

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**Wednesday, 26 September 2018**  
**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

**Chair:**

Mr S.J. Duluk

**Members:**

Hon. S.E. Close  
Mr D.K.B. Basham  
Mr B.I. Boyer  
Mr F.J. Ellis  
Mr A.S. Pederick  
Ms D. Wortley

*The committee met at 09:00*

*Estimates Vote*

**DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$2,642,198,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$301,007,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner, Minister for Education.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education.  
Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education.  
Mr B. Temperly, Executive Director, System Performance, Department for Education.  
Ms S. Cameron, Executive Director, Learning Improvement, Department for Education.  
Mr C. Vetere, Director, Budget and Finance, Department for Education.  
Ms C. Bauer, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** Good morning, everybody. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. Can the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition confirm that a timetable for today's proceedings as previously distributed is accurate?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes.

**Dr CLOSE:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee

secretary by no later than Friday 26 October 2018. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each, should they wish.

There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced.

Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*. There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house; that is, that it is of a purely statistical nature and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister and not the minister's advisers (and I will be hot on that, as I have been all week), and the minister may refer questions to advisers for a response, if appropriate.

The committee's examination will be broadcast in the same manner as the sittings of the house are broadcast, and that is through the IPTV system within Parliament House and via the web stream link to the internet. I will now proceed to open the following lines of examination, being the portfolio School Education. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education. The estimate of payments is Department for Education and administered items for the Department for Education. I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 2. I call the minister to introduce his advisers and to make an opening statement, if he so desires.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** On my right is Rick Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education; on my left is Chris Bernardi, Executive Director of Finance; and Ben Temperly, Executive Director of System Performance. Behind me are the departmental officers and advisers.

I will not make a long opening statement, other than to say that I have enjoyed nothing more in my working life than the opportunity to serve as Minister for Education over the last six months or so. The opportunity afforded to the minister and shadow minister for education is that we get to spend much of our days visiting schools, preschools and educational institutions, talking with teachers, parents, students and educators, celebrating their achievements and working on ways that we can better serve their needs in our shared desire to ensure that South Australia's education system is the best it can be. We have bold ambitions and we are working hard to achieve them. I thank all of those staff in the education department, in our schools and other educational facilities for the work that they dedicate their lives to doing.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, minister. Deputy leader, do you have an opening statement or would you like to go straight into questions?

**Dr CLOSE:** No, straight to questions, thank you. I would like to start with reference to Budget Paper 3, page 53, regarding the funding that comes from the commonwealth government to the state for non-government schools. At present, there is an estimation of an increase in that, I believe due to Gonski 2.0—so the Birmingham edition—or money that would not have been in the previous budget but is now.

However, I am interested in the change that will now take place, given the most recent announcement by the federal government to provide additional funding to the Catholic and independent sectors. I would like to understand the process that is now before you. Does this require the minister's consent? Has the minister indicated consent? Has the minister yet signed? When must the minister sign? If there is a formal signing process, how much does the department then expect to have come through to pass on? Then I have some subsequent questions.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will answer the question broadly and, if there are details that are not picked up in the information I provide, then the shadow minister can ask whatever questions she would like. Obviously, when the commonwealth advises that it wishes to provide further money to schools, then that is something that is welcomed. The South Australian government is engaged in respectful bilateral negotiations with the commonwealth in relation to schools funding and the

implementation of reforms in the proposed national school reform agreement to be considered by COAG.

We have sought further detailed information in relation to last Thursday's announcement, which was about further funding for non-government schools, and we have sought that information in the context partly of what impact it might have on those discussions. That includes state responsibilities obviously. The position of the South Australian government is that we will always seek to get the best possible outcome for South Australian students, and that is consistent with the principles espoused in David Gonski's reviews. The South Australian government supports a needs-based school funding model that is sector blind in the approach that it takes.

In relation to non-government schools, consideration is given to parents' capacity to pay when identifying the nature of government funding. There are two aspects to the announcement by the commonwealth last Thursday. One is a new approach to the calculation of parents' capacity to pay to more accurately reflect, we are advised, that capacity in the calculation of needs-based funding. The new calculation is to take into account, as I understand it, parents' actual income rather than the SES of the postcode where they live. On the face of it, such an adjustment could well be remaining consistent with Gonski principles but we will continue to look at the detail of that aspect of the announcement.

The second aspect of Thursday's announcement relates to a fund that is designed to support, in the commonwealth's words, 'opportunity and diversity in the schooling system...lifting outcomes in underperforming schools and targeting extra support for schools who need a helping hand.' That includes those in rural and remote communities. So the South Australian government has made the point to the commonwealth that this fund's operation within the Australian Education Act's needs-based funding model is not clear and we have expressed our concern that South Australian government school students will not benefit from the announced funding.

However, there is an opportunity. This fund's existence and the commonwealth's demonstrated willingness to provide new funds into education over and above what was legislated has presented us with the opportunity to make the case for our government schools in that context, too. To that end, since the announcement on Thursday, I spoke to the federal minister on Friday. I wrote to him on Monday. I spoke to him again yesterday. I am expecting to speak to him again tomorrow, outlining firmly the South Australian government's position at every turn.

I made the point that a clear case exists for our government schools to also be considered more favourably by the commonwealth, if they are minded to provide extra support for 'schools who need a helping hand' ahead of the final transition to the commonwealth's contribution of 20 per cent of SRS. I argued that if an official consideration were to be given to any sector or jurisdiction then South Australian government schools would have a fair case to be at the front of the pack.

The unfavourable deal negotiated in 2013 by the former South Australian government in relation to the National Education Reform Agreement saw the bulk of the commonwealth's increased investment in South Australian schools delayed until the fifth and sixth years of that agreement, and therefore the commonwealth's subsequent withdrawal from NERA meant that South Australia lost ground in terms of reaching that 20 per cent SRS contribution from the commonwealth. So in 2017, when the new legislation took over, South Australia's share of commonwealth funding as a percentage of SRS was already behind the national average.

We will continue to negotiate with the commonwealth in the coming weeks, and potentially months if need be. We have a single-minded focus on achieving the best possible outcome for South Australian students and South Australian schools.

**The CHAIR:** Before I call the deputy leader, I will be consistent in what I have applied all week. This is, of course, the Minister for Education, who is responsible for the administration of the state education department. He is not responsible for federal policy directives, and a commentary on what the federal government may or may not do is probably not helpful to the committee. As always I will allow the questions, because they are of an education nature, and the minister can answer them if he wishes, but they are very, very broad and are not directly related to the budget papers we have in front of us and to what the committee is here to do.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I can offer some assistance. There is an administered items line a bit later in the day and that question might have been more accurately directed there, but I felt it was appropriate to answer it.

**The CHAIR:** I appreciate there is an administered items line, but I am reluctant to see this become a line of questioning all day. Deputy leader, your call.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Just to clarify: you do need to sign off on this, they do not just give the money to the schools, this is going to be part of the bilateral agreement and will be rolled into the same discussion that is occurring at present on the bilateral agreement, or will it be a separate agreement that you sign?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Funds provided from the commonwealth to non-government schools come through the state government. In terms of the nature of any impacts from last Thursday's announcement, we are still working through that detail and, obviously, are still in bilateral negotiations and discussions with the commonwealth.

**Dr CLOSE:** So at present it is unclear whether you, as the Minister for Education, would need to in any way approve this decision? It is not something you would necessarily have to sign up to? I ask, in part, because I understood that it would need to be something signed off on, and I believe that the New South Wales and Queensland ministers are talking about not signing up. I am just trying to understand your role in the decision being made on how much is provided to the non-government schools.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I have answered the question. Obviously we have a role, but we are in bilateral negotiations with the commonwealth at the moment.

**Dr CLOSE:** I turn to Budget Paper 3, page 31, which covers the operating expenses of selected agencies, including education. I would like to understand the increase in expenditure over the forward estimates from the estimated result in 2017-18 through to 2021-22. On page 32 there is a note that says it is primarily due to increased funding for enrolment and providing core services, but I would appreciate it if the minister could elaborate a little more on the elements of the variation.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Certainly. I note that page 32 provides a figure that is substantially less than the \$515 million, although it is nevertheless a significant figure. The state government announced \$515 million more will be spent on education in 2021-22 compared with 2017-18. Key factors include the department's budget, including growth for enrolments funded from both the commonwealth and state governments, depreciation of assets, the investment in new PPP schools in the northern and southern areas, and the investment in funding year 7s as secondary students. The forward estimates include standard indexation assumptions which are compounding. The budget also includes other growth in commonwealth revenue.

The department's budget includes growth associated with the Gonski 1 arrangements and the state government's contribution there. Another key offset includes savings growth which mostly relates to past allocation of savings, the Mid-Year Budget Review and earlier budgets that the member for Port Adelaide would no doubt be acutely aware of.

The new investment, which is not parameter-based, is enabling the department to invest in a range of new strategies, including funding the government's election commitments, funding strategies that the previous state government committed to and we support, such as investment in literacy and numeracy first in primary schools, expanding access to School Card, centralising utilities, and a range of other matters.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. That is very clear. I would appreciate clarity on how much the PPP features in the forward estimates, and how much money is allocated to the two PPP schools that you referred to, which had been three, but now there is direct funding for the Whyalla school, as I understand it.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There is \$13.2 million identified in the department's 2018-19 budget for the acquisition of sites. That would be in capital, I think from memory. In relation to other matters, I do not want to take the shadow minister down the wrong track, so I will take that question on notice at the moment.

**Dr CLOSE:** No problem at all. Thank you. If we turn to Budget Paper 5, page 42, Operating efficiencies. I understand the department has already indicated that there will a reduction of some 200 staff. Of course, Treasury has created an incentive for that to occur as early as possible by paying for the TVSPs in the first financial year of the budget, and then the department would have to pay for any further ones. Can you give me some clarity on where you expect those staff to come from and when?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So \$2 million per annum is contributing to bottom-line savings. These were savings announced by the government and the residual will enable the department to deliver against its overall budget strategy. In relation to where those might be, the department is currently working through its strategy to deliver against the required FTE reduction, noting the majority of these savings will be reinvested into education priorities.

Schools and preschools are quarantined, as the member would be aware, and we need to address those previous savings allocations to the department left to us by the previous government. The strategy will involve an expression of interest process for TVSPs, as well as considering divisional structures where efficiencies can be achieved. Very importantly, direct services to students will not be affected.

**Dr CLOSE:** I understand the term 'front-line staff' as used by both parties when in government that the front-line staff are protected. Here, of course, you are talking about direct employees of schools and preschools. Can I clarify whether speech pathologists attributed to head office are going to be part of this pool?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that we are considering those to be out of scope, as they provide direct services to schools.

**Dr CLOSE:** Does that also hold for wellbeing practitioners?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes.

**Dr CLOSE:** Psychology staff?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes.

**Dr CLOSE:** And disability support workers?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** They are the ones, if they are providing direct support services in schools, that are out of scope.

**Dr CLOSE:** Okay. In that case, that is a reasonable proportion of the staff who are attributed to head office. Can you inform me what the size of the pool of staff is from which the 200 will come?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We do not have the exact figure, but it is basically administrative and corporate that we are talking about.

**Dr CLOSE:** Is it possible for you to take on notice how many staff are employed in those capacities?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We do not have that figure available at the moment. Yes, I can take it on notice. We will get what we can for the member.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Is it the minister's contention that this will see no reduction in the quality of service, or the experience of service, received by schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It is important to understand that we are actually investing further moneys into education. We believe that we are also targeting our expenditure effectively so that we can deliver a high-quality service for schools and terrific outcomes for students.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister inform us what process will be used by the department to identify? I appreciate that the traditional way of starting the TVSP process is an expression of interest, which I understand is occurring or has occurred. What process will then be used to assess which FTEs from which positions can be made redundant?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I might ask Mr Persse to address that.

**Mr PERSSE:** Thank you. Through you, minister, we are working division by division, largely focused around our corporate administration, finance and policy areas. At the moment, it will depend on the level of uptake from the expression of interest exercise to be able to do that, but where we are really looking at the moment is at the processes that might lend themselves to red tape reduction, automation and process re-engineering to ensure that there is no impact on schools or, if there is any impact, that it is a positive one.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer the committee to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 21, Program summary. How is the government continuing to support the Virtual War Memorial, a project that has been underway for some time but which has always had bipartisan support?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the member for the question. It is a tremendous pleasure to be able to talk about this project, of course, which has always had bipartisan support. It was welcomed when the former government invested in it—and the new government continues to do so. In June 2015, the then minister for education approved the establishment of the department's RSL-SA learning partnership to establish an education component of the RSL Virtual War Memorial. The 2015-18 agreements involved the following funding arrangements between the minister and the RSL over a four-year period: \$145,000 to be used for development and use of the learning portal and \$50,000 to employ an education program project officer on a 0.5 FTE teacher salary.

In 2015, grant funds were transferred to RSL-SA to develop the Virtual War Memorial education portal and employ an education project officer to provide advice on the implementation requirements of the portal. In 2016, grant funds were transferred to RSL to further develop the Virtual War Memorial education portal and employ an education project officer to work with schools and teachers during the trial stage.

In 2017, the Virtual War Memorial continued to work with schools using the education portal. However, the work was limited due to the May 2017 voluntary administration of the RSL, resulting in those 2017 funds for the education portal and project officer not being transferred. In August 2016, the Virtual War Memorial was established as a separate entity from the RSL to manage the project. In May of this year, RSL-SA provided all ownership and intellectual property rights to the Virtual War Memorial Limited. As a result of this transfer, during June, deeds of novation were established and signed to change the 2015-18 minister and RSL agreements to be between the minister and the Virtual War Memorial.

The deeds of novation enable the transfer of the 2018 grants to the Virtual War Memorial Limited for the continued development and implementation of the Virtual War Memorial education portal. The deeds also extended the funding to July 2019. Over the period of funding, \$435,000 has been used for the development of the education portal, and \$150,000 has been used for the employment of the project officer. In accordance with the funding agreement, we have had yearly audits.

The education portal and the site in general are used in schools across sectors for commemoration and student historical research on Australia's involvement in the conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2017, 29 schools engaged directly with the portal for structured classroom use, and the resource section of the portal recorded 3,551 page views, which of course would include a significant number from beyond just the 29 schools. It has become an integral research component of the Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize. It has enhanced the number and quality of entrants in that competition since its establishment in 2016.

I can inform the committee that the Premier personally enjoyed greatly his participation in the ANZAC Spirit School Prize award ceremony this year. That is a project that the government looks forward to continuing. It is one of those occasions where I thank the former government for investing in something that has been worthwhile.

