

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Wednesday, 3 August 2016
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chair:

Mr L.K. Odenwalder

Members:

Hon. A. Piccolo
Hon. J.M. Rankine
Ms A.F.C. Digance
Mr S.J. Duluk
Mr S.P. Griffiths
Dr D. McFetridge

The committee met at 09:00

Estimates Vote

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$1,090,488,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION, \$195,310,000

Minister:

Hon. Z.L. Bettison, Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr P. Bull, Executive Director, Youth Justice, Community and Organisational Support, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Wallace, Executive Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

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

Ms B. Weis, Director, Community and Organisational Support, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms J. Kennedy, Director, Community Engagement and Grants, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms K. Tattersall, Director, Screening, Procurement and Stanton Institute, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms T. Stephenson, Manager, Strategic Coordination, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr R. Bennett, Acting Director, Youth Justice, Community and Organisational Support, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

The CHAIR: Good morning, minister. Welcome to Estimates Committee B. You are appearing today in your capacity as Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 1. This is a relatively informal procedure. As such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand you have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of the proposed payments. Has there been any change to that timetable?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No.

Dr McFETRIDGE: No.

The CHAIR: Excellent. We will stick to that. I will allow the minister and the lead speaker, if they wish, to give an opening statement of no more than 10 minutes. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions. As I said, it is relatively informal. However, questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget, clearly identifiable and referenced and questions must be directed to the minister.

If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 28 October 2016. During our examination, the media and television cameras will be allowed in the chamber. I now call on you, minister, to make a statement, if you wish, and to introduce your advisers.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can I introduce the Chief Executive of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, Tony Harrison, to my left; to my far left, Andrew Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services; to my right, Peter Bull, Executive Director, Youth Justice, Community and Organisational Support. Directly behind me are Nancy Rogers, Director, Business Affairs and Tracey Stephenson, Manager, Strategic Coordination, Business Affairs.

I do have an opening statement. This government is committed to a socially-inclusive South Australia where diversity is celebrated and where people feel valued and have their basic needs met. The vast range of programs and opportunities delivered by the communities and social inclusion portfolio seek to improve the quality of life for people who may be vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged.

Many South Australians are assisted in very practical ways to manage cost of living pressures. Around \$170 million is provided to eligible applicants for a range of concessions, including energy, water, sewerage, the emergency services levy on fixed property and to assist with the cost of living. In addition, more than \$10 million is provided in affordable living programs, which provide financial counselling, financial assistance, emergency electricity payments, low income support, utilities literacy and micro-finance products.

Achievements in 2015-16 include the launching of the Good Money store in Salisbury. In the coming months, we will be trialling a new micro-enterprise development program in the northern suburbs. There have also been some areas of challenge in this financial year, but we are making progress in key areas such as a reconciliation of concessions and processing of screening applications. I am pleased to say that around 98 per cent of completed screening applications are now processed within 30 days.

Last November, the devastating Pinery fire burnt out 82,600 hectares in our state's Mid North, severely impacting individuals and communities in the area. The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion played a pivotal role in the provision of relief measures immediately after the fire and has continued to provide support to the community through their ongoing recovery. This support will continue in the coming months.

I would like to take this opportunity to again thank everyone involved in the recovery efforts, including volunteers, and acknowledge the generosity of community spirit of South Australians. I note in the chamber today we have the member for Light and the member for Goyder, whose constituencies were both impacted by that fire.

One of the highlights of the past year has been the establishment of a new grants program, Grants SA, which means much simpler and easier access to grants for community organisations. Organisations can now apply for a number of different types of grants through one application. This is a significant reduction in red tape and has been widely welcomed across the sector. In 2016-17, Grants SA will provide \$3 million in grants to improve community participation, wellbeing and quality of life.

Working in collaboration with the Human Services Partnership Forum, a range of other measures are being put in place to support the community sector, such as simplified and consistent funding and guidelines processes across government, training and other resources. This government seeks to build prosperous and thriving communities, promote social and economic opportunities and increase community leadership in developing solutions for long-term, population-level change. Through the Thriving Communities initiative, we are already seeing networks and community participation grow in some of our most disadvantaged communities.

Recently, there has been considerable focus on the treatment of young people in detention. I am very confident of our approaches in South Australia, and the successful passage of the Youth Justice Administration Bill in March 2016 will see strengthened protections for young people in detention. It will also enshrine the current service model, which has a central focus on rehabilitation and education as well as on the safety and wellbeing of residents as well as staff.

Earlier this year, the Auditor-General, Mr Andrew Richardson, completed a review of concessions administered by DCSI. The Auditor-General's review report deals principally with the issue of evidence of concession validation and reconciliation processes in the six-year period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2015. He had a particular focus on the energy concession.

We know that concessions play an incredibly important role and are provided to the most vulnerable people in South Australia. The Auditor-General is right to raise concern about the way in which public money is spent; however, as he himself acknowledged, it is always important to strike a balance between protecting the public purse and making sure that those who rely on concessions receive them quickly and efficiently.

Following the Auditor-General's report, there has been much said about the issue of energy concession payments, particularly in cases where the applicant may not have been eligible at the time payment was made to their energy retailer. The Auditor-General's report included a figure of 4,350 payments over a six-year period made to households where the concession holder was deceased. Let me please note that energy concession payments are made to energy retailers, not to households.

I have instructed my department to complete an audit of these payments to confirm how they occurred and that current processes were sufficient to prevent a reoccurrence. I also asked them to determine whether any funds may be recovered. The results of the audit are as follows:

- 875 payments in fact represented credit payments to DCSI and not payments to retailers;
- 520 payments were made where the primary account holder was not deceased, but the concession holder had died. The remaining spouse was still eligible for the concession; and
- 98 payments were made within the 13-week grace period.

In addition, my department reviewed individual case files and determined that 2,005 payments occurred where a surviving spouse would have been eligible for the concession during the relevant period. This leaves 852 payments involving 305 households where no member of the household has yet been substantiated as being eligible during the relevant period. The total amount of these payments is estimated to be less than \$46,000.

In 2014-15, 35 payments were identified with a total value estimated at less than \$2,000. The \$46,000 over six years, from the \$616 million worth of concession payments, is minor. It is also important to note that an active account was being maintained at the address in question with the same retailer. It is always possible to improve further, but over the last 18 months we have begun a major data-cleaning operation, implemented a semiautomated verification and reconciliation process, ensured that proof of validation is entered into the database and increased the number of staff who administer concessions.

The Auditor-General has acknowledged that processes and controls regarding concessions have been strengthened. I have also asked my department to consider ways in which our concessions can be delivered to strike a better balance between the interests of the public purse and the public good. This will assist in our budget process. Our work is ongoing with the Auditor-General, and I will continue to focus on being effective and making sure our validations are supported by eligibility.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Do you have an opening statement, member for Morphett?

Dr McFETRIDGE: I will go straight into it. Certainly, this is a very important portfolio and we need to get some answers on some very important questions. With that, the reference is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 91, investing expenditure statement. Minister, why would 934,000 be spent on ministerial office accommodation?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I moved office from Terrace Towers to No. 1 King William Street. We consolidated the offices. As I am aware, four ministers are now in that office space.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So that cost was shared over the four offices?

The CHAIR: Sorry, member for Morphett, sorry to interrupt your flow. Sadly, the member for Goyder has asked to be discharged, to be replaced by the member for Bragg, temporarily.

Membership:

Ms Chapman substituted for Mr Griffiths.

Dr McFETRIDGE: When you say 'consolidated'—was that 934,000 for your office or for the four offices? Or is it \$4 million for the whole lot?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I understand that is for my office.

Dr McFETRIDGE: For one office. So how many staff are working in the office? I have seen some of the other ministers' offices, they are pretty flash. The reason I ask is that people are doing it tough out there. Is it a good spend of money?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As the member may be aware, it is a refurbished building and I think that we were unable to continue renting a part floor in the building that we were in. That instigated the move, as I am aware. I have 8.5 centrally funded FTEs in my office, with a budget of \$1.61 million.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What do you get for a million bucks in a ministerial office?

The CHAIR: That is a pretty broad question, member for Morphett. Do you want to be more specific?

Dr McFETRIDGE: She must get a nice boardroom with a boardroom table and chair. Anyway, we will move on because there is much more to be covered. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93, the community connections and support program, net costs of sub-program. No guesses here, minister. CASIS was a rolling disaster. There were eight Auditor-General reports into CASIS. It started at 600,000 and finished at a bit over \$7 million and then was dumped to be replaced by COLC (Cost of Living Concessions) and the Cost of Living Information—where the 'in' comes from, let me know—COLIN, as it is called now. There was a 40 per cent increase in FTEs from 220 to 307 to administer the COLC and COLIN. Can you give us some details on why that was necessary?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: With the greatest respect, member for Morphet, we are talking about a few different things. The system that you referred to was the computer system, and COLIN is the new computer system that will endeavour to be fully automated. The focus on COLIN—the Cost of Living Information system—will initially be about cost-of-living concession payments, with the intention that it will be rolled out to all concession areas. My intention is that PARS and the Spectacles Scheme will likely be the first ones on after COLC, and then the other concessions after that.

One of the key things at the moment is that we have a semiautomated system and that is what we do. When we introduced the cost of living concession—obviously this was a new concession—we wanted to be very thorough in how we did that and focus on eligibility and that required some additional staff. With the development of COLIN we will see a decrease in the need for staff.

One of the key things we found is the demographics of people who are eligible. While many do go online to look at things, many prefer to have a conversation over the phone, and I think many of the people here would know that, when the cost of living concession was rolled out, there were many questions, and we endeavoured to answer them over the phone via the concessions line. Sometimes that took multiple phone calls and we made sure that we had the necessary staff to answer those questions.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to the same reference. I thought that CASIS was replacing CARTS (Concessions and Rebate Tracking System). How could you get it so wrong with CASIS and now we are seeing COLIN—there is an increase spend on this of—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Morphet, you are correct.

Dr McFETRIDGE: It has gone up \$4.89 million.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That was the intention that CASIS would replace CARTS. It is unfortunate that that outcome was unable to be achieved. There has been no cost blowout with the build of the COLIN system. We initially allocated \$2.2 million to build COLIN and then a business case identified a range of options of how the COLIN system would operate and how to achieve greater automation. After considering these options, it was decided to invest an extra \$1.4 million in COLIN to achieve a fully automated business technology platform to administer the COLC.

To date, all milestones for the COLIN project have been met on time and on budget, and when the COLIN system is fully operational in 2017-18, the additional investment provided in the system will ensure automation of payment calculations, an online portal for customers, reconciliation capacity and a full auditability of administration. I think it is very important for me as the minister, when we are introducing this new technology that it is a staged process, that we get it right, that it is working effectively and then we will add on additional concessions.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Forgive me if I am a bit of a cynic about costings on this. Can you guarantee that tax payers will not end up with a CASIS II, with COLIN at \$2.2 million ending up at \$3.6 million? Is that going to be the final cost in 2017-18? That is nearly \$11 million so far on trying to get a system that is not working as yet—and eight audit reports.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I acknowledge the concern. The build of COLIN is different. It is utilising new, low-risk technologies that are available and widely used. These opportunities were not available at the time that the CASIS project commenced. As I said previously, the system development is staged. Rather than all components commencing at once, the success of each stage will determine moving on to the next stage. The contracts are based on a fixed price basis to contain the costs and the fixed price purchasing of off-the-shelf components was not readily available when CASIS commenced.

As you can imagine, I have a key focus on this working and we have risk management and associated planning—which is a major focus for this project—a steering committee, a senior executive governance group and we have an external representative nominated by the Office for Digital Government, and they are providing oversight on the project.

The original estimated \$2.2 million, final build cost, was subject to the outcome of a final business case and identification of high-level functional requirements for the system. This work led to a revised build cost of \$3.6 million build, with \$800,000 for ongoing support costs.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can you please give those figures again? Was it \$1.6 million for—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The original estimated \$2.2 million final build cost was subject to the outcome of the final business case and the identification of high-level functional requirements for the system. This work led to a revised build cost of \$3.6 million build, with \$800,000 for ongoing support costs.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So it is \$4.2 million, not \$3.6 million all-up then?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No, it is \$3.6 million with ongoing costs of \$800,000.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So the ongoing costs add on to \$3.6 million—is that right—or part of the \$3.6 million?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: One would say about a capital infrastructure plus ongoing maintenance costs as we would do with anything—

Dr McFETRIDGE: So the total cost to the taxpayer is \$4.2 million.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —\$3.6 million.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can you guarantee that that is not going to blow out again, because this is just—

The CHAIR: Member for Morphett, hang on, they are just clarifying those figures for you so we can settle this once and for all.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I have been very clear about what our intended costs are.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Because last time, eight audit reports with CASIS, it just kept growing and growing. There was either incompetence or—

The CHAIR: That is not a question, member for Morphett. Do you have any more questions?

Dr McFETRIDGE: You are right, and I do have more. Why was an external contractor needed to extract data from CAST, to check if CAST was in fact working?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can you reference which part of the budget you are referring to?

Dr McFETRIDGE: It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93, Net cost of sub-program, and this is all included in that. The actual information is out of the recent Auditor-General's Report, so it is in there somewhere.

The CHAIR: Can I just clarify something before we go on, and this has come up time and time again: the reason we reference these things is so that the minister has the opportunity to ask her advisers, who have worked very hard and cross-referenced all of this, so we are not just being pedantic, we need to know the reference.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have been doing this for 14 years now and the ministers have usually been able to come up with the answers, but if we do not know why we are having to review over 600,000 individual files manually, after \$7 million and now another \$4.2 million then there is something wrong. How many people are receiving cost of living concessions and how many are being manually processed?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As you know, the cost of living concession was a new concession to support fixed and low-income South Australians to manage their households. What I think is particularly important about this concession is that it gives people a choice in how they spend their money. The number of recipients—pensioners and low-income earners who were home owner-occupiers—who received the \$200 cost of living concessions was 153,845. The number of pensioners, low-income earners and self-funded retirees who hold a commonwealth seniors health care card and are tenants who received \$100 was 28,973, for a total of 182,818.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Why did we increase the cost-of-living concession?

The CHAIR: What budget paper are you referring to?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: It is the same reference, page 93, the introduction of the cost-of-living concession. I would like to know why we did that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Wright, I am sure both you and I were both equally disappointed when the national partnership on certain concessions was ripped up without any discussion. We had about \$30 million, if I remember correctly, as part of our system. We had some choices to make here and obviously we had quite a substantial concession system, about \$170 million a year. It is incredibly important as to how we support our most vulnerable people, so we had to make a decision. Obviously, the first thing was to go back to the federal government to say, 'This is unfair. We had an agreement here and without any discussion you ripped it up.'

To be honest, we were hoping for a review in that budget session after that announcement—that was not forthcoming, so we had to make a decision and that is when the cost-of-living concession was determined as a way of giving people opportunity and choice, but recognising that they had a need and vulnerability and an issue with the cost of living.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I just wish I had the letter from the Speaker, the member for Croydon, to his constituents about this.

Members interjecting:

Dr McFETRIDGE: Actually, it is quite relevant to the last question. Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93, cost of living concessions. Minister, how can you pay \$2.81 million to clients if there is no record of the client? Where has that money gone? You have no record of the client, you have paid out \$2.81 million to whom?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am sorry, member for Morphett, exactly what are you referring to in cost of living concession? We had a very thorough process of validation and eligibility for the cost-of-living concession. I followed it incredibly closely, so I would like you to draw my attention to what you are talking about.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The Auditor-General's Report, page 4, concessions eligibility, key findings, \$2.81 million, where DCSI had no record of the client—\$1.82 million where the client had not received any concession; I can continue on, if you like.

The CHAIR: But, member for Morphett, we are not here to examine the Auditor-General's Report.

Dr McFETRIDGE: It is all part of the cost-of-living concession.

The CHAIR: So, what is your question? What is your budget reference and what is your question?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: I missed it.

Dr McFETRIDGE: For those who have not been paying attention on the other side, it is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93, state government concessions, net cost of sub-program: \$2.81 million of that net cost was paid to people where there is no record of the client. How can they give money to people? Where has it gone? Who spent that money?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Morphett, the cost of living concession was not addressed in this supplementary report. Can I just go back to our stats again—

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: You have got it wrong, Duncan.

Dr McFETRIDGE: No, no, it is all there—black and white, Jennifer, black and white—you want to read it.

The CHAIR: Order! Let's pace ourselves.

Dr McFETRIDGE: It is not pretty.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Morphett, as I just spoke about, the cost-of-living concession is a new concession. We had no choice when the federal government ripped up our national partnership of certain concessions.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Because you did not negotiate it.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We had to make decisions as a government, and as a state government we put our most vulnerable people first, and we will continue to do so. As I said, 182,818 South Australians receive the cost-of-living concession.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Well, there's \$2.81 million gone to people—we do not even know who they are.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: They are also about to receive their next—

The CHAIR: Member for Morphett, stop interrupting the minister, please.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In August of this year the vast majority of people who are home owners and eligible received that into their account, and then tenants will receive it early in 2017.

Dr McFETRIDGE: If I seem somewhat frustrated by the information we are getting, that taxpayers are getting, then it is quite justified. We have seen \$7 million go down the tube in CASIS, and now we have \$4 million plus in the new system for which we have no guarantees that dead people will not be paid and that money will not go to clients where there is no client.

The CHAIR: Before you make a point of order, member for Light, please member for Morphett ask some questions and leave the extraneous comment to a grievance debate.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93: is DCSI still in breach of the State Records Act by not retaining a record for a minimum of seven years?

Ms DIGANCE: What line?

Dr McFETRIDGE: I know that you are new to this, some of you people—others have been here longer, they should know.

Ms DIGANCE: What line?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Net cost of providing services.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Rubbish.

Ms DIGANCE: What line?

Dr McFETRIDGE: I know you are here to shield—the human shields over there are not working. Answer, minister, please.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Once again, member for Morphett, you are referring to the Auditor-General's Report and not the budget. I understand that there were three incidents out of 418 where this was not maintained. I do not think this is acceptable. I have asked the department to look into why this has happened and make sure it does not happen again. I acknowledge it was not appropriate. I think this is an exception and not the rule, and we will move forward from there.

Dr McFETRIDGE: We will move on to another extremely important area for many people in South Australia, being the cost of employment screening, Budget Paper 5, page 23, Continuous monitoring for screening. When will the new continuous system be fully operational?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I thank the member for Morphett in his continued interest in this area. Since screening was introduced and we obviously widened it to more South Australians, particularly those working with vulnerable people, with children or people with disabilities, we have increased the number of people who are being screened in South Australia. We have committed to a continuous monitoring system for pre-employment screening checks. In late 2015, the government approved a business case and funding for the development and implementation of this in South Australia.

The screening unit is working with South Australia Police (SAPOL) and the Department of Education and Child Development to build and implement the system. This will include the ability to

flag offences when they occur and alert organisations that the status of a clearance has changed. This will go live in mid-2017. The government has provided \$5.3 million in investing expenditure over two years for this initiative, in addition to ongoing operational support.

There are many other initiatives that we have looked at as well and which have been introduced, including updating the website to improve the ease of finding information, and providing a range of user-friendly material, including fact sheets and frequently asked questions. We have implemented automated communication to advise applicants and organisations about the status of an application. We have implemented BPOINT as a payment mechanism. We want to make screening efficient and effective, and we continue to do so.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Is this system that is being operated by the state government in line with the competitive neutrality policies of the state government?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that that would have been taken into consideration. We made the decision to build it ourselves.

Dr McFETRIDGE: If private organisations can do it better, cheaper and much more quickly, why would you not consider them?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I am informed, because our system does not just look at CrimTrac, it does look other areas of screening. Private companies at this point do not have access to information in DECD records.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Will the cost of screening go up as a result of the \$1.4 million annual operating cost?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is not the intention that we have.

Dr McFETRIDGE: It might be the end result, though.

The CHAIR: Member for Morphett, you are asking the minister to speculate. She has speculated, and you cannot argue with her speculation.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Perhaps I could talk a little bit about how continuous monitoring will work. We will maintain a register of all people who have been screened, which would be updated daily. Notifications will be matched against names maintained in the register. This matching will be undertaken by the relevant agency and confirmed or not confirmed as a genuine match. For example, if new criminal history were available, SAPOL would confirm this was a match with the relevant person in the register.

Prior to sending the notification for DCSI to follow up, this step must be undertaken by the relevant agency, with the authority to deal with the sensitive information. Confirmed matches will be sent to the DCSI screening unit for review and reassessment as required. The status of the screening assessment will be updated in the register, which will be accessible to employers, volunteering and student organisations via a secure website.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Moving on, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103, Domiciliary Care Services and Community Care, and the net costs of providing services. Has Domiciliary Care kept up to date with its financial reporting requirements to the commonwealth Department of Health? If not, why not?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I have no reason to believe that they have not adhered. One of the key things that we have is a massive change to our system of how we support people as they age. Domcare has been an icon here in South Australia for some time, providing that care to the home, but the commonwealth made the decision, I think perhaps a few years ago, to take responsibility for those over the age of 65 and the state for those under 65. We moved to a new system, a system that is in transition. Domiciliary Care provides the Commonwealth Home Support Program and continues to do so.

We have an agreement with the commonwealth to 2018. We continue to work with the commonwealth within the focus that they have for the delivery of our services. Just so we understand how many people we support, there are about 9,400 Domiciliary Care clients, with 251,000 service hours.

Dr McFETRIDGE: On that same budget reference and a similar question, has Domiciliary Care kept up to date with its data reporting requirements with the federal Department of Health?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not have a specific issue in regard to that; perhaps you would like to detail—

Dr McFETRIDGE: If you could get back to us on that. I understand that there have been some concerns about the data reporting requirements that the commonwealth Department of Health has and that Domiciliary Care has had some issues. That is what I understand. If it is wrong, I would like to hear.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Morphett, I am assured by people from my department that there are no issues in regard to data. Perhaps if you would like to write to me separately or to speak to me, I would be happy to follow up. Can I just talk about how we are reorienting our services to meet the new arrangements in the program. Part of the delivery of service in the Commonwealth Home Support Program guidelines, is looking at the most appropriate care. We know that that might mean transitioning some of our existing clients, which might mean to a different package or residential care or a home care package. Just to be clear to people, the Commonwealth Home Support Program is what you would call the initial area of support for people; personal care and maybe assistance with shopping. If they need further assistance, then they will be assessed through an ACAP process for a home care package.

This is a fairly new system and although the commonwealth has taken responsibility, under my other hat as Minister for Ageing, and with my interest in Domiciliary Care, we have addressed to the commonwealth gaps that we see as we transition with My Aged Care. Let me be clear, we needed to do things differently. We know that we have an ageing population and, of course, South Australia has the oldest ageing population in the mainland state so I want to work well with the commonwealth government about how we support people as they age.

We know that there is going to be more emphasis on ageing in place, so that means that we need to know that we are providing those services in a timely manner, but also we know there is going to be a massive expansion, so we have to, as governments, determine how we are going to pay for this, and that is where the new system in My Aged Care is being developed.

We will continue to work closely with the commonwealth. I have raised with them some gaps about the accessibility. Many of us here might have had constituents who have gone to log on to My Aged Care and found it quite a complex process, and we endeavour to talk to the commonwealth about that. We also know that some of our culturally and linguistically diverse constituents have found it very challenging and they need interpreters, and Multicultural Aged Care and I have worked together to lobby the commonwealth about how that can happen.

Just so we know, there was a change, because we did have a contract with the commonwealth government for Access2HomeCare that expired on 30 June 2015, and that went to another part of the industry, and we did not receive that contract. We know that from 2018, all funding under the Commonwealth Home Support Program will be through a market-based and client-driven agenda, and those are some of the movements that we have in this space.

Ms CHAPMAN: Minister, I have some questions on youth justice as the newly appointed youth justice shadow minister, on page 91 and also the portfolio section at page 96. Firstly, in respect of the youth training centres—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Which volume?

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 91, same volume; it is all community services. With the Adelaide Youth Training Centre—Major Security Works for last year, I see the \$4.2 million was not spent and it is explained there. This was at Jonal Drive Security Upgrade and I note then the new project is Major Security Works. Is that also the \$2 million to be spent at Jonal Drive, the old Cavan site for younger children?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is correct.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is the continuous monitoring of screening for the security of employees or residents, or both? That is the \$3.3 million.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, that covers all people, but I am not sure of your reference to youth justice and continuous screening.

Ms CHAPMAN: No, here we have 'continuous monitoring of screening'.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think there might be a lack of clarity on what we are talking about.

Ms CHAPMAN: So the screening issue is not the prison?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No, that is about the continuous monitoring that I have just spoken about between SAPOL, DECD and DCSI.

Ms CHAPMAN: If I can go back then to Jonal Drive, what are the security works that we are going to spend \$2 million on, and why wasn't the \$4 million spent last year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Perhaps I can detail those projects for you. When I became the minister, it was raised with me that there were some areas that needed improving, including the upgrading of servers to increase capacity and storage and air conditioning at the Goldsbrough Road server room to cater for increased demand to support both campuses.

Ms CHAPMAN: If I can just interrupt for a moment, I think we are at cross purposes. I am not talking about Goldsbrough Road. That is a new facility, it is a different matter altogether. This project—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can I perhaps be clear to you that we have a one training centre two-campus model, so when we talk about the Adelaide Youth Training Centre we talk about both campuses. The majority of that spend will, of course, be on Jonal Drive but part of that is the connectivity to Goldsbrough.