**Dr CLOSE:** Just to conclude the questions I was asking on operating efficiencies and the reduction in staff: will the learning improvement directorate be spared? Will it be excluded from consideration of staff loss?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There are examples of new investment in the Learning Improvement section that have occurred as a result of decisions taken by this government. There is a new group, based on Learning Improvement, called the Literacy Guarantee Unit, which fulfilled an

election commitment of our government. These are outstanding educators who are doing a wonderful job. The first eight have been appointed, in addition to the leader of that unit, who, I imagine the shadow minister would have come across in the time that she was the minister. She is a very well respected educator indeed.

There are another five being brought into that unit. If there are some details still to work through, or if there is new information, I will obviously be able to provide it. This government is investing in providing supports to schools that will deliver improved learning outcomes and the Learning Improvement division is a key part of that.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Could the minister give me, and perhaps take on notice if that is easier, the number of people who are working currently—FTEs and individuals—as speech therapists, wellbeing practitioners, psychology staff and disability support workers, currently attributed to head office?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think we may actually have those figures. I do not want to provide any inaccuracies, so we will take it on notice and bring back the detail.

**Dr CLOSE:** No problem. If I can move to Budget Paper 5, page 43, the move of year 7 into high school. I see that the government has allocated funding for the additional operating costs that comes with having year 7s in a secondary setting. However, there appears to be no allocation in capital for the necessary buildings to accommodate year 7s in high schools that are already full. How many of the 91 schools that received or were allocated Building Better Schools money will be using at least some of that money to accommodate year 7s?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It is worth adding a little bit of context here because, of course, a section of the Building Better Schools funding announcement was always about ensuring that capacity existed in our schools. That is, indeed, also one of the reasons that the education department expects an allocation towards infrastructure every year in the order of \$60 million as I understand, and that is towards replenishing aged facilities and providing new capacity.

There is a demand on capacity in a good many of our schools at the moment. I imagine that if the former minister's inbox was anything like mine, a significant proportion of it would have been requests from individuals seeking special exemption from zoning requirements for their children. At the end of the day, it is unfortunate but you cannot place more children in a school than there is room in that school. Where that becomes particularly challenging for any family is where they are unable to find a space for their child in the school that they are actually even zoned to. That is something that requires substantial forethought and I wish that a lot more thought had gone into this in years gone by.

The challenge involves either providing extra classroom capacity to some extent in primary schools or in high schools, and the year 7s remaining in primary schools would have probably required a substantial amount of future infrastructure investment to be directed towards ensuring that there is capacity in primary schools. The decision from the South Australian government that South Australia will, as every other state has, move year 7 to high school in line with the national curriculum, and what we believe is best practice, put a greater weight of that capacity opportunity and capacity challenge towards high schools.

Certainly for those schools that have capital works grants that are designed around refurbishing existing classrooms, improving street frontage, removing modular and transportable classrooms or building capacity where it is needed—and they are the four categories that the member for Port Adelaide put on the program when she was the minister—one would imagine that an increased percentage of the primary schools that might have had to add extra classrooms under the program will instead be able to use that money towards refurbishing classrooms or removing transportables or improving street frontage or other projects that will add to educational outcomes at those schools.

Some of the high schools will have a greater responsibility towards adding new capacity. We are still in the process of working through the detail. There are some schools where that presents more obviously than others, and there are some schools that have some capacity. There are high schools where there were commitments of that capital works program that are going ahead that do

not have the same capacity issues that some others do. All of that is being worked through at the moment. There are obviously settings in terms of infrastructure support coming into the education department continuing, and I would imagine it is a reasonable expectation that the year 7 project will probably inform where some of that goes.

**Mr BOYER:** Minister, Budget Paper 5, page 43, year 7 to high school again. How much of the \$10 million under the Building Better Schools program that was given to Golden Grove High School is going to be repurposed, if you will, to go towards meeting your election commitment to moving year 7 into high school?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Golden Grove High School will receive capital works to the value of \$10 million. I think that is the figure the member identified. The project is being delivered with the same guiding principles developed under the previous government, announced when the member for Port Adelaide was the minister, and published in the school's brochure in February 2018, they being priorities of removal of old relocatable and modular classrooms, creation of new buildings for schools with growing student numbers, refurbishment of classrooms and buildings transforming them into modern learning areas, and landscaping and upgrades of the street frontage.

When the wish list, if you like—the things that schools were invited to submit that they would like in an ideal world if everything could be funded and with costings still to be done and after those four priorities had been met—had been made, it always was advised by the previous government that these initial plans are subject to further planning and may change. Neither the former government nor the Department for Education ever provided any guarantee that each school's aspirations could be met in total, and we are working through with each of those schools as to what their needs are and how we can best deliver on those needs for the benefit of their students.

**Mr BOYER:** Minister, can you rule out that Golden Grove High School will lose as much as \$7 million of the \$10 million to go towards creating additional space for students who will be moving to study year 7 on that campus, and that there may only be as much as \$3 million of the \$10 million left to do what the school had initially intended to do with that money?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The initial intent of that money is exactly as I have just identified. New classrooms and more modern classrooms, I have always thought, is a reasonably positive outcome for any school community. Members on both sides of the house, members in this room, have recently been visiting schools with me, or on their own, to open the new STEM Works facilities that the former government announced and which we are very pleased to rollout. Those are new classrooms, those are refurbishments of existing classrooms, and they are pretty well received, to be honest.

The figure that the member identifies, I do not have any advice on that specific figure but I would have thought that if we are talking about new state-of-the-art accommodation classrooms, this is about delivering outcomes for school education and modern classrooms have a pretty critical function in that.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Budget Paper 4, page 43. I understand that the transition to year 7 is going to take some time. I want to speak specifically about Vale Park Primary School. Vale Park Primary School needs two classrooms. They have teachers who are having to use mobile classrooms. There was an election commitment by the Labor government (when in government) to accommodate them with two transportable classrooms. The current impact on the students and the teachers at Vale Park Primary School in not having enough classroom space is significant. I understand that the governing council has written to the minister.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Torrens, if there is a question there that would be wonderful.

**Ms WORTLEY:** What can Vale Park Primary School expect in relation to accommodating their students adequately with transportable classrooms prior to the year 7 transition?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My understanding is that the school may well have had a commitment during the election campaign from the opposition but that when the opposition was in government there was no funding put in place. I do not recollect reading correspondence. It is possible there was correspondence I have read that does not immediately come to mind. Certainly, there is a budget and allocation in the education department for transportables, as I understand, and



if this school meets the priorities and the assessment that the department goes through for the allocation of those funds, then we will definitely be happy to have a look at it.

**Mr BOYER:** The intention as explained to me and to the community by Golden Grove High School was that they would be using the \$10 million Building Better Schools grant to build a performing arts centre. Are you saying that the school will still be able to build the performing arts centre that it intended to build with the \$10 million grant?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think the member for Wright has mischaracterised what his party announced when they were in government. When the member for Wright's party was in government, they announced the Building Better Schools project and they said that the guiding principles for the work—this is signed off by the member for Port Adelaide; it was published in February and it was described to schools before—were that the priorities would be the removal of old relocatable and modular classrooms; the creation of new buildings for schools with growing student numbers; the refurbishment of classrooms and buildings, transforming them into modern learning areas; and the landscaping and upgrade of the street frontage.

The department advised, in relation to Golden Grove High School in particular, with planning being underway, that the plans would include increasing the number of general learning areas, constructing new dance and drama studios, and refurbishing existing teaching spaces, but identified that those initial plans are subject to further planning and may change. In effect, what the former government did was invite schools to suggest the things that they would like and then there were to be costings done to see what could be facilitated.

At every step of the way, the former government, the department, and indeed the new government, has started with those four guiding principles for the project: our priorities were to remove old relocatable and modular classrooms; create new buildings for schools with growing student numbers; refurbish classrooms and buildings, transforming them into modern learning areas; and provide landscaping and upgrades of the street frontage.

The new government has kept those four priorities, because they were very sensible priorities. Where there is opportunity to expand on that, if those classroom facilities are in great nick and there are other priorities that the school would like that can be delivered within the funding envelope allocated, then we will be very keen to do that.

It is noteworthy that the announcement of funds came prior to identification of what schools might want. It was not that schools were applying for funding to meet their desired need; the former government identified the schools that would receive funds and then schools were invited to make suggestions about what they might like to do with that. Obviously, work had to be done on costings, on what those priorities were and matching them up as to whether they met those four priorities.

**Dr CLOSE:** As the minister so accurately says, one of the criteria—

**The CHAIR:** What line?

**Dr CLOSE:** Exactly the same line.

**The CHAIR:** Which is?

**Dr CLOSE:** Which is Budget Paper 5, page 43, which relates to the move of year 7s. With Building Better Schools, one of the elements that made up which schools would get additional funding and how much was the need for increased capacity. Obviously, at the time that was on the basis of a need for increased capacity for students from years 8 to 12 and now the demand for increased capacity has come in because of also needing to accommodate another year level of students.

Has the department advised the minister how many of the schools that previously did not require additional capacity now do because they need to fit in year 7? Those schools, such as Golden Grove, from memory, that needed to have extra capacity because of the growth of the area without the move to year 7 now have to find even more capacity because of the move of year 7. How has this one of the four elements—the need for increased capacity—changed as a result of the decision to move year 7? How many schools does that affect? You can take that on notice if that is easier.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The member has suggested a process that went into identifying which schools would be able to receive money. I imagine that, for a good number of those schools, that may have been the process, but there was of course a range of other factors that may have fitted in as well, and the former cabinet made whatever it decisions it made.

In terms of which schools will have what impacts as a result of year 7, that work is ongoing. There has been some advice from the department but, in terms of detail, there are a bit over three years between now and 2022 when this has to be taken into account. It is a very complex process, and I would not like to provide you with a specific number because I do not think it would necessarily be accurate. There are a lot of assumptions that go into that, and we can talk in some more detail about it if you would like, but my basic answer is that that work is ongoing.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, how many schools are in the first tranche of Building Better Schools? In that tranche, how many of those need to use some of the money for year 7?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Unless I have miscounted, there are 34 schools in round 1. Three of those are primary schools, nine of those are R to 12 or B to 12 or area schools, and the remainder appear to be stand-alone high schools. I will not count those. I will allow you to do the maths. The Premier used to carry a calculator to estimates for just such an occasion. We should do that in future.

**Dr CLOSE:** If that is the end of your answer, what I was really asking is: how many of them will be affected? Clearly, the three primary schools will not be, but the high schools and the birth to 12 may be affected by having some of the money that has been allocated specifically being used to accommodate year 7s. I would expect the department would know that for at least tranche 1.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In terms of detail, there is an enormous difference between if a school were to be projected to need an extra 20 or 30 places as opposed to 100, so it would not be a hugely relevant figure in terms of how many are one or the other, but I can take that on notice and provide what detail we can to the member.

**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that. As you are taking it on notice, if it could not only be the number then but which schools have been identified as needing to have year 7 classrooms built, that would be very useful, thank you.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will provide whatever information we can. I make the point again that new state-of-the-art classrooms are actually a pretty good thing in schools. I know that in the members' electorates where we have been opening such classrooms, they have been very well received. I congratulate the former minister for being involved in a budget decision that provided some of that in 2016. Those new classrooms are pretty well received.

**Dr CLOSE:** There are high schools, of course, that are already at capacity and do not have any money allocated under Building Better Schools. Marryatville, Brighton, Glenunga and Adelaide High are particularly obvious ones. What is the plan at this stage for preparing them to have sufficient space for year 7s, and to what degree will that rely on a change in zones rather than increasing built capacity, given that the forward estimates at this point do not refer to any additional capital expenditure on those schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have sort of answered this question before. We are still working through that process, and I refer the honourable member to my remarks earlier about infrastructure funding coming in the period ahead.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister guarantee that there will not be any zone changes to those schools as a result of the move for year 7?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I do not expect that those schools that the shadow minister has identified are being proposed in that way. I have also had advice in terms of enforcing the zones that exist currently, having that applied. In some cases in recent years zones have been enforced more rigorously than previously, and that may well provide some assistance in the process.

I can provide a little bit of further information. There is no plan to change any zones or more specialist programs. I note that there are some calls for zones to be reviewed. I received

correspondence not that long ago from the member for Croydon, the Leader of the Opposition, dated 1 July, 8 May and 2 June, in which he argues for the Adelaide High School zone to be reviewed.

One of the letters, from memory, suggested that only suburbs east of South Road be included in the zoned area for the schools. He believes South Road to be a more natural geographic boundary. If the Leader of the Opposition's recommendation is to be taken into account, noting of course that he was in the cabinet that set that zone, that would see significant numbers of suburbs west of South Road potentially excluded. That is what the Leader of the Opposition suggested.

We have no plans to change the zones at the moment. We know that Adelaide High and Adelaide Botanic High are going to be very popular schools, so that is a challenge we will look at. The Leader of the Opposition and the former deputy premier, the member for Enfield, have written to me asking for a review, and I will always take advice from my department on what is suitable on those occasions, but currently we have no plans.

**Dr CLOSE:** You mentioned this briefly in your answer, but if I could have more clarity: those schools that I have mentioned—Adelaide, Marryatville, Brighton and Glenunga—all have special entry programs to allow students from outside. Are you also ruling out—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I would be very reluctant to see those specialist entry programs removed. I think that international—the chair is nodding at me.

**Dr CLOSE:** Reluctant to, but not ruling out?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think the Chair is an old scholar of one of those schools, is he not? We have no plans to, I would be very reluctant to—I think they are a valuable part of what those schools have to offer our public school system.

**Dr CLOSE:** In which case, without a change in zones and without a change in special entry, is the minister foreshadowing additional capital expenditure on those schools, although not additional capital expenditure on any other school to accommodate year 7?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** No, that is not what I said.

**Dr CLOSE:** How are you going to fit them in?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think that you might want to have a look at the way you worded the former question. I have answered this in several previous questions but I will go through a couple of the key points. First, zones are currently being enforced in a manner in which they were not previously which is providing some assistance. That is not going to be able to solve the problem across the whole area.

Second, we identified that there is money that comes into the education department for infrastructure and it was identified that there will be, no doubt, a case capable of being made that in the years ahead to meet the infrastructure challenges of our schools, the small significant proportion of that will be in high schools rather than primary schools potentially. But we have many capital works projects ongoing and planned in primary schools at the moment.

The third aspect of my question is that the detailed answer in terms of how the year 7 project will be rolled out is something the department continues to work on. I make the further point that the capacity issues, particularly in the metropolitan area, are significant at the moment under the current arrangements. During the election campaign, one of the things that kept coming back and forth was this question, 'Are you going to need to build more capacity in high schools?' as if that was the only new infrastructure money that might be needed.

I would put it to the member that were year 7 not moving into high school, there would be an enormous capacity problem in the coming years that would make our current capacity challenges look very small by comparison in those primary schools and we would have to build new classrooms in those schools. There seems to be a negative perception to building new classrooms from some members that I find a bit strange actually.