Ms CHAPMAN: Connectivity of?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Communications.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there any upgrade to be done at the new site on which we have already spent \$75 million? If so, how much of that \$2.04 million—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Are you referring to Goldsbrough now?

Ms CHAPMAN: No, you were. What I asked is this: the item there for \$2.04 million, which last year was \$4.257 million but was not spent, you say is now being spent at Jonal Drive, the old campus where the younger children are. We understand that. It is been around for 30 years so it may need some upgrades. However, you are saying that that \$2.04 million is at Jonal Drive but that some may be spent at Goldsbrough to receive a communications system. Do I have that right?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can I just re-emphasise that there is some very minor stuff at the new facility. Obviously, once we go back we will have a one system, so we need to make sure that there is connectivity. There will be an upgrade of the Jonal Drive campus radio system from analog to digital, and that will connect to Goldsbrough so that we have that connectivity. There will be a duress-activated sound recording system linked to controls, some upgrade to sally port and admissions, the existing units and the exercise yard. The Jonal Drive campus will be modified to become the new admissions sally port enabling the secure transition of young persons in and out of the Jonal Drive campus and to holding rooms.

For the security systems at Jonal Drive, we will be looking at biometric access control with new airlock arrangements in the foyer to include the redesign of the administration and reception areas and a key and radio safe for storage, including Goldsbrough Road for radios. We have an upgrade of the current commercial grade keys and locks to the same correctional standard as Goldsbrough, an upgrade of the perimeter lighting to LED for Jonal Drive, digital CCTV cameras and holding rooms and bedrooms, an upgrade of the ICT system control, personal protective equipment, web cameras and infrastructure and the replacement of the emergency standby UPS generator at the Jonal Drive campus.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there anything in the budget under youth justice, pages 96 or 97, that makes provision for the security for residents in any other way, and in particular I refer to equipment

such as the spit restraints that have been used in the Northern Territory. I note that your CEO has been on radio saying they are not used in South Australia, which I am pleased to hear. Is there any provision for any other equipment, apart from a new radio system, for the restraint of residents?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is not my understanding, but I will ask for details from the executive director.

Mr BULL: We would not be looking to buy any of that type of mechanical equipment, apart from just replacing our existing equipment. There would not be anything additional.

Ms CHAPMAN: In your existing equipment, are there any restraint hoods or spit hoods, as they are called?

Mr BULL: There is a spit protection that we use, which is very thin nylon material that comes down just below the nose, so that eyes are not impeded, with a thicker material around the bottom to prevent the spread of bodily fluids and blood.

Ms CHAPMAN: That is a different model, but it is a spit restraint. It is a different model to the Northern Territory.

Mr BULL: Yes, it is. The one in the Northern Territory was more of an all-over mask—

Ms CHAPMAN: A full hood.

Mr BULL: —which obviously offered some impediment to the vision, which is not what we have.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is there any other equipment you have currently that is used in these extreme circumstances?

Mr BULL: We would use handcuffs and maybe some leg straps if the person was lashing out quite violently, but they would be used very rarely.

Ms CHAPMAN: Have they been used in the last 12 months?

Mr BULL: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: Member for Bragg—

Ms CHAPMAN: I just have one final question, which I think the minister will want to hear.

The CHAIR: To the minister, yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: Minister, the human rights commissioner Gillian Triggs has actually called for an expansion of the Northern Territory inquiry to all other states and territories to investigate any potential issues in respect of their matters and those that have been raised in the Northern Territory. Have you had any correspondence with the Prime Minister's office yet in respect of that?

The CHAIR: The minister may choose not to answer this or—

Ms CHAPMAN: That is fine.

The CHAIR: No, I am being fair. The minister may choose to answer this or not. It is irrelevant to the budget but, if the minister chooses to answer, she can.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is if they have made some provision for submissions to the Northern Territory inquiry.

The CHAIR: That was not your question.

Ms CHAPMAN: If I had not been interrupted, I might have got to that.

The CHAIR: Well, I am giving you extra time, member for Bragg.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, sir.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Member for Bragg, at all times, I welcome the attention paid to how we support young people in residential care and in the training centre. We have not received any correspondence from the Prime Minister. Just recently we have enacted the youth justice

administration bill, which was debated in this house and which contemporises our legislation, and we are about to put forward the regulations. I am confident that we have a focus on rehabilitation and education but, if this process is to go forward, I welcome it.

Ms CHAPMAN: And do you condone the use—

The CHAIR: According to the agreed timetable, I am moving on now to Housing SA.

Membership:

Mr Griffiths substituted for Ms Chapman.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr P. Fagan-Schmidt, Executive Director, Housing SA.

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

Mr P. Reardon, Director, Property and Contract Management, Housing SA.

Mr G. Slack, Director, Strategy and Reporting, Housing SA.

Ms K. Broderick, Senior Parliamentary and Project Coordinator, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do, but let me please introduce my team. To my left is Tony Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion; to my far left is Andrew Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services; to my right is Philip Fagan-Schmidt, Executive Director, Housing SA. Behind me, on the right is Nancy Rogers, Director, Business Affairs, and on the left is Kate Broderick, Senior Parliamentary and Project Coordinator for the chief executive's office.

The government has a responsibility to provide people with housing support, and the social housing portfolio plays a critical role in fulfilling this responsibility. During 2015-16, many thousands of South Australians received assistance through this portfolio.

Around 67,000 people live in public housing properties and many more in properties managed by the community housing sector. In addition, during the year, Housing SA provided more than 33,000 customers with financial assistance to access the private rental market, and over 22,000 people received support due to homelessness or domestic violence.

In December 2015, Housing SA finalised the implementation of a new service delivery model. This model improves Housing SA's capacity to respond to the increased risk and vulnerability of customers, including proactively identifying children at risk. Housing SA also implemented a number of initiatives to improve support for those who are vulnerable and at risk, and strengthen service delivery while maintaining a strong focus on compliance. I would like to highlight a few of these areas.

There have been initiatives to support victims of family and domestic violence. These include the extension of the Staying Home Staying Safe program delivered by the Victim Support Service in partnership with Housing SA. This program plays an important role in enabling women and children who have experienced domestic or family violence to remain living safely in their own home. Additional commonwealth government funding of \$1.2 million over the next three years will allow this program to increase the number and type of security measures that assist victims.

During 2015-16, the South Australian Housing Trust also spent \$1.6 million from its maintenance budget on safety upgrades for tenants experiencing domestic and family violence. South Australia has also secured commonwealth government funding for the next three years for two new local support coordinators who will provide support to women aged 15 to 24 years who are victims of domestic and family violence. These positions will be part of Housing SA's regional response team. This is in addition to the support provided through the homelessness sector to people who experience domestic and family violence. More than 8,000 clients were assisted in the last year.

My department has also been focused on addressing the challenges relating to the complex needs of remote Indigenous South Australians. During the financial year, Housing SA completed construction of 15 new houses and upgraded 34 houses in the APY lands. A further 10 properties were acquired in metropolitan centres through the Employment Related Accommodation program to assist people moving from remote Aboriginal communities for education and employment opportunities.

Since 2009-10, \$22 million has been released for capital investment in ERA. With this funding, the program has acquired 41 properties in regional centres across South Australia and metropolitan Adelaide, and constructed accommodation to support the APY lands trade training centre. We have also successfully renegotiated funding for the new Remote Housing Strategy, which will allow us to continue to build on achievements in providing housing for remote Indigenous communities.

Housing SA has also maintained a strong focus on compliance. For example, Housing SA recently recruited two additional officers to increase its ability to investigate and, where appropriate, dispute bond claims against South Australian Housing Trust bond guarantees. During 2015-16, Housing SA reclaimed over \$650,000 as a result of these investigations.

In 2015-16, Housing SA also established the property ownership review team. This team was formed to identify and investigate cases where public housing tenants were suspected to also own residential property. This project was very successful, with 32 households vacating public housing due to property ownership. These properties can now be directed to those most in need. A further 74 households were identified as needing to pay full market rent. This ensures public-funded rental subsidies go to those who need them.

South Australians should be encouraged by the actions taken by this government to address the service delivery and compliance challenges of providing social housing and affordable housing options. This year has been a year of change, development and opportunity for public housing in South Australia, and the year ahead promises to continue that trend. My department will continue to adapt and respond to community needs to ensure South Australians have access to housing services and supports.

Membership:

Ms Sanderson substituted for Dr McFetridge.

The CHAIR: Member for Adelaide, I understand you are the lead speaker. Do you have a statement or are you going straight to questions?

Ms SANDERSON: Straight to questions, thank you. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107, Social Housing, Description/objective, Housing SA tenants housed. Can the minister outline the total number of people on the Housing SA waiting list and the total number of people who were housed, by category, for the 2015-16 year and also note how many of those were 25 years and under?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you, member for Adelaide. The housing register, as we now refer to it, has 20,974 people, and the number of customers that was allocated housing was 2,160. Obviously, our focus is on category 1 tenants—those that have the greatest need—and 88.5 per cent of category 1 tenants were allocated. I know you have a particular interest in the number of customers under 25 years. We have 2,724 on the housing register and allocations of 383 this year.

Ms SANDERSON: Is it possible to get the breakdown later, for categories 1, 2 and 3, and exact numbers, rather than just one percentage of one—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I can supply those to you. In category 1, the number of people on the housing register is 3,534; in category 2, 5,562; in category 3, 11,784; low demand is 38; pending is 56—and that gets you a total of 20,974. Numbers of customers allocated housing is: category 1, 1,911; category 2, 140; category 3, 109 to 2,160. When we consider specifying the number of customers under 25 years on the register: category 1, 552; category 2, 317; category 3, 1,827; low demand is 2; and pending is 26, for that total of 2,724. The housing allocation's number of customers under 25 years is: category 1, 366; category 2, 11; category 3, 6, for a total of 383.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Statement, Chapter 5, Government business, page 76, Capital Investment Program: can the minister confirm that the One Thousand Homes in 1000 Days program will not add a single additional home to the Housing SA stock?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The project of 1,000 houses in 1,000 days is responsible to the minister for renewal.

Ms SANDERSON: Can the minister then confirm whether there will be less bedrooms at the end of the program than there were at the beginning?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Less bedrooms, member for Adelaide?

Ms SANDERSON: Yes, because I believe larger houses are being—

The CHAIR: Fewer. Fewer bedrooms.

Ms SANDERSON: Fewer. I guess one of the—

The CHAIR: Hence the misunderstanding!

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you. There has been a focus on utilisation in the past and it is my expectation, where we have more than 70 per cent of our tenants who live alone, that that utilisation rate would be higher than it is currently.

Ms SANDERSON: At the end of the program, which you are not responsible for, are you expecting, as the minister who is responsible for the people, that there will be less people on the waiting list, or the waiting list will not be affected by this program?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think the key thing, when we think about the housing register, is about how we support people. So, when someone is on the waiting list, I think the impression you have is that they are not receiving any support. That is actually not accurate. More than 80 per cent of people who are on that housing register do receive a form of support—usually private rental assistance. They come to us and we perform a risk identification tool. We understand the needs of that person on that housing register, and we endeavour to support them with our private liaison officer or by looking at them being category 1, 2 and 3, but in the meantime offering them other areas of assistance.

When we look at our social housing system, public housing and Housing SA properties are a major part of that, but so is the community housing sector. When you go on the housing register, you are also open to eligibility and accessibility for those community housing providers as well. What we want to provide is a one-stop shop. When someone goes online on Housing SA, or comes into one of the offices, we want to talk about how we can help them to look at the issue of housing. So, whether it be the potential for Housing SA, community housing or private rental assistance, that is how we will support vulnerable South Australians.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I draw the minister's attention to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 107, 108 and 109. Can the minister advise the committee on how the department has assisted vulnerable tenants and customers to access secure housing and other services, which you mentioned in your previous question.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can you repeat—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can you advise the committee of how the department can assist or has assisted vulnerable tenants and customers to access secure housing and other services: the new delivery model.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The new delivery model, which was fully implemented in December 2015, better meets the needs of communities and customers. We are transforming our business to make it about the people. It is connecting people to place. I sit in this room with two former ministers for social housing and we know that we have an increasing vulnerability within our tenancies. We feel that we need to be far more proactive in identifying risk and vulnerable people, particularly women and children. So, we have increased our capacity to respond to complex needs. We have targeted specialist services, provided to integrate a multidisciplinary approach, where customers are connected to support services in their local community.

If I can be frank, I think sometimes in the past we have focused on the bricks and mortar of Housing SA. It has played an enormous role in the development of our economy. Many people still come up to me today and say, 'I grew up in a Housing SA house, a trust house; and it was great stability for my family', particularly those who migrated from England or other post-World War II migrants. They came out, they had a house, they worked and they built wealth within their families. What it provided was stability, and in fact I had a conversation with a constituent of mine who was originally born in England. He now lives in Brahma Lodge and owns his house. He went back home and his brothers and sisters and their children are still renting, whereas he had the opportunity to buy a house; but his initial support here was through the Housing Trust.

The model supports the changing needs of Housing SA's customer profile, and what we are allowing is for staff to invest more intensely at the beginning of a customer's tenancy by assessing need, providing information, delivering appropriate products and services. We know that many of our customers have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma and they often have complex personal and family circumstances and lives marked by disadvantage and social exclusion. We have had specialised training that has been delivered to our staff, under the new model, covering a range of topics, including child protection, cultural awareness and family and domestic violence.

Overall, the new service delivery model takes a proactive approach to address the underlying causes of issues that can impact on a person and their family. The key change is a whole-of-community approach now, because we want people to thrive and flourish and participate in their communities. We know that housing is central to that.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Statement Chapter 5, page 79. Can the minister provide a total net debt position for the Housing SA clients as at 30 June 2016, and also provide a breakdown of that debt for the year? It is page 79, government business, net contributions.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would like to start with what we are doing about debt, because this has been a key focus of mine. In September 2015, we established a debt management steering committee to implement new strategies to reduce and manage the debt. This includes senior representatives from both Housing SA and Renewal SA.

Several initiatives have been implemented. This year, two debt blitzes were conducted in each of the Housing SA metropolitan regions which were led by our compliance officers. Staff made contact with tenants and successfully implemented repayment arrangements in a number of cases. These officers also provided regional staff with strategies to identify customer debt to be written off and cases requiring referral to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for recovery.

We have had improved weekly debt performance reports and have improved and developed a new weekly debt report. That report provides high level statistics as well as information on accounts overdue enabling proactive action. We have had several reforms to the debt policy and procedures, including increasing the minimum repayment for non-tenant debt from \$10 to \$15 per week; introducing the internal benchmark requiring that 70 per cent of debt arrangements meet the minimum repayment amount unless the tenant has demonstrated financial hardship and does not have the capacity to repay the minimum amount. We are reviewing the existing debt policies and procedures to align with the new service delivery model.

We have introduced SMS for customer communication. In March 2016, we trialled an alert to customers of new debt on an SMS or of broken repayment arrangements. The results indicate

that the trial has been positive providing a low-cost approach to proactively contacting customers to support debt recovery. We are looking to expand the use of SMS for other customer communications. Training was delivered to Housing SA staff by an industry expert to develop customer engagement and negotiation skills, and additional training was provided to supervisors and managers to develop coaching skills.

One of the more innovative ways is to actually understand when debt accrues for our residents and tenants. We know that when people move it is a time when additional debts are raised. We see that there is a significant cost associated with rubbish removal from Housing SA properties. One of the key things we have done is to make a postcard saying, 'If you leave rubbish behind, you will get a debt of X amount,' and it states the costs they will incur if they leave rubbish and belongings when they vacate a property. The postcards encourage the tenants to use low-cost services to dispose of rubbish, such as the local council hard rubbish collection. We have used that vacancy charges postcard since May 2016.

In relation to additional resourcing, we have two additional officers to review the legitimacy of bond claims made by landlords and we have also put in additional resources to concentrate efforts on establishing repayment arrangements with customers who owe more than \$1,000. We have had an internal review of the compliance and collection unit and the final report will be making recommendations on how to improve efficiency—and I will continue to do so.

Your question asked about the total, and it is \$28.532 million. We have 8,686 tenants with a debt and 8,201 non-tenants with a debt. Non-tenants relate to people who have a private rental assistance program, a bond guarantee that they would have provided and rent in advance. The key thing that I have always focused on is the fact that 83.9 per cent of people have an arrangement to repay this debt, so we know who this debt belongs to and we continue to pursue that debt and will continue to do so.

One of the key things is that 77 per cent of tenants do not have a debt. Can I just re-emphasise the fact that often we hear comments about Housing SA tenants regarding concerns about disruptions and concerns about high needs, but we also have a considerable amount of tenants who have the most immaculate houses I have ever seen and who treat the houses as their own and who pay all their money on time and always have. I just want to put on record: 77 per cent of Housing SA tenants do not have a debt and have never had a debt. While I am actively pursuing debt and looking at how we can prevent it by understanding when people accrue debt, it is important to realise that the vast majority of our tenants do not have debt.

The other thing to understand is that those who do have a debt, most of them (about 69 per cent, I think) owe less than \$1,000. One of the key things is to understand the triggers for these smaller amounts of money, why that debt has accrued and how can we reduce that.

Ms SANDERSON: Can the minister please outline the amount of debt that was waived and written off, and the amount also that was reinstated in that same financial year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In 2015-16 the reinstatable debt that was written off was \$5.13 million, non-reinstatable debt, \$2.04 million.

Ms SANDERSON: So, the waived debt was \$5.13 million—waived as in not reinstatable or written off? Which is written off and which is waived—which are the normal descriptions you give?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Reinstatable debt is debt that is written off as legally recoverable, but can be reraised and deemed to be reinstatable. Non-reinstatable is debt that is written off, as not legally recoverable, cannot be reraised and is deemed to be non-reinstatable.

Ms SANDERSON: So previously what you called waived, you are now calling written off but reinstatable?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not think there has ever been a misunderstanding of these two areas.

Ms SANDERSON: They have always been called waived and written off in the past?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Perhaps I can clarify when you are considering this: debt that is written off as not legally recoverable cannot be reraised, and that occurs when a customer has died.

Ms SANDERSON: And how much is that?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is \$2.04 million.

Ms SANDERSON: So, the reinstatable in the future is the \$5.13 million. How much was reinstated during the year from previous years?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: While I find that detail about reinstatable debts, we would classify debts in that way as debts that remain outstanding after a debt settlement agreement has been accepted, debts owed by customers who are serving a prison sentence greater than three months, debts that have been recalled from a private debt collector due to the collector determining that it is not economical to pursue legal action to recover them, debts of \$10 or more that have been recalled from a private debt collector due to the collector being unable to locate the customers—that is reinstatable debt. I think your question is about the differences within these categories.

Ms SANDERSON: We have them now. I just want the reinstated figure, because we are running out of time. I have a lot of important questions.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In 2014-15 the reinstatable figure was \$5.35 million, and in 2015-16 it was \$5.13 million.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Paper 5, Volume 1, program 3, page 107, maintenance. What was the total and the breakdown for repairs and maintenance by category or even just the total, given the time we have available.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Just before I detail the areas, let me talk about our maintenance program. It is to fund the repair and maintenance of the properties to ensure standards are met in relation to condition, amenity, quality, health, safety and security. There are different types of maintenance programs. There is responsive maintenance that responds reactively to health, safety and security issues. It includes horticultural work, addressing urgent building maintenance and repair. There is programmed maintenance, which proactively maintains the condition, sustainability, quality and serviceability.

Ms SANDERSON: If you are going to read them out, you might as well give me the figures as you go through. That will save time if you want to do that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will have to take that on notice. I do not have it broken down. We know that tenanted properties was \$37.609 million—

Ms SANDERSON: What was just the total then if we get the rest later?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My apologies, member for Adelaide. The estimated result is \$121.7 million.

Ms SANDERSON: And how much of the repairs and maintenance budget was transferred to the community housing providers from that current 2015-16 year, which should then diminish your own figure?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask the executive director, Phil Fagan-Schmidt, to answer that.

Mr FAGAN-SCHMIDT: What occurs is that the 1,100 properties have been transferred. The arrangements are that the full rents are now made available to the community housing organisation, which out of that provides for all the maintenance arrangements. In respect of the reduction, there is a reduction in the accounts of the Housing Trust that reflects the 1,100 properties' income coming in, and there is a similar reduction or a pro rata reduction to the level of maintenance made available to the trust in recognition of that 1,100 property reduction.

Ms SANDERSON: I am told that there was an average of \$4,000 worth of repairs—

The CHAIR: Member for Adelaide, you are not here to cross-examine the executive director. Your questions are to the minister.

Ms SANDERSON: To the minister, I am told that roughly \$4,000 worth of repairs and maintenance per home was transferred to community housing, which would equate to \$4.4 million of repairs and maintenance. Has that reduction of \$4.4 million been included in your new \$121 million of repairs and maintenance that is still in your debt?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask the executive director to detail that to you.

Mr FAGAN-SCHMIDT: As such, there is no transfer of maintenance to the non-government sector. There is information provided to the non-government sector about the maintenance records on those 1,100 properties, but the ownership of that remains with the Housing Trust, and the long-term maintenance responsibilities shift across the non-government sector. Because of the treatment of various commonwealth subsidies, such as commonwealth rent assistance, and some minor treatments around the way GST works, the non-government organisations could expect to pick up approximately \$2,000 per property per year in additional rent while the tenant's after housing cost disposal income remains the same.

Whereas if those properties were in government management, the government maintenance would be constrained to the level of rent collected, the non-government organisation can benefit by having that extra \$2,000 in funds and that typically goes into maintenance and additional service delivery and the like.

Ms SANDERSON: Through the minister again, you are saying that the drop of \$2 million in the repair and maintenance debt is not due to the 1,100 houses that were transferred; you have suddenly done a lot more repairs and maintenance and got that figure down, or there was a figure that was transferred out?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The reduction in the debt?

Ms SANDERSON: Yes. It was \$123.6 million last year for repairs and maintenance outstanding and this year I believe you just quoted \$121.7 million, which is approximately \$2 million less, so it is either due to transferring it out or that you are a little more on top of your repairs and maintenance.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Sorry, the figure I gave to you is about expenditure and that is how much we spent. I think that was the question that you asked me.

Ms SANDERSON: Yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Which is in those different categories.

Ms SANDERSON: How much debt is outstanding? What is the liability outstanding on your balance sheet for repairs and maintenance?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am not sure that the question is accurate. Can you detail it a little further?

Ms SANDERSON: That is alright; we can go on to another question.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We will move on.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107, Sales of goods and services. Can the minister please advise, firstly, the total number of houses that were owned by Housing SA or South Australian Housing Trust as at 30 June 2015 and 30 June 2016?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that you are asking about the total number of properties that we have responsibility for. It is 40,022.

Ms SANDERSON: In which year was that one?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In 2015-16.

Ms SANDERSON: Do you have the figure for the 2014-15 financial year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In 2014-15 it is 41,912.

Ms SANDERSON: I am happy for this to be taken on notice as it was last year, but I was provided with a breakdown of the total number of houses that were occupied, the total number that

were leased, the total vacant and tenable houses, the total waiting for sale or redevelopment, rental stock vacant and untenable that requires major works, houses empty waiting on repairs and maintenance, stock vacant and untenable for acquisitions, capital projects, rent stock, vacant tenable and under construction (that is under the jurisdiction of Renewal SA), Renewal SA responsibility and Housing SA responsible for. That was a table that was taken on notice and presented later.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I can talk about that now. When we are looking at our occupied rental stock, 39,215; and the rental stock vacant and tenable 642, which is 1.6 per cent, and that is the kind that we will turn around quite quickly. I think you have heard me speak in the past that I work on a KPI and we are trying to work to five weeks turnaround time, and we are trying to use some innovative techniques of how we have people look at the property, more like the private sector. We had a longer process and we have tried to turn that around a lot more quickly. There is rental stock vacant and untenable, 165, which requires major maintenance; maybe they might need a new roof or a new kitchen and they will take a bit longer. That takes us to the 40,022.

Ms SANDERSON: Again on page 107, can the minister please outline the total number of evictions for both 2014-15 and 2015-16 year and the reason for the evictions?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Let me give you a breakdown of that. The number of evictions due to debt in the last financial year was 34; for abandoned properties, two; access, eight; breach of conditions of tenancy, one; the expiry of lease, 14; illegal activity, three; non-residing, 13; property condition, three; property ownership, one; section 87 (a serious breach), eight; section 90 (disruption), 13; and tenant versus tenant, three. The total number of evictions is 103, which is an increase from 90 in the previous year.

Ms SANDERSON: How many applications for eviction or termination of lease were made to SACAT in the same year, and how many of those orders found in favour of Housing SA?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Where a tenant fails or refuses to rectify a breach—because we like to give tenants the opportunity for that—Housing SA may apply to SACAT to have the tenant evicted from the property. Now SACAT, not Housing SA, will make the decision whether a tenant should be evicted. Not all Housing SA applications to SACAT are successful. Last year there were 213 initial SACAT hearings and, of these, 48 per cent resulted in an eviction decision.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 89, Workforce summary. Is a formula used by the department for the staff to tenant ratio and are more staff allocated per ratio in the country branches to accommodate for the long distances involved in accessing their clients?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask the executive director to talk about ratios per se. I want to talk about our new system and our connecting people to place because one of the key turnarounds I have had in the last few years is us talking about tenants and their needs. We are actually changing the mix of the type of staff that we need in Housing SA. What we need is people with community skills to support people who are vulnerable. While we have required, I guess, more traditional property management type skills in the past, we are looking for more people with skills in the social work and community development space. I will ask the executive director to detail that question.