**Dr CLOSE:** Which of the schools Adelaide, Marryatville, Brighton and Glenunga currently do not strictly enforce their zone?

**The CHAIR:** Deputy leader, remind me of which budget line?

**Dr CLOSE:** We are talking about the move of year 7 still, page 43.

**The CHAIR:** Well, year 7 and zones are two different things.

**Dr CLOSE:** In order to have room for students to fit in.

**The CHAIR:** Then preface that in your question, please, which you—

**Dr CLOSE:** So the minister—

**The CHAIR:** No, you have a new question and I am just asking you to always remember that we are in the budget and, if we are talking about year 7, then I would suggest 'In relation to year 7 into high school and the enforcement of the zone.' That is how I would preface that question because then it brings us back to the budget paper.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, minister. Deputy leader, if you could re-ask your question, please?

**Dr CLOSE:** Okay.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I remember it.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, minister.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that pretty much every school in the state takes out-of-zone enrolments. If there is further information about the schools that the member specifically raises, then I will take it on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** If I could clarify what has been taken on notice in reference to Budget Paper 5, page 43?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The question that you asked before.

**Dr CLOSE:** The question I asked previously. I appreciate that there are students who come from within a zone, and in high schools there are out-of-zone enrolments that are due to special entry. But when the minister answered my previous question about how year 7s would fit into high schools that are already full, part of the answer was a more strict enforcement of existing zones which refers, I think, to a third way that students come in which is that the zones are not strictly enforced. I would like to know, on notice, if Adelaide, Marryatville, Brighton or Glenunga are currently allowing students from outside out of zone other than through their special entry programs because I do not believe that is the case but I would be interested to know if they were not currently and that there would be capacity through that more strict enforcement of the zone.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Regardless of what the member for Port Adelaide believes is or is not the case, that is the question I believe I took on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Excellent. I am glad we are talking the same language.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** And to help, we will check the *Hansard* when I take things on notice to make sure that the question relevant is as was said.

**Dr CLOSE:** Perfect. Thank you so much, minister. One more question on this subject: the minister referred earlier to additional money coming into the budget in capital for maintenance and upgrades and so on. I think \$60 million was referred to.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It is about that.

**Dr CLOSE:** Given that through Building Better Schools at least some of that in the then forward estimates was attributed to Building Better Schools, when does money that is not attached to Building Better Schools start to come into the forward estimates for this department?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am pleased that the member asks that question because I seem to recall the public announcements at the time were largely based around suggesting that it was to do with the sale of the Lands Titles Office and I do not remember too many comments from

the former government suggesting that they were using existing resources. We will take that on notice.

**Mr BASHAM:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, and targets on internet connectivity. A number of my local schools have reported to me that their internet connection is too slow and that this is impacting on their ability to deliver the education our students deserve. How do government schools in South Australia compare with other states for internet connectivity, and what is the government doing to address this?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the member for his question. I am looking forward to visiting his electorate in the coming weeks and talking with a number of the schools in his area; I imagine this is one of the issues they will raise because it is an issue that is raised with me regularly. It is an issue that was discussed during the election campaign, and the Liberal Party, during that election campaign, made some commitments in this area that I am very pleased to advise we are working towards meeting.

Across all government and non-government sectors demand for high-speed internet has been rapidly increasing as more and more services are provided digitally. The education sector is no different; online learning platforms are continuing to rapidly emerge and the requirement for more contemporary digital learning solutions is becoming more prevalent. In short, people expect to be able to have access to good internet speeds, and there are significant challenges in a school environment where you have a number of users online at the same time, all of whom are trying to get access to their online apps or programs.

A very significant percentage of our government schools and preschools are currently experiencing significant challenges adopting those modern digital platforms and learning technologies due, in part, to the substandard performance of their current internet connections—something all members of parliament should be familiar with—and potentially in some areas more than others.

I am not a tech expert myself, but I am advised that optical fibre is the most reliable and scalable internet connection solution available. Currently only about 25 per cent of government schools in South Australia are connected to the internet via optical fibre; in other states that figure is closer to 95 per cent and even up to 98 per cent of schools connected to optical fibre. So upon coming into government after 16 years of Labor's administration that is the situation we found ourselves in.

The Department for Education is working on a two-stage process to dramatically improve internet connectivity in schools. Stage 1 is an accelerated upgrade of internet connectivity to primary, secondary and area schools to the highest performing connection currently available in their location. This work was largely completed by the middle of this year, with over 500 sites receiving significant updates to their EduConnect connection. The improvement in some sites was of the magnitude of even 100 times improvement.

Stage 2 involves fundamentally changing the architecture used by schools to access the internet. We are striving for a service whereby every school, every teacher, every student, has access to reliable internet connectivity at the speed they require when they require it. The first phase of stage 2 is connecting all schools, regardless of their location, to optical fibre. The second phase is to provide a school-based internet connectivity capability through a proactive managed service.

I am pleased to advise the committee that a trial commenced in term 3 this year to test a new architecture in six schools: Birdwood High School, Stradbroke School, Glenelg Primary School, Golden Grove High School, Heathfield High School and the Aldinga Beach B-7 School. The trial will continue through to the end of term 4 2018. We are very excited about how this trial is going, and look forward to continuing to work on this project in years ahead.

**Dr CLOSE:** What is the departmental modelling for how many additional specialist secondary teachers will need to be recruited for the move of year 7?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This is an important question and I think a very worthwhile one. The department is engaged with other states—in particular Queensland and Western Australia, who have most recently made this transition—to learn from the challenges they faced and the

opportunities they have suggested. I am very grateful for the way in which those governments have been happy to work with our department and, for that matter, those ministers who have been happy to talk with me about it when I have met with them at education council meetings. I think these ministers enjoyed their time in Adelaide for those meetings, and I am grateful to them for their advice along the way. I will take on notice the answer to the question regarding the number because that is still being worked through.

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on Budget Paper 5, page 43. What is the departmental modelling for how many primary teachers will require retraining in order to facilitate the move to year 7? I note, also referring to the minister's previous answer, that the Western Australian government committed significant resources to that task.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We have significant resources that we put towards professional development, at any rate. There is going to be a greater demand for secondary teachers and a slightly lower demand for primary teachers. I make the point that it will be a voluntary process for any primary teacher who wishes to undertake a transition with their students. In the same way, I will take on notice the detail in terms of numbers.

**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that. Is the minister able to tell us how many FTE teachers are currently employed in the public system to teach year 7?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take it on notice and we will bring back what we can. It would be an arbitrary number, in some ways. The shadow minister would be aware that probably the vast majority of our schools have composite classes in terms of year levels, and some schools that do not even operate under a year level model. In terms of year 7, I will take that on notice. I can answer one of the member's earlier questions at this point, if you would like. I am advised that we have 62.5 FTE special educators, 41.5 in behaviour support, 88 speech pathologists, 65 psychologists, 8.5 special ed hearing, 34 in social work/truancy, 7.6 in social work/family focus, and six in the SWISS team.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. I appreciate that speedy response.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is the advice I have. I acknowledge it came through carrier pigeon, so we will clarify if any clarification needs to be made, but I thank my office for getting that.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am sure that will be reasonably accurate. Minister, can you inform us of the current attendance level for year 7s?

**The CHAIR:** Is it the same budget?

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 5, page 43.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Florey.

**Ms BEDFORD:** My questions relate to Budget Paper 5, pages 37 to 43, but they are slightly different in that there seems to be no mention of music education in Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. I presume there is some funding allocated for music. How much is it? How is it allocated, administered and delivered?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I remember the member raising this with me when I was the shadow minister. It has been a longstanding interest of hers. It is not unusual for the budget papers not to provide that level of detail.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I have already been to the choirs festival. How many have you been—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am looking forward to going to the festival tonight.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Great.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think there is a good amount of information that I can provide to the member. I had hoped that she would be here today, and we are not disappointed. I think I will start with the key number that the member is after and then provide further information.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Tell me what budget paper page it is on—that would be helpful.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Program summary is where it fits in.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Florey, you are wanting to identify the budget paper line?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will help out. It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, Program summary.

**The CHAIR:** From my understanding, that is not how the process works, but the minister is being very generous.

**Ms BEDFORD:** He is very patient with me.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** From memory, it is page 12, but I could be wrong. The instrumental music budget comprises 84.5 FTE. That includes leaders, teachers and administration staff. There is provision for 11.4 FTE leadership and administration staff and 73.1 FTE instrumental music teachers. That varies. The total instrumental music budget is \$11,577 million for 2018-19. There is a range of activities being done: instrumental music staff; the music-focused schools; we have a focus on improving participation, equity, engagement and student achievement of music learning outcomes; teacher quality; and access and participation in music pathways. That focus aligns with the strategic priorities that are guiding the development of the Music Education Strategy.

If I can talk a little bit about that strategy, the government is investing into the instrumental music budget. In addition to the funding that any individual school might allocate towards music teachers, which is substantial as well, and in addition to any further support that is given through schools to private music instruction, which is a further expenditure on supporting music in schools, the government is investing \$7.005 million over the next four years to improve the delivery of music education in schools through our Music Education Strategy.

As the member knows, music helps develop thinking and learning skills that lift literacy and numeracy achievement and activates social, behavioural and academic benefits that persist throughout a child's education. The Music Education Strategy will look at ways to make sure that children and young people can access the benefit of music in schools.

I launched a public consultation process in May to help inform the strategy development. Consultation has closed and the department is now analysing more than 800 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including educators, experts, families and communities. We are going to continue to work with key stakeholders, including the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and various state music bodies in the development of the strategy. I very much hope that it will be finalised in term 4 of 2018. I particularly want to acknowledge the strong, dedicated—and, to the best part of my knowledge, we are not paying them very much—

**Mr PERSSE:** Voluntary.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** —voluntary work of Graeme Koehne of the Elder Con. and Vincent Ciccarello of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. There is a number of other people who have volunteered their services to provide input, and 800 submissions suggest the strong level of interest in this program from around the community. This strategy, as I say, will be funded with \$7 million over the next four years.

**Ms BEDFORD:** It is good to see that there is an emphasis on experience, and specifically trained departmental educators, in delivering music. How can we be sure, though, that the schools are able to engage suitably trained, privately contracted musical educators? There are varying qualities that I have seen in my own electorate, so I wonder how you are going to manage that over the state.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So you are talking in relation to private music instructors. Private music instructors have an important role in music education in South Australia, too. Of course,

we were talking about the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra a moment ago. A number of the players in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in their spare time work as private music instructors in schools. On a number of occasions, I would imagine that those families who engage somebody with that level of capacity and experience would be pretty happy to have that opportunity.

The member may be aware that the Employment Tribunal, formerly the SA industrial relations commission, has set out some guidelines as to how this works. In 2016, a consent order made it mandatory for schools to comply with guidelines developed I think in 2009, from memory. This requires schools to follow a series of steps prior to entering arrangements with private music instructors to deliver an agreed service to the school. That will enable more instrumental teachers trained in instrumental pedagogy to be employed by schools to provide that instruction. That was the purpose of the consent order.

The department continues to work individually with schools to support them in maintaining music lessons to children and students within the guidelines of that consent order but—and I think this probably goes a bit more directly to what the member was asking—anyone seeking engagement as a private music instructor must apply for an authority to work letter issued by the department's recruitment centre using the department's processes. They must have the authority to work letter, which requires renewal every year, a DHS-relevant history screening clearance letter and a Responding to Abuse and Neglect—Education and Care certificate. Then, of course, there is that process that the school has to go through prior to working with private music instructors.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I have a question on the focus schools. How is that all working out since the rearrangement of how music is delivered? Are more students engaged in music, as we were told they would be, through that focus rearrangement?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that the answer is yes. In terms of providing statistical or even anecdotal evidence that might provide ballast to that answer of yes, I will get back to the member.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, and your earlier answer to the Dixier from the member for Finniss about the schools—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Member for Wright; Dixier is not a term we use in this place.

**Mr BOYER:** —question—

**The CHAIR:** Question.

**Mr BOYER:** —off-the-cuff question—and your answer to that question about schools that will be trialling the new architecture around I think it might have been on fibre optics or broadband. I think you listed six schools. Are any of those six schools that are involved in the trial in non-Liberal held seats?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I would suggest a couple of things to the member when he asks a question of that nature. The first is that we have had, to my account, two questions from the government, and there was no request made of the opposition for a reduction in time in return for having almost all of the time provided. This is in stark contrast—

**Mr BOYER:** Point of order, Chair: I am not—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** No, the member raised a question about legitimate questions.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, the member is allowed to raise a point of order and I will rule on it.

**Mr BOYER:** I was not, in any way, complaining about the question asked by the member for Finniss.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Well, why did you?

**Mr BOYER:** I was simply referring to it.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, just bear with me one moment please.

**Mr BOYER:** I have no issue with the member for Finniss asking the question. I am asking a question of my own on the back of that, referring to that question.



**The CHAIR:** I think the minister, from my view, so far, is entirely in line with his comments and I ask the minister to continue as he sees fit.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The schools were identified by departmental officers with, to the best of my knowledge, absolutely no reference to the minister's office. I listed them before. Would the member like me to repeat the list of schools? Would that help?

**Mr BOYER:** Yes, please.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Birdwood, Stradbroke, Glenelg, Golden Grove, Heathfield and Aldinga.

**Mr BOYER:** Chair, I asked a question and I have not heard the question actually answered. My question was a pretty straightforward one.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** The minister has provided an answer. It seems pretty succinct to me.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Pretty simple!

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hammond—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have answered that question and, as to the purpose of Liberal or Labor held seats, I make two comments: I am aware of where a couple of those schools are; I am not aware of the electorate of every single one of them. If the member wants to know about investment in non-Liberal held seats, I can advise him that there is \$100 million in new money being provided to build a school in Whyalla that the government did not commit to during the election campaign, but we have done that because we are actually interested in governing in the best interests of the people of South Australia and making decisions that will be in the best educational interests of students across South Australia.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Wright, do you want to continue?

**Mr BOYER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Wright has the call.

**Mr BOYER:** The same budget line, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20. Are any of those schools in your own seat?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Two of them are.

**Dr CLOSE:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, School Education, and the target for this financial year about the school improvement model. What measures make up the scorecard for the school improvement model?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The school improvement model recognises that within an education system schools are, of course, at different levels of performance and accordingly require varying degrees of support. It is data based and evidence driven. It has been widely consulted upon and is informed by the experience and knowledge of a number of South Australia principals, particularly principals who have been successful in lifting student achievement and school performance.