Mr FAGAN-SCHMIDT: Thank you, minister. We allocate staff according to regular workload studies. The number of public housing units in a region would be one indicator, as would matters like distance. For example, in the APY lands we would see a higher ratio of staff to properties than in non-remote areas simply as a result of the long distances travelled and the fact that we may have two staff travelling rather than one in some circumstances due to the safety requirements around remote areas.

There are significant other circumstances. For example, the Adelaide office in Pulteney Street tends to operate more as a statewide office, where we get a lot more inquiries for generic housing services or non-public housing services, private rental and the like, so we will have a waiting there that responds to the community. So in broad terms, yes, distance and public housing units are input, but there are a wider set of inputs and these are adjusted annually based on workload studies.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 109, Activity indicators, the number of rough sleepers. What was the total number of individuals, either homeless or at risk of

homelessness, who sought assistance? We know the number that were helped, but how many were not able to be helped due to a lack of resources? How many actually applied for help?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The number of clients who received assistance from specialist homelessness service providers in 2015-16 was 22,541. The support periods were 29,058. We often see clients presenting on multiple occasions within one year.

The CHAIR: The agreed time has expired.

Sitting suspended from 10:30 to 10:46.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$1,090,488,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION, \$195,310,000
DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND AGEING, \$3,654,825,000

Membership:

Ms Chapman substituted for Ms Sanderson.

Minister:

Hon. Z.L. Bettison, Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms F. Mort, Director, Office for Women, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion..

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

Ms T. Stephenson, Manager, Strategic Coordination, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

The CHAIR: Welcome back, minister. You are now appearing before us in your capacity as the Minister for the Status of Women. I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and I refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 1. Minister, would you make an opening statement, if you wish and introduce your advisers.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would like to introduce, to my left, Tony Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion; to my far left, Andrew Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services; and to my right is Fiona Mort, Director, Office for Women. As the new Minister for the Status of Women in South Australia, I am proud of the broad range of initiatives that are improving the lives of women in this state.

As minister, my role involves advocating for, and promoting, programs and initiatives that seek to increase equality for women in workplaces, the home and our community. I also lead whole-of-government policy responses to violence against women under South Australia's A Right to Safety policy and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. As part of this work, I am a member of the national women's safety ministers' forum which oversees the national plan.

In this key area, I work alongside the Premier, who has overall leadership in our government's response and has a particular interest in the role of men in preventing violence against women. I also work closely with the Attorney-General who leads legislative change to support the safety of women and their children and the South Australian police, who uphold relevant laws to help women and their children stay safe. I take a lead role as Chair of the chief executive's A Right to Safety (ARTS) group.

On 30 July 2015, the South Australian government launched Achieving Women's Equality, acknowledging the importance of women's participation in all aspects of life. Achieving Women's Equality is the key policy driver to achieving equality in South Australia and sets out action in three areas: improving women's economic status, increasing women's leadership and participation, and improving women's safety and wellbeing.

Action to improve women's economic status is further set out in the women's economic empowerment blueprint Investing in Women's Futures, released by the Premier and I on International Women's Day this year. Recognising that women are underrepresented in senior leadership roles, in March 2016, the government launched a new strategy for increasing women's leadership in the public sector, Gender Equality in Leadership: a Strategy for Gender Equality and Leadership in the South Australian Public Sector.

The state government also continues to take strong action to address violence against women with a range of new and expanding initiatives. Most recently, the Attorney-General released the domestic violence discussion paper. The paper seeks the views of the public on important areas for potential reform, including the model for a domestic violence disclosure scheme in South Australia.

As well as this, this government continues to support and contribute to the work undertaken as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all interested groups and individuals to consider the domestic violence discussion paper and provide feedback on this important document.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a brief opening statement. I was very disappointed to read in this year's budget of the minimalist contribution in fact by the government towards the treatment of both victims and perpetrators in respect of domestic violence. I note the Treasurer announced \$683,000 over four years to provide some expansion of the Multi-Agency Protection Service—it is a pittance.

Secondly, there was provision over four years of \$1.269 million to deal with an allocation for sharing of information in respect of domestic violence orders and, finally, \$2.4 million in the Corrections budget in respect of all violent offender programs in the prisons. This is scant in respect of the contribution that is necessary, and for the minister to, I think, be seduced by the application and announcements of the government generally and the Attorney-General, in respect of this area, is close to head in the sand. It is very disappointing—

The CHAIR: Member for Bragg, I am allowing you a little latitude. This is an opening statement. The minister does not need to respond to these allegations.

Ms CHAPMAN: No, I am making an opening statement. The government is able to find \$25 million to implement a new planning system in one year and \$22 million for climate change in the CBD. I am not quite sure how much sea-level flooding we are going to have in Rundle Street, but compare this to the amount of money allocated for the most pressing and most dangerous situation for women and children in this state.

For the minister to say to the committee that she is pleased by the Attorney-General's announcement that he is going to have another conversation with the people of South Australia by issuing an issues paper which had been promised by the Premier in November last year, and recently announced with no funding available to it, is very, very concerning. I would ask the minister, I would urge the minister, in dealing with this issue, to remember that there are always pressing submissions being put by the ministers next to her in the pressure for money but, to have another discussion paper when we have had the select committee report to this parliament in April this year, and none of those initiatives have been funded in this year's budget, is very concerning.

The CHAIR: It was a standing committee. It was the Social Development Committee.

Ms CHAPMAN: A standing committee. I did not mean to be disrespectful to the committee, but it was a very important, comprehensive inquiry, and then nothing. So, I am concerned, but I will ask, in the first instance, has the Office for Women or the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion calculated the cost to implement any or all of the recommendations in the Social Development Committee's inquiry into domestic violence that was presented in April?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The work of the Social Development Committee was incredibly thorough, and I welcome their report. We will be looking to respond to that report and looking across government at how to respond to that. I am looking at the DV discussion paper, looking at the ways forward and the different areas that were raised in that, and I will be responding before the end of the year.

Ms CHAPMAN: What I have asked, though, minister, is whether your department has done any costing of the estimates to implement those recommendations? I accept that the government may reject some of them, but have you done any of them and, if so, what does the costing indicate?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am not in a position today to talk about that costing. Obviously, we will be looking at the different areas that would impact on the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and put that into consideration when we respond.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are you aware of any?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: At this point in time I am not in a position to give detailed information about those costings.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are you going to wait for the further issues paper consultation before you make any announcements as to what the government might do in respect of that standing committee recommendation?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No, that is not my intention.

Ms CHAPMAN: In respect of your commitment from the Premier and the Attorney-General with regard to implementing across-government support, as identified on page 98, to the agencies and departments in their commitment to ensuring domestic violence is not perpetuated in the workplace, how many of the departments and agencies have you supported to achieve White Ribbon accreditation, which is a program supported by the Equal Opportunity Commission? If it is not all of them, can you identify which agencies have either not done it yet or refuse to do it?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In March 2015, 11 departments commenced the White Ribbon accreditation process and all are now accredited. In November 2015, a further nine departments commenced the accreditation processes. The processes were completed and agencies advised of their accreditation status by 28 February 2017.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, I am not sure, are there any that have not yet?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We have 20 government departments and agencies that are participating in the accreditation process.

Ms CHAPMAN: I understand that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Some of them are not complete—11 have been completed.

Ms CHAPMAN: Does that include all of the agencies: Renewal SA, SA Water, government instrumentalities, or just the departments?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As we are informed, 11 departments have received their accreditation. We know that nine others are working towards it.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am asking about the agencies and public corporations of the government.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will have to take that on notice, about those details.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are you aware if any of them have done it, or have they not been asked to do it?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am confident that we have a focus on this and a commitment to it. I am going to take it on notice to follow-up those individual areas that you specified. As I have notified you, we would expect 20 agencies to be completed by February next year.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 99, Lead implementation of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions. This is a national program. Is the state government making any contribution to the funding of this? The commonwealth is putting in \$4 million, I note.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that the Office for Women is leading the implementation for that funding and providing the human resources for its role here in South Australia.

Ms CHAPMAN: But not actually putting in any money?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Not at this stage. I might add that the role of perpetrators and our support of perpetrators is an area of interest of mine. I think that we are actually just at the start of understanding how we are going to prevent domestic and family violence. We cannot do that without having that discussion about perpetrators, and how we support perpetrators is a key part. I look forward, in the near future, to detailing further about where we can go. As you have pointed out, in the corrections system, there are already some support programs about the perpetrators, but I do think we have more to go in that area.

Ms CHAPMAN: This is just identifying a national outcome standard so we can measure it and see whether programs work and whether we are improving anything. When do you expect that to be implemented?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that will be implemented over the next two years. We are also facilitating the expansion of programs about perpetrators by supporting ANROWS (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety). It is a research agenda based on evidence that contributes to policy and practice development and part of the aim for that research is improving the evidence-base on perpetrator interventions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is that what you call the Third Action Plan at page 99?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that it is part of the Third Action Plan.

Ms CHAPMAN: Apart from doing a standards assessment, which can then hopefully be implemented across Australia, and doing some more research, is there any money going in from the Office for Women in respect of this area. That appears to be all commonwealth funded.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Let me detail some of the areas: there is \$7.8 million over four years for the implementation of Intervention Orders (Prevention Of Abuse) Act 2009. Under this initiative, funding has been provided for DCSI in 2016-17 for the Women's Safety Contact Program, to provide support to women who have an intervention order in place and whose ex-partner has been referred to the court-mandated perpetrator program for ex or current partner through the OARS program.

We have also contributed \$102,500 in 2016-17 for the Aboriginal Men's Violence Intervention Program, which provides a specialised response to Aboriginal men who are perpetrators of violence towards women, and it works in collaboration with the Aboriginal Women's Safety Contact Service to improve the safety of Aboriginal women and their children. This service is delivered by Kornar Winmil Yunti.

Ms CHAPMAN: And the Third Action Plan, identified at page 99, was supposed to be released mid 2016. We are now in August, has it been released? If not, when do you expect it to be released?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is it was delayed due to the recent federal election and it is due to be released after all states and territories sign in late October.

Ms CHAPMAN: Why was it published in the budget papers to be released in mid 2016. We knew that we were having a federal election four months ago.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that was the indicative date that was given.

Ms CHAPMAN: Alright, anyway, October we can expect it?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: In respect to the level of support in the court systems, this is what was trialled and now is to be expanded, what actual additional support is going to be offered? How many victims will receive that support and is this initiative ongoing or just another one-off payment? This is page 98; this was one of your highlights.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The name of the support service is the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service. It provides a greater level of support with the court system for victims of domestic violence by assisting women deal successfully with the legal system. The advice I am given is that year to date the total number of women provided with advice or assistance relating to intervention orders is 331. That is to March of this year. We expect it will be about 400 people. There were 59 women represented in court up to March of this year. There were 57 women who applied directly to the court for an intervention order, and there were 19 women assisted with tenancy issues.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are they only represented in respect of applications for intervention orders?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that that is the focus of this support.

Ms CHAPMAN: So they cannot just go and get advice on any other domestic matters?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As you can see, people were helped with tenancy issues.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That was an issue. Obviously I would take that into consideration when we look at it.

Ms CHAPMAN: What was the increased level of support? Did you have half a million last year and a million this year? What was the thing you did last year that was increased; what was the amount?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding is that this program started on 1 July last year, so this is the first full year that it has run.

Ms CHAPMAN: How much was the budgeting for last year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It was \$346,000.

Ms CHAPMAN: Was it all spent?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, it was, and the budget for this year is \$353,000.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is it ongoing or was it just another one-off?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is ongoing program. It was part of our Taking a Stand: Responding to Domestic Violence. As you might recall, part of the Coroner's recommendations were about how we can support people more effectively. I would just like to note on record that 80 per cent of women who used this service reported a greater level of confidence with their intervention order. I think this is a key thing that we need to continue to support.

Ms CHAPMAN: Which is why it is more disappointing, minister, that this is not an ongoing funded program.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is an ongoing funded program.

Ms CHAPMAN: You have trialled it; it is one year and you have another year's funding.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is in the forward estimates.

Ms CHAPMAN: For every year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes. It is delivered by the Victim Support Service, and I would like to thank them for the work that they do in this area.

Ms CHAPMAN: Indeed. The minister is aware that there is a Victims of Crime (Fund and Levy) which, if you have been following the rest of the committee evidence from the Attorney-General, will have some \$370 million in it (estimated) in four years' time. It is accumulating a massive amount of money each year. We raised this last year and the year before. Is there anything you have put to the government to enable access to some of that fund to deal with domestic violence victims, advertising campaigns, advice to perpetrators or anything in respect of the use of some of that money, hopefully to minimise the recidivist actions in respect of domestic violence; and, if so, could you advise the committee what it is you have done?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I am advised, both the court assistance service that we have just detailed and the Family Safety Framework and the Victim Support Service's support for the Family Safety Framework is out of the victims of crime fund.

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes, but that has always been the case. What I am saying to you, minister, is: now that we have a new regime for victims of crime entitlements which—I think it is fair to say, the explanation the government gave as to them having to work out how much money was going to disappear out of the fund when these new more generous payments were given to victims—has now been implemented for a year and we still have an ongoing and an anticipated major net contribution to that fund, now already over \$200 million, closer to \$400 million by 2020. So, clearly, even the government acknowledges that with the new system in place there is plenty of money there. Having got over that lump, and the first year of claims under the new system, if you have not made any application to government for the release of those funds, will you?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not think this is the appropriate forum for me to talk about bids that I would have made within a budget context. However, I do feel that we have addressed at a particular point in our culture the understanding that domestic violence is not acceptable. As we endeavour to have both legislative policy and cultural change we need to invest in that. Now, we have made investments. Do we need to make more? I believe that we do, and I will take that into consideration as we move forward.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is just that in this instance, minister, this money has been sitting there accumulating, and it is almost obscene that none of it is being used for the very purpose that you acknowledge needs to be addressed. So, I will be asking the same questions again next year, and I hope that, if you are the minister, you will be able to enlighten the committee about what has been done, given that I have been asking about them for as long as I can remember being in here.

To go back to some other matters: women in the workplace. How much funding is allocated for the initiative of the Achieving Women's Equality program, which you launched in 2015-16?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I was very pleased to launch this economic blueprint for investing in women's futures. I guess that this is one of the key triggers for my interest in politics—participation in the economy for all South Australians, not only women but for people to participate more fully. I do not have a figure that comes to the total of what that is—it is across many different departments. I will take it on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: What other departments will you be funding out of your budget for that, or is there none?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Our goal is to coordinate and monitor investing in women. Individual departments will put in their own investments.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, this is a key priority for you: increasing leadership and participation for women. I appreciate that action by the government and legislatively has meant that a number of government boards have disappeared and no longer exist, but of those we now have as at 30 June (as it is easier for accounting purposes) are you able to identify the percentage of women on those boards that are left?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is 47 per cent.

Ms CHAPMAN: And in respect of employees in leadership positions in the departments—chief executives of all government departments and—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is 44.6 per cent.

Ms CHAPMAN: Of departments only?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In executive positions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Is that chief executives or all executives?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: All executives.

Ms CHAPMAN: I see. And of chief executives, out of 20 departments?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think as at 30 June it was two.

Ms CHAPMAN: Two, out of 20, and what about public corporations and other agencies which the government administers?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not have those details in front of me. Obviously the target, which you have looked at, looks across women in public sector executive positions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will you take that on notice and provide that information for all the agencies for which the government is responsible?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Certainly.

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 98: a highlight again was the partnering of the Office of the Public Sector in launching the gender equity in leadership. Can the minister advise what has been achieved since that was announced?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will get some details for you. The key focus in two of the areas is looking at an audit in the public sector, and that has commenced at this stage. It is led by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment and overseen by a steering committee, including the Director of the Office for Women, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner and the Valuer-General of South Australia. The targets of part of the strategy is a gender pay gap analysis of public sector data to identify those gaps, in what levels, roles or agencies the gap is more prevalent, and to develop a strategy to address the pay gap according to findings.

Some of the other areas of interest will be the succession planning initiatives, where chief executives support women into executive roles, the opportunity for reverse mentoring programs, where aspiring female executives mentor men in senior management roles to help managers understand women's experiences in the public sector.

We will also be looking at a pilot sponsorship program to proactively support women through career progression. An area that I find quite interesting, because I think it is something we have not looked at much, is identifying the challenges in unconscious bias, and that is something that both the public and private sectors are just coming to understand more effectively. We are also going to have courses that help aspiring female leaders in the public sector develop and enhance their skills.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate the highlight was to just say that you had actually launched it. At this stage, do I assume from that answer, which is a lot of 'we will be doing', that nothing has actually been achieved yet?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I understand the pay gap analysis is currently happening.

Ms CHAPMAN: When will we have the response on that?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would expect we would have some answers by the end of the year.

The CHAIR: With that, the agreed time for the examination of the Minister for the Status of Women has expired. Thank you, minister. Could I ask that the relevant advisers for you in your capacity as Minister for Ageing please take their seats. I refer members to Agency Statement Volume 3.

Membership:

Dr McFetridge substituted for Ms Chapman.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Frater, Deputy Chief Executive, SA Health.

Ms S. Jacobi, Executive Director, Policy and Governance, Office for the Ageing.

Ms J. Walters, Assistant Director, Office for the Ageing.

Mr J. Woolcock, Chief Finance Officer, Office for the Ageing.

Ms V. Clarke, Chief Retirement Villages Officer, Office for the Ageing.

The CHAIR: Before we start, minister, I do note that some of the budget lines referred to in the section on ageing may not be your responsibility. In particular, there is a lot of overlap with the Minister for Health and other ministers. I would ask you to assist the committee when you are asked a question that does not lie within your purview by letting us know, and I will make an assessment. I will ask the member for Morphett to respect those decisions. Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes. Can I introduce first, to my left, Don Frater, the Deputy Chief Executive of SA Health. Further to my left is Skye Jacobi, the Executive Director, Policy and Governance, and to my right is Jeanette Walters, the Assistant Director, Office for the Ageing. Behind me to my right is Jamin Woolcock, Chief Finance Officer, and Vanessa Clarke, Chief Retirement Villages Officer.

As we know, South Australia has the highest proportion of older people in mainland Australia. This population is diverse, having been born across very different times, many in different countries, and, as they age, with very different expectations for their future. The Office for the Ageing seeks to understand and work to address issues for older people across the diversity of our community, in line with the state ageing plan and its strategic priorities: health, wellbeing and security; social and economic productivity; and all-age friendly communities.

A key activity in the health, wellbeing and security priority has been the release of the Stop Elder Abuse community awareness raising campaign in October 2015. It was effective in getting the message out to the community about the existence of elder abuse and where to go for information and support.

The linked website and phone line received significant traffic over this period and continues to be a source of useful information. The more recent phase 2 of the campaign released in June 2016 has focused on those working closely with older people and has included resources to support them in sharing the Stop Elder Abuse message. I look forward to seeing this message spread widely through the community, the workforce and the future workforce through a range of initiatives over the year.

Social and economic productivity has been an area of particular focus with it being well recognised that, as people are living longer and are more active into later life, there are products and services that they need and want that are different than in the past: technology to assist independence in the home; tourism designed for the pace and interest of the older consumer; food that is nutritious and easy to prepare; and financial products that help people to live their lives the way they want to or to meet their costs of their needs. These are the findings of the research undertaken by Professor John Spoehr and his team launching his report at an industry forum late last year.

This work continues with a strategic framework now being prepared that will build on this initial work, recognising the economic opportunities for business but also the social dividends through the involvement of older people in product design and development, having access to services that better meet their needs and a better understanding of the older population as a customer. Whyalla, Adelaide Hills and Mount Barker joined the local governments committed to building age-friendly communities in partnership with the Office for the Ageing last year. Office for the Ageing provided seed funding of \$15,000 per council and also support through the network of age-friendly councils in South Australia and annual forum.

I am pleased to announce that Whyalla has gone on to be accepted to the World Health Organisation age-friendly communities network, an important recognition of their work to date and support for their future plans. I would also like to recognise Salisbury council, which has long worked with the Office for the Ageing in the age-friendly space as one of the foundation partners in developing the local government guidelines. They, too, have received acceptance by WHO to the age-friendly network. This is an area of increasing focus for the 2016-17 year with a push towards an age-friendly state.

Another significant activity in this portfolio has been the considerable work done in preparing and consulting on the Retirement Villages Bill 2016. This key piece of consumer protection legislation seeks to increase clarity for residents and operators alike on a range of areas from conflict resolution and contract disclosure through to financial obligations. Considerable consultation has been undertaken and care taken to consider the many perspectives and potential consequences of any change. I feel a balance has been achieved that will provide the necessary protections to older South Australians living in villages and provide the certainty to future residents needed to further grow this important sector.

The year ahead will see work begin on the regulations to support the legislation once past and education of the sector and residents about any changes. These few initiatives are just a snapshot of some of the important work underway by the Office for the Ageing. There is, of course, also the work of the statewide Seniors Card Program and the wide range of benefits it provides to its 360,000 members; the suite of grants delivered to support the community in active ageing activities; the statewide administration of the Aged Care Assessment Program, and supporting the implementation of state and commonwealth reforms. We are working with key parties to ensure the resolution of issues and contributing to the development of future reform initiatives.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The minister will be pleased to know that while this is no less important, it is far less contentious than our last inquiries. I am looking forward to the results of the next Census because I understand that my electorate of Morphett is what Australia is going to be in 25 years' time, so ageing is certainly a very important issue for me. With the budget references for this particular line, I am always perplexed that we have half an hour for something for which, when you do a word search, really comes down to the health and ageing section, but there is no real reference other than Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 33, Sub-program 1.2: Finance and Corporate Services, responsible for delivery of services related to, amongst other things, aged care. That is the reference we will be using. If there are other references, I would be delighted to find out what they are. My first question is: what is the budget for the Office for the Ageing in the current financial year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: \$3.78 million.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What was it last year, 2015-16?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: \$3.679 million.

Dr McFETRIDGE: And the estimated result was?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The estimated is the same as the original budget.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That is very good, on time and on budget. How many FTEs were in the Office for the Ageing as at June 2016?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Eighteen.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Why does that not appear anywhere in the budget, do you know?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is a question to be taken up with the Treasurer.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You may be in this space one day so you may want to do that now. Does the number of FTEs include people working on the commonwealth funded Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP)?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: At this time it does not include the six FTEs who work in the administration of the Aged Care Assessment Program. Negotiations are continuing with the commonwealth about the finalisation of that funding, but I am assured that we will have a positive outcome in the near future.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Where will the ACAP staff be based? Will they be in the Office for the Ageing?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: They are be based in the Office for the Ageing.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The other huge issue that has been raised particularly recently is elder abuse. The government has been undertaking some work in preventing elder abuse. Has the elder abuse prevalence study undertaken by the University of South Australia been released yet? If so, can you tell the committee what are the key findings?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would like to ask the assistant director of the Office for the Ageing to talk about where that report is at.

Ms WALTERS: That report is underway at the moment. It is a partnership with the University of South Australia. We have received the preliminary report on that but they are only part way through that work.

Dr McFETRIDGE: When can we expect that report to be tabled? Will it be tabled in parliament? I assume it will.

Ms WALTERS: We expect it to be completed by the end of the year.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I have not taken that into consideration. I will look at the report. It is not my intention to not be transparent in this area. Like many issues within our population, it is important that we have those difficult conversations. Elder abuse is everybody's business, just as domestic and family violence is. We are drawing people's attention to that area. Over the last decade we have drawn attention to several areas within our culture, such as child abuse, such as the safety of children.

I think elder abuse is something that we need to consider, and we need to make sure that people are aware of the different types of elder abuse. That will be my role as the Minister for Ageing in South Australia, with our action plan, to have the advocacy service that we have through ARAS so that people can call and get information. What is also important is to have evidence based the prevalence and how we can stop elder abuse in the first place.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can you give any information at all at this stage about the percentage or number of South Australians who have experienced one or more forms of elder abuse?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In general, the statistic we see is about one in 20. That has been the evidence that has been provided in the past. I think it is important that, when we address this, we have continued research in this area and more detailed information. That is the best way to prevent it.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Is there any information available to show the prevalence, or lack of hopefully, of elder abuse in aged care facilities?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As we have recently seen, in what was a horrific circumstance, we must be vigilant whether it is in the home, the community or an institutional setting. This issue of elder abuse is everybody's business.

Dr McFETRIDGE: On that same budget line, minister, does the government support the recent call by the ANMF's South Australian branch to introduce a licensing scheme to prevent aged-care workers who have been sacked for misconduct from being able to get a job at another aged-care facility?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not have details of that with me. I certainly think that is something to consider. I am not sure whether the Office for the Ageing would be the place to do that. As you know very well, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion has a screening unit. Perhaps, if that was the way forward, we would consider that. Already, through the commonwealth legislation, people must hold a screening to work in aged care.

Mr GRIFFITHS: On a point of clarification: I appreciate the answer, minister, but has your office done any work to determine, albeit that South Australia does not have it yet, whether other states in Australia have adopted a system like this?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: About licensing?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: At this point, member for Goyder, I am not aware that other states have. I am happy to take that on notice. I just want to raise the issue of what we have seen happen recently in a commonwealth-regulated residential aged-care facility because this is of great concern to me. Given that we have focused in South Australia on elder abuse with our strategy to safeguard the rights of older South Australians and the action plan that I launched last year, I have written to key groups in the aged-care sector, seeking their assistance to further delineate this issue.

Actually, I will be holding a forum about this to explore the ideas and solutions with the parties. I have written to Aged and Community Services Australia SA & NT and Leading Age Services Australia, SA about this issue. While this is a commonwealth area, I do think it is appropriate to me to provide recommendations from South Australia. After this forum, I would endeavour to provide recommendations to the commonwealth minister for aged care about our considerations in this area.

I also note that there is no longer a ministerial council for ministers for ageing, as I understand there has been in the past, and that is another area that I will be looking into. There is a new minister for ageing and, under Sussan Ley, there is a minister assisting in that area. I will speak to him about our reconvening that meeting across the states and territories.

Dr McFETRIDGE: As part of the elder abuse prevalence study, I understand that the elder abuse phone helpline was put in place. Can you give the committee details about that? Is it still running? How many calls were received on the helpline?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, the phone line is still running. It was a pilot for an elder abuse prevention phone line, providing confidential advice, information and support, and over 150 calls have been received. They have mainly been calls from older people experiencing abuse or from concerned family, friends or service providers.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Of those 150 calls, how many were about elder abuse?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We are just about to evaluate that final data but, from the initial conversation, that would be the focus of it.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Were any of those of sufficient concern to advise the callers to take further action or was the Office for the Ageing able to take action on their behalf?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: This phone line is managed by ARAS—the Aged Rights Advocacy Service. They provide advice and will determine the best course of action to support people.

Dr McFETRIDGE: On that point then, ARAS put out a press release just recently about the particular case that was on the television, and they raise a number of issues about the right to choose to have a safety camera in place, the need for mandatory elder abuse recognition training for all staff and the education of residential aged-care facility managers on how to respond to complaints or concerns. Have you had discussions with ARAS about some of the points they raise in their press release?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I mentioned the forum previously that I will be holding, and ARAS will be part of that forum.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Do you think then there is a need to have mandatory elder abuse recognition training for all staff in aged-care facilities?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think that is something for us to consider. I do not think that was part of the action plan, from my recollection. I think this is an area of growth within our community. We know we have older people, and I think we should always be looking at having the best standards, and that is why we are doing the research we are doing, so we can provide that not only to the people working in the industry sector themselves but the wider community. So, that would inform some of the training and development. I would be more than happy to talk to some of the registered training organisations about what they do already.

One of the things that came out of our research is an elder abuse simulation learning tool that is run by the School of Nursing at the University of Adelaide, and that was part of our action plan. It is a teaching tool for nursing and other disciplines to know and recognise elder abuse and where to go for information and support. So, that is at the nursing level, but I think that your question was focused more on the aged-care sector.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That's right. Minister, have you had any discussions with the Attorney-General, or do you plan to, to consider ARAS's first point about the right to choose to have a safety camera in place? I understand there are some legal concerns about this and, obviously, as ARAS say here:

This should always be with the consent of the older person or their representative. It is important to remember that the camera would be in private room/space of the older person who has most likely to have purchased the accommodation for a not inconsiderable amount of money. This right needs to balance the right to privacy and the right to safety.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As indicated, my intention is to have the forum where I talk with peak bodies and leading providers. I have had a conversation with the Attorney-General. At the moment, because residential aged care is commonwealth-regulated, we will probably be looking towards some of the commonwealth legislation there but, once again, I think it is my role as Minister for Ageing to be clear about recommendations up to the federal minister in regard to this area. We can certainly provide leadership amongst the South Australian providers of residential aged care in regard to this area and provide any clarifications that they would need according to state law.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just to be clear, minister, the ARAS media release here has at the bottom, 'If you or a person you know is being abused and you want free confidential advice' it lists the Elder Abuse Prevention Phone Line 1800 372 310. Is that phone line still operating, and how long will it continue to operate for?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We are in a current negotiation about the next stage of the agreement. As I have been told, the commonwealth is also looking into having phone lines and accessibility in regard to elder abuse so, while we will continue to have a presence in South Australia, we will also look to see what movements there will be in the national area.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You mentioned in your opening statement the charter of rights and the freedoms of older people. Is that charter of rights being somehow strengthened in the plans to go forward to protect the rights of older people? So, rather than just having basically a feel-good document here, could we have something that has a bit of bite?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The Charter of Rights is the fundamental work that we did prior to developing the safeguarding strategy and the safeguarding action plan. It is fundamental to where we start from when we look at safeguarding the rights of older South Australians, so I do think the charter is incredibly important. The last thing we want is to be coming in from a patronising point of view to say, 'Well, as an older person this is what you need.' If there is one thing I know, being the Minister for Ageing, it is that age is just a number, and your life experience is actually what develops your outlook, how you see your rights and what is important to you. So I think that the charter is incredibly important, and it has already been utilised as a key tool upon which we built the strategy and the action plan.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You are exactly right, minister. Age is just a number, and although I am not quite the grandfather of the house, certainly in my position I am very annoyed, very frequently, by the ageist attitude of a lot of people, particularly in the media. They think that when you turn 50 you are supposed to be brain-dead. Tell Hillary Clinton that, for a start; tell all those others out there that are wonderful examples of people that master the university of life. So, not being patronising, but making sure we do protect the rights of people.

Can I also ask, has work been done—not only in educating people on recognising elder abuse, but with the changes to the powers of attorney and other anticipatory documents that are out there now—by the Office of the Ageing to educate relatives of older people who are, say with powers of attorney, to make sure that they do not inadvertently cause legal issues? To me, it is keeping the receipts, right down to the box of tissues, when you have the power of attorney.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The power of attorney actually sits with the Attorney-General. But we have had our Planning Ahead, where we hold forums and we have CD information and packs about people making some decisions about what they want. That is, obviously, focused around the Advance Care Directives. We have recently done a review of the form after receiving some feedback from people. We had a Planning Ahead week in September 2015 where we talked about Advance Care Directives, wills, power of attorney and organ donation registration. We have, now, the Planning Ahead resources developed in English, Greek, Vietnamese and Italian.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to the Transforming Health program's Frailty in Older People model of care: can you give the committee some information on what involvement the Office for the Ageing has had in developing the Frailty in Older People model of care?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is the purview of the Minister for Health. I understand the Office for the Ageing have a representative on the Transforming Health frailty group.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just going back to aged-care assessment with the commonwealth: how much commonwealth funding has been received in 2015-16 to deliver aged-care assessment programs, and how many category 1, 2 and 3 referrals were received in 2015-16?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The funding agreement was \$10.319 million in 2015-16. That was for us to administer the ACAT in South Australia. As I have mentioned earlier, we are just in the final negotiation for the next two-year agreement. The new agreement is proposed to be \$10.942 million in 2016-17 and \$11.44 million in 2017-18. You asked about total numbers within different categories. In 2015-16 category 1, 17, 6,343 in category 2 and 5,545 in category 3. The total numbers are 11,905 as of 31 March 2016.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What activities and events did the Office for the Ageing hold or fund in the last financial year to strengthen employment opportunities for older South Australians?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As far as money within the budget for 2015-16, \$90,000 was on the mature economy and job strategy and \$20,000 on the Digital Fabrication Demystified Fab Lab seminars and workshops. We know that by 2036 the number of people aged over 65 in South Australia will increase by 23.6 per cent. This is a pattern that we know will be seen along the Asia-Pacific region. When we talk about a mature economy and work, we like to look at both of those areas together.

In 2014-15, we commissioned a partnership with the Stretton Centre with Professor John Spoehr. He has delivered the mature economy project to look at opportunities for South Australia and our growing population. We see that there are opportunities in healthy ageing, assistive and emerging technology, ICT, age-friendly workplaces, age-friendly living arrangements, financial services, tourism, leisure and retail and lifelong learning. We are going to develop the Mature Economy Business and Job Strategy for South Australia, and in the next coming months we will be launching the age of opportunity and this will be a platform to guide strategic and sector leadership and investment innovation across these spheres.

I do think we have some way to go about recognising older people in the workplace. One of my areas of interest is multigenerational workplaces where you have different life experiences, different skills, and we will continue to focus on that in the development of the mature economy. The other area we had some focus on was innovation and we worked in partnership with the Office for Digital Government. The D3 digital challenge focused on active ageing and supporting the objectives of our state ageing plan. The D3 challenge was to design, develop and deliver a model—and that was going to be piloted. The model was to engage and support South Australian tech start-ups to create digital solutions for critical government policy issues. The question that they addressed was how to support older people to lead engaged and active lives and a focus on the baby boomer cohort.

Two groups won the challenge: Sandpit, which developed a web-based device housed within the architecture of an old analog phone to help isolated individuals; and Yup Yup Labs, an application to connect older people with local organisations. What we have had post that project is some mentoring by NGO organisations. The auspicing partners were the RAA, with \$60,000 for Sandpit, and ACH with \$50,000 for Yup Yup Labs.

One of the other areas of mature-age employment that I am particularly interested in is about seniorpreneurs, that is, older people establishing their business. I am about to go and launch something in Victor Harbor in about 10 days' time where they are having hubs for older people who would like to start a business. When we think about start-ups and technology and innovation, we tend to think about the young ones who are digitally connected, and yet we know—the evidence speaks for itself—that when older people establish a business they are more likely to succeed. We will continue to support that. I think it is a really exciting area in South Australia. It is about developing a seniorpreneurial culture and how we can support them. I will endeavour to have the Office for the Ageing continue to look at that.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I declare that the examination of those payments is over. I ask the minister to invite her advisers on multicultural affairs to the table.

Membership:

Mr Gardner substituted for Dr McFetridge.

The CHAIR: Member for Davenport, do you have omnibus questions?

Mr DULUK: Yes.

The CHAIR: Would you like to read them in now?

Mr DULUK: They are:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2015-16 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. In financial year 2015-16 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 2016-17?

3. For each department and 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 2014-15 and 2015-16.

4. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budget of all grant programs administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, and for 2015-16 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, the purpose of the grant and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction 15.

5. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the corporate overhead costs allocated to each individual program and subprogram administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you detail:

- (a) How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2015-16?
- (b) Which department funded these TVSPs?
- (c) What number of TVSPs was funded?
- (d) What is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how these packages are to be funded?

7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2016, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices and ministerial liaison officers?

The CHAIR: Minister, would you introduce your advisers and if you have another statement, feel free to put it on the record.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Wallace, Executive Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

Ms J. Kennedy, Director, Community Engagement and Grants Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Multiculturalism is a vital and valuable aspect of South Australia, a state built upon successful waves of immigration. We have experienced unprecedented change in the diversity of our population in a relatively short period of time. In the 2015-16 state budget the government demonstrated its commitment to our many cultural communities by tripling its investment, providing an extra \$8 million in grant funding over four years. This brings the state government's total investment in supporting multicultural communities to \$12 million over four years.

In 2015-16 we used this funding to strengthen the social, economic and cultural participation of our multicultural communities. One issue affecting all our migrant communities is culturally appropriate services for the elderly. Older South Australians of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are the fastest growing proportion of our ageing South Australian population. In our Italian and Greek communities, over 50 per cent of members are aged 65 or older, and aged care is therefore a pressing issue. For other newer communities, issues around caring for the elderly may be different, but are no less pressing. Our Multicultural SA grant funding provides crucial support for our organisations addressing such needs.

Our Stronger Families, Stronger Communities grant connects our multicultural communities with services and programs to help them build better lives for themselves and their families. Our multicultural infrastructure grants, which will be open for another round in late 2016, provide communities with a solid foundation of grassroots infrastructure, places where they can come together and build connections within their local communities. Our new one-off grants program, Grants SA, brings together existing one-off grant programs. One of the target groups for this program is culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities. Grants SA has simpler application procedures, less restrictive guidelines and streamlined reporting, providing multicultural communities with even greater ease and access.

This major reform aligns with the South Australian government's commitment to reduce red tape, simplify grant processes and improve accessibility to grants for community groups. Feedback from the community has been extremely positive. We continue to celebrate our cultural diversity through festivals and events. We have structured our funding to provide major festivals with greater surety of funding over the next three years. Our second multicultural festival in Rundle Mall in November 2015 gave 80,000 South Australians an experience of the rich cultural diversity that contributes so much to the vibrancy of our state and the social cohesion that underpins our way of life.

The South Australian multicultural action plan 2017-18 is now under development. It will help us respond to the increasingly diverse needs of our communities. It will provide a two-year plan for our activities and directions in the multicultural affairs portfolio, based on three key pillars: build, strengthen and celebrate. In 2015-16 our government also established a multiagency Countering Violent Extremism program under the national countering violent extremism framework. This will focus efforts on strengthening social cohesion and preventing individuals becoming or remaining radicalised to violent extremism. Nothing brings home our world's growing mobility more than, clearly, the current crisis in Syria.

In February 2016, the Premier requested the commonwealth classify our state as a safe haven enterprise visa zone, making all of South Australia available for eligible refugees to build better lives and a future for their families. This is testament to South Australia's multicultural commitment and ethos, and to our understanding that our state's multiculturalism is not only fundamental to our social, cultural and economic thriving but fundamental to who we are as South Australians.

Mr GARDNER: I will make a brief opening statement. The minister and I spend a great deal of time together at functions, and often identify that South Australia is possibly one of the world's greatest multicultural success stories. I think that is true, but it requires constant work and constant support. One of the reasons South Australia has been a multicultural success story for decades is the bipartisan nature of the engagement with multicultural communities and the support that those communities receive from all sides of the parliament. We all value the opportunities that having that multicultural community creates.

I think the investment of time, the investment of political endeavour, by so many members of parliament on both sides is important. The only person who possibly attends more functions than the minister and me in this area would possibly be the parliamentary secretary from the opposition, the Hon. Jing Lee, and I commend her for the work she does. I welcome the chief executive to this department. I appreciated the opportunities I had to talk with him when he was the chief executive of the education department and I had that role, and I hope that in this new role he has that he particularly takes the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate this area, which can be a very joyful one in which to work. But, critically, it is not just about festivals and community engagement in the joyful sense. There are serious policy outcomes that have to be delivered from this line. That is something that I support and the Liberal Party supports, and I hope the government will continue to support, as it usually does.

That said, I have some questions. Can we go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 99 and 100. The bulk of the questions are in this area. The use of Parliament House to engage with multicultural communities is to be applauded. I have some questions about how that has been done though. Can you identify on how many occasions Parliament House has been used for receptions and functions for multicultural communities, and the expense associated with that use?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not believe that I have that detail in front of me. I will endeavour to get you a response before the end of this session. I imagine my advisers are listening to me. May I make mention that I have held several functions here and invited all members of parliament to attend in general or issued specific invites with an open house that is here.

For many people, it is the first time that they have ever gone into a parliament and what I see is that the accessibility here in South Australia is something they have never experienced before. Of the 124 events that I attended in the 2015-16 calendar, the majority were out in the community, because they have invited me to their events. We do from time to time hold events here, usually around a specific event; it might be Eid or Diwali. I do believe I have something celebrating the Polish community's 130th anniversary coming up.

Mr DULUK: It is the 160th.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is the 160th; I stand corrected. I also know the Premier has held some events in regards to that, not always in Parliament House, but we think that it is important to recognise those events. I will endeavour to get you some detail before the end of the session.

Mr GARDNER: In relation to these events, I have certainly seen and spoken to people for whom, as the minister says, it is their first time here. They do certainly appreciate it, and I think it is an opportunity for outreach. In that bipartisan way, I notice the minister said in her response that it is

an open house policy. Can she confirm that when these events happen all members of parliament are encouraged to participate in welcoming members of those communities to Parliament House for those events?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I can obviously go back into the details. I know that when I have held events—I will double-check—I have generally extended an invitation to yourself or to the Leader of the Opposition to attend. If that has not happened on all occasions, I would apologise.

Mr GARDNER: I was seeking particularly going forward, if that is the plan, that members of parliament of both sides are welcome to attend?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That has been my intention. We do not have a particular conversation about it. I think that we should have a bipartisan approach. I will endeavour to get those details. That is always been my intention.

Mr GARDNER: Hear, hear! Thank you. In relation to those events that the Premier organises—

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: It has not always been bipartisan. I can remember; I have been around long enough to remember.

Mr GARDNER: I am glad we had the opportunity to have that. In relation to those functions the Premier has organised, what engagement does multicultural services have with those functions?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My advice is that Multicultural has not necessarily provided any support for those functions.

Mr GARDNER: I hope you will take the same bipartisan approach that the minister has taken and indicated today. We will move on to another line. In relation to the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, is that funded out of this budget line on page 99, or is it subprogram 1.2: Policy and community development, or is it from somewhere else?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We are just clarifying some of the detail about which budget line it comes out of. We do provide resources, though, to comprise three full-time equivalent employees and that remains the same budget—\$409,000 for 2015-16 and it will be the same in 2016-17.

Mr GARDNER: Minister, last year you identified that the budget for SAMEAC to support three FTEs was at a cost of \$304,425. You have just indicated a significantly higher number, I think, over \$400,000. What is the increase?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Sorry, the figure you are saying is—

Mr GARDNER: I am just quoting from your estimates last year; you said \$304,425. There was also \$105,000 allocated for Multicultural SA to support the role and function of SAMEAC, so is the figure you are identifying that, as well as the three FTEs at SAMEAC?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is my understanding and I will just get some clarification for you. I would like to talk about some of the really active work that SAMEAC has done, the strategic priorities, economic development participation, ageing and domestic violence. One of the areas in which they have done particularly well is community engagement meetings and we have had four in the last financial year: the Afghan community on 6 August, the African community on 22 October, the Filipino community in February this year, and the Chinese community this year.

Some of the issues that have been raised in here are the need for new community facilities and upgrades to existing facilities and, of course, we now have our new infrastructure grant program that people can apply for. We talk about language barriers remaining a challenge particularly in relation to obtaining employment, and parenting challenges in balancing traditional cultures and Australian values.

That is why our Stronger Families, Stronger Communities grant program is so important because some of the messages I heard when I came in as Minister for Multicultural Affairs is that division between trying to maintain culture but also being close within the family. Also, the ongoing impacts of trauma and torture, concerns about levels of domestic and family violence and, of course, opportunities for youth engagement. Probably one of the most exciting areas is how our migrants

can sell our trade message to the world, so we have often seen with our international students who study here, that some remain and some go home, and they tell a great message of what living in Adelaide is like.

I think we have an opportunity for migrants who are here, who have great connections all through the world to sell our services and our products to that world. They are our ambassadors and I would like to work more on how we can develop those linkages. There are some issues raised about challenges faced by international students including social isolation and unemployment. I really think these community engagement meetings have been incredibly successful and we will continue to do them throughout this year. We will do them in a community setting where we invite people to come along.

Mr GARDNER: In relation to that detail of the SAMEAC budget, you will confirm that and bring that back?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would like to ask Andrew to answer your question.

Mr THOMPSON: Sub-program 1.2—

Mr GARDNER: Sub-program 1.2, and that is that \$400,000 figure.

Mr THOMPSON: Essentially, the SAMEAC budget is in 1.2.

Mr GARDNER: The SAMEAC budget is not listed specifically in 1.2, hence the question. It is obviously included within that figure but, as I understand it, to be utterly clear, SAMEAC has three staff of their own plus one assigned from Multicultural SA and that is the cost of the \$400,000 figure the minister identified earlier; is that correct?

Mr THOMPSON: The FTEs associated with SAMEAC, the cost of those, are in 1.2. There are no FTEs in the multicultural services sub-program.

Mr GARDNER: Are there three or four of those?

The CHAIR: Hang on, you are not cross-examining the public servant.

Mr GARDNER: I am cross-examining the minister.

The CHAIR: You can ask all you like of the minister.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: SAMEAC has three FTEs.

Mr GARDNER: Three FTEs at a cost of?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The financial information I have for the whole of SAMEAC is \$409,000. I think I will take on notice the division of that between the FTEs and the running of the office.

Mr GARDNER: How much is the salary for the chair of SAMEAC, this year and last year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Approximately \$27,000 for the role as chair.

Mr GARDNER: Is that in addition to the three FTEs?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, that is separate, as I understand it.

Mr GARDNER: In relation to the multicultural strategy that is the target on page 100, the minister mentioned in her opening statement the Stronger Families, Stronger Communities Grants, the Multicultural Infrastructure Grants, the one-off grants program. She talked about the benefits she identified of that one-off grants program, there being less restrictive guidelines for community groups and a different mode of reporting than they might have had to deal with previously. She said that that was very popular with the community groups. In relation to the multicultural strategy and these grants, I am interested in what analysis, what outreach has been done with those groups that have not been applying for grants, those groups that are perhaps less expert at writing grant applications? What support has been given to those groups?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I am informed, Multicultural SA has organised a range of information sessions. SAMEAC also, when it does its community engagement, raises grants and the

grants process there. The Multicultural Communities Council has also run some sessions. With the new Grants SA, we will endeavour to have a continual information rollout of communication, given that this is a new grants program and a new way of doing it. I think probably all MPs have been approached, I would imagine, by community groups in their electorates, and that is why we have simplified the application process. I am very aware that people who have a digital literacy divide find it quite challenging to apply online, but we will try to cut the red tape and make it as simple as possible.

Mr GARDNER: You have also identified that the department, SAMEAC and the Multicultural Communities Council are putting information out there and running sessions, and MPs certainly put information out there. Has any analysis been done of groups that have not been engaged with the multicultural communities grants and in particular analyses in relation to the number of people coming into Australia and their community groups?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: For the 124 different events that I attended throughout the year, it is from the diverse population that we have. I think we estimated 200 different community groups. I cannot say that there were different individual groups within those attendances. As you and I both know, we have regular invites from particular groups. The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion ran a grants program looking at the grants across the communities and had a bit of a road show, so to speak, through South Australia, and those groups will continue to be included. I am happy to take it on board for us to consider, whether we need things in different languages. People have expressed a greater clarity around the regularity of the new Grants SA system, but I will take it on board. I have been to many events with very new arrival groups who are establishing their communities, and they have applied for grants through that process.

Mr GARDNER: In the minister's opening statement, she talked about the less restrictive guidelines. Can she identify in what ways the guidelines have been relaxed compared with what people previously had to go through in relation to their eligibility criteria?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask Ms Wallace to give a little more detail about the different guidelines. The key issue that was raised with me was the timeliness of the grants. We would open a round and people would have to apply before an event took place. Then there would often be a three-month period from the time they applied to when they would find out, when the event happened. The timeliness was one of the key barriers, I felt. Now, the minor rounds of grants of less than \$5,000 happen every month, so it is a lot more frequent.

While I will let Ms Wallace talk about any other changes, to me, the biggest challenge we had from a multicultural point of view is the ability to apply on a regular basis. Obviously, we try to say to people, 'Apply in advance, we're not going to pay retrospectively.' I see here another former minister for multicultural affairs who I am sure has had approaches by people asking for retrospective support. To me, it is important for it to be accessible. I will ask Ms Wallace to expand any specifics.

Ms WALLACE: The key changes are that organisations now only have to apply once to be assessed for eligibility across four streams of grant programs and reporting is now proportionate to the type and level of funding won by the organisation.

Mr GARDNER: I notice that in relation to some grants programs, particularly that the commonwealth has run over the years, there are exclusions such as, for example, religious groups are not entitled to receive grants. I do not believe that has been the case for our state grant system. Can you identify if there are grants that religious groups are not entitled to apply for?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Religious events are not part of those grants; it is about the communities.

Mr GARDNER: What about infrastructure?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: They are not included in the infrastructure grants applications.

Mr GARDNER: The state grants programs are excluding religious groups; is that your answer?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The focus of these grants—and I will stand to be corrected—is about the communities and social inclusion and about the community coming together.

Mr GARDNER: Sure, but is there an exclusion there or not?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am advised that religious groups are not precluded, but the focus of the grant is the community activity and not a religious purpose.

Mr GARDNER: I understand, and that is good news. In relation to pages 99 and 95, we have the estimated results for the year but not the actuals. Can we get those with the estimates answers, rather than having to wait for the Mid-Year Budget Review, unless you have here the individual 2015-16 actual end of year results, as opposed to the estimated results?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask Andrew to answer that.

Mr THOMPSON: We are obviously still going through the end-of-year process and checking accruals and getting it audited and all the rest, so we can supply that when that information is available.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Would you like me to list the events for the people who have received grants?

Mr GARDNER: No, not yet.

The CHAIR: I appreciate your being proactive, minister!

Mr GARDNER: We only have 10 minutes left and I would like to get in a couple more questions. On page 99, there is a financial table. Can the minister provide a breakdown of the expenses within multicultural services and explain what that budget line is for?