It is an evolving model so, of course, there was some work that was done by the department prior to the government coming into office, and we have encouraged the department to continue to work with principals and stakeholders on constantly improving the model. I am encouraged by the fact that that was indeed their plan and the CEs advised me of that all along. To support schools in the development of focused school improvement plans that help schools identify priorities for improvement, key data inputs have been developed. A school's performance will be based on its current performance and growth, improving or declining over a three-year period.

A school's performance will be determined through combining all NAPLAN year level results for numeracy and reading and SACE completion and grades data for year 12 for a calendar year. A school's growth will be determined by assessing whether the school's performance score increases, decreases or stays the same over a three-year period. An assessment will be made as to where

each school is placed in accordance with their performance and growth on a five-stage improvement continuum.

I make the point that the national agenda is heading towards a way that will suggest that there will be further assessment tools, formative assessment tools suggested by David Gonski and his group. One would expect that when they are online, if they come online, they would naturally be the sort of things we would also be seeking to include.

One of the key parts of the model is that there is a personalised web page for school leaders and local education teams that presents data on a range of areas, particularly, I understand, in the context of schools, because data tells part of the story and context is important as well. That includes school performance scores, NAPLAN, SACE scores, the ability to look across school, class, year level and student level records. This includes data on percentage of students who are proficient, those who are performing below and those who are performing well above the expected achievement.

In relation to growth, there is a new measure to provide the three-year time line of the change in students' achievement status between testing. This metric presents the percentage of students whose level of achievement between testing has decreased, stayed the same or improved.

Attendance: the measure provides an indication of the prevalence of chronic non-attendance in each of the last three years. In relation to Aboriginal students, of course, the dashboard highlights proficiency in literacy, numeracy or SACE of Aboriginal students at the school. The dashboard offers a further range of metrics in addition to the performance data. These wellbeing metrics look at key areas that are known to impact on student achievement and hence school improvement and include topics such as student wellbeing. This measure describes the emotional wellbeing and engagement with the school and learning readiness for students. The parent engagement: this measure describes the overall sentiment towards school amongst parents surveyed.

Staff engagement and culture: leaders are able to see metrics on their staff engagement and culture informing organisational development. Through use of the dashboard, leaders can focus on key cohorts of students to inform targeted improvement strategies and gain insight into the views of students, parents and staff.

I know the member has written to me recently seeking further briefing on this and I was going to advise at the beginning of this answer, if I was asked, and I will advise it now seeing as I have remembered, that we will be happy to provide further detail in a personal briefing in the coming weeks or months, as the member sees fit.

**Dr CLOSE:** That would be extremely useful, but I will continue to ask some questions in this forum.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sure; you can do that if you like.

**Dr CLOSE:** So continuing to relate to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, the school improvement model. In making an assessment of NAPLAN performance in particular but also the other measures that are referred to in the dashboard, what mechanism is being used to control for SES, or ICSIA?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We do not adjust in relation to the NAPLAN results.

**Dr CLOSE:** Have the schools all been informed now where they sit on the scorecard?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will ask Mr Temperly to provide that evidence.

**Mr TEMPERLY:** Schools were provided with a preliminary indication of their assessment at the end of term 1 this year and received an updated assessment based on the 2018 NAPLAN data on 10 September this year. So yes, all schools have received their notification.

**Dr CLOSE:** Is that information publicly available? Is it something that can be provided to the opposition?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We provided that information to the opposition about 10 seconds ago.

**Dr CLOSE:** The scorecard information that has been provided to schools, is that going to be made in any way public?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** No; the NAPLAN data is already publicly available.

**Dr CLOSE:** If I were to seek an FOI on the information that has been provided to schools, is that protected in any way?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am happy for the member to do that if she would like to have a go, but I am also happy for the member to be briefed on it, as I said earlier.

**Dr CLOSE:** I will at the end of that briefing whether I need to seek any further information. Still on Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, the school improvement model. Can the minister or one of his advisers explain the relationship between the external review process and the scorecard approach in the school improvement? Are they now unified into one approach as far as the school is concerned or are there still two, and how do they integrate?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will ask Mr Temperly to provide some further information.

**Mr TEMPERLY:** Yes, there is a number of accountability type processes that exist within the public education system, external school reviews being one of them, and partnership performance reviews also. We are just going through the process now of reviewing those processes, to make sure that they line up with the school improvement model overall.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. We might explore that more in a subsequent briefing, but that is very interesting. Minister, under the school improvement model, what supports are offered to schools that are regarded as not performing at the standard expected, and what kind of resource allocation has been made for that additional support, should there be any?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will offer some information and then the CE or Mr Temperly can provide further information if they think that it is necessary. The model seeks to tailor support to the needs of the school very significantly. The support that is provided is not only in relation to handbooks that are tailored in terms of evidence-driven advice but also the support that is provided through an enhanced local education team.

The member would be aware this is a decision that she took last year, that the teams be increased from 20 to 30 so that they could provide more schools to the local level. It fits very well with the government's school improvement model, of course. I suspect that the advice that drove it was possibly even coming from people last year to the minister that it would be beneficial, so you have the education director but also principal consultants and other people with that local support being available.

In terms of the significance of that support, it is a level of support that I have become convinced is going to be incredibly valuable to schools. While there were obviously questions raised in the parliament about that decision last year and the expenditure there, the fact that you can still see those 30 teams working with our schools I think demonstrates the Marshall government's commitment to providing those extra supports to schools as they are increasingly being found to be incredibly valuable. They are particularly geared towards delivering the sort of support that the school improvement model will be able to provide.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, I am just checking if there is further information.

**Dr CLOSE:** Sorry.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that my answer was pretty on the mark.

**Dr CLOSE:** Previously, there had been, under the previous government, funding that was known as Literacy and Numeracy First, which involved in a substantial degree—

**The CHAIR:** Deputy leader, which budget line item are you referring to?

**Dr CLOSE:** I would like to talk about Budget Paper 5, page 41, the literacy guarantee.

**The CHAIR:** Page 41?

**Dr CLOSE:** That is right, the literacy guarantee, although in part it is also relevant to where we were previously, which is about the school improvement model. Under that, there was allocation to schools based on NAPLAN results. Where students were not performing, or students were at risk of not continuing to perform at a very high level, the schools were allocated funding directly in response. Does that remain part of the way in which schools are supported, either in the context of the literacy guarantee or in the context of the school improvement model, whereby schools get additional funding to use to lift their performance?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** A total of \$67.5 million was provided over 2017-18 to 2020-21 for Literacy and Numeracy First in primary schools. That was a decision, obviously, that the member is referring to. Based on the policy parameters, \$17.3 million was allocated for 2018. The department will continue to fund the strategy. There is a reduction of \$1.5 million per annum, so a small reduction.

**Dr CLOSE:** So it is otherwise continuing but with a reduction of \$1.5 million? Do I understand that correctly?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, again on the six schools that have been chosen for the new internet architecture. Who signed off on those six schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will check on the detail, but I am advised that it was a decision of the department, not of the minister's office. The chief information officer was the one who provided that recommendation, we believe, to the chief executive. If there is any further information to provide, we will.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, again, minister. Can you rule out that neither you nor your political office had any—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Wright; on page 20, which dot point are you referring to?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Internet connectivity, if the member cannot find it.

**Mr BOYER:** I asked my question, minister.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** What was the question?

**Mr BOYER:** Did you or anyone in your office have any involvement in signing off on the two schools out of the six that are in your seat?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have answered the question. The advice came directly from the department and we did not change the schools. I am unaware of whether it was a document that I signed personally. It is possible that it was, but I can assure the member that I did not seek any special treatment for any school. My understanding of it is the schools were suggested by the person who was running the program, with no political interference at all.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I am looking at Budget Paper 5, page 37, under school facility improvements. This may be a bit of a stretch, but I am talking about the encouragement and collaborations where education department land can be used by community sporting clubs and groups when the schools are not using them. I wonder if you have given any consideration to allowing investments or partnerships on education department lands that are suitable for use by sporting clubs and then have the offset for the school use as well.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There are a number of schools where sporting clubs and schools engage very positively and productively. The member may have some schools in her electorate that already do that. I am familiar with, from my time on the Charles Campbell College school council, the engagement between that school and the Norwood Football Club and from memory the Newton Jaguars Netball Club as well. I would be surprised if there were not a significant number across the system.

The issue is that the decisions are made at a local level as to what is in the school's best interest. We are obviously very interested, and there is a level of community interest in the question of use of school grounds by sporting clubs. Where it works, it works really well and that is

tremendous, but I am also familiar with an example—and this is just an example, obviously—where a primary school was approached by a local council and the soccer club wishing to have access to the pitches. The governing council had a view that was informed by some of their considerations about what that might mean for the quality of the pitches being available for the school's use when they needed them.

It has been suggested to me by some people that, when clubs want to engage and use school facilities, one of the key things that sporting clubs do is sell consumables through the canteen or through a bar—particularly, sometimes there are suggestions of alcohol being sold. One of the reasons why the club wants access to facilities is to have more games. More games produces more revenue for the club, potentially, but that is not always appropriate on a school site, so I think I would be very cautious about pushing local school communities into a partnership that they did not see as being in their best interests.

We will certainly be open to looking at propositions. I think Sport SA have approached my office to seek a meeting fairly recently, so we will have a chat to them about what their proposition is. My understanding is that the department provides advice to schools and, where schools want to enter into an agreement with a club, we also provide support to them to do that. As the member suggests, it is on a case-by-case basis. I would be cautious about having a blanket rule for everybody. I think we want to work with local schools to deliver outcomes that are in the best interests of those local schools.

Obviously, if we can reach a partnership with clubs that delivers a win-win outcome for the school and for the broader community, then that is an outstanding outcome. Where community groups have had productive relationships with those schools, then I think we can use some of those examples to show other school communities how it can work really well.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Sometimes it is terribly slow, though—that is just an observation. The same budget paper, the school bus review: does that have any connotations for metropolitan schools? For instance, I have a school in my area where one of the biggest problems is getting the children to school. I know they would like a little bus to do something like that. What will the school bus review actually encompass?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The review is more focused on regional areas, but the terms of reference for the review are currently being finalised. If the honourable member has a suggestion, I would encourage her to send us an email with some proposals and we will take that into consideration, but acknowledging that the challenge in regional areas is vastly different in scale from the challenge in metropolitan areas, where of course public transport facilities are, by and large, much more evident.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Lastly, you may have covered this earlier—and I apologise if you have—Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20. Given that priorities have been given to secondary schools in the wake of the government's decision to integrate year 7s to high school, what time line exists for primary schools that did not receive STEM or Building Better Schools funding to receive facility upgrades?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** You are asking about schools that were not included in STEM Works or the former government's Building Better Schools?

**Ms BEDFORD:** They have missed out on everything.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** STEM Works, there were 130-odd schools, and there were 90-odd Building Better Schools grants. Some of those schools were the same schools. We have 500 schools in our system. If we had the Premier's calculator here we could probably have a crack at working out how many were not provided with specific projects.

Some schools did not receive either project but did receive other upgrades in recent years. There were some schools, such as the announcement of \$100 million for a new secondary school in Whyalla, that have received further provision since the former government's announcements. There is a category of minor works funding, which I think is identified in the budget.

If schools have particular works that they would think merit support, then, obviously, we will seek to work with them. There is also the capacity for schools, out of the money provided to them—small projects is a category within the budget papers and they are generally projects that have minor budget expenditure in the current financial year, which is what I was trying to refer to before. Obviously, schools have the capacity, potentially, within their own resources provided to do further works.

Some schools have sought—and if they get to my desk I think I have invariably said yes—to use some of their funds to enhance the offering of a STEM Works project or a Building Better Schools project so that they can use both to get a larger project achieved.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer the committee to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12, minister's office. Why does the reference show a larger number of staff than last year's budget papers, and have any savings been possible?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the member for Hammond for the question. I am very pleased to advise that the answer is yes, there are savings in the ministerial office compared with previous years. The difference in the allocation of staff in the budget papers is one where we are now counting everybody who works in the minister's office in the budget papers and identifying and owning that expenditure.

The previous government operated under a different approach where they identified some of the minister's office as being within the minister's office, and then in this case I have an example of seven staff who were funded by the department to do work in the minister's office but not identified under previous budget papers. I imagine that was a decision of former treasurers. I am not sure how that works. I am certainly not making any reflection on the former minister for education in this. I think it was a longstanding practice of the former government to have significant numbers of people in different Public Service departments, working in ministers' offices, effectively working as what would be described as 'for the minister'.

The new government has taken an approach where we will be transparent. There are 14 identified there. That includes some of those seven people who were in the former minister's office, some of them doing exactly the same jobs now at the same desk—potentially different desks, as I think we have moved a couple of the desks—but they are the same people. They are public servants who are doing important work in my office for the people of South Australia, often facilitating strong and speedy translation of correspondence from members of the community or, indeed, giving advice to the minister's office from people within the department.

They are all now captured within what we identify as the ministerial office allocation. The former government did not do that. There is a reduction in staff, therefore, in the minister's office compared to previously. The only difference is that we are now acknowledging all those people as working in the minister's office and being open and transparent with the people of South Australia.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Budget Paper 5, part 2, page 40. Klemzig Primary School is a bilingual school and they teach Auslan right across the school. I am wanting to know whether Klemzig Primary School will benefit through the Languages in Schools program, in particular in relation to access to Innovative Language Grants for primary schools, improving professional development opportunities for language teachers and offering scholarships for language teachers to improve their language skills.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So the question is whether Auslan is capable of being accommodated and supported within the various projects under the languages reinvigoration program?

**Ms WORTLEY:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have sought advice and the advice is that they are.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Good, thank you. My next question is in relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 12 to 14 and 36. Students from education department schools, mainly from special needs classes, attend Strathmont's swimming centre lessons. My first question is: how much in monetary terms per child is contributed on behalf of the students individually or collectively towards these lessons?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Perhaps these will follow then as well. Where has the department secured classes for these students from the beginning of the 2019 year, given that the Strathmont swimming centre is going to close?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My recollection is from advice that was provided to me previously, and I think I even shared this with the parliament during question time if I recall, that the department is currently working through the needs of those schools. Of course, I am advised the swimming pool's closure has been on the slate for some significant time. The life of the swimming pool is coming to a natural end and I think that work continues. I am looking forward very much to having some great outcomes for those kids.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Minister, the question is specifically in relation to where they are going to be accommodated for the 2019 year and who is going to pick up the cost of the swimming lessons and the water therapy. Will it be the department, the school or the parents?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have just answered the question. We are working through it.

**Dr CLOSE:** I turn to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 23, and the reference to the activity indicators for students with disability. Has the minister received any correspondence from the member for Waite asking for classes to be restored in Blackwood for the autism intervention program? If so, how has he responded?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The member for Waite is a fierce advocate for his local community. He works—

**The CHAIR:** Minister, I will be listening intently to your answer and am keen to know it, given that the former government did nothing in this area. I am very keen to hear your answer.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The member for Waite is a fierce advocate for his area and his constituents. He has brought a number of things to my attention, as minister, in relation to this matter as well as many others; there would not be too many weeks go by when I do not get at least one phone call from the member for Waite with some good advice about one matter or another. He continually works hard for his constituents.

In relation to the question regarding that particular unit, it is a matter on which I am continuing to take advice. I look forward to providing a response to the member for Waite in the not too distant future.

**The CHAIR:** A very good answer, minister. Deputy leader.

**Dr CLOSE:** I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 39, and the appointment of an Aboriginal commissioner for children and young people. Can the minister update the committee on the status of that advertising and selection process?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The government has committed to the appointment of a Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People within the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, having a particular focus on Aboriginal children's needs in education, health, child protection and justice. The recruitment process for the commissioner has commenced, in line with the government's commitment.

The position was advertised on the I WORK FOR SA and SEEK websites, in *The Advertiser* and the *Koori Mail* between 5 and 13 June 2018. Applications closed on Saturday 23 June. Once appointed, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People will be placed within the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People and be able to commence their work.

A series of inquiries in South Australia—including the Nyland royal commission in 2016 and the Mullighan report in 2008—identified the extent of Aboriginal child sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect as well as issues associated with poor educational outcomes, youth crime and substance abuse amongst Aboriginal children and young people. There remains a disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system, with Aboriginal children comprising more than 37 per cent of all those subject to care and protection orders.

During the Nyland royal commission Aboriginal organisations sought the appointment of a commissioner with specific responsibilities for Aboriginal children and young people. South Australia's Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People will promote the development of policies and practices that will improve the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people, and assist Aboriginal families and communities to keep children safe in culturally appropriate ways.

The appointment process is underway. A merit-based selection process was undertaken, and we expect the appointment will be in place pretty soon, I expect before the end of the year.

**Dr CLOSE:** Did the advertisement restrict applications to Aboriginal people or not?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am confident that the fact the advertisement did not make such a restriction will, once the appointment been made, be seen not to have had a negative impact on that process in any way.

**Dr CLOSE:** I take that to mean that an Aboriginal person has, indeed, won the position or is in the process of being negotiated with, but can the minister rule out that he or his office changed the advertisement in order to not make it restricted to an Aboriginal applicant?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will have to take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Okay. I appreciate that. Thank you.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In terms of context, from memory, it was on or about the time when I took a couple of weeks leave earlier this year, for reasons the member would be aware of, so I do not immediately recollect.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am happy for you to take that on notice. The last question relating to the appointment of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People. I understand that the responsibility was moved from the Department for Child Protection to the Department for Education some time after the initial appointment of the minister and the new government. Why was that? What happened? Why was it assigned to Child Protection initially and then moved?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This matter has been publicly ventilated but I am happy to go through it again. The Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act is where the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Guardian for Children and Young People, the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, the Child Development Council, and there may be others, and obviously the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People fits in there as well, all of those are in an act that was previously assigned to the member for Port Adelaide, who was of course the minister for education and the minister for child protection.

Upon coming to government, there were a series of machinery of government changes made and the government required that the Guardian for Children and Young People report to the Minister for Child Protection, with whom lies the exclusive responsibility. The Guardian for Children and Young People looks after the needs and interests of children under the guardianship of the minister, so it was the government's desire that the guardian report to the Minister for Child Protection. A rather blunt instrument was used to effect that immediately, in which the Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act was transferred to the responsibility for the Minister for Child Protection.

The unintended consequence of that was that the Child Development Council, the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, and there may have been another one, were also transferred there, but that was not the intention in the first place. At the first possible opportunity, the machinery of government changes were restored so that the other oversight bodies would remain with the Department for Education, where they had always been intended to be, with the sub-delegation in effect—and I apologise if that is not the correct legal term—of the Guardian for Children and Young People being delegated to the Minister for Child Protection, which would have been the correct thing to do in the first place but there was a lot of machinery of government changes going on at the time.



**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that. Thank you very much, minister. If I can move now to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 21. There is a reference to making progress in a strategy in partnership with the Department for Industry and Skills to encourage flexible apprenticeship pathways. I would be interested to hear from the minister about the ways in which the experience of school-based apprenticeships and vocational training within the school system are likely to change in the course of these four years.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That work is ongoing. I note that the SACE review is also underway and one of the key matters that is looking at is directly relevant to this question, too.

**Dr CLOSE:** We might talk more about that in the SACE section, if that is okay.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am happy to talk more about that in the SACE section but it is directly relevant to the question the member has just asked. I will not take much longer but I make the point that we have not yet received the recommendations of the SACE review. We will also look forward to receiving advice from the SACE Board, and I am sure many other people, on how we respond to that SACE review. The short answer is that that work is ongoing.

We have within the Department for Education a new team and a new director of further education pathways, which will give focus and dedicated effort to achieve that aim. The member asked about the experience of school-based apprentices and students undertaking vocational education. The short answer I can give is that there will be a lot more encouragement for students to undertake apprenticeships and vocational education and training that leads directly towards job pathways and job outcomes.

**Dr CLOSE:** Just as a supplementary, perhaps you could describe—

**The CHAIR:** We do not ask supplementaries, as we know, but perhaps you can ask another question.

**Dr CLOSE:** As an additional question, on exactly the same matter: the minister refers to encouragement. Can he give any specificity as to what that might look like?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I started my first answer by advising that we are working on some of the detail on that, but I am happy to bring back more information for the member.

**Dr CLOSE:** Some school students are observing here—it is the perfect estimates for them to observe. If I can move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, in the general budget. I would like to ask a question about SAASTA and Clontarf. Can the minister explain a bit about the arrangement with Clontarf for four schools—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, can you repeat that?

**Dr CLOSE:** Clontarf is, as I understand it, an alternative to SAASTA. Although, if it is in addition to SAASTA—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The problem, deputy leader, is that I am actually struggling to hear you.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am sorry, the microphone does not seem to be perfectly located for me.

**The CHAIR:** For my benefit, on page 20, what dot point are we working under?

**Dr CLOSE:** We are talking about Aboriginal students and their support.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How about we go to the program summary on page 21, which covers pretty much everything?

**Dr CLOSE:** We can always just go to page 14 and page 21, which is the general budget.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can I ask a question about Clontarf and the reasons behind engaging Clontarf in four schools and the way in which that will or will not interact with the existing SAASTA academy?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sure. My understanding was that the Labor Party supported the Clontarf investment. Indeed, when were being advised and briefed on Clontarf at an event, the

member for Hurtle Vale spoke glowingly of the program, and it is fantastic to have her hosting some school students. I am sure that the member for Hurtle Vale can provide supplementary information to the member for Port Adelaide about the benefits she saw when it was presented.

There is a number of good reasons that Clontarf is now part of the mix. We have a three-year pilot program in four South Australian schools, three of which are regional and one which is outer metropolitan. The tripartite funding model sees South Australia supporting one-third of the cost, with the commonwealth and philanthropic giving to the Clontarf Foundation also contributing one-third each. Our commitment is for \$2.75 million over four calendar years. I assume, from the previous sentence, that the others will also be providing \$2.75 million each over four calendar years.

So we are getting an extra \$5.5 million dollars from other sources—or at least not through our expenditure—that the South Australian taxpayers are going to be seeing in our schools. The Clontarf Foundation operates around Australia with academies and partner schools. Football is used as a means of engagement to train staff to work full-time to mentor boys, encouraging behavioural change through raising their self-esteem and assisting students to complete school and secure employment.

The program is aimed at Aboriginal male youth from 12 years old who are disengaged from schools, have limited family support and are on the edge of the youth justice system. These students would not generally be eligible for SAASTA (South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy program), which works with Aboriginal youth from year 10 who are engaged in school with a better than 80 per cent attendance rate. We are talking about different cohorts of students.

I can advise that SAASTA's budget is significantly increasing in the coming years and will reach \$2.942 million in 2020-21, which is a substantial increase. As the member is aware, it is a unique program that provides a culturally secure environment for Aboriginal secondary students to learn, develop skills, access opportunities and build confidence to achieve in the areas of academia, cultural identity, leadership, employment and positive living choices through sports. SAASTA develops and delivers curriculum and related resources through its academy sites at stages 1 and 2 of the SACE and VET, including mentoring, coaching and Aboriginal role models, behaviour management, attendance, tertiary and employment pathways and cultural activities.

We are seeing five new school-based academies in the Far North, the Adelaide Hills, the east at Avenues—from memory, I think that is the member for Torrens's electorate—Paralowie and the South-East. There are two new sports-based academies for women's AFL and mixed basketball, and indeed one new SAASTA head office staff member, according to these notes.

That is a program that does related things, but not exactly the same, and services, by and large, a different group of students to Clontarf. I note that the senior judge of the Youth Court, Penny Eldridge, has particularly welcomed the support for Clontarf. We are really excited about the opportunities to work with Clontarf in our schools. I have a feeling I might be going to SAASTA's graduation event this Friday. The government will continue to support SAASTA as well. They complement each other's work to a great extent.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can I clarify, on that same point, the bit over \$2 million over the four years: is that just for the four schools that Clontarf is currently engaged with or is there an expectation that there will be more schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Just to clarify: we are talking about four academies. I will double-check whether it is just the four schools. If there is, indeed, the capacity for more schools to engage, we will let you know, but I think it is four schools—it is certainly four academies and four regions. That is what the commitment is for. If there is an expansion, then we will, no doubt, let you know.

**Dr CLOSE:** If I can move now—although, I believe on the same page still—to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 21, at the top. There is reference to the entrepreneurial specialist programs. Which schools will be selected, or, if not yet, what criteria will be used to select them and what will be the benefit financially to those schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Two schools will be in the metropolitan area and two will be in regional areas. Business leaders, entrepreneurs and other relevant leaders will be engaged as

role models and mentors. Of course, the SACE Board is working on new business-focused subjects that will be available to all schools, but you would expect that the entrepreneurial schools would have a bit of a focus on those areas. The schools based in regional areas will have a particular focus on engaging with primary industries.

The budget allocated to deliver this initiative is \$5.6 million over four years. The response from schools to the invitation to submit an expression of interest has been strong, with a total of 26 schools submitting an application. Of these, 16 are metropolitan schools and 10 are regional schools. A panel, including representatives from the Department for Education, the Department for Industry and Skills, the SACE Board, Regions SA, the University of Adelaide and an entrepreneurial industry partner have been undertaking a review process to provide the government with some advice on those applications.

The criteria against which the applications have been assessed and advice has been provided includes school leadership and staff capability and capacity, alignment with existing schools' strategic direction and aspirations, connections to community, business and industry network partners, awareness of entrepreneurial pathways and demonstrated capability in course and career counselling, and curriculum development expertise. Once that assessment against those criteria is complete, I am told that further advice will be provided to the government.

**The CHAIR:** Before I call the deputy leader, could I acknowledge students from Reynella East College, who are in the gallery today as guests of the member for Hurtle Vale. Welcome to parliament this morning. Deputy leader.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you, Chair. I still refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, but for the general school education budget, for which the program summary is on page 21. Regarding the schools on the APY lands—I am not sure if the minister has yet had an opportunity to go, but I am sure, if not, he will before long—I would like an update on what is occurring for students on the lands to have the same length of school year as all other students.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice if that is alright.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Remaining on the general school education budget for which the summary is at Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 21, what was the cost for the change of the name for the education department?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** As often happens with these things, we had signage—the new stationery orders will have the new department's name on but the direction was that we continue to use the old stationery until it ran out, so the Department for Education and Child Development letterheads were still used. I think the chief executive handed me some business cards early on that had his name on them and the old logo, and I expect that happened everywhere because that is certainly what the department told everyone to do.

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 20 and 21, the general school budget: the Education Management System. What is the total cost of the contract with Civica for the delivery and operation of the EMS? I appreciate that it is a project that has been in the making for a significant period of time.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That aspect I will take on notice and see what we can provide to the member. I am happy to provide some more general information about the EMS, if she would like.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am interested in the length of the contract and also when it is expected to be fully operational, so if your general response could encompass those if possible it would be very useful.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that the length of contract is 10 years with an option for 10 more. Of course, the general lifetime of such a system—20 years is more normal, as I am advised. In relation to when it is hoped to be rolled out, the department is looking to undertake a pilot in terms 1 and 2 of 2019, with a small cross-section of representative schools and preschools and parallel to existing systems and processes.

The outcomes of that pilot will inform business processes, configuration, testing and training for the implementation of the EMS. Full implementation is expected—certainly hoped—I know when the former minister briefed me on it there was a level of hope in it all, but cautious optimism remains the flavour of the month. Full implementation is expected to commence in the 2020 school year and is expected to be rolled out into all schools and preschools by the end of 31 December 2022, my notes provide.

**Dr CLOSE:** By the end of?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think either works.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. I turn now to Budget Paper 5, page 39, the bullying program. What support is currently being offered to teachers and students who might be dealing with homophobic or transphobic bullying in our public schools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Obviously the government is concerned about any form of bullying, as I know all members are. There is a range of programs that is offered that deal with bullying. The particular cohort is of course one of those that are more susceptible to bullying than many other cohorts. They are not the only cohort that is more susceptible—at greater risk—but there are supports that obviously need to be provided.

We have work that is being done on an overarching antibullying strategy, which will support all of those cohorts, including students identifying as LGBTI. In the interim the department has partnered with specialist consultants to provide information, consultative specialist advice, professional development and tailored support to school staff where such support is needed to meet the needs of that school community. Advice, training and tailored support is available as it needs to be.

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on page 39 with the bullying program, which consultants have been appointed, and what was the process for selecting them?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I will take that—

*Dr Close interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** On the interim program? I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on the same dot point, is the minister aware if anyone lost their job in Shine SA as a result of the termination of the government contract?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The advice that I have is that funding to the SSAI, which was through Shine, ceased on 13 July. There were two service agreements arising out of the SSAI. One of them was an agreement with a contract value \$619,605, GST inclusive, with Shine for services from 1 July 2017 until 30 June 2020. The second was an agreement with a less significant contract value of \$67,155, GST inclusive, with external evaluator Beyond. Both agreements ceased on 13 July after a period of 30 days notice as required by their terms and conditions. Final payments to the contractors for work done to the cessation date of the service agreements has been settled. That funding has been able to be redirected towards other education, particularly student wellbeing and antibullying projects within the education department. That is information I have.