If I can perhaps just finish that question, I note particularly on page 99 that the 2014-15 actual figure is listed as \$1.3 million, which grows to \$3.4 million. I note, in the corresponding budget line last year, the 2014-15 budgeted figure was \$6.6 million, which increased to \$6.8 million in 2015-16. I appreciate there has been a reallocation of back-office services, but last year's budget papers suggested that there was a \$200,000 increase in this program.

This year's budget papers suggest that, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, there was a \$2.1 million increase in this program. I believe you when you say the grants have increased but, given the grants are dealt with, I think, under sub-program 1.2, I am just confused as to why there is such a disparity between this year's budget papers and last year's budget papers.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am advised that that does include the grants. On page 99, sub-program 1.5 does include the grants within that. As we know, there was an increase due to the grant funding to establish the infrastructure support grants programs and the Stronger Families, Stronger Communities funding program. I think you touched on the FTEs, and I think the question you might have been alluding to is the fact that there are no FTEs addressed here.

Mr GARDNER: No, they are in sub-program 1.2, I understand.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, so we believe that by having multicultural, youth and volunteers together, along with our family and community development programs, we can develop the skill set more effectively and people can work across those programs.

Mr GARDNER: Are any of these expenses on page 99 non-grant related?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My understanding, as advised, is they are the supplies and services that are in addition to those. We also have what I guess is some grant funding that is core funding. So, we have the festivals funding and the Multicultural SA one-off grants, which are through Grants SA. We do some core funding: the Migrant Resource Centre, last year, was \$25,630; ethnic broadcasters, \$22,000; Multicultural Communities Council, \$172,510; the Australia Day Council of South Australia, \$10,000; the women's leadership course, \$12,000; and we put \$52,901 in for the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. Of course, you have detailed the \$1 million with Stronger Families, Stronger Communities, and there is \$1 million for multicultural infrastructure grants. So, that is how it is done. It is for supplies and services, I understand.

Mr GARDNER: Last year, I think there were 56.4 staff FTEs budgeted in multicultural services. I appreciate you have identified that those would be incorporated into sub-program 1.2 but,

given there has been this integration with youth and volunteers, can you identify if the roles of any of those people working in multicultural services in policy-related roles still exist or not?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Those roles do exist, but the large proportion of that FTE is from the Interpreting and Translating Centre.

Mr GARDNER: I notice that in Sub-program 1.2: Policy and Community Development, we do not have any highlights or targets that are particularly relevant to Multicultural Affairs. Is there policy work in the description and objective that identifies that the program includes policy and corporate support to the Office of Multicultural Affairs? What policy support is that program unit giving the office?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Those policy officers work across multicultural, volunteer and youth. They have been working on the multicultural plan, the grants guidelines, things like that—so they work across the areas. We have talked about the STARservice Development Program and scope that are some of the highlights. Some of our multicultural communities, potentially, would have access to those programs as well. We have brought things together under this area because we think that there is the opportunity for policy and community development to be done more consistently and to have a higher standard, rather than having separate ways in which we do that. I think the standard has increased. I have been very pleased with where we are going.

Mr GARDNER: In relation to these budget papers—you can use page 90 as the reference, if you like, for Thriving Communities—are there any funds or staff outside of sub-programs 1.2 and 1.5 that are supporting Multicultural Services?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The interpreting and translating services are in 1.1. Can I just come back to a question you asked me earlier about my events in Parliament House? I hosted, in 2015, the farewell of the Italian Consul to Adelaide—I think the member for Light was there; the Demetria Festival for the Greek community; the Diwali festival for the Indians; and in 2016 I hosted World Africa Day and a celebration of Carnevale. The total for that was \$12,378.25.

Mr GARDNER: Can the minister identify all the grants given under these programs to multicultural communities in 2015-16 and all those that have so far been granted in this financial year? I am happy to take it on notice, if you like.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I can—

Mr GARDNER: You have two minutes, Minister!

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: While I would love to detail them, I can tell you that information about these grants is available on the website, as I understand. I am happy to talk through some highlights, if you wish. We could talk about the major festivals that we have. Perhaps this is a nice way for us to end and I can talk about some of the changes we have made. We have now delineated three-year festivals, which are our significant festivals, and then we have major festivals that are regular. The major festivals include: the Unmasked African Festival, the French Market, INDOfest, Chinese New Year Festival, Carnevale Italian festival, the Philippine Fiesta, the Greek Glendi, Indian Mela, Al Salam Festival, Schützenfest and Tet.

These 11 festivals are our major festivals. In fact, one of my key goals is to mainstream these festivals. Because we are the Festival State, we do festivals well. Traditionally, while these have been rather large festivals, they have not always extended the opportunity to all South Australians, so I am endeavouring to work with these groups.

In fact, we have just had a meeting with these 11 participants, because there are numerous costs when you host a festival, including the insurance costs, the security costs, the hiring of the venue, where people park, etc. I am facilitating with the event leaders about how we can potentially do a group booking for some of these things. That will not be the role of government to actually do that booking, but to facilitate the opportunity. Now that these 11 events are locked into our calendar, how can they bring down their costs?

Mr GARDNER: How were those 11 chosen. I do not have any issue with any of them, but how is it them and not the twelfth or thirteenth that get into the list as major festivals. I think there might have previously been fewer?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, there were fewer. But there were many events that we had funded, sometimes for decades, that were consistently increasing with larger crowds, and one of the things I felt that I could give them was certainty about their funding, and that is why they had the three-year funding deal. When we look at different growths within our population, we know that definitely the Indian and the Chinese communities have increased dramatically. Probably one of the groups that has not been acknowledged is the Filipino community, that has actually been coming over 50 years, in many different ways that we have.

This major festival funding was first established in 2013-14 and the focus was on about proven capacity to stay significant festivals that reach out to all South Australians, impact on the community and they represent the broad cultural diversity of South Australia.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much, minister. I declare the examination of the proposed payments be adjourned until later today.

Sitting suspended from 12:32 to 1:30.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$1,090,488,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION, \$195,310,000

Membership:

Ms Sanderson substituted for Mr Gardner.

Hon. T.R. Kenyon substituted for Ms Digance.

Minister:

Hon. Z.L. Bettison, Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. Harrison, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Wallace, Executive Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

Ms J. Kennedy, Director, Community Engagement and Grants Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

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

The CHAIR: Minister, welcome back. You are appearing now in your capacity as the Minister for Youth. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to Agency Statement Volume 1, and I call on the minister to introduce her advisers and make a statement if she wishes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you, Chair. To my left is Tony Harrison, the Chief Executive of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion; to my far left is Andrew Thompson, Executive Director, Financial and Business Services; to my right is Sue Wallace,

Executive Director, Policy and Community Development; behind me is Nancy Rogers, Director, Business Affairs, and Greg Myers, Principal Coordinator, Strategic Projects and Business Affairs; and in the third row is Justine Kennedy, Director, Community Engagement and Grants Policy and Community Development.

It is a great honour to be the Minister for Youth. Our diverse and dynamic generation of young people is a significant resource. Our best future lies with a generation that is prepared to take on the opportunities in our changing world and create a strong, cohesive community. The Office for Youth has an across-government role in supporting young South Australians through strategic policy, youth sector support and advocacy, and events and forums that celebrate young people and ensure that they have the opportunity to have a say.

The portfolio's focus through its Youth Strategy, funding and other programs is on increasing the economic and social participation of young South Australians, especially those experiencing disadvantage. I am pleased to say that over 70 per cent of the Office for Youth funding has been used to address this priority during 2015-16. We have demonstrated our commitment to this priority through our new one-off grants program, Grants SA, which brings together existing one-off grant programs. One of the target groups for this program is young people experiencing disadvantage. Grants SA has a simpler application procedure, less restrictive guidelines and streamlined reporting, which makes it easier for eligible organisations working with young people to access funding. Feedback from the community has been extremely positive.

The government's 2016 Youth Strategy, Connected to YOUth, builds on the priorities of the 2015 strategy to address youth homelessness and support at-risk young people transitioning from school to employment or further education. The 2015 strategy included the development of a white paper on improving the economic and social participation of young South Australians experiencing homelessness. The 2016 strategy includes financial literacy, training through the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's MoneySmart Rookie program to 200 young South Australians at risk of unstable housing due to low incomes and poor budgeting skills.

In addition, building on the 2015 strategy, Connected to YOUth continues the highly effective successful transitions program. A case management and mentoring program, aimed to support our most vulnerable young South Australians to move into meaningful work and social participation. Youth engagement was a priority focus in 2015-16, including the youth engagement guide, developed in collaboration with young people, the community sector and other government agencies, and aligned with our government's Better Together initiative.

As minister I have had the privilege of engaging with many young people throughout the year. The Office for Youth also continues to support the participation of young people across South Australia through a range of events and activities that promote and celebrate our young people and to ensure they have a voice on issues that are important to them.

As will be evident already, the Office for Youth is increasingly working in collaboration with other government agencies and the community sector to better coordinate efforts within South Australian communities. As an example, the Northern Aboriginal Youth Justice Program will provide a multi-agency response to improve outcomes for Aboriginal young people in contact with the justice system. Working together to harness efforts, goodwill and resources is the best practice for community agencies and organisations, and it is the way forward for the Office for Youth.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Member for Adelaide, do you have an opening statement?

Ms SANDERSON: No.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions?

Ms SANDERSON: Thank you. In relation to the minister's opening statement—this is also referenced on page 101, targets, point 1. In 2015 you mentioned the white paper on homelessness, yet in 2016 there was no follow up—it was not mentioned in the top three. However, it shows up again for the 2016-17 year, so skipping a year forward, to conduct a cross-sector round table on homelessness and family and/or relationship violence. I am wondering why you would have produced a white paper and then done nothing for a whole year.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is not the case because the youth strategy is based on a calendar year. We were looking here at financial years. The white paper happened in the calendar year of 2015. In 2016, just this morning, I announced the next step of that process. We will be doing a regional homelessness youth prevention pilot program, incorporating Mount Gambier and Whyalla. This is in cooperation with the University of South Australia, Service to Youth Council and Uniting Communities.

One of the key areas that was spoken about in the white paper was about preventing homelessness. In particular, young people who have instability issues in housing often disconnect from school. We find them appearing in high numbers in our justice system, and it sets up a life-long issue of instability if they cannot support that.

One of the key things I wanted to do was look at that white paper. One of the other areas is, of course, the round tables we will be holding, probably in the second half of this year, looking at the connection between domestic and family violence as a trigger for youth homelessness.

The other issue I mentioned was ASIC's MoneySmart Rookie program. One of the other things we identified with young people is that, often if they need to leave home early, they might be share housing. We find that often people get themselves into debt without realising it—maybe through a mobile phone, a smartphone, or through perhaps not actually budgeting for utilities bills, the insurance on the house, etc., etc. So, that is a program where there has been 200 places across South Australia for young people to have that training through a series of modules. I will get some details on where we are running that program.

We identified that a lack of financial knowledge is a real barrier to people proceeding forward, because they can get themselves into lots of credit issues and therefore they might be evicted from their place of residence, or they might find themselves in a rent-to-buy plan that is actually more expensive than if they went through a different area.

Ms SANDERSON: Regarding that MoneySmart Rookie, which community organisations were involved and what amount of money was allocated to that?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: With the MoneySmart Rookie program?

Ms SANDERSON: Yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We have 12 organisations involved with this: Aboriginal Legal Rights, AnglicareSA, Baptist Care SA, Campbell Page Flow Program, Centacare Catholic Family Services Country SA, Lutheran Community Care, Community Access and Services, Re-engage Youth Services, UnitingCare Wesley Bowden, UnitingCare Wesley Country, West Coast Youth and Community Support, and Yorke Youth Services. They delivered the program starting in June, and \$100,000 was committed to this program.

Ms SANDERSON: My next question is on Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 100. I refer to the table regarding expenses. Can the minister explain the large increase in expense from the 2014-15 year, the actual figure, to the 2015-16 year? It is a rise of 30 per cent.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am advised that the \$513,000 increase in expenses between the 2014-15 actual and the 2016-17 budget was due to the commencement of the Successful Transitions program late in the financial year, resulting in a \$304,000 underspend in that budget. That is where that change came in. Let me talk to you about Successful Transitions. I have to say that this is one of my personal favourite projects. When we did the youth forums, and we did country cabinets and metro cabinets, what I heard from young people and people working with young people was that between the ages of 17 and 24 there were people who were not engaging in the last bits of school or finding that transition from school to work really difficult.

As I look around the chamber here, we have people with teenagers or people who are young adults. It is often a time when your family still provides great mentoring and guidance to what you are doing. While young people think, 'I am an adult; I know what I am doing,' I certainly know that my family backed me up many times between those ages as I started my way. We find that people do not always have that support. We have that money from the Successful Transition programs and it is distributed to five service providers across three financial years. I can talk to you about the fact that we extended it also to Whyalla.

It is available to young people aged 17 to 24 years in five regions identified on disadvantage: the northern and southern metro areas, the Limestone Coast, the Murray Bridge Mount Barker region, and the Mid North region—and that included the communities of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Peterborough. In April of this year we extended that to include the Whyalla community. During the year, 255 young people were referred to the program and 177 young people engaged with an individual transition plan. It is a key thing to have intensive case management of a young person to assist them to re-engage in school or to stabilise their housing, or deal with some of the issues they might well have and get them into an apprenticeship or traineeship to get that job going.

I would like to share with you some of the examples of this. Brandon (which is not his real name), 21 years old, was unemployed, and lacked direction and motivation. His lack of employment and occasional drug use led to a strained relationship with his mother. Successful Transitions provided intensive mentoring to build his confidence and recognise his personal strengths. Brandon was connected to job preparation support and learned interview techniques. His drug use was reduced and he was supported to find employment. Brandon is now working full-time as a car retailer, detailing cars with a view to an apprenticeship. He is motivated and loving his work and saving for the future.

Tara, who is 19 years old, was diagnosed with a personality disorder. She lacked confidence and presented with anxiety issues. She lived independently with a partner who, like her, was also long-term unemployed. Headspace referred Tara to Successful Transitions, where she was assisted to continue support from Headspace for her mental health, as well as enrol in programs to improve her communication, interview, resume and letter-writing skills. Her self-esteem and confidence grew, and eventually she secured part-time work in a bakery. She is now working regular shifts, living a healthy lifestyle and presenting as a confident and intelligent young woman.

Jack is 18 and his employment provider referred him to Successful Transitions because he was struggling to meet the mutual obligation requirements needed to keep his Centrelink payments. He had left school during year 11 due to extreme anxiety which caused him to be isolated, struggling to maintain social and sporting connections. Successful Transitions teamed with Jack to identify his goals and create a plan for the future.

Through intensive mentoring, Jack was able to develop coping strategies for his anxiety. He was supported through the Youth 2 Work program operated by Regional Development Australia, and received assistance to get his white card accreditation, which is an induction for construction training. He continued to apply for work and he gained a role at his local recycling centre. He is enjoying his work and receiving post-employment placement to ensure his transition to work is a success.

While I realise that is a lot of detail and it is just some case studies, it was a real gap which I saw and which was raised with me during these youth forums—we held about eight or so last year—and I felt that people really needed help at that particular time in their life and it could make a real difference to their outcome. It is a program which I am quite proud of, we are targeting 150 participants again this year, and I look forward to reporting to you next year about some of the outcomes.

Ms SANDERSON: From the 255 who were referred to the program, how many are now employed and what is the breakdown between full-time, part-time and casual employment?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I said, we then participated with 177. I am not sure we have that breakdown of detail. I am happy to take that on notice, remembering that what we were looking for was stability for that person, so perhaps returning to school or training or entering the workforce. It was always a combination of the three.

Ms SANDERSON: Does the minister agree that, given youth unemployment is around 20 per cent, all youth who are unemployed would benefit from this kind of mentoring as per the Successful Transitions program and not just the disengaged, and does the minister have any plans to make this happen?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am very interested in intensive case management. We have actually used it in a recovery process after both the Sampson Flat and Pinery fire recovery. Throughout government, and particularly in my areas, I think we should investigate further how we

do that. The question about youth unemployment is something that is everybody's business here in South Australia. We know that once you get that first job, it is much easier to get that second job. I will of course work with my cabinet colleagues to raise this.

We need to support young people to get that start and make that transition. I think as we evaluate this program, I would like to look at it over the three years, and put it forward. We know the commonwealth government has been looking at this area as well and I welcome their interest in their past program. I have some concerns about the payments within that and how that will work, but we know that support program is needed.

Ms SANDERSON: Back to page 100, can the minister also explain why the 2015-16 expenses estimated figure of \$1.911 million published in the current budget was 40 per cent lower than the 2015-16 expenses budget of \$3.327 million published last year? Could this be the wages figure that has been shifted into another area, or how much of it is?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is correct.

Ms SANDERSON: Is that the whole amount?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes. One of the things we have done in policy and community development is that we have combined the group of people working in multicultural, youth and volunteers, and also family and community development programs, so that they are now listed in, I think, 1.2 of the budget papers and it is a realignment of those functions.

Ms SANDERSON: The FTEs for Youth were estimated at 11.1, so that would indicate that there is an average of \$127,000 per person that was transferred. Would that be correct?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: FTEs?

Ms SANDERSON: Full-time equivalents, yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: With the FTEs and policy and community development, the budget estimated result is 129.2 and we are looking in this budget for it to be 122.5 but, like I said, that is multicultural services, youth, volunteers and policy and community development.

Ms SANDERSON: Can the minister break that down between the three areas: multicultural, youth and volunteers?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No; the whole point is that we have realigned the functions. Many of the skills and attributes that we wanted in that portfolio were represented across the board. We wanted a greater depth of skills and professional development, and I feel that that is what we have when we have reorganised the functions.

Ms SANDERSON: What was the intention of combining the three? Are those three portfolios combined like that in any other state? There have been a lot of questions about why those three would be put together.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is a contemporary approach to social policy and planning that is looking at the multidimensional nature of challenges and opportunities. As minister, I always want to be effective but efficient.

Ms SANDERSON: Was the idea to use the same staff in different areas? If so, I do not see why you would have increased the number of staff by 55.1 when you have combined three. You have not actually gained any efficiencies: you have ended up with more staff than you had individually in the three departments added together.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think you might also be incorporating or not recognising that policy and community development is also included in that area. It is actually the four areas that have come together: multicultural, youth, volunteers and policy and community development.

Ms SANDERSON: Were there 55 in that department in 2015-16, like the previous year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: While we are here at this session I will get someone to calculate that for us and we can compare apples with apples.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to page 101, Performance indicators, point one. Can the minister advise what initiatives were funded by the Office for Youth, and can the minister break down the funding allocated to each initiative?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can I ask: the number of young people involved or the percentage of funded initiatives? On which area would you like me to elaborate?

Ms SANDERSON: The Office for Youth funded initiatives.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think I have already detailed those programs. It is Successful Transitions, it is the MoneySmart Rookie program. The other one we have that we have not talked about is Be a Job Maker, and I will be releasing more details about that. I think where you are going with this is that it would be good if we detailed where the grants are going.

Ms SANDERSON: Yes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I suspected that that is where we were heading. I will read through how we spent the budget. Successful Transitions was \$616,000; \$100,000 for the rookie grants; \$83,000 for the Peterborough youth plan, part of Thriving Communities; \$5,000 for the youth engagement guide; \$127,000 for National Youth Week; \$226,000 for the Port Augusta social vision; \$327,700 for YACSA; \$80,000 for the Youth Network grants; \$50,000 for the Youth Parliament; \$55,400 for Community Voices; \$56,200 for sustainable online communities; and \$25,500 for the Youth Volunteer Scholarship. In addition to that, the differences for the budget this year are that we are adding the cross sector round table on youth and homelessness, the northern Adelaide youth justice project (\$45,000), the University of South Australia homeless early intervention pilot (\$150,000), and money will go towards Grants SA within that.

Ms SANDERSON: Also on page 101, Performance indicators, point one, the actual number of young people involved in government and community decision-making has more than halved, from 2,512 in 2013-14 to 1,042 in 2014-15. Can the minister advise what the government is doing to get more people involved in this decision-making? And can the minister advise why, in April this year, I received an answer to last year's estimates stating that that figure was 1,200—nine months after the figure should have been calculated?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can I confirm that you are saying that the actual figure was 1,042 in 2014-15 and the estimated result in 2015-16 is an increase to 1,469? Are you asking where that increase came from?

Ms SANDERSON: Yes. In the previous year, the 2013-14 year, which is not on this page, it was 2,512, so we have less than half the number.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am not sure where you get the figure of 2,500 from.

Ms SANDERSON: From the previous year's budget.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: What year are you talking about?

Ms SANDERSON: Last year's budget will have the actual figures for the 2013-14 year. It is the actual 2013-14 figure.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: There was a change when we were running the Duke of Edinburgh awards and that would have increased dramatically that area.

Ms SANDERSON: I think that was a few years ago now.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: This is focused now around the youth forums, National Youth Week and the community engagement forums. The biggest jump—which, I think, is your point—is when we ceased doing the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Ms SANDERSON: I think that was actually 2011-12, when 5,539 was the actual number of young involved, and then that dropped to 2,913 in the 2012-13 year, then 2,512 in the 2013-14 year. I believe 2012-13 was the Duke of Edinburgh change and now we have halved again. I know there is no youth minister's group—it had an official name—and there is all the YACSA funding through the councils. That would indicate some of the drop, but it is less than half. Are you planning on raising the number again and, if so, how?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Obviously, this is a target for the number of young people to be involved in these events. In our youth strategies, my focus was to go out and do the youth forums in the regional areas and, of course, across the metro area as well. I am happy to look at the changes. Obviously, from year to year, we have a different focus about where that money is going to go.

I suspect there were some changes when local government was not running the Youth Advisory Committee program, as it had been. There was a change there and there was the Duke of Edinburgh change behind that, but I will continue to be actively seeking. The MoneySmart Rookie program is an innovative program reaching out to different people.

We have a lot of people involved in youth parliaments, which have been going for some time, and also the Be a Job Maker program. We are connecting in different ways. I would probably say that we are connecting at a deeper level when we run those programs. I think that, while the actual number might be less, that does not necessarily reflect less interest or involvement.

Ms SANDERSON: On that same page, under Targets 2016-17, the first dot point refers to cross-sector round table youth talks. Can the minister outline who will be involved, what they are involved in, where the round tables or forums will be held and how often?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That program is being developed as we speak. I know for myself that, when we do our country cabinets, that will definitely be something I would add to the program that I facilitate at that time. Also, when we are doing metro cabinets, that will be a time for us to pursue that, but we do not have the plan at this stage. I am happy to supply that when we do.

Ms SANDERSON: Referring to page 94, under description/objective, one of the objectives of the Office for Youth is to ensure youth policy development across government. Can the minister outline where this has been achieved for the last financial year and give some specific examples?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The best example is about Aboriginal youth justice. It is a whole of government-based family support model that we are using. To some extent, it is based on some of the Ceduna service reforms where we have seen some promising results at this point. It is a multi-agency approach to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system.

The proposal has been developed to a shared concern between the community and government. It is a multi-agency, family-focused response proposed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal families who present with complex needs and have experienced intergenerational contact with statutory agencies and particularly criminal justice. We are trying to interrupt the cycle with young people within high-risk family networks. Of course, Housing SA is often connected with those families as well. We also work with SA Police, the Department for Education and Child Development, the Department for Correctional Services and SA Health within that.

As I touched on before, I am particularly interested in intensive case management models because the key thing for me is you are putting the person at the middle, and we tend to have a one size fits all model in general about how we support people who are vulnerable. I am very interested to see, post the work of the Ceduna service reform, how we look at the vulnerable persons framework. We have seen the collaborations if DV is an issue within family safety frameworks.

We put the person at the centre and the services around them. I am very interested to follow this as a model. I have raised how we can do things differently with the Attorney-General because we need to interrupt the cycle of poverty and the normalisation of people's contact with the correctional services system.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. We will now move on to the examination of payments under the Minister for Volunteers. Could you call your new advisers, please?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think the advisers are the same.

The CHAIR: Excellent. Do you have a statement in relation to your capacity as Minister for Volunteers?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes, I do have something to say. Each year, 900,000 South Australian volunteers contribute about 1.7 million volunteer hours per week across the state, and we estimate that economic contribution to be around \$5 billion each year. I particularly highlight

the tremendous response of our emergency services volunteers to two major South Australian bushfires in 2015 with more than 3,500 firefighters supported by New South Wales and Victorian fire authorities. They were deployed to Sampson Flat in January 2015, and 1,700 were in attendance at the Pinery fire in late November.

The recovery phase after each fire was also supported by numerous volunteer-involving organisations such as BlazeAid, the Australian Red Cross, Save'em, Conservation Volunteers, St Vincent de Paul Society and many service clubs. I would like to acknowledge the 13,900 Country Fire Service volunteers from across South Australia who respond to over 8,000 incidents each year and provide invaluable support to our communities.

This government is committed to supporting and building volunteering and recognising and strengthening the contribution our volunteers make. One way that we have demonstrated this commitment is through our major grant reform. Our new one-off grants program, Grants SA, brings together existing one-off grant programs. Its simpler application procedures, less restrictive guidelines and streamlined reporting make it easy for eligible organisations working with volunteers to access funding. As I said, feedback from the community has been extremely positive.