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on that page—page 39 of Budget Paper 5—but on a different dot point, beginning 're-engaging all children', I believe the department has been undertaking some work on lifting attendance. Can the minister inform us about the process for selecting the consultants who have been undertaking work that has included a proposal to have focus groups with parents whose children are not attending primary school?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Maintaining a focus on student attendance and engagement is, of course, important and recognises that educational success is central to lifelong achievement, to wellbeing and to the success of children and young people—and attending school is a pretty critical part of that. Our attendance strategy includes a range of attendance initiatives that focus on promoting the importance of education from the earliest years of life by supporting families to understand the importance of education and the active engagement of children, young people and their families in education by valuing diversity, individual capabilities and unique interests. There are

also strategies to address barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing by monitoring and understanding attendance patterns and taking early action to address attendance concerns.

Some of the initiatives underway include the involvement of youth voice in relation to attendance improvement through a partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia. My recollection is that might have been a project that was signed by the member for Port Adelaide. There were some delays in that work being able to be progressed, and from memory I was asked to extend the end date on that project so that the Youth Affairs Council would have time to complete that work in a useful way. If it is the one I was thinking of, I was certainly amenable to that request.

A parent-targeted communication strategy for a pilot social media campaign aims to increase parent awareness of the importance of consistent school attendance; of setting up attendance patterns in the early years; of the impact that absence has on achievement, wellbeing and life outcomes; of a review of current policies and procedures relating to attendance; and of a trial of a family group conferencing model for chronic non-attenders.

In preparation for the legislation that is obviously being presented, at least in this aspect in a fairly similar way to the way it was presented last year, I note that the government has removed the former government's desire to have expiation notices available to provide to parents. We await with interest whether the opposition proposes to put those back in by way of amendment.

An updated version of the attendance strategy document launched in October 2017 is currently being finalised. I think the member asked specifically about people engaged to do certain work. That is not something that is in the notes that I have been provided with, other than the Youth Affairs Council. Obviously, if there are other bodies engaged to do particular bodies of work in amongst that, then we will come back. I imagine it will probably be captured in the omnibus questions to do with contractors, if the member is going to read those at some point, so one way or another we will definitely be coming back to you.

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on the same point, I am particularly interested in the pilot social media campaign work, where I understand there is a proposal that is currently rolling out for focus group attendance by parents. I would be interested not only in the answers that come through in the omnibus about the contract of an organisation to do that but also what the expectation is and how well that has gone.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** One way or another, we have taken that on notice. I can actually answer a question that you asked earlier that was taken on notice then. I am advised that the attendance rate for year 7s, according to the term 3 census, was in 2014, 91.5 per cent; in 2015, 91.4 per cent; in 2016, 91.4 per cent; and in 2017, 91.1 per cent. I express that with full confidence, as I am advised that it is publicly available on the department's website.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you very much. I will turn shortly to the estimates omnibus. I need, on yesterday's rate of reading, five minutes to do that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do you want to do that in this session or the next one?

**Dr CLOSE:** I will do them in this session. The question I have now, though, refers to Budget Paper 5, page 41, the literacy guarantee. The minister said earlier that the Literacy and Numeracy First funding was substantially remaining, with a reduction of \$1.5 million for each year after, I think, this financial year. Given that the literacy guarantee funding is being found from within existing departmental resources, according to Budget Paper 5, where is the remaining money coming from? What is not occurring in order to fund it?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The department does not identify a specific program here to fund a specific program there. There is a number of opportunities for existing resources to be applied to deliver election commitments. We also had the substantial benefit, at least from a financial point of view, of having undertaken before the election a different point of view on the former government's proposal to give a free laptop to every year 10 student in each of the government schools. That is a saving of \$70 million to the taxpayers of South Australia.

Of course, schools already had their own IT programs, so when the member announced during the election campaign that a re-elected Labor government would give those free laptops to

every student, the opposition did not make that commitment; indeed, we pointed out some of the challenges that that commitment would involve. We identified, on coming to government, that there was a very substantial saving to the taxpayer there, which has gone towards meeting our savings targets and, of course, made further money available to spend on other educational priorities.

There is at least one example of work that is being done by the Literacy Guarantee Unit that was anticipated might be done by the former government. I have commended the member for Port Adelaide a couple of times for going ahead with the trial of the year 1 phonics check. That work is obviously tied up very closely with the work of the Literacy Guarantee Unit, so that aspect of the funding is included within the Literacy Guarantee Unit's budget. That is an example of a redirection.

**Dr CLOSE:** I will now turn to the omnibus questions:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000, engaged between 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018 by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the estimated total cost of the work, the work undertaken and the method of appointment?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of the forecast expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 for the 2018-19 financial year to be engaged by 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?

3. For each department and agency for which the minister has responsibility:

- (a) How many FTEs were employed to provide communication and promotion activities in 2017-18 and what was their employment expense?
- (b) How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, and what is their estimated employment expense?
- (c) The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2017-18 and budgeted cost for 2018-19.

4. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for the 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years:

- (a) The name of the program or fund;
- (b) The purpose of the program or fund;
- (c) Balance of the grant program or fund;
- (d) Budgeted (or actual) expenditure from the program or fund;
- (e) Budgeted (or actual) payments into the program or fund;
- (f) Carryovers into or from the program or fund;
- (g) Details, including the value and beneficiary, of any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund; and
- (h) Whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instructions 15.

5. For the period of 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018, provide a breakdown of all grants paid by the department/agency that report to the minister, including when the payment was made to the recipient, and when the grant agreement was signed by both parties.

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- (a) The total number of FTEs in that department or agency;
- (b) The number of FTEs by division and/or business unit within the department or agency; and

- (c) The number of FTEs by classification in each division and/or business unit within the department or agency.
7. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you detail:
- (a) How much is allocated to be spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2018-19?
- (b) How many of the TVSPs are estimated to be funded?
- (c) What is the budget for TVSPs for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how are these packages to be funded?
8. For each department or agency reporting to the minister in 2018-19 please provide the number of public servants broken down into headcount and FTE's that are (1) tenured and (2) on contract and, for each category, provide a breakdown of the number of (1) executives and (2) non-executives.
9. Between 30 June 2017 and 17 March 2018, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of SA executive positions—(1) which have been abolished and (2) which have been created?
10. Between 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of SA executive positions—(1) which have been abolished and (2) which have been created?
11. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budget for each individual program administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.
12. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budgeted expenditure across the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 financial years for each individual investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.
13. For each department or agency reporting to the minister how many surplus employees are there at 30 June 2018 and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of employee and the total cost of the employee?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Out of kindness to the opposition, Chair, would you like me to take those on notice?

**The CHAIR:** Indeed. Minister, would you be happy to take those on notice?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take them on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, minister. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio School Education completed. In accordance with the agreed timetable, the committee stands suspended until 11.45am.

*Sitting suspended from 11:30 to 11:45.*

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education.

Ms K. Brandon, Director, Early Childhood Services, Department for Education.

Ms C. Bauer, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** Good morning. We will open up the Early Childhood Development portfolio. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education. It is the same budget lines, as I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 2,

and I ask the minister to introduce his advisers, as there has been a change, and to make an opening statement, if he so wishes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you, sir. We have farewelled Mr Temperly, and he is doing extraordinarily important and good work for the government at another desk right now. At the table we still have: Mr Persse, the Chief Executive; Mr Bernardi, the Chief Financial Officer; and, we welcome to her first estimates, Ksharmra Brandon, Director, Early Childhood Services.

As an opening statement, the only thing I would add to my earlier opening statement is to say that everything I said at the beginning of the School Education portfolio estimates hearing I reiterate for this area. There are many fine people who work in our system in Early Childhood Development, both within our early childhood sites, children's centres, preschools and others, and of course within the department doing policy work. It is a particularly important area of public policy, of which I am personally acutely aware at this very moment.

**Dr CLOSE:** I have no opening statement. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, which is the program summary for early childhood. What savings are expected to be made in early childhood over the next four years? How will they be approached and where are they expected to come from?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take the question on notice, but the broad settings are in line with the School Education answer. As I understand it, the principles of expression of interest for TVSPs are within their corporate and administrative and not in—direct services to preschools and children's centres are quarantined.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister describe what work is undertaken in early childhood that is not a direct service?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The corporate and administrative within the department, in the same way as with the answer to the schools question earlier.

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 5, page 44, contains memorandum items, which refers to universal access. The current national partnership agreement, which is the one that provides 15 hours a week of preschool to South Australian children, expires at the end of 2019. What is the status of negotiations with the commonwealth on the continuance of that funding?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** They are ongoing. I would not like to put a number on the number of conversations I have had with the federal minister since he took up the role some weeks ago but it would be probably fewer than 12 and more than five. In each and every one of those conversations, I have raised this matter. The South Australian government unambiguously would like the commonwealth to give us certainty in the longer term past the end of 2019.

**Dr CLOSE:** Has the government provisioned to fund the shortfall should that not occur?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am an optimistic person. We are working hard, we are negotiating and discussing the matter with the commonwealth. We are a little way off the end of 2019 as yet. As we get a bit closer, if we have not yet come to an agreement, then we will no doubt have more to say. I will add that additional funding enables South Australia to maintain access to 15 hours per week in normal Department for Education preschools, provide funding to non-government preschools and childcare centres to retain that 15 hours per week and provide specialist services to support our most vulnerable children.

The South Australian government continues to work with other jurisdictions and the Australian government to support this. This is a matter that gets discussed regularly at the Education Council. We had Pascoe and Brennan—Ms and Professor. One of them is Professor and one of them is Ms. Forgive me if I cannot remember which is which at this moment. They gave a tremendous presentation to the Education Council a few months ago. At the Education Council, it is a matter of discussion that comes up pretty regularly. This is not something only South Australia is interested in.

**Dr CLOSE:** Indeed. Could the minister elaborate on the presentation that was made? Was it about the virtues of the provision of 15 hours a week?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It was about the 'Lifting our game' report which they wrote.



**Dr CLOSE:** Did the presentation discuss, or have other conversations at ministerial council discussed, lowering the age for the availability of preschool in Australia?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The 'Lifting our game' report is a public document which I am sure the member has read. There is a range of approaches. Obviously we have provision of preschool for four year olds and for three year olds in vulnerable groups, in particular Aboriginal children and children under care. They may also have an extended period in preschool up to six years of age. Ensuring those groups of people who we are targeting our support for are fully utilising that opportunity is a priority for the government.

**Dr CLOSE:** I will come back to the age of three for preschool very shortly, but just to tidy off the question of universal access, has the minister included in his discussions with the federal minister the Inclusive Preschool Programs funding? Has he received any further assurance that that will continue to be made available?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is funded out of the same bucket, so it is part of the same discussion when we argue at the very least for the current situation to continue. That is incorporated in that.

**Dr CLOSE:** I believe there is some anxiety that a future iteration might not include that, so just to have that on your radar. Minister, if we can return to the question of the potential for three year olds to access preschool, referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, which is the program summary for early childhood. Has the minister received or asked for in the costings and other advice on the question of generally lowering the preschool age from four to three or even younger?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, lowering the preschool age to children younger than the age of three?

**Dr CLOSE:** Either from four to three or even, as is occurring in the UK, to two.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Has the minister asked for or received advice on those matters? I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** I gather from that it is not a live discussion at present, but I am happy to have that taken on notice.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It was clearly a priority of the former government. Our priority is ensuring that those particularly vulnerable cohorts we are targeting to try to increase their engagement, those cohorts that will benefit the most from access to preschool and early childhood education, are fully utilising the opportunity they have at the moment.

**Dr CLOSE:** On the same point, can the minister advise the proportion of young people in that category, either being Aboriginal or being under the care of the state, or proportion of three-year-olds in that category who are having access to the preschool services?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice. If it is possible for us to bring back an answer before the end of the session I will.

**Dr CLOSE:** Assuming that the proportion is not 100 per cent, which would be unlikely, I would also be interested in what strategies might be being considered in order to lift the proportion.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There is a range of things that are done. Obviously we have noted that there is availability for Aboriginal children and children under care, that they may have extended access. We work with the Department for Child Protection in relation to children under care. We also provide early entry to preschool for children with additional needs, such as those with emerging English and those at significant risk due to family circumstances, for up to two terms prior to commencing full time in preschool. There is an ongoing body of work to make sure that we can identify and target students

There is also the funding of buses in six locations with a high number of Aboriginal children enrolled. We also continue to operate children's centres for early childhood development and parenting where family service coordinators and community development coordinators have a key role in supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable families and children to access early childhood services, including preschool programs.

There is a significant number of those, and I visited some of them this year. I spoke to FSCs and CDCs—that is the way they referred to themselves in the centres I visited, I do not know whether that is universal or not—and they talked about the strategies they employ. That existing work continues.

**Dr CLOSE:** Is there any consideration of increasing the pool of young people who would be eligible for three-year-old preschool?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Obviously it is part of that broad national discussion in relation to the Lifting Our Game report, and I anticipate there will continue to be a discussion at the national level. However, I have identified our government's priority. The other aspect—and this could have been part of my answer to the last question, I received this advice before—we also have a focus on increasing the attendance of our four year olds, not just enrolment.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister give me any statistics on attendance by category of preschool?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice and if we can provide an answer by the end of the session, we will. Otherwise, we will get back to the member.

**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, I can provide some broad data. We may be able to provide more later, but as at August 2017, which is the most recent data that is in front of me, 98 per cent of South Australian children were enrolled in preschool in their year before full-time school for 15 hours per week. Of these enrolments, 98 per cent of children attended a preschool program at least once during the collection reference period, and 87 per cent of children attended for at least 10 hours.

**Dr CLOSE:** If you could keep on notice the question of the three categories of preschool, I would appreciate that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sure.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, the same page, page 17, with the summary. Can the minister outline how much money is allocated to children with a verified disability in preschools, and if this funding is decreasing on a per child basis this year and over the forward estimates?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Is the minister aware that there are concerns in the preschool sector that because of the increase in the number of children with verified disabilities who are enrolling in preschools that, in fact, the money although growing is declining per capita? Is the minister aware that is an issue being raised at present?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Certainly the department has been approached by the AEU. There may well be others who have raised this issue and we are looking into it.

**Dr CLOSE:** Further, I understand that many preschools were only informed of their term 3 preschool support funding a few weeks ago, so well into term 3, which ends at the end of this week. Is the minister aware of this issue and is there an explanation for the uncertainty that that may have caused in preschools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is the member talking about disability support for those students?

**Dr CLOSE:** That is right.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The structure of the department has that funding coming through a different group than the advisers I have at the table, so we will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 19, Activity indicators, preschool attendances. You addressed this in part in answer to a previous question, but is there any money allocated in the budget to increase both enrolment and attendance at the preschool level as opposed to the school level, which we discussed earlier?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Family day care is on page 20 with a number of services. Is the minister considering or would he rule out privatising or outsourcing any department-run family day care services?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The Department for Education is obviously an approved provider of family day care services in South Australia—I will provide some context if that is alright—and supports a network of over 500 educators providing care to almost 5,500 children and 4,000 families across South Australia. The department has provided family day care services for over 40 years and is currently the only approved service provider operating in South Australia.

It is not provision of educational support in the way that a department school is, as the member would be fully aware. Effectively, the people who are doing the provision are self-employed at the moment, and the department has a register for the purposes of compliance. Therefore, to describe it as a government service at the moment, it is not a government service in the way that others are. The government has a role, clearly, and the department is the registered provider so that those family day care settings can continue to operate.

I can provide some further information on those family day care services. There are 12 services assessed and rated under the National Quality Standard: one exceeding NQS, two meeting NQS and nine working towards NQS. Of course, one educator failing to meet one of the seven quality areas of the NQS at the time of assessment and rating can bring down the rating of the entire service. This is an area of challenge.

How that management works is something that the department has looked at over a period of time, but I have not received any advice, formally, in terms of what the member suggests. Other than that, I would describe its characterisation as privatisation as an ambitious description.

**Dr CLOSE:** Okay, but clearly there is work occurring within the department about how that service might be managed.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think that is a description of how the department operates in all areas. Clearly, this is an area where there are 500 self-employed educators at the moment, providing care to 5,500 children and 4,000 families. It is an area where we would always want to do the best for them.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you, minister.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Minister, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 16. In relation to the section that refers to partnering with non-government organisations to deliver evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs targeted at disadvantaged children before they start school, would you be able to provide a bit more information in relation to that? What setting, specifically, are you referring to, and can you provide examples of the non-government organisations and the qualifications?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am very pleased to provide the member for Torrens with an answer. The government will, in accordance with our election commitments, deliver evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs targeted at disadvantaged children in their early years before they get to school—indeed, not only some of those targets but also some provision to all children. Agreements are being reached with Raising Literacy Australia to extend the Little Big Book Club and the Smith Family to deliver their Let's Read and Let's Count programs across government and non-government early learning settings.

The funding extension for Raising Literacy Australia brings the total state government funding as at June 2023 to \$4.64 million. It provides baby, toddler and preschool reading packs to South Australian families, as well as the Read to Me project, which supports children in out-of-home care. The reading packs aim to develop early childhood reading and literacy skills by encouraging and supporting parents and caregivers to read regularly to their children from an early age. I can attest that the kids seem to enjoy that. The Read to Me project provides a reading pack and user guide for carers and residential care staff to target it to children up to preschool age who are under the guardianship of the minister.

The Smith Family will also receive \$720,000 over four years to deliver their Let's Read and Let's Count programs into disadvantaged communities, including the Smith Family Learning for Life

communities within the cities of Onkaparinga, Port Adelaide, Playford, Salisbury, Port Augusta and Whyalla. For families with young children, the department also provides services that focus on healthy child development, including literacy and numeracy development through the Early Years Learning Framework, which guides early childhood educators in developing quality early childhood education programs; 45 children's centres; and the Learning Together and Learning Together at Home programs that are delivered throughout the state.

Learning Together operates within existing departmental services and works with parents to plan for and support children's learning. Learning Together at Home offers in-home support to families with children prior to preschool. The government is thrilled to be delivering on its election commitments, and I know that that is something that many people in the community will appreciate.

**Mr BOYER:** Minister, I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 18. Can the minister update the committee on his department's negotiations with Surrey Downs Kindergarten about securing the long-term viability of their existing site?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will have to take that on notice, I am afraid.

**Dr CLOSE:** If I can turn to page 17 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, Program summary. There is a substantial difference between the 2017-18 budget and estimated the result in the grants and subsidies line. Can that variation be explained?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am advised that the transfer of provider payments in respect to the family day care program is now two administered items and that is \$19 million. That would seem to account for a fairly large chunk. There is an adjustment in the budget to compensate for activity levels that have been changed.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you, minister.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I can actually give you a little bit more information about that: lower activity levels compared to the last budget for family day care.

**Dr CLOSE:** If we turn to page 16, there is the list of targets 2018-19. There is not a lot of new activity or new programs occurring, but can minister elaborate on his ambitions for early childhood development? I am particularly interested in the minister's expectations on the literacy and numeracy penultimate dot point and the activity he expects to see and how much money is being assigned to that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I just had a fair old crack at that in response to the member for Torrens' question and I refer the member to my previous answer.

**Dr CLOSE:** So that substantially is working with non-government providers rather than activities within the preschools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** If the member checks the *Hansard*, she will find I spoke about government providers as well.

**Ms WORTLEY:** You say, 'Strengthening teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in every preschool—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, member, my hearing is a little hard. It is my fault, I am sorry.

**Ms WORTLEY:** Perhaps they speak more quietly in this chamber.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There is an echo.

**Ms WORTLEY:** You say, 'Strengthening teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in every preschool using the indicators of preschool literacy and numeracy.' The other question was specifically in relation to the use of non-government organisations to deliver evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs, but was that outside of the preschools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice and I appreciate, in recollecting, I think the first part of the member for Port Adelaide's last question was focused on this, whereas I

focused on the second part of her question in my previous answer. I will take it on notice and we will check the *Hansard* and make sure we provide an accurate response.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister elaborate back on the same penultimate dot point on page 16 on the approach to numeracy in preschools?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Some of this I think was covered earlier, but I will provide information again. The department provides services for families with young children focused on healthy child development, including literacy and numeracy development through the Early Years Framework, which guides early childhood educators in developing quality early childhood education programs, the 45 children centres for early childhood development and parenting, and the Learning Together and Learn Togethering at Home programs that are delivered throughout the state.

I remind members that the Learning Together Program operates within existing departmental services and works with parents to plan for and support children's learning. Learning Together at Home offers in-home support to families with children prior to preschool.

**Ms WORTLEY:** In relation to that, I know throughout there is reference to coaching rather than teaching. Can you explain the difference between coaching—it was not on that particular page, it was earlier. I just want to know the difference between—

**The CHAIR:** Member for Torrens, could you reference which page number in the budget?

**Ms WORTLEY:** It is just a simple question: what is the difference between coaching and—

**The CHAIR:** No, everything needs to be referenced. I appreciate there is an ongoing dialogue and you want to go backwards but—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In trying to assist the committee, I do recall talking about coaches in relation to the literacy guarantee—

**Ms WORTLEY:** It was in relation to literacy.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** —in the school education. Those coaches work with teachers and the teachers work with children. That is a summary; I do not know if it is the most accurate summary but certainly in my observation that is something I have noticed.

**The CHAIR:** You are too generous, minister, I will give you that.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer the minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, in particular expenses, grants and subsidies. Can the minister tell us a little about the grant the new government has given to the Tea Tree Gully Toy Library?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This fulfils an election commitment. I am not sure if it is out of that line or out of a different budget line. I have a feeling that it might be a different budget line that that came from, a slight expansion on something the former minister had signed, and we have a new agreement that has a bit more money. It is an agreement for \$100,000: \$25,000 per year for four years. It has been executed with the Tea Tree Gully Toy Library. The budget for 2018-19 is \$25,000.

The toy library provides a loan service for quality toys and educational resources appropriate to each stage of a child's development. It is located in a space provided within the Tea Tree Gully Council Library at a reduced rent. The funding will assist the toy library with its operating expenses to improve accessibility of existing services to the community. The funding will aid sustainability of the toy library and provide a safe and friendly environment for families, especially those from vulnerable and isolated communities, provide affordable membership fees and improve the quality of the services provided to the local community.

It is something that the local Liberal candidates campaigned on before the election, as it was a Liberal Party election commitment. It is also something that I note the member for Florey has also had a long-term engagement and involvement with. Certainly, when I went to make the announcement to confirm the delivery of that election commitment, there were representatives of the council, including the Mayor of Tea Tree Gully, who were very enthusiastic about the delivery of that commitment.

**Mr BOYER:** On the same budget line, is it not true though that the previous minister before caretaker mode actually signed off on increased funding of an additional \$21,000 per year to the toy library, in which case your \$25,000 in totality per year is actually a cut on what was delivered?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are you suggesting that \$25,000 per year is less than \$21,000 per year?

**Mr BOYER:** Sorry, I can rephrase the question, if you like. Ours was an additional \$21,000 on top of their existing grant.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The advice the department provided me was that the grant provided by the former government was the \$21,000, that that was not additional money. I will double-check that but the advice I had was that our grant was an increase in the funds available for the library. As I say, we will check.

**Mr BOYER:** Take that on notice and—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Well, we will check and if there is any further information to provide we will provide it.

**Dr CLOSE:** On page 16, Early Childhood Development, the penultimate dot point in the highlights for 2017-18 refers to what we used to call the Child and Family Assessment and Referral Networks (CFARN) and their relationship to the 17 children's centres. Can the minister elaborate on how the children's centres have been able to participate and what kind of results might have been seen as a result? I know that CFARN was a pilot by the child protection department, so it would be interesting to know from the children's centres' perspective how that worked.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have some information that I can provide that will certainly touch on that. Would the member like me to—

**Dr CLOSE:** Go for it.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The Child Protection Systems Royal Commission highlighted evidence describing the large cohort of children who are the subject of notifications and need assistance but do not receive a response until their situation is critical. The royal commission identified the need to substantially grow preventative and early intervention services that help families safely care for children before their circumstances become untenable.

The over-representation of Aboriginal children and families in contact with the statutory child protection system is well documented throughout the royal commission report. Recommendation 51 of the royal commission was made in response to this and recommended the establishment of Child and Family Assessment and Referral Networks (CFARN), as the member has rightly described. This recommendation was accepted by the then South Australian government.

Recommendation 196 relates to ensuring that Aboriginal services are at the centre of the CFARN model to promote service coordination and act as a visible entry point. This recommendation was accepted by the then South Australian government. Three pilot CFARNs in metropolitan Adelaide commenced a phased operation in July 2017. A fourth CFARN will be established in Mount Gambier as a regional pilot, which will be operational by the end of this year.

There is a 14 FTE staffing allocation across the three Department for Education-led CFARN locations. One CFARN site is being led by Relationships Australia South Australia. The pilot period is 24 months, ending on 30 June 2019. The Department for Education-led CFARNs are located in the north, covering the Playford and Salisbury local government areas; the south, covering parts of the Marion and Onkaparinga local government areas; and regionally, covering Mount Gambier and surrounding areas. The Relationships Australia South Australia-led CFARN is in the western metropolitan area and covers parts of the Port Adelaide Enfield and Charles Sturt local government areas.

Staff in client facing positions are a mix of allied health professional and operational services classifications. Administrative support is included in the FTE allocation for each location. The CFARN's focus is on the first 1,000 days of an infant's life, commencing in the antenatal phase of pregnancy through until the infant is 24 months of age. There are four key focuses of CFARN: coordinating with partner agencies to ensure the local service systems complement rather than

duplicate service responses to families; promotion of a restorative practice approach among partner agencies; information sharing and use of a common assessment framework; and fostering strong local links and service pathways and providing case management where required.

The CFARN model is based on a collaborative practice approach. Practitioners work alongside each other to provide integrated and holistic services that support the earlier engagement of families into the services that may not have been otherwise engaged, and the CFARN model continues to be refined and developed during the pilot period. I might ask Ms Brandon to elaborate a little bit further on how the service has been received by children's centre staff.

**Ms BRANDON:** Noting that we are still in the pilot stage, anecdotally it is going really well—linking children and their families with critical services. So once we are at the end of the pilot period we can make a full assessment, but from the information that we get from the services and from our children's centre staff, it is really positive.

**Dr CLOSE:** I appreciate that the full assessment of the pilot is yet to be completed, but is there some consideration in the budget for perhaps having more extensive services provided through children's centres as a result of the need identified in the process of the pilot?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will be assessing the pilot in the coming period.

**Dr CLOSE:** Okay. It seemed like there was a lot more conversation than that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I distilled it for the member's benefit.

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 14, has key agency outputs, and children's centres are clearly part of the delivery, in particular for the young children, particularly the vulnerable and at risk, which is the first point on that page. Will there be any cuts to funding for children's centres across the forward estimates?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Children's centres are quarantined, as are preschools and schools.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you. Just for the sake of clarity, will there be any cuts to community development coordinators in children's centres?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** They are front-line service providers.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister guarantee that the leadership role—the director's role—for children's centres will continue to be someone who is an educator?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That question I have heard before. I hope the Chair will give me indulgence to reflect on a debate that is before the house. I think that the Labor Party and the Liberal Party have put on record their support for a provision in the education bill that will ensure that is the case; that is my understanding.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister give me figures on the amount, by quality and quantity, of allied health provision currently in our children's centres?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take that on notice.

**Dr CLOSE:** Is the minister in a position to guarantee that any services provided by another government department through the children's centres will not be cut over the forward estimates?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think the definition of the question is that it is not within these budget lines.

**Dr CLOSE:** Perhaps the minister can have conversations with his colleagues to seek that kind of reassurance.

**The CHAIR:** The minister's colleagues are not here for interrogation. It is about what is in the budget lines, deputy leader, as you well and truly know. I am giving a lot of latitude in these questions.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The minister is capable of saying that the education department, for which I am responsible, has identified these as quarantined because we consider

them to be front-line service delivery providers, and that will be our view if there are any suggestions from anyone else.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you; I appreciate that. Is the minister familiar with the material coming from the early development census on where children are starting school behind on various indicators?

**The CHAIR:** Where is this?

**Dr CLOSE:** Sorry, it is still on page 14, support for families and young children, particularly vulnerable and at risk. The early development census identifies where children are behind on any indicators. Has the minister had the opportunity to consider whether there needs to be any enlargement of services to young people who are starting preschool and then school—or finishing preschool, given the budget line we are on—who are behind on those indicators?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will check in terms of information that has been provided to me and will take that on notice and bring back an answer.

**Mr BOYER:** I turn back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, and the Tea Tree Gully toy library. Given that the minister of the day's correspondence, before caretaker mode kicked in, said that the \$21,000 grant—and I stress that it is not an election commitment but it was a grant—

**The CHAIR:** A grant it was, member for Wright.

**Mr BOYER:** Thank you, Chair, you did correct me—was additional money for the Tea Tree Gully toy library, is it not true that the \$25,000 commitment from your government is actually a cut for the toy library?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have said that we will check that question, but my recollection is that the way in which it might be described as additional is because the previous grant had run out, the previous grant having been provided for a limited period of time. This \$21,000 was additional, but not necessarily provided at the same time. That is my recollection, that the \$21,000 was a new grant that would begin at the time that the old grant ceased. The \$25,000 was therefore an increase of, to the best of my mathematics, \$4,000 on \$21,000.

The previous government, I am advised, spent \$19,000 per year. They had committed in the future grant to increase that \$19,000 to \$21,000; it was not a proposal that it be \$21,000 on top of the \$19,000. The advice I have from the department is that there was no proposal that it be \$40,000 going forward; it was that it be increased from previously \$19,000 being received to, in the future, \$21,000. The people living in the electorates of Newland, Florey and King, through their local members, I believe have expressed some level of gratitude for the fact that it is now \$25,000 which is, as we worked out before, more than \$21,000, which the previous government was offering.