The year 2015-16 has been an active year for the Office for Volunteers and for our volunteers. The government has recognised the contributions of our volunteers through a range of events and awards, most spectacularly the State Volunteers Day Thank You event, which of course the member for Adelaide joined me at. It was held at the Adelaide Festival Centre over the June long weekend. I was very pleased that our Governor was able to attend to hand out those key awards. There were 1,800 people in attendance and some fabulous entertainment courtesy of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

We have continued to recognise significant volunteer contributions through the South Australian Volunteer Awards, awarding close to 5,000 South Australian volunteers Certificates of Appreciation and nearly 200 Premier's Certificates of Recognition. We brought volunteers and volunteer organisations together for information sharing and networking through the 2016 State Volunteer Congress held on 11 May 2016.

The strategy has been developed through a unique partnership between state and local government, the volunteer sector and the business sector. Now in its third year, it continues to offer opportunities to build partnerships. Four project teams have achieved some great results in 2015-16, contributing to the strategy's aims of improving outcomes for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and maintaining a volunteer participation rate of 70 per cent or better. I thank all the parties for their contribution.

Another highlight has been the development of the Volunteer Recognition Scheme, which aims to increase the number of young people who volunteer, and to use volunteering as a pathway to employment. The WeDo app for banking volunteer hours, which recognises and rewards young volunteers for their efforts, has been piloted as part of the scheme and has now been further developed by Volunteering SA&NT. We know that volunteering is fundamental to the survival of so many of our community services and it is good to see that our volunteering community continues to thrive and to contribute so abundantly to our South Australian communities.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Adelaide, do you have a statement?

Ms SANDERSON: No, I do not, thank you.

The CHAIR: Then proceed with questions.

Ms SANDERSON: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 102, Targets 2016-17: 'Further implement the Volunteering Recognition Scheme for South Australia and officially launch the scheme.' The pilot for the Volunteer Recognition Scheme was supposed to produce results by November 2015. I believe you have just mentioned it was called the WeDo app, which has been trialled. Can the minister advise of the date for commencement of that program and is this program still based on the Blue Dot program in the UK? If not, what are the differences between that system?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will be launching it at the show. I hope you will be in attendance. I will send you an invitation to that. If I remember—and I will get Sue to come in—we had looked at

the Blue Dot program and another reward program that was going to bank hours—Time Banking. I think this was an election commitment that we were going to do that. In fact the former minister for volunteers is here. He might recall the development of that. When we looked at that in more detail, the administration of that was going to be far more complex than initially considered, so we looked at other opportunities. The app that had both a reward and a recognition aspect to it was going to be the best way forward.

I accept that there was a little bit more time taken to do this. Volunteering SA&NT has been working with some different stakeholders to test this app out. In particular, I am very keen to involve younger people in using the app because I think that volunteering is a great pathway to employment. What we believe is, by having the WeDo app that shows how much you have done, that can quantify that work, and it also enables you to look at those transferable skills from a volunteering opportunity into work. I accept that it is taking us a little longer. There was a trial pilot in December of last year. I certainly would like it to work smoothly when I launch it at the show.

Ms SANDERSON: How much funding has been allocated? I believe in last year's estimates it was \$300,000 for the 2014-15 year and \$300,000 again in the 2015-16 year. There was a figure of \$1.2 million mentioned at one point. What is the total cost for both of those programs that have now been combined into one? You mentioned Time Banking and getting youth into work, can a reference be generated so that young people can add Time Banking to their resume?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will answer your last question first. I do not believe that that app will have that complexity, but it might be able to do a statement of volunteer hours done. I can come back to you about that. The funding was \$300,000 per year for three years for this Volunteer Recognition Scheme.

Ms SANDERSON: And you are within that budget then; we are into the final year now, the 2016-17 year?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Yes.

Ms SANDERSON: At page 101 of the same paper, can the minister advise why there is no income listed in this year's budget papers for volunteers, and if the income has been distributed to a different program, could she please advise the details of how much would be allocated nominally for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think the way to explain it is that it is not usual for us to have an income in this area, and that it was a credit for some advertising airtime expense in 2014-15 that we recouped and some unspent funding in one of the grants programs. It was a bit unusual. It would be a credit and a carryover.

Ms SANDERSON: In the 2013-14 actual year it was \$49,000 income and for the budget last year, when you were budgeting for the 2015-16 year, it was still \$18,000, so if for one year they had a credit why did the other two years still have income?

The CHAIR: Can I clarify with you, minister: do you have the 2013-14 figures in front of you or are you just relying on—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No, I do not.

The CHAIR: In that case, member for Adelaide, you cannot refer to matters which are so far beyond the budget that the minister cannot possibly know what those figures are without reference to your evidence. You need to address this year's budget. You can address last year's if it is detailed in the budget papers but you cannot go back in time. The minister has been pretty lenient so far.

Ms SANDERSON: We will see what she comes up with.

The CHAIR: Therefore, the minister can answer in any way she wishes.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not have those figures in front of me but the areas I touched on were the reasoning for that in both those years.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to the same budget paper, page 101, and expenses. The expenses for the 2016-17 year are \$13,000 higher than the original for the previous 2015-16 budget. It is also outlined that the employee expenditure associated with the program is now reported in

another subprogram. Can the minister advise the reason as to why expenses would have increased even though employee expenditure is not incorporated?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I am advised, the increase is likely due to indexation.

Ms SANDERSON: If wages would normally be included as an expense item why has that actually increased since 2014-15 now that the salaries and wages should not even be in there at all? How has the figure risen? Are there extra expenses that are now going through this account?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As I am advised, it could be because there is a slight underspend in a grant program but I think it is best if we take that on notice and come back to you.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 95, highlights, point 3, 'Worked with the not-for-profit sector to develop State Government not-for-profit funding rules,' etc. Is there a dedicated resourcing from DCSI to achieve this goal and, if so, what is it?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Obviously, while we do in volunteering work for not-for-profit this would be across the whole of the area including multicultural, youth and volunteers. Perhaps I will talk a little bit about our partnership with the non-government sector. We have our Stronger Together commitment that we signed just recently. I am the co-chair of the Human Services Partnership Forum, along with the president of SACOSS, and that is a forum in which we come together to talk about these areas, and we have outlined the Stronger Together commitment, which is the principles of partnership between the state government and health and community services sector. We have a commitment to collaborate on projects that improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians.

The areas of Stronger Together are that people are connected and actively participating, people are healthy, people are resilient and people are prosperous. We are focusing, however, with the non-government sector on a more results-based approach, and we are looking at more strategic initiatives. One of the key things of which I am very proud and on which we are now working with the NGO sector is our capacity building within the community sector. We have our SCOPE program (Sustainable Community Organisations through Partnership and Engagement), to help non-government organisations strengthen their governance and business systems, by providing direct and personal support, including assistance in seeking alternative funding and coordinating training and development.

Also, we have our STARservice Development Program, an interactive, free, online, self-paced development program to guide community organisations towards sustainability and success. It is designed for use by very small non-government organisations that want to attract grant funding and improve their governance. We have had 35 organisations do the STARservice since December last year. The other area we have worked on is SANFRAG (South Australian Not-for-profit Funding Rules and Guidelines), which is designed to ensure funding is managed consistently across government. We have now improved the funding rules and guideline principles and work is commencing to develop draft rules reflecting these endorsed principles.

The other area of course is the Australian Service Excellent Standards (ASES); 254 organisations benefited from that in 2015-16, and it is about pursuing accreditation under the service excellence standards, and our target was exceeded on that. While it might not specifically be about volunteering, we feel that our role is with our connection and collaboration with the non-government sector, capacity building, but also about working together on specific issues that we see from both sides. The Better Together principles, Stronger Together, are about making sure we have clear ways of engaging with non-government and sharing the decision-making process for the best way forward.

Ms SANDERSON: Regarding the human services partnership, which you said you co-chair, how is that partnership being resourced and how are the outcomes being resourced? So, what department and where is that money allocated coming from?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The forum benefits from significant in-kind support from government and non-government in the form of staff time, which ensures that the forum's activities are completed in timely manner.

Ms SANDERSON: So no actual money is allocated; it is just in-kind staff at this point?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Obviously a key part of what we have looked at is streamlining of contracts and reducing the red tape, which will save all of us and become more efficient and effective.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to page 93, highlights, 2015-16, point 3—Implemented an online application form for screening applications: what was the total cost of this initiative?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That question relates to Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms SANDERSON: What was the total number of applications received in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 year, and how many were received online?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: That is not part of this budget area.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to page 101. How many volunteers have registered as at 30 June 2016, and how does this compare with the previous year? You may have said 900,000 in your opening statement.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Nine hundred thousand. I think that rather than a volunteer register, which is what you have implied, the way we measure it is through a survey that is commissioned every two years. We do that to do a survey of the South Australian population to indicate the percentage of people who volunteer, and then that is extrapolated out against the population.

Ms SANDERSON: From that 900,000 figure then—so that would be the same for the last two years—are you able to pull out how many young people that would be, as a percentage or as a number? I assume young is up to the age of 25.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think we will take that on notice. Obviously, we have a survey that we conduct every two years that we have been doing for some time. That gives us a snapshot of the South Australian population. If I do not have a specific figure I can give you, I think potentially through Volunteering SA and NT we could look at the cohorts, southern volunteering, northern volunteering, what percentage of people they have contact with.

Of course, often we find young people do not recognise what they might do as volunteering. If they cut up the oranges for half time at the footy or they do as Tom Kenyon did and wash the jumpers after the rugby game, they might not consider that as a volunteering aspect. When we think about this it is about understanding the breadth of volunteering, and of course we try to get those figures. It is important for us to measure it because we want to encourage volunteering.

Ms SANDERSON: I refer to page 101, under the description and objective of volunteering. What role, if any, will volunteers play at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital? Will the Lavender Ladies maintain their current levels of service?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I recognise your great interest in what will be a beautiful, cutting-edge—

The Hon. T.R. KENYON: Best hospital in the country.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —best hospital in the country. I welcome your support of that. I hope you publicly come out and support what will be our new Royal Adelaide Hospital. I will have to direct that question to the Minister for Health.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Can I ask a question?

The CHAIR: The member for Goyder.

Mr GRIFFITHS: It is about the 900,000 number that you quoted. I think it is commendable and it is wonderful that our society supports that level of involvement. Do you keep any form of statistics on the number of those people who are required to have some form of check to be able to volunteer? I know that an issue many MPs are contacted about is the challenges associated with that, getting it done in a timely manner. Is there an estimate of the number of checks that are required?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We will endeavour to get something. That 900,000 is from a survey that we do. I can tell you that in 2015-16, 54,422 people received a screening check to be a volunteer. As I think the member for Goyder and I might have spoken about previously, sometimes people require more than one check, particularly if they are working in country health. We have endeavoured to pursue some clarification about that, but because of both vulnerability and the aged that is the requirement for people to volunteer. When we look at screening, it is not quite fifty-fifty. We have more volunteers requiring screening than employees, and about 52.3 per cent of clearances are for volunteers.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Do you keep a track on the time taken for a clearance to be provided? In some cases is an age profile a complication? If it is a more common name, is that a challenge for it? Have you tried to track it and ensure that there is an improvement in the time frames on the response to the requests?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Ninety-eight per cent are done in less than 30 days. I feel that we have turned it around.

The CHAIR: There being no more questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments be referred to Committee A. I thank you, minister, for your time; I thank your advisers for all their hard work and time; and I thank members of the committee and their staff for their work today.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I would like to take this opportunity to thank my very hardworking team from the CEO down in the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. While we enjoy this time together, our time of bonding has now passed for a little while, and we look forward to next year; but I want to thank them for their work.

Sitting suspended from 14:27 to 14:46.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS, \$126,885,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS,
\$3,989,000

Membership:

Mr van Holst Pellekaan substituted for Ms Sanderson.

Mr Pederick substituted for Mr Griffiths.

Mr Knoll substituted for Mr Duluk.

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.

Professor M. Doroudi, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Ms A. Lloyd-Wright, Executive Director, Regions SA.

Mr S. Johnke, Director, Finance and Prudential Management, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Ms A. Barclay, Director, Regions SA, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Mr B. Paolo, Director, Major Programs, Rural Solutions SA, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Mr M. Williams, Manager, Budget Strategy, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

The CHAIR: Welcome, minister. I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and I refer members to Agency Statement Volume 4. Minister, I call on you to make a statement, if you wish, and to introduce your advisers. Since you are new to the estimates committee this year, I need to go through a very quick pro forma about the rules and regulations. I understand that there is no change to the agreed timetable. Excellent.

I will allow both you, minister, and the lead speaker for the opposition 10 minutes at the most for an opening statement, if you so wish. We will try to keep the questions even. The questions must be directed to the minister and they must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and be identifiable and referenced. If a minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 28 October. That is all the salient information. Minister, could you introduce your advisers and make a statement if you so wish.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Good afternoon, Chair, committee members and everybody here. First, I would like to introduce the members of the department who are here 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 Stephen Johnke, Director, Finance and Prudential Management. On my right is Alison Lloyd-Wright, Executive Director of Regions SA. Behind me on my left-hand side is Ann Barclay, Director of Regions SA, and Bengy Paolo, Director, Major Programs, Rural Solutions SA.

The 2016-17 state budget highlights the government's continued commitment to the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy and to providing opportunities for regional South Australia through significant investment in key service areas, programs and infrastructure. It builds on the good work and collective efforts of the government and our regional communities during 2015-16. I will highlight some of the government's regional development activities over the last year.

Country cabinet is one of the many opportunities enshrined in the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy for government to genuinely engage with regional communities in a way that has tangible and far-reaching outcomes. Country cabinet meetings are held three times a year, allowing regional South Australia to have direct input and provide feedback on how government can better support communities to grow and flourish, both socially and economically.

The Regional South Australia Cabinet Committee met regularly throughout the year. Among other things, the cabinet committee ensures that regional development strategies are effectively coordinated across government portfolios and agencies. Since its commencement there has been strong interest in the Regional Development Fund (RDF) grants program. These grants support regional communities and businesses to develop economic infrastructure, create jobs, and leverage both private and federal government investment.

This investment is working, with the 61 projects awarded grants through rounds 1 and 2 of the RDF contributing \$933 million to the South Australian economy in 2015-16 alone. In 2015-16, I called and committed two grant rounds of the RDF, ensuring that both 2015-16 and 2016-17 funding could be committed and invested in our regions without delay.

This government is working hard to address the challenges currently facing the Upper Spencer Gulf and outback due to the contraction of mineral prices and changes in the energy sector. Some of the recent measures include:

- a \$7 million economic support package through the Regional Development Fund and the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program;
- a commitment to retaining services in Leigh Creek until at least July 2018, along with a \$1 million job creation package for the region;
- more than \$6 million in financial support for Sundrop Farms at Port Augusta;
- the \$10 million Whyalla Small Business Loan Scheme to support businesses servicing Arrium through the administration period;

- a \$50 million commitment to the new owner of Arrium for upgrading technologies; and
- underwriting the Nyrstar smelter transformation in Port Pirie.

The once-off \$10 million Jobs Accelerator Fund has been fully committed to a package of initiatives that will drive regional economic development including:

- \$2 million for the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program;
- \$2 million for the Regional Youth Traineeship Program to subsidise the employment of 57 young unemployed trainees across regional local government authorities; and
- \$1.4 million to the North West Indigenous Pastoral Project, creating jobs and job-ready Aboriginal pastoral workers, while returning pastoral land to commercial productivity.

I am delighted that an additional \$1.5 million has been allocated over two years in this state budget to continue the highly successful North West Indigenous Pastoral Project.

The Regional Youth Traineeship Program is fully subscribed with 57 young unemployed people now working in their region. The two-year program offers the participating local governing bodies \$14,500 per annum per trainee to provide entry-level employment and training for young people aged 17 to 24.

Under the National Partnership Agreement on South Australian River Murray Sustainability Program (SARMS), I administer the \$25 million regional economic development program. This program includes a suite of regional development, research and innovation programs in the South Australian River Murray region, including the \$12.5 million Regional Development and Innovation Fund (RDIF), the \$5 million Industry-led Research Sub-Program and the \$7.5 million redevelopment of Loxton Research Centre.

In 2015, I commenced an engagement process with regional communities through a series of Regions in Focus workshops across the state. These workshops have identified opportunities for closer partnership between the state government and our regional communities. A number of local priorities were identified by the participants. I am currently undertaking a second round of Regions in Focus roadshows, which will continue through to the middle of this month.

Regions in Focus has been undertaken in partnership with the seven Regional Development Australia associations (RDAs) which continue to be supported by state government funding of \$3 million per annum. In close consultation with their local communities, each RDA is delivering a three-year plan to support the government's efforts to tackle regional priorities identified by those communities.

During 2016-17, I will continue to visit our regions to hear what people have to say about what is important to them now and for future generations. It is very 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 state government understands that the prosperity and wellbeing of regional South Australians and their communities underpins the sustainability and wellbeing of the entire state.

The contribution that our regional industries make to the state's economy, our prosperity and wellbeing and the government's role in supporting regional industries and communities remain vital to building a better future for all South Australians. This 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 and for all of us.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Member for Stuart, do you have an opening statement?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Very briefly, I put on the record that contributing to regional development was one of my biggest drivers when I decided to stand for election to become a member of parliament. Six years down the track, it is still without doubt one of my very highest priorities. Regional South Australia has a smaller share of our state's population than other parts of the state but contributes on a per capita basis much more than other parts of the state. Most importantly, at

this stage in our state's development, our greatest growth opportunities are in regional South Australia, and they need to be given every opportunity to flourish.

Moving to questions, minister, I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 24, looking at the Primary Industries and Regions line right in the middle of the page. Given that PIRSA's operating expenditure will decrease by \$100 million from \$263 million in the 2016-17 year to \$163 million in the 2019-20 year, what will be the reduction in regional development programs over the forward estimates?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The \$100 million decrease in projected expenditure across the forward estimates between the 2016-17 budget, which is \$263 million, and the 2019-20 estimate, which is \$163 million, is mainly due to the timing and planned completion of time-limited, specific initiatives within the next four years. Around \$17.4 million of the \$100 million relates to my regional development portfolio, in particular:

- the regional economic development program component of the commonwealth-funded South Australian River Murray Sustainability (SARMS) program ceasing prior to 2019-20, which is around \$2.8 million expenditure in 2016-17;
- various regional development grant programs being fully expended and ceasing prior to 2019-20, including the Jobs Accelerator Fund, which is \$2.3 million expenditure in 2016-17, and the Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund, which is \$1.5 million expenditure in 2016-17;
- the timing of additional carryover expenditure included in the 2016-17 budget for the Regional Development Fund, which is \$10.1 million expenditure in 2016-17, compared to the base funding of \$15 million annually; and
- budget initiatives with expenditure in the 2016-17 budget for the extension of the North West Indigenous Pastoral program, which is \$0.7 million dollars expenditure in 2016-17 and also 2017-18, being completed before 2019-20.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I know you made a public statement today with regard to the extension of the RDF funding, with the \$15 million carrying over in the last two years of the budget estimates period, those being 2018-19 and 2019-20. Given that announcement was made today, after the budget was delivered, and essentially says that there is \$30 million in those last two years which will be delivered specifically for the RDF, does that mean that there will be another \$30 million of other programs that were originally planned which now will not go ahead?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am advised that, as we all know, we had \$15 million per annum in the Regional Development Fund for the first four years from 2014-15 onwards, and there was an extra \$6.4 million which was allocated from the Treasury towards the \$15 million for the second round. As we get on to the end of each year, in the next year, it rolls over. So, each year, there will be another \$15 million, and that is what we are talking about.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: This announcement today is a new announcement of an additional \$30 million in the last two years of the forward estimates, but it does very clearly say that the money has been incorporated into the forward estimates. So the \$30 million is part of the funding that is on this page, but it is a new announcement, made today, that it is going to go to RDF, which means that something that was allocated to be spent on this page has to be taken away. So what is that?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: What is on that page is a part of the first lot of four by \$15 million and it has 2018-19 included.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: But minister, if you did not make this announcement today, what would the money have been spent on?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Chair, because it is a technical issue I will get Stephen Johninke to make a comment.

Mr JOHINKE: The \$15 million per annum forms part of our approved forward estimates. It has not replaced anything as such. As PIRSA's forward estimates have rolled over each year, the \$15 million related to the RDF has been incorporated.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: But it is not actually any extra money at all?

Mr JOHINKE: The original announcement related to the RDF and was about \$15 million per annum for four years, which was the extent of the forward estimates at that period. This is, in effect, increasing that \$60 million over four years to be \$90 million over—

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: But there is no more money than is currently in the forward estimates for regional development?

Mr JOHINKE: No. The \$15 million is incorporated in those forward estimates figures. They are on page 24.

The CHAIR: I am going to go to the member for Wright for a question, if indeed you have a question?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Yes, I do. Minister, as you know, I have spent many years living in the Mid North and in your hometown. Also, prior to going there, I lived in Peterborough, so those towns are really dear to my heart. Referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, Program 3, Regional Development statement, can you advise the committee on the progress that has been made by the Peterborough community development officer through their role in that regional community?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for her question. The Peterborough community development officer, Ms Nicole Lewis, was appointed on 12 October 2015. This position exists within the Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North organisation. Since her appointment, Ms Lewis has brought a range of benefits to the local community by implementing a variety of activities and initiatives that are proving very successful. The Peterborough community development officer has been appointed to:

- promote small-scale economic development initiatives;
- assist the District Council of Peterborough and community groups with identifying and facilitating small-scale community infrastructure projects;
- facilitate community employment projects, including access to federal, state and local government funding projects;
- support the state government's coordination of state government service delivery in Peterborough to maximise resource effort; and
- regularly report to Regions SA through Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North on progress outcomes achieved in Peterborough.

Many of the key responsibilities outlined in the community development officer's employment plan have already been achieved, including being readily available to the community, promoting economic development and coordinating the delivery of state services.

Some of the activities and initiatives undertaken by the community development officer include:

- development of a business association through consultation with local businesses, along with a suite of business development and community engagement programs, which the business association can access and drive. This initiative also includes a monthly networking event;
- promotion of relevant state government grant programs and the offering of assistance with applications;
- progression of the Main Street Renewal Program, working with the District Council of Peterborough;

- development of a community survey to understand the residents' perceptions on local issues and how they can be addressed;
- development of a services directory to adequately understand the social needs of Peterborough and the community;
- development of a rural driver project to assist people to gain their licence, which is a critical independence initiative and local problem;
- progression of the Peterborough Youth Strategy and reopening of the youth centre;
- reinvigorating local sporting culture through re-engaging with residents;
- progression of the Thriving Communities initiative, in conjunction with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusions and Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia;
- development of shearing courses for local students; and
- community-wide service mapping and gap analysis.

The community development officer is currently working on a unique project to develop a community-owned bakery in partnership with the District Council of Peterborough. This type of business is not currently available in Peterborough and is a service desired by the community. It is hoped that the bakery will boost tourism visitations, local employment and skills, and provide baked goods for the residents of the community and region.

The Hon. T.R. KENYON: Referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, Program 3: Regional Development, pages 32 to 34, can the minister please provide the estimates committee with information on the Regional Development Fund and specifically about the economic contribution study.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. I advised that Ernst & Young undertook a study that reported on the overall economic impact of projects awarded grant funding in rounds 1 and 2 of the Regional Development Fund (RDF). The report highlighted that the main benefit to the state is not the grants themselves, but the projects and industries it supports. They support these industries by accelerating companies' own investment, enabling additional investment for further value and allowing projects to progress that otherwise would not have.

Key findings from the report included the following: over 2,600 jobs and more than \$933 million in gross output were generated in 2015-16 by projects supported by the fund. RDF grants awarded to date will support projects worth a combined \$426 million in 2015-16 and up to \$2.7 billion for the state economy. RDF grants will also help to create 944 ongoing jobs and 1,721 construction jobs over the next seven years. Eighty per cent of the grant funding awarded went to the manufacturing (including food manufacturing) and agriculture industries. The manufacturing and construction industries are expected to contribute the most to the state in terms of value-added in 2015-16, contributing \$68 million and \$48 million respectively over the period.

The South Australian government is committed to building stronger regions because we know that these are the drivers of our future economic growth, contributing to every priority in the state's economic plan.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 32, can the minister advise the house of the government's progress in protecting the 50-plus jobs and the \$9.4 million per year of local economic benefit which are connected to the ongoing viability of the northern forests in response to the Bundaleer and Bangor fires? Are you considering using any of your RDF money to support regional development in that area?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the member for his question. Given the bushfire damage in recent years, a business as usual approach for the Mid North forests is not an option. At the current rate there is about five years of log supply remaining, and replanting of the forest would produce logs in 22 years' time at the earliest. In 2014, minister Bignell announced the replanting of 150 hectares of the Bundaleer forest, while options for the future of the whole area were explored with the community. Insufficient rainfall in winter last year meant only 60 hectares of the replant could

be completed but the operation to return 150 hectares of the scorched Bundaleer forest to pine was completed in July this year. More than 200,000 trees were planted and well-known Mid North native forest locations, including The Range and Spaniards Gully, are open to visitors once again.

The government has been consulting with the community through the Mid North Forests Future Strategy. Our focus is on jobs and the region's economic development. The strategy's expression of interest phase provided strong evidence of market interest in potential future land management uses. There is a great potential for expanded and new enterprises to employ people in the Mid North region. Recreation and tourism, commercial forestry, grazing and cropping could all deliver greater outcomes.

From January to March 2016 the government conducted the Mid North Forests Request for Proposal. This is the most significant phase of the strategy and almost 40 binding proposals were received. An interagency committee is considering the proposals and will advise minister Bignell of the advice. Proposals are being considered in detail to see how they can retain existing jobs and create new ones, as well as have a broader impact on the community and regional economy. Proposals are also being considered to see how they can address fire risk, represent value for money and complement any existing or proposed uses of the land.

We all understand the need to progress matters as soon as possible. The majority of the proposals received, however, are complex and it is important that the appropriate time is taken to consider them. Ultimately, the state government will make final decisions based on the best outcomes for the regions of South Australia. Being bound by good governance and probity requirements, all stakeholders are being treated fairly and without prejudice. A comprehensive process is under way and is being overseen by an independent probity adviser.

I understand minister Bignell has asked for the decisions on the future direction of the forests, including the finalisation of agreements for the first tranche of successful proposals, to be made by the end of September. The government will keep respondents and the community informed during the assessment process subject to commercial-in-confidence, probity and good governance considerations. I will consider the outcome of the report and then consider the need for any RDF funding support for the project.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 108. As you would be aware, high electricity prices are detrimental to economic conditions in South Australia. What are you doing, minister, within your department to improve a reliable and affordable electricity supply in regional South Australia? It is page 108, under the large heading Regions South Australia, the second paragraph down, 'Key role for regions SA to improve community's resilience and ability to respond to regional economic conditions'.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. As I travel around the regions various matters are raised with me, including through our forums for engagement with local leaders in the regions in focus forum workshops. The issue of power prices has been raised with me as a challenge facing regional businesses. As an advocate for the regions and a member in cabinet I have passed on these concerns to the minister responsible for that portfolio.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Passed on those concerns? Strongly advocating, as well as passing on the concerns, minister?

The CHAIR: I do not think the minister needs to go into detail about deliberations of cabinet either, by the way.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Like anything at all in cabinet, we will not divulge it, but I strongly advocate for lots of stuff within the regions.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 109. Of the \$30 million (\$15 million each year in the next two years of forward estimates), approximately \$10 million has been allocated to the Whyalla Small Business Loans Scheme, \$5 million has been allocated to the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback area, \$1 million to the mobile phone black spots. With regard to the remaining \$14 million over the next two years, will that money be put towards the original purpose of the RDF, or is it likely that more of that money will go to support broader government programs and needs as they come up?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. First up, my priority is for opportunities in the regions, and at this stage, unless there is some outstanding requirement or emergency, I will be focusing the Regional Development Fund as we are currently at the moment. But, with emerging opportunities, if something came out of left field, I would have to reconsider it in the priorities at the time.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: In the same way that the government is using \$16 million of that \$30 million for Whyalla, for Upper Spencer Gulf for mobile black spots, it could continue? The remaining \$14 million that you have for the current and the next financial year could be eroded even further, and not go to the original purpose of the Regional Development Fund—is that correct?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the member for his question. First, up, the fund delivers support for an approach that will provide better infrastructure, drive economic growth, create jobs and leverage increased investment in regional South Australia. If I can just mention the \$9.6 million that I think the member indicated for Whyalla—I stand corrected, that was not the figure: that was to enable it to retain jobs, so it is an opportunity for those businesses, as we made quite clear before, who may have had a cash flow problem in that interim period, so therefore I consider we would have saved X number of jobs. The focus will continue to be on maintaining or creating jobs.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 34, minister. Are you satisfied that a \$2 million contribution to the mobile phone black spot funding is sufficient contribution by the state government to build new mobile phone towers?

The Hon. T.R. KENYON: It is entirely the province of the federal government.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: It is not true, \$1 million has come out of here. I am asking the minister for an opinion.

The CHAIR: You are asking the minister for an opinion?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Yes. Is he satisfied—

Mr PEDERICK: It is in the budget.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: It is in the budget.

The CHAIR: Can you repeat the question for my benefit?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Is the minister satisfied that a \$2 million contribution to the mobile blackspot funding program is a sufficient contribution by the state government to mobile network operators to build new mobile base stations?

The CHAIR: Does that money come out of a budget line that the minister is responsible for?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Fifty per cent of it does.

The CHAIR: Okay. In that case, you can answer it.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. About 20 per cent of South Australia is covered by mobile phone signal. The remaining areas, so-called mobile blackspots, are situated in regional, rural and remote areas, which are disadvantaged by not having access to mobile phone services. Today, mobile phones are almost an essential communication service in business, industry and everyday life. That is why on 16 June 2016, in conjunction with the Minister for Science and Information Economy, I announced a \$2 million state government contribution towards the second round of the federal government program aimed at extending mobile voice and wireless broadband services throughout regional South Australia.

The program is a nationally competitive grants program which provides funding to mobile network operators to build new mobile base stations across regional locations. Round 2 of the program includes funding of \$60 million nationally and favours applications that include co-contributions from state and local governments. It is up to the mobile network operators, such as Telstra and Optus, to submit applications to the commonwealth. However, the South Australian government has sought to work with these operators to influence their priorities. Regional South Australia is the powerhouse of the state's economy, and wherever I travel in the regions I hear that mobile blackspots are impacting growth. That is why I committed \$1 million from the Regional

Development Fund towards the state government's \$2 million co-contribution to this commonwealth program.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Did you advocate for more than \$2 million to go to this program?

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! The member for Light has a point of order, apparently.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Point of order: Mr Chairman, that question would actually require the minister to divulge what is discussed in cabinet, and it is out of order.

The CHAIR: I disagree with that point of order. The minister can answer the question. Do you have an answer, minister?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Yes, I have.

The CHAIR: The minister has an answer. The minister seems perfectly happy to answer the question.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Firstly, I am advised that Tasmania put forward only \$350,000 towards the mobile blackspots. It is hard to know what the federal government is going to do with the mobile blackspots on the allocation. This program is very competitive, so let's wait and see. A minute ago, answering the member's question about what I do in the cabinet, I did say that I strongly advocate for regional issues.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I put on the record that other states are putting in \$10 million, \$20 million and \$30 million as well. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 34, the North West Indigenous Pastoral Program. What type of infrastructure has been put in place through this program? What sort of skills are the people being taught? What sort of employment opportunities will be created for them out of this program? Wrapped up in that, obviously it is a pastoral program, but is it specifically for cattle, horses, camels? What sort of a pastoral program is it, please?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The North West Indigenous Pastoral Program forms part of the government's regional Jobs Accelerator Fund, which aims to stimulate or fast-track investment to generate new and sustainable employment and participation opportunities.

The North West Indigenous Pastoral Project was established in April 2015 with state government funding of \$1.4 million over two years from 2014-15 to 2015-16 to help Indigenous landowners bring more of the land into production and establish viable pastoral businesses by employing and training Indigenous pastoral workers. The 2016-17 state budget announced that the North West Indigenous Pastoral Project will receive an additional \$1.5 million over two years from 2016-17 to 2017-18 to employ more Aboriginal pastoral trainees.

The North West Indigenous Pastoral Project has successfully engaged Aboriginal landholders, the business sector, particularly BHP Billiton, and the Indigenous Land Corporation. Of the three million hectares of Indigenous land in the north-west of South Australia only 5 per cent is currently grazed under Indigenous owned stock. The North West Indigenous Pastoral Project aims to address this opportunity by employing local Indigenous pastoral trainees and helping landowners to establish viable pastoral enterprises on their land.

The \$1.4 million from the Regional Jobs Accelerator Fund has helped to leverage additional investment into the project. Project partner, Indigenous Land Corporation, and community partner, BHP Billiton, committed \$776,000 and \$1.1 million respectively for business planning and property reinstatement for Indigenous pastoral landowners. Currently, 16 trainees are employed (with a total of 23 employed over the life of the project) with the Kokatha Pastoral Development Project, the APY Pastoral Enterprise and Bungala's Emeroo Station at Port Augusta.

Newcomers, AMY Nominees at Mabel Creek Station, are positioned to take advantage of an upcoming homestead refurbishment to house an additional three pastoral trainees for ongoing works. The project has created opportunities for Indigenous training and employment with associated infrastructure investment and transitional arrangements to ensure that the positive outcomes of the project continue. The state budget funding will support the employment of up to 20 Aboriginal pastoral

trainees, contribute to the repair and development of property infrastructure, and help to implement property management plans and transition existing pastoral trainees to independent employment.

The area that the member asked about, whether it was cattle, sheep or camels; it is mainly cattle.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Not sheep?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: No, at this stage I am advised that it is mainly cattle. It will also be about fixing fencing, housing, water tanks, road upgrades and also equipment.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Are there any employment targets associated with this program, and any targets for local employment going into the future?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Are you talking about projects on the land itself?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: No, about employment. It is an employment program essentially, trying to upgrade infrastructure so that people can be employed, so that businesses can run and there is training involved in it to create employment. Is there actually a target for how many people would be employed? You have mentioned how many are currently employed.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am advised that, as mentioned a minute ago, there have been 23 employed and to start off with that is going to be the number. With the extra money we will review that, but the whole concept of this is working with those people to get as many people through the process as we can, to give them as much training as we can to allow them, as I mentioned previously, an opportunity to get some training and for them to be able to get some full-time jobs.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: But there is no particular target for how many of them would actually get jobs into the future?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The initial target was 23 employed over the life of the project but, again, as I mentioned earlier, there is that extra \$1.5 million over the next two years so that will be reviewed. We want to try to create as many jobs as we can with these opportunities and give indigenous young people the opportunity to get employment.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, Budget Statement, page 109, under Regional Development Fund. How much of the \$10 million Whyalla Small Business Loan Scheme will come from the Regional Development Fund? Is that the \$9.6 million that you referred to before?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Can I ask the member to repeat the question?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: The \$10 million Whyalla Small Business Loan Scheme, which I think is predominantly funded out of RDF money, I am just looking for the exact amount of RDF money that went into that.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. The total is \$9.64 million. I am advised that out of that, \$7 million came from the Regional Development Fund (RDF), \$2 million came from the Jobs Accelerator Fund, and \$0.64 million came from the old Save the River Murray Fund. That gives us a total of \$9.64 million.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: What is the time frame for those loans to be repaid?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I believe that money was transferred to Treasury, and I believe that should be a question for the Treasurer to answer.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: When the money is repaid will Treasury repay your budget?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am advised that there is no arrangement in the budget for that to be repaid to the RDF. Can I also reinforce what I said a minute ago, that that loans fund is there to assist those businesses that may have a cash flow problem in the interim period—after Arrium went into administration. If that money was not allocated, some of those businesses may not have been able to succeed and some of those people may not have had a job. As I said in a previous answer, it retains the opportunity for those people to continue until such time as Arrium comes out of administration.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I am not questioning the value of the support for the people in Whyalla. What I am trying to understand—and correct me if I have this wrong—is that the RDF has handed over \$7 million, the Jobs Accelerator Fund has handed over \$2 million and I think you said the River Murray fund. Regardless, regional development money has been handed over to Treasury, Treasury will lend it to businesses in Whyalla, the businesses in Whyalla will pay the money back but Treasury will then keep that money. So your program has essentially given the money away, which I would be quite understandable if it was used for the original purpose, which is a grant of some sort for regional development, but actually you have given the money away to Treasury.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the member for his question. I reiterate: this money is there to maintain those jobs, and 200 or 300 jobs may have been there. As I mentioned a bit earlier, on the question from the member about the extra in the forward estimates, the amounts of \$15 million, we also have another \$30 million that is coming through the system. In regard to the interest-free loan scheme to support Whyalla businesses, this is part of that.

The interest-free loans are up to \$750,000 and will be available to South Australian businesses. Applications for loans will be considered on a case-by-case basis and provided over a term of up to three years. Grants may also be offered, in special circumstances, in place of a loan or in combination with a loan. Again, that is from a press release from the Treasurer and, as I say, I think that question should be referred to the Treasurer.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Can I respectfully suggest that, when that money is repaid to the Treasurer, you ask him to repay it to you, so that the people in the regions can actually get the value of the money that was originally intended for them?

The CHAIR: Suggestion noted. The member for Light has a question.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Chair, can I just point out to the member that this retained, secured, X number of jobs in the Upper Spencer Gulf in a city that is feeling the uncertainty—

The CHAIR: I think we all appreciate that. I think the member for Stuart appreciates that. The member for Light has a question.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Minister, in your opening comments, you mentioned an assistance package for the Spencer Gulf economic area. Can you provide some more details on what that package entails? That is in Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, Program 3, pages 32 to 34.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. On 12 November 2015, I announced a \$7 million economic assistance package for the Upper Spencer Gulf and outback as part of the state government's response to the challenges that the region is facing due to the contraction of the mining and energy sectors. These funds include up to \$5 million for major projects and community infrastructure from round 3 of the Regional Development Fund, which was opened early, and a once-off \$2 million Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program for small projects.

The round 3 Regional Development Fund guidelines provide a special focus for the \$5 million allocated to the Upper Spencer Gulf and outback area. Unlike previous guidelines, round 3 states that, where project proposals are assessed as being similarly competitive, preference will be given to those located within the area. The comment from the shadow minister for energy that the \$5 million is only available to the Upper Spencer Gulf and outback area when a project is better than a project elsewhere is not the case for round 3. As I have said—

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Is this an answer to the same question?

The CHAIR: It is the answer to the member for Light's question.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: As I have said, the round 3 guidelines give a preference to the area, which is the key distinction from previous rounds, and are a direct response to the challenges being faced in this region. This injection of funding to the Upper Spencer Gulf and outback communities and businesses, along with the other support measures put in place by this government, will promote business confidence, drive structural economic change and diversification and accelerate job creation in the region.

Applications for round 3 of the Regional Development Fund are currently being assessed and I look forward to informing the house about the successful projects in the coming months. The once-off \$2 million Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program will provide dollar-for-dollar grants for amounts from \$50,000 to \$200,000. Applications for the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program also being currently assessed.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Minister, you also in your opening comments made comment regarding the government's Regional Youth Traineeship Program. I did not quite get the whole picture there. Could you provide the committee with some details of the success of that program to date?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The Regional Youth Traineeship Program is one element supported by the \$10 million Regional Jobs Accelerator fund. As a result of the program, 57 young people living in regional South Australia, who were either unemployed or did not have a full-time job, have been given the opportunity to gain a traineeship in regional local government as a result of the \$2 million Regional Youth Traineeship Program. The program is now fully subscribed, and councils and other local governing authorities across non-metropolitan regions have finalised recruitment and signed contracts of training.

The program is being delivered by the Local Government Association of South Australia on behalf of the state government. The two-year program offers the participating local governing bodies \$14,500 per year, per trainee, to provide entry-level employment for young people. The program has also been designed to encourage the continued employment of these trainees after the two-year traineeship period.

The trainees will have the opportunity to gain skills and experience in many areas, including business administration, horticulture, civil works, IT and community services, and gain formal accreditation in the process. Trainees who are participating in the program will gain an invaluable foothold into the local labour market, and this will help retain young people in their regions. A series of welcome to local government induction workshops are currently being rolled out for all 57 trainees and their supervisors in 10 regional areas.

I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of these trainees during my regular visits to the regions, and they have all impressed me with their enthusiasm and their gratitude for the opportunity that has been presented to them by this traineeship. I can say to members here that these people are forever grateful for the opportunity to have full-time employment and get something on their CV to allow them to get full-time employment.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 108. Minister, as part of your agreement with the Premier to help the Labor Party form government, you got a commitment from the government that one minister would spend at least one day, each week, in a regional area. Have you been keeping track of whether that commitment has been fulfilled?

The CHAIR: The minister can choose to answer this, but it is not related to the budget at all. The minister can choose to respond or not, or we can go on to the next question.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: It is related to the very first paragraph of that page.

The CHAIR: Well, I do not have my glasses on.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: It is not a budget line.

The CHAIR: It is not a budget line, but the minister can choose, for the next two minutes, to entertain us with his thoughts.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: It would be a very easy 'yes' if it was true.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: They are undermining your authority, Lee.

The CHAIR: No, I am saying it is up to the minister. If he chooses to give us his thoughts ranging around the idea of his agreement with the Premier, that is fine, but it is not related to the budget, and we have about a minute left.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: First up, can I point out that the agreement is not with the Minister for Regional Development. The agreement is with the member—

The CHAIR: So, it is doubly irrelevant. In that case, I rule it out of order, and we will go on to the next question.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am quite happy to answer the question; however, I just want to point out the agreement is with the member for Frome. The visits to the regions by the ministers are well-received. They are appreciated by the ministers going out there, and they are monitored by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: And how are they going? Are they fulfilling the obligation?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: You are doubly out of order.

The CHAIR: Yes, that is right. You may get away with asking the Premier that question, since it is being administered by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: It is proving very successful.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: I refer to page 109 in the same book. Was the expenditure for the independent report prepared for the government by Ernst & Young into the value of RDF to which you referred a while ago paid for out of RDF funding? If not, where was the payment from?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: If I may, I will get the CE of PIRSA, Mr Scott Ashby, to answer that because it comes from another area.

Mr ASHBY: Sorry, could you just repeat the question, so I can be clear?

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: The independent Ernst & Young report, which the minister referred to before, is a self-evaluation, essentially, of the impact of RDF. Was that report paid for out of RDF funding and, if not, what part of regional development funding did pay for it?

Mr ASHBY: No, it was not paid for out of the RDF. It was actually paid for out of the Regions SA operational budget.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: Okay, thanks, Mr Ashby.

The CHAIR: There being no further questions to the Minister for Regional Development, I declare the examination of those proposed payments completed.

Sitting suspended from 15:45 to 16:00.

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE, \$636,641,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, \$9,719,000**

Membership:

Mr Griffiths substituted for Mr van Holst Pellekaan.

Minister:

Hon. G.G. Brock, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Hogben, General Manager, Planning and Transport Policy, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr B. Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Ms A. Hart, Manager, Office of Local Government, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

The CHAIR: Welcome back, minister, this time in your capacity as Minister for Local Government. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 3. I now call on the minister to make a statement, if he wishes, and to introduce his new advisers

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Chair, if I could get my assistants to introduce themselves, with Ms Alex Hart being the first one.

Ms HART: Ms Alex Hart, Manager, Office of Local Government, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr CAGIALIS: Bill Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr HOGBEN: Don Hogben, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, General Manager, Planning and Transport Policy.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The Office of Local Government is largely a policy unit that sits within the Development Division of the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. OLG provides advice to the Minister for Local Government on:

- the constitution and operations of the local government system, including the legislative framework that governs councils;
- the relationship between the state government and councils and bodies such as the Local Government Association;
- whole-of-government policy and legislation as they affect local government; and
- the statutory authorities that are responsible to the Minister for Local Government—the Local Government Grants Commission and the Outback Communities Authority.

With regard to the Grants Commission, I draw members' attention to the recent appointment of Mr Rory McEwen as a member of the commission. Mr McEwen is a former local government minister and past mayor of the District Council of Grant. He brings to the commission a wealth of knowledge and experience and he is highly regarded across the local government sector. I would also like to express my gratitude to outgoing commission member, Jane Gascoigne. Ms Gascoigne has made a significant contribution to the work of the commission, notably in reviewing the methodology used by the commission in formulating its recommendations.

I propose to outline the key priorities that have been progressed over the past financial year and those that will be a focus for further action in the year ahead. In July 2015, I introduced the Local Government (Accountability and Governance) Amendment Bill 2015 into parliament, which was assented to in November and proclaimed on 31 March this year. The amendment act has changed the Local Government Act to improve councils' accountability and governance. In addition to priorities that I identified as minister, it has implemented a range of recommendations made by the South Australian Ombudsman and other bodies as a result of investigations and audits of local government matters.

The amendment act included many miscellaneous amendments to achieve a more consistent and contemporary legislative framework for the local government sector and, importantly, strengthened requirements for council accountability and governance. Notably, the amendment act included new provisions allowing council members to more effectively manage the conflicts of interest that may arise as council business is conducted.

Prior to this, the Local Government Act required all conflicts to be declared, but there was only one way to manage these: to leave the meeting room. There was no ability to closely manage serious conflicts of interest that could influence a council members' actions, while also being able to simply acknowledge less direct or perceived interests that would not have the same impact. This is the flexibility that the amendment act provided.

The Office of Local Government worked closely with the Local Government Association to develop these reforms and, at my direction, the proposed legislative reforms were the subject of extensive consultation. Indeed, during the parliamentary debate on the bill, the member for Goyder acknowledged this extensive and thorough consultation. Despite this, the LGA has since expressed concerns about the operation of the new provisions that were not articulated during this consultation. Of course, the implementation of the new legislation often identifies some teething problems, and I am addressing those procedural issues through the relevant regulations, as appropriate.

Ensuring that the legislation guiding the governance of councils is of the highest standard is one of my most important roles as Minister for Local Government. Alongside the implementation of the amendment act, work is continuing on the review of the codes of conduct for council members and council employees.

These codes are an essential tool for ensuring that council members and employees act in the interests of the public they are elected or appointed to serve. As a result of extensive consultation, new codes have been prepared as draft regulations. They will be simpler, avoid duplicating responsibilities under the Local Government Act and other acts and be more contemporary by addressing matters that have been raised over the last two years. Both the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption and the Ombudsman have provided detailed comments on the codes, and I thank them for their valuable contributions.

It is intended that the draft regulations will be provided shortly to the sector and to the member for Goyder for consultation. Importantly, until these regulations are made, the existing codes of conduct will remain in force. Continuing my commitment to review and improve the local government legislative framework, the government is also reviewing the provisions in the Local Government Act relating to council boundary changes.

We have an opportunity to put a better process in place, one that deals with minor boundary changes efficiently and enables freer debate and discussion on more significant structural reform opportunities. Following discussion at the Premier's State/Local Government Forum, the government and the LGA have agreed on a proposed new framework that will allow for a more effective way of proposing and considering submissions for council boundary changes. A draft bill on these reforms will be released soon for public consultation and I expect that a bill will be introduced into parliament in the spring session of this year.

In conclusion, I want to briefly touch on the continuing work of the Premier's State/Local government forum. Some of the key issues dealt with by the forum over the past year include local government reform, in particular council boundary changes, potential models for a state/local government infrastructure investment partnership, economic priorities and collaboration on road investment. Discussion has also been held on the schedule of priorities for 2016-17 that forms an important part of the state/local government relations agreement. In concluding my opening remarks, I would like to acknowledge the good work of councils across South Australia over the past 12 months, recognising the importance of the services they deliver for their communities.

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

Mr GRIFFITHS: A brief one sir, if I may. Minister, thank you for that. I would like to put on the record my acknowledgement of the former member for Mount Gambier, Mr Rory McEwen's appointment to the grants commission, and I do pay particular respect to Jane Gascoigne in her role, not just as a commissioner in the most recent of times, but as an executive officer in the past. She does possess a significant amount of knowledge about local government across the state. There will be some questions that stem from some of the minister's introductory comments too.

In the last six months, in particular, I have met with many councils that have allowed me to reacquaint some relationships that I had before coming into this place. I have met them about one particular piece of legislation and policy, which I hope there is an opportunity to ask them a question about.

The CHAIR: Which shall not speak its name.

Mr GRIFFITHS: It will, to some degree, Chair.

The CHAIR: I would be very careful about it.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I put one clarifying point on this, because the description or objective of the Office of Local Government is: 'The Office of Local Government provides policy and other advice to the Minister for Local Government'. Therefore, I would assume that in the rate capping legislation, that I proposed, which has subsequently lost, that the minister had advice and contact and used the facilities and the expertise available in the Office of Local Government to actually form the opinion that he took when it came to the legislative debate and vote on it, which was in June.

Given that the responsibility of the office is to provide the minister with advice, can the minister outline what advice or policy opportunities he has been provided with when it comes to the level of rates that are charged upon South Australians? Minister, I just need to get from you information of the sort of advice that you have received about rates, as they exist, not about any other effect that might come into it, but I would like this to go to opportunities for efficiency demands to be in place and the potential for what is charged upon people to be reviewed, to be considered and for some form of advice given to councils about what they should be increasing by.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: It is the government's view that councils should determine, with their communities, the right balance between providing services and raising the rates needed to pay for them. Rate capping takes this decision out of the hands of councils and communities. Also, there is evidence from other jurisdictions that capping rates can restrict the level of services that councils can provide for their ratepayers and create large backlogs in both the maintenance and replacement of important infrastructure. The government supports councils continuing to have the power to set their own rates and manage their budgets in consultation with their community.

Councils should be accountable to their communities, not to an external body for their rating decisions. Councils need to have conversations with their communities about the services they demand and their willingness to pay for them. The act already provides ratepayers with a number of opportunities to voice their concerns or perspectives about the rates set by their councils and, ultimately, councils are held accountable to ratepayers for the decisions they make.

Having said that, I think that many councils could do a much better job in engaging their communities in this debate. After all, the decision to set rates is possibly the decision that has the most impact on community members. The act includes quite detailed provisions telling councils what they must do to engage with their communities on their annual business plan. Councils are required to do things such as publicly release a draft plan and hold public meetings to discuss it.

I have made it quite clear to the Local Government Association that while I do not support rate capping, I also expect that councils will make every effort to engage fully with their communities and that the LGA will take a leading role in supporting them to do this. It is very important to remember that councils have a range of measures available to them to provide rate relief to those who need it. These include methods such as the remission of rates or postponement of payments. Of course, the state government has stepped in with the cost-of-living concession. This will provide an annual payment of \$200 to pensioners and low-income earners who own their own homes, \$100 for pensioners and low-income earners who are tenants, and \$100 for self-funded retirees who hold a commonwealth seniors health card.

I have promoted, through the LGA and through my visits to all councils, regional and metropolitan, that this is about the opportunity to become more efficient in their operation, resource sharing, knowledge sharing and whatever they can do that. While I have stated what I have done in my firm and informed position on the rate capping or other external mechanism that restricts the conversations councils can have with their communities, I believe councils have the opportunity to become more efficient. I have had that discussion with councils and I get plenty of advice from the Office of Local Government.

Mr GRIFFITHS: For the benefit of the record, I indicate that I was nodding my head in agreement with the minister's comments about efficiencies and resource sharing.

The CHAIR: I do not think *Hansard* picked up you nodding, anyway.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I am in a way describing it because on those things, minister, we completely agree. I suppose the difference is that, via a legislative framework, I have proposed the option of the

need for this to physically exist and to be implemented, whereas the minister has said he has referred to having words with councils. What is following on from the words, minister? You have said this to many councils, either collectively or individually, but what is occurring within the Office of Local Government and the staff for whom you have responsibility to ensure that actions actually result from it?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: As we understand—we have both had experience in local government—local government is a separate sphere of government and should be responsible for their operations and what they have to do for their communities. I have indicated before that I do not think it is right that one form of government should be forcing something on to another part of government, but it is something we all need to do. All councils, everybody, needs to look at more efficient ways of doing things.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, the challenge for me is in accepting part of the argument from you where you talked about what you said to councils about being efficient, but then also saying 'not forcing things' on people. In the legislation that I propose, it is done by a completely autonomous body, it is not a political decision that is made.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, I do not want to get bogged down in the policy debate that we have already had ad infinitum, and we had a committee report into it recently. We are just traversing the same ground, I think, and it is barely related to the budget.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I will be prepared to move on—

The CHAIR: Do you have questions about the budget?

Mr GRIFFITHS: I do, but also questions about the committee report, which has been referred to.

The CHAIR: You can ask me those questions privately, if you like.

Mr GRIFFITHS: No, I am actually going to refer it to the minister. The minister would be aware of the Economic and Finance Committee investigation into rate capping, and its report was tabled in the parliament recently. One of those recommendations was about the Auditor-General being involved in the review of the financial transactions of the council. Is that an option that the minister is pursuing? Does he have a position on that recommendation?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The Economic and Finance Committee announced an inquiry into rate capping in May 2015. In addition to 21 written submissions, the committee held five public hearings and heard testimony from 23 witnesses. The final report, which was tabled on 6 July 2016, contained four recommendations, including:

- Local councils retain full authority to set their own rates and that no rate cap be introduced;
- Local councils continue to set rates after full consultation with their communities;
- Councils be subject to a thorough auditing process under the auspices of the Auditor-General, consistent with section 30 of the Public Finance and Audit Act;
- Councils be required to publish, on an annual basis, these audits.

I will respond to the recommendations identified in the report in accordance of section 19 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991.

In regard to the committee's proposal to require the Auditor-General to audit all councils, I have directed the Office of Local Government to provide me with advice on this proposal and, as noted, will respond to the committee at the appropriate time. So, I am taking that on board.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Thank you, minister, for the response. This is a question about some of the decisions that have been made that impact directly upon local government, particularly when it is an issue that has to be covered by them as part of the rates they charge property owners, and where some rather significant policy decisions have been made by government overall, at which you as a minister sit as part of cabinet when decisions are made.

I am interested in, for example, the natural resources management levy and the significant increases over two years, which is a direct cost upon property owners. Do you support that decision,

and have you been engaged in conversations with local government, either individually or collectively, about the impacts of that decision?

The CHAIR: The first part of that question, presumably, is answered by the fact that the minister is a member of cabinet, so he does not have to range over whether or not he agrees with a decision of government. As to the second part of your question—

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I thank the member for his question. I am aware that a motion was passed at the LGA's April 2016 ordinary general meeting requesting the LGA to lobby the state government for a cessation of the current collection method of the NRM levy. The state government has partnered with the LGA on several occasions to determine the best way of collecting the NRM levy, and it has been determined that the fairest, or the most cost-effective, method of collecting is through the local councils. The NRM levy is itemised as a separate rate on the council notices, so that it is clear to the ratepayer that they are contributing by way of an NRM levy. The levy is spent in the region in which it is raised to address sustainable land and water management priorities defined within the regional NRM plan.

What I would encourage is for the member to address anything further here for the responsible minister. I said in the previous estimates under regional development that I advocate very strongly for anything to do with the regions. I am not going to go into what was discussed in the cabinet as the Chair has indicated, but I certainly would encourage the member for Goyder to address these questions to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, the Hon. Ian Hunter, in the MLC.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, I have been pretty generous, but can we bring questions back to specific budget lines?

Mr GRIFFITHS: It still relates to the Office of Local Government policy and other advice to the Minister from Local Government.

The CHAIR: So the description objective on page 97?

Mr GRIFFITHS: The budget line for this is only two pages.

The CHAIR: That is right.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I am grateful for the fact that you are reasonably generous. I appreciate that.

The CHAIR: It is part of my nature.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Can I ask a question, because it has a direct impact, about the solid waste levy increase, which was announced just prior to the state budget being delivered? For many councils, it was either just before or just after they had made a budget decision for the 2016-17 year. Can the minister outline what he has done to advocate for the local government industry on this matter?

The CHAIR: I make the point again that a lot of these questions about what the minister has done to advocate for various parts of government policy presumably were done in cabinet, or were done as part of some sort of cabinet process and the minister does not have to range over it.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am just going to reinforce that I am not going to divulge what is discussed in cabinet or the outcomes, but I reiterate that I advocate strongly for regions. I have regular meetings, and one just recently, with the president of the Local Government Association, and he had a meeting with the Treasurer. I would again encourage the member to have the discussion with the relevant minister, who is the Treasurer.

Mr GRIFFITHS: This question is about the Office of Local Government and the size of it. I note that it is 7.6 full-time equivalent staff—

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: It is 7.6?

Mr GRIFFITHS: That is under FTEs as at 30 June.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: It is 7.6?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes, 2016-17 budget period, 7.6 staff. It has reduced from what the budget estimate for 2015- 6 had been. That was 13; it was actually 8.5. Can the minister provide a reason why it reduced from 13 to 8.5, just for the record?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: If I can, I will get Bill Cogalis from the DPTI to answer because it is about the administrative side.

Mr CAGIALIS: The 13 FTEs is a capped number and the actual FTEs have remained pretty steady over the years at around the 8, 8.5, 7.6 in 2016-17. When the Office of Local Government joined the department a couple of years ago, the cap was just higher than what it should have been, but the actual FTEs have remained steady in the last two or three years.

Mr GRIFFITHS: That is an interesting response. I would have thought the cap was closer to what the real needs were, and what the demands of it were, not an inflated figure. I have not heard that one before. Anyway, I appreciate the answer. Thank you for that. I am particularly interested in the opportunity for the Office of Local Government to provide more of an advice active role when it comes to local government across the state, because in years past (which you and I both remember) a lot more staff were involved with it. Is this something that you are interested in doing? Do you believe that there needs to be a very close liaison between the Local Government Association and the OLG to ensure that the resources are there so that councils, given that they manage \$22 billion worth of assets, can actually do things as best as they can?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The role of the Office of Local Government has been to assist the Local Government Association and councils with the legislative framework and tools to be able to manage everything. Councils themselves operate as an independent body. We have meetings with the LGA, the president and the CE on a regular basis. We also have the Premier's State/Local Government Forum and everything is discussed there. The assistance from the Office of Local Government is really well received by the LGA.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will follow on from the member for Goyder's good question. I refer to Budget 4, Volume 3, Portfolio Statement, page 87. Could the minister elaborate upon what mechanisms are in place to ensure engagement with the local government sector and to strengthen the relationship between state and local government?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Is that Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is correct.

Mr Griffiths interjecting:

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder for pointing out there are two pages. On 29 January 2015, the Premier, the president of the Local Government Association and I signed the State/Local Government Relations Agreement. The agreement guides strategic planning, policy development, decision-making processes and consultation arrangements between state and local government in South Australia, with a view to achieving better strategic alignment.

The Premier's State/Local Government Forum (the forum) is a key mechanism that assists in achieving the principles and commitments of the agreement. The forum provides advice to the Premier, myself as Minister for Local Government and the Local Government Association on matters of priority to both state and local government that require the cooperation of both sectors of government to reach effective resolution.

The forum meets four times a year to oversee and progress matters. It also endorses a schedule of priorities as an appendix to the State/Local Government Relations Agreement that outlines annual priorities for joint action. A communiqué which provides a summary of outcomes is released after each forum meeting and is available on the Office of Local Government website. The forum last met on Friday 13 May 2016. Further discussion was held on progressing a legislative framework for revising the Local Government Act 1999 on potential council boundary changes and structural reform, potential models for a state-local government infrastructure investment partnership, economic priorities, and the schedule of priorities for 2016-17.

The meeting preceding that, held on 16 December 2015, included discussion on local government reform, collaboration on road investment, local government finances and the cost for

public lighting and the potential for innovative uses of that infrastructure. The forum also met on 16 September 2015 to discuss local government's role in the economic growth of the state. The Premier and the Local Government Association president jointly acknowledge the capacity of councils to contribute to new economic activity and new job creation in South Australia.

The forum noted that the benefits of planning reform will be optimised if state and local government work in partnership in the delivery of a new system and discussed the local government elections review and the progress of a number of local government reform matters, including council boundary changes and regional governance models. The next forum meeting is scheduled for this Friday, 5 August, where consideration will be given to endorsing and signing the schedule of priorities for this financial year.

The government remains committed to regular and effective communication, consultation and negotiations with the local government sector on the formulation and implementation of key policies, legislative proposals and significant programs and projects affecting both spheres of government.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I have a couple of questions arising from that statement, if I may. The minister referred to planning reform as part of the work that the forum has been discussing. Can the minister confirm how many years it is expected that local government will be paying a levy as part of the planning reform implementation costs?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder. I will answer the question to the best of my ability, but I must encourage the member for Goyder to direct such questions to the relevant minister, which is the Minister for Planning, the Hon. John Rau. However, one of the key components of the planning reform process, underpinned by the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016, is to change the way South Australians interact with the planning system through the establishment of a single online planning portal with links to council and agency websites.

To fund the implementation program, the South Australian government will meet the entire capital works program up-front and align a cost recovery strategy with the delivery of benefits. The chief executive of the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure is empowered under section 56 of the act to impose fees and charges with respect to gaining access to information or material held on the e-planning portal. The power to require a contribution from councils requires the chief executive to take reasonable steps to consult with the LGA before setting or varying any such contribution.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Just for clarification, do you know how long the levy will be in place? Given that you have that level of answer provided to you for this afternoon, is the advice of your staff able to extend to that information?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I would encourage the member for Goyder to seek further details, including time frames, from minister Rau.

Mr GRIFFITHS: To me this comes back to the portfolio responsibility and the involvement that has to occur. I know what the answer is: it is 13 years. I assume that as part of the—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Point of order, Mr Chair: why ask the question?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Because I want to find out whether the minister knows the answer.

The CHAIR: Hang on, the member for Light has a point of order.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The member has just admitted that he knows the answer, so why ask the question?

The CHAIR: That is not really a point of order.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Is the minister able to confirm what advocacy he has undertaken for local government in the negotiations about the levy, about the e-planning portal?

The CHAIR: We have addressed this very point and the minister does not need to answer this question. The member for Wright has a question, though. I hope it is in order.

Mr GRIFFITHS: The minister would like to say something.

The CHAIR: Yes, minister.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the member. First, what was discussed in the cabinet will not be discussed here. Secondly, I would have thought that the member would have asked these questions of minister Rau when he had the opportunity during the previous estimates.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: I refer to the obvious pages in Budget Paper 4 in relation to local government. I am very interested in the turnout for local government elections. Can the minister advise what progress is being made in reviewing local government elections?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for her question. Periodic elections are held every four years for all councils, except Roxby Downs, which is governed by an administrator. The last local government election was held in November 2014, as I am sure we are all aware. The returning officer is the Electoral Commissioner, with voting being voluntary and conducted entirely by postal voting.

The government is looking to make effective and practical changes to the local government elections process in order to meet increasingly high community expectations for transparency and participation in debate on important local issues. The Office of Local Government, with input from the Electoral Commissioner and the Local Government Association, is finalising the review of the 2014 local government elections.

A discussion paper was circulated by the Office of Local Government (OLG) with the assistance of the Local Government Association. The review has focused on particular matters identified by the three agencies with the aim of improving the operation of the elections as well as voter participation.

These matters included electronic voting in local government elections; automatic property franchise entitlements; caretaker provisions; concurrent timing of state and local government elections; access by candidates to electronic copies of the voters' roll; disclosure of candidates' political affiliations and memberships; and disclosure of the residential address of candidates. A number of submissions were received and considered, and it is safe to say that views across local government varied on some issues.

Further detailed work is being undertaken by the Office of Local Government and the Electoral Commission about the implementation of some measures, while the Local Government Association carries out further consultation across the local government sector to determine its position on the issues that I have indicated are under consideration. Any proposed legislative amendments arising out of the review of the 2014 local government elections will be introduced to parliament well ahead of the next local government elections in November 2018.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Again, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87. In the highlights, there is mention of Leigh Creek. Can you advise the committee what steps are being taken to ensure a smooth transition in the provision of services in Leigh Creek and communities in the northern Flinders region?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The Outback Communities Authority (OCA) is responsible for supporting services and infrastructure in areas of South Australia that are not within a council area. Leigh Creek township is within the OCA's area of operations. The Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation (Hon. Kyam Maher MLC) has been leading the government response to the Alinta closures.

Leigh Creek township is the primary service centre for the far north-eastern part of the state. It provides a central location for education, health, police and retail, along with the provision of potable water and waste management for communities in the immediate vicinity. On 30 May 2016, the government announced that it will provide \$18 million over five years to support the future management of the Leigh Creek township.

A range of agencies, including the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI), SA Water and the OCA are being funded to ensure that township services transition smoothly to government on 1 January 2017. It is my intention to ensure that Leigh Creek will remain open for

business beyond July 2018 and continue to provide essential support to approximately 700 people in the northern Flinders region.

The OCA will assume operational management of the township on 1 January 2017 and provide municipal services in collaboration with DPTI and SA Water. To do this, the OCA will be provided with around about \$8.8 million over five years for the provision of council-like services, including maintenance of parks, gardens and township facilities, rubbish collection and management, aerodrome operations, swimming pool operations and care of public buildings and structures.

The OCA has the capacity to employ a town administrator with administrative support, with the administrator being located in Leigh Creek. DPTI appointed a transition manager to oversee and coordinate government agencies to ensure an effective and efficient transition occurs on 1 January 2017. The Leigh Creek transition manager will be employed for a period of 12 months and is being funded from the remaining budget allocation of \$1 million for Leigh Creek transition planning, which was approved in January 2016.

The economic opportunities for the region identified by Dr Jane Lomax-Smith in her Leigh Creek Futures paper can also be progressed alongside the transition of township management to the OCA. I am very confident that the government's commitment is such that Leigh Creek and the northern Flinders community will consolidate an economically sustainable future.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I also respect the importance of the question from the member for Wright. It was appropriate that the response be provided, so I commend the government on what it has done there. Can I just ask a question, minister, on community wastewater management schemes? The ongoing funding opportunity for those is rather important to local government, and I am aware that there was an agreement signed by, I believe, the minister and the president of the Local Government Association for a review group to be established. My understanding is that was meant to report by the end of July. Can the minister confirm what stage that is at?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The state government continues to support councils throughout South Australia to construct community wastewater management systems, or CWMS, as they are known. The CWMS agreement provides for an annual allocation, which is currently approximately \$4 million per annum, to the Local Government Association to subsidise councils that provide a CWMS, primarily in regional towns and cities where conventional urban sewer systems are not provided by SA Water or other major water industry authorities.

The current agreement commenced on 1 July 2008 and will expire on 30 June 2017. The funding enables councils to provide these services at a cost to users that is equivalent to the cost of SA Water-provided sewerage schemes. The state's subsidy ensures equity between our regional and metropolitan citizens for this essential service. The agreement requires that the funds are allocated by the LGA on the advice of a CWMS management committee and according to conditions and principles set out in the agreement and the state government policy for CWMS. The management committee consists of representatives from local government and a broad range of relevant state government agencies, including the Office of Local Government (OLG), the Environment Protection Authority—

Mr GRIFFITHS: Mr Chair, I am reluctant to be rude, but my question related to the review group, and the minister has not given any reference to the review group so far.

The CHAIR: I think he is contextualising, but we will get there.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I was going to give you a bit of the history of it because, at the end of the day, this goes on *Hansard*, and, when people read it, they would like to understand what the scheme is doing. However, if the member for Goyder does not want that on there, I am quite happy to answer specifically about the review. The current agreement between the state government and the LGA expires on 30 June 2017.

Mr GRIFFITHS: As you have already said.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Yes, I was getting to all this.

Mr GRIFFITHS: No, you have leapt forward to the next page.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, please don't distract the minister from his flow.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The government has not yet committed to either continuing the CWMS funding program beyond 30 June 2017 in its current or some revised form or terminating the agreement and the funding program. Therefore, as the existing agreement does not represent a precedent for future funding, and in order to inform my decision-making, I have committed to a joint review of the agreement with the LGA.

I have recently received the progress report that I requested from the LGA and I am pleased to note that the LGA and the relevant state agencies are working together on the important review. At the conclusion of the review, I will be in a position to consider the report findings and the future of the CWMS agreement well before the expiry of the current agreement in June 2017.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Excellent. I am grateful for those words minister. As part of your comments this afternoon you have talked about the boundary adjustments and the legislation that is required. It was my understanding that a draft of that legislation would have been available by now, the intention being to introduce the bill for debate in the spring session of parliament. Where is that legislation at?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: A draft bill will be released for consultation very soon. I am intending, after the consultation, to put the bill before the parliament this Spring.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, can I ask for clarification on 'very soon'? Is that two weeks away, one month away?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Very soon, Mr Chair—and very, very, very soon.

Mr GRIFFITHS: The member for Light might be flippant about it but I am not. On the basis that it is a draft, it goes out for consultation, the feedback has to come back in, a review has to be undertaken and then the legislation gets tabled. I am just trying to make sure that there is an opportunity for this to be legislatively debated through both chambers by the time 2016 finishes. Is that your target also?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The draft bill will be out there very, very, very soon for consultation. I will ensure that there is plenty of time for consultation between councils and the community, and it is my intention to have this bill introduced this year.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Excellent. Minister, can I ask a question about the impact upon local government of community housing providers and the rates rebate or remission that is required as part of section 161? It was part of draft legislation that you showed me early last year, but it was not in the legislation that was tabled and debated subsequently. Can the minister confirm, on the basis of his feedback from councils that potentially may be impacted by the transfer of housing stock and the rebate or remission having to be given, what he is doing to try to ensure there is a system in place that gives some surety to councils?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is a relevant question, but I thought this estimates process is about the budget consideration. These are matters that are best prosecuted I would have thought in question time. That is what it is for.

The CHAIR: Yes, you are right member for Light. The member is referring to statements that have been made in the previous 45 minutes. It is in context I, think.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Strangely, he has an answer.

The CHAIR: The minister can answer this in any way he chooses.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder for his question. This issue was explained in estimates last year, from memory. This issue was raised last year and I was assured by the then minister for housing and urban development that the application for council rate rebates would be considered on a case-by-case basis. I understand that the Minister for Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Stephen Mullighan) recently met with the Local Government Association on this matter and asked Renewal SA to undertake more detailed conversations with the LGA and affected councils in the near future. The Premier also wrote to the LGA in January this year confirming that in future transfers the state government would decide on rebates on a case-by-case basis. This will

provide councils with the opportunity to make their own views known well and truly before any decisions are made.

I inform the member, this matter comes under an act of the parliament that is facilitated by another minister, any further questions on this matter should be directed to minister Mullighan.

Mr GRIFFITHS: It is just interesting to me, yes.

The Hon. A. Piccolo interjecting:

The CHAIR: No, the member for Light, the member for Goyder is wasting his own time.

Mr GRIFFITHS: A case-by-case basis provides no surety to anyone; that is just it. That is what my concern has always been.

The CHAIR: Do you have another question?

Mr GRIFFITHS: I do.

The Hon. A. Piccolo interjecting:

The CHAIR: The member for Light.

Mr GRIFFITHS: That provides surety, too.

The CHAIR: Member for Light, we have 10 minutes to go.

Mr GRIFFITHS: This is about advice from the Office of Local Government to the minister. Can the minister confirm what advice he was provided by the Office of Local Government about the street renewal program and how many councils have been provided with that opportunity?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have had no advice from the Office of Local Government on this. Again, this does not come under my portfolio but I would encourage the member to ask that question. However, again, I have had no advice from OLG on this project.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I just asked this question on the basis that when a significant amount of dollars is offered to one council only, if that is an issue that the Office of Local Government is briefed about or the minister is briefed about—but it appears not. The Local Government Association, as part of its budget submission for the 2016-17 state budget, put forward a paper which no doubt the minister has reviewed. There were 12 recommendations or priorities in that which the Local Government Association sought support from. Is the minister able to give an outline, briefly preferably, on the position held in those 12 areas? I am happy for it to be taken on notice.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am quite happy to take that on notice because I do not have it with me at the moment, but I am certainly happy to get back to the member.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Can the minister confirm what level of involvement he and the Office of Local Government have had with the Ombudsman audit that was undertaken on section 270 of the act, internal review procedures for local government?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am advised that the Office of Local Government has regular meetings with the Ombudsman, and I would get advice from the Office of Local Government when any audit has been completed.

Mr GRIFFITHS: As part of that, it is my understanding that there is a 12-month time limit in place for the Ombudsman to undertake an investigation. Is that actually the case? In relation to the number of issues reported to the Ombudsman, how many of them, as a percentage of the total amount, are not able to be considered or resolved within that 12-month time frame?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder. Pursuant to section 25(3) of the Ombudsman Act 1972, the Ombudsman is required to provide me with a copy of a report or recommendations in relation to an investigation where the Ombudsman has found there has been an administrative error. Section 273 of the Local Government Act 1999 empowers me to take action on the basis of a report of the Ombudsman.

Accordingly, the Ombudsman advises me if a council or a council member does not comply with his or her recommendations. Not only are the reports important to advising me of administrative

errors in local government governance but they are also a medium for the Ombudsman to issue recommendations for legislative reform where necessary.

I just have to check, Mr Chairman, because I have some figures here which I want to make certain I am allowed to say in the *Hansard*. In the 2015-16 financial year, the Ombudsman provided me with approximately 20 such reports. I note these and request further advice on any action that may be appropriate for me to take. Any question regarding the number of complaints investigated and the time in which they are done with should be directed to the Ombudsman direct or to the Attorney-General.

Mr GRIFFITHS: The minister referred to the work of the Premier's State/Local Government Forum, and public lighting was one of the issues you talked about. Given that there has been some exposure to the Eastern Region Alliance and the tender it had let, has the minister sought an update on the situation there?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder. As quoted in the media, I think the Eastern Region Alliance had engaged an independent consultant to review their tender process for their street lighting replacement program, which I believe is the one the member is talking about. I understand that this review has been completed and soon will be presented for consideration by the mayors of the constituent councils.

As I have said in the media, if there are concerns about the tender process, these should be directed to the Office for Public Integrity or the Ombudsman. These bodies are the appropriate independent authorities to receive complaints and are empowered to conduct investigations if they consider that this is warranted.

Mr GRIFFITHS: To clarify, if that was your public record statement about referring it to another authority, minister at your own initiative you have not sought a briefing opportunity from anyone from ERA about the issue at all?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thanks for the question. Not at this stage, but you must remember that under the act the Ombudsman is required to provide me with a copy of a report or recommendations in relation to an investigation where the Ombudsman has found there to be an administrative error. Section 273 of the Local Government Act 1999 empowers me to take appropriate action on the basis of a report from the Ombudsman.

The CHAIR: I think we had best go to the omnibus questions.

Mr KNOLL: I ask the following questions:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2015-16 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. In financial year 2015-16 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 2016-17?

3. For each department and 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 2014-15 and 2015-16.

4. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budget of all grant programs administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, and for 2015-16 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, the purpose of the grant and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction 15.

5. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the corporate overhead costs allocated to each individual program and subprogram administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you detail:
- (a) How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2015-16?
 - (b) Which department funded these TVSPs?
 - (c) What number of TVSPs was funded?
 - (d) What is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how these packages are to be funded?

7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2016, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices and ministerial liaison officers?

The CHAIR: Sadly, we are out of time. I thank the minister for coming in and thank his advisers for their hard work, and all members of the committee and staff. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments complete. I lay before the committee a draft report.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I move:

That the draft report be the report of the committee.

Motion carried.

At 17.01 the committee concluded.