**The CHAIR:** Alas, committee, as the time for this item has expired, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio Early Childhood Development completed.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Perse, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, SACE Board.

Ms K. Weston, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education.

Ms C. Bauer, Chief of Staff.

**The CHAIR:** I open up the portfolio Administered Items. Of course, we have the Minister for Education, and I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statement, Volume 2. Whilst there is a change of advisers, I would like to acknowledge and welcome the former member for Schubert—baron of the Barossa, Mr Ivan Venning—who is with us.



Good to see you are still with us physically, Ivan, after the last time I saw you. He is a wonderful man who probably sat on many estimates committees over many years. It is great to have you here, Mr Venning.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** While the officers are setting up, I would like to thank Ms Brandon for her appearance at her first estimates. I thought that she did really well in her presentation of evidence. In many years to come, I am sure she will enjoy that opportunity as well. Chris Bernardi seems to have left the front table, and Mr Persse remains, everyone will be relieved to know. I welcome Martin Westwell, who is the CE of the SACE Board, and Karen Weston, who is the Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Will you be making a brief statement?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will. I just want to, as I have in the earlier sessions and especially in this case, place on the record my gratitude to the members of the SACE Board and the staff of the SACE Board past and present. It is tremendously important that the work that the SACE Board does is acknowledged. Many of them are well recognised as experts and leaders in their fields. Some of the people who served on the SACE Board prior to us coming to government stepped down for reasons of their term having expired. One of them stepped down because she got a tremendous new employment opportunity that precluded her from being able to continue to participate in the work of the SACE Board. I want to thank all of those former members of the SACE Board and place on the record the government's thanks to them for their work.

Those who have come in to replace those members we are very confident will do an excellent job and are working with the SACE administration well already. Martin is an acknowledged leader in a growing accumulation of fields. I thank him as well for the work that he does. The government has great confidence in the work that the SACE Board is doing.

I thank them particularly for the work they have done hand in glove with the reviewer, Wendy Johnson, who is doing a tremendous body of work, I understand at the moment, to deliver on the government's election commitment to a review into the SACE. It is timely and we look forward to seeing Wendy's work. I understand that Martin and the team at SACE have worked well with her and the body of work will come to its natural fruition in coming weeks and months. I am looking forward to it.

**Dr CLOSE:** I will essentially kick off with a question, but I echo your comments, at the beginning of each of the sessions we have had, about the quality of public servants and board members that the government has access to. I would like to start with the Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board, ask a few questions about that and then we can make sure we devote time to SACE.

If we look at Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13, the Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board FTEs are listed at the top of that page. There looks like a substantial reduction from 37.5 as the estimated result for 2017-18 down to 23.5 for 2018-19. Could the minister explain why there is such a reduction and what impact that will have on the services that the board is responsible for?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the honourable member for the question, and certainly on reading the budget papers, absent of the information I am about to provide, I can understand the appearance of it. The short answer is that there will be no reduction and no reduction in service delivery. It certainly appears as a reduction through the mechanism through which the funding is allocated.

The member would be aware that some decisions were made in this year's commonwealth budget, which provided services under a national partnership-type model for this and for ACECQA, the national body, and the commonwealth government decided that it wanted to fund ACECQA wholly without input from the states, and left these regulatory bodies for the states to look after.

In terms of the way the budget material is presented, that is why there appears to be a drop. I will provide some further context, but the short answer is that we are assisting through our resources to provide support to the Education Standards Board to continue their work, which we consider to be

very important. The board, through the chair of the board and through the registrar, have been given plenty of notice of that support.

The Education and Early Childhood Services Registration Standards Board regulates 1,300 early childhood education and care services in South Australia across metropolitan, rural and remote locations. They are responsible for the registration review of 722 government and non-government schools in South Australia, and for the endorsement of these schools to provide education services to full fee paying and overseas students.

Government schools and preschools comprise a significant proportion of the services regulated. The independence of the board as a regulatory authority is greatly valued by the community for its consistent approach to approving and rating early childhood services and registering and reviewing schools across the government and non-government education and care sectors.

It is supported by a secretariat comprising 22 ongoing Public Service employees and 18 persons employed on short-term contracts to undertake its regulatory functions. The national quality framework, which came into effect in 2012, provides that national approach to regulation and quality improvement for all early childhood education and care services.

The NPA funding was tied to outputs and required states and territories to access and rate a minimum of 15 per cent of eligible services within a calendar year. South Australia consistently met this target in 2017, assessed and rated 24 per cent of eligible services. I am pleased to advise that, as of 1 August this year, 97 per cent of eligible services in South Australia have been assessed and rated.

The board's budget shortfall in 2018-19 resulted from the termination of the national partnership agreement between the commonwealth and the states and territories for the early childhood education and care services from 30 June 2018. In 2017-18, commonwealth NPA funding for the board was \$1.1 million. Under the NPA the commonwealth contributed approximately 28 per cent of the board's 2017-18 funding for early childhood education and care services.

For the coming financial year, funding from the South Australian government is \$3.7 million for the board to fulfil its regulatory obligations. That is the recurrent funding for this financial year. We are providing that \$1.1 million extra to support the board's activities, pending a review of options to address the budget shortfall from next financial year.

The board is considering what options it might have for reducing expenditure. However, there are non-discretionary fundings, for example, the assessment of application to enter the sector. There is little scope for reduction in these activities. Frankly, the quality agenda is important, and we will be working with the board to ensure that it can continue delivering those services.

**Dr CLOSE:** So remaining on page 13 and my question about the apparent reduction in FTEs, does that mean that there are in fact still the same number of people being employed but it is being represented differently, or will there been any reduction in FTEs between the result for 2017-18 and the experience of 2018-19?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My advice is that it is the former. The money that was coming from the federal government is now coming from the state government. The board has, of course, a level of independence—it has its board and its registrar, so I cannot speak for internal decisions they may make, but we are providing funding to meet the shortfall that is apparent in the budget papers.

**Dr CLOSE:** If I can clarify, is that shortfall identical so that there is no net loss?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The member may be remembering previously that there was \$1.6 million provided in the national partnership; \$500,000 of that was to ACECQA, which the federal government is now paying for entirely itself, and \$1.1 million was the federal government's contribution to the ESB. That is the same quantum of money that the department is now providing to the ESB in addition to what we were already providing.

**Dr CLOSE:** The additional funding being provided by the department is for 2018-19 only? Or is it being budgeted for the rest of the forwards?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I want to provide an exactly accurate answer, so I will take some advice. We have given the board some extra certainty to the end of 2019, so not just the 2018-19 year, but obviously we are looking at options. If the board is looking at their operations, we will make some suggestions, and if we need to look at that going forward then we will consider it. But the point I make is that the government's view is that the regulatory function is tremendously important and we will be ensuring that it continues.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, if I can turn now to SACE. One of the greatest qualities of our education system is our SACE offering and part of the feature of that is that it keeps improving. It never rests on its laurels. I assume that the review of SACE, which has been mentioned by the minister, is part of that desire to continue to see an improvement. When will the review be completed?

**The CHAIR:** Deputy leader, could you give me a line item, please?

**Dr CLOSE:** Yes, on page 12 in the middle it says 'administered items' and the first dot point of the administered items is the SACE Board.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Soon is the short answer; definitely by the end of the year. I think we would expect it in coming weeks or months at most.

**Dr CLOSE:** On the subject of the review, will the board be receiving the review and giving advice to the minister accompanying the review, or does the review go directly to the minister?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think this is the suggestion of how it be handled that the board has put forward. We will get a copy of the review, the board will get a copy of the review and then prior to the government responding to the review we will also receive the board's advice as well.

**Dr CLOSE:** Has the minister set any conditions for the outcome of the review in terms of the research project? Is there an expectation that it become not compulsory and/or that it move to being a SACE Stage 1 assessed subject?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have not set any limits or preconditions on the advice that the reviewer will come back with, and that is certainly the recollection of the CE in his discussions with me. I am fairly sure that was also very clear in my discussions with the reviewer before she undertook the work. I have been at pains in public commentary on the same matter to explain that we want honest advice. We have chosen a reviewer who is extraordinarily well regarded and she has been working with the SACE Board. She has also received an enormous number of submissions and is working her way through those. We are looking forward to the outcomes. Obviously, the factors that the member describes were referred to in the terms of reference, so it is something they will be looking at. I am looking forward to seeing the advice.

**Mr ELLIS:** I would like to continue along this path, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13, the SACE Board. What is the progression of the delivery of electronic examinations?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** As a former journalist I am sure the honourable member will be very pleased to hear that this is a priority, particularly in English Literary Studies. Electronic assessment is a key priority of the SACE Board's strategic plan, which was released in 2016. It represents a shift from the traditional paper-based methods of submitting hard copy student materials and marking and moderating this work on paper, and enables students to demonstrate their learning in digital ways. This strategy culminates in providing a technological solution that allows students to participate in an electronic examination.

The online submission of materials, online marking, online moderation of student work were programs successfully delivered last year. The rollout of additional subjects continues in 2018 and beyond. The final program within the priority is the implementation of electronic examinations themselves in 2018.

The electronic examinations program is on track to deliver the stage 2 English Literary Studies electronic examination. When students sit the ELS examination this year it will be a new experience for them and an unique event, as it will be the first time in South Australia that year 12 students have completed a final electronic exam in a high-stakes environment. Electronic exams recognise the way students use computers in their learning and everyday life.

In relation to ELS being the subject, it is the only subject being assessed by an electronic examination in 2018 to ensure that the implementation can be closely monitored and controlled, and that lessons learned can be collated and forwarded on to support the proposed implementation of Modern History and Psychology in 2019. A total of 118 schools in South Australia have enrolments in ELS: 41 schools from the government sector, 39 from the independent sector, 23 from the Catholic sector and 13 from the Northern Territory.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will leave that for the member for Wright; he can ask that if he likes. The students self-select if they are enrolled in that subject.

There are 2,180 students enrolled, and I understand that all of those 2,180 students—or almost all, certainly we tried to get them all, there may have been some sick that day—participated in an August 2018 trial to provide them with a genuine electronic examination experience as well as to evaluate their organisational and technical readiness for the final examination on 7 November. I will ask the SACE CE to comment a bit further on how that has been received.

**Prof. WESTWELL:** The feedback we have been getting from schools and from students in particular has been very positive. Students want to have their assessment, have their exam, in this online way because it is much more in line with the way they are learning these days. In fact, we have had communication from students in other states and territories hoping it will be rolled out in those jurisdictions as well.

**Ms WORTLEY:** The same budget line: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 12 and 13. I would like to ask a question in relation to SACE. The English exam is going to be rolled out this year for students to be able to submit their exam in English, and I think you mentioned Geography and Psychology following through. There are other subjects that require significant written input which I thought would benefit from being able to be conducted online. Do we have a time frame for those?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In addition to Modern History and Psychology 2019? I will invite the CE to respond.

**Prof. WESTWELL:** The rollout is being done in partnership with schools, so we are looking at working with schools to make sure they feel capable of doing these subjects. Exactly as you say, the subjects that have a lot of writing in them are likely to be some of the first subjects that come along in discussion with the schools. Some of the subjects where there is symbolic writing, such as mathematics, might come later on as we explore the technical requirements that might need to be put in place to do justice to those exams.

**Ms WORTLEY:** In relation to those subjects that require a lot of writing, when will they be rolled out? Do we have a time frame? We still do not have a time frame, only for the ones you have mentioned today.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will continue to take advice from the SACE Board.

**Dr CLOSE:** I saw that the research project expo run by SACE was not held this year. Is it now anticipated to become every two years or was that just a blip this year?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will invite the CE to respond.

**Prof. WESTWELL:** The research project expo we felt had a lot of value early on when we first delivered it but was not really achieving that value in the same sort of way. So we have been looking at other ways of promoting the research project and finding networks for students and teachers to engage with the research project and how they might do that, but it really was not delivering the value that we needed out of it.

**Dr CLOSE:** There is an expectation that there will not be another one. Is that what I can conclude from that?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is a matter for the SACE Board.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, will there be a merit ceremony for the SACE early next year?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes.

**Dr CLOSE:** And will you be attending?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I certainly hope to.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, you will be aware that there was an enormous amount of work undertaken by the SACE Board on China, Vietnam and, in a much more longstanding way, Malaysia, being places that were capable of offering the SACE, particularly in international schools. What is the current effort being devoted by the SACE Board to that internationalisation, and what is the anticipated success? What are the targets?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We are very committed to looking for every opportunity to export South Australian wherewithal, knowledge, services, supplies, everything else. This is a government very much focused on exports, and I am very pleased that the SACE Board is, what I would characterise as, ramping up their efforts in this area under the new government. At the beginning of 2018, the SACE International program was being delivered in four schools in Malaysia, eight schools in China, one school in Vietnam, and one school in Vanuatu.

In 2018-19, at least five more schools in China, two more schools in Malaysia, and two more schools in Vietnam will begin delivering the SACE International program. I am advised that these new schools are expected to generate gross revenue for the SACE Board of up to \$400,000 in 2018-19. I can run through the schools if the member would like—

**Dr CLOSE:** That is alright. I visited many of them.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** —otherwise I will skip to the next bit. The SACE International program can be taught following either the Southern Hemisphere cycle per schools in Australia or the Northern Hemisphere cycle per schools in Asia. The first stage 2 examinations for the Northern Hemisphere were held in March 2018 with the first stage 1 and stage 2 results for this cycle released in May 2018. I will see if there is anything else here that is particularly useful for the member. The introduction of that Northern Hemisphere assessment cycle this year to meet the requirements of Northern Hemisphere university admission time lines is expected to increase these numbers over the next two or three years.

The total number of students enrolled in the SACE International program in 2016 was 706; in 2017, 785; and in 2018, 735. Those 2018 enrolments are provisional only and subject to change. The 2016 and 2017 cohorts had a 95 per cent completion rate. In addition, there are international students studying the SACE in South Australian schools through visa subclass 571 or 500. The number of visa students enrolled in the SACE was 1,307 in 2016, 1,357 in 2017, 1,290 in 2018—again, provisional enrolments only. The completion rates for those groups were in 2016, 94 per cent, and in 2017, 93 per cent. We will continue to work with the SACE Board on promoting SACE International.

**Dr CLOSE:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13, FTEs listed for the SACE Board. Is there a dedicated person or people employed in the SACE Board to work on the internationalisation?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There is a dedicated staff member who runs the program. The SACE Board is currently recruiting a business development manager. In addition, they draw on the capacity of other staff within the SACE organisation, as needed.

**Dr CLOSE:** On the same table, I see that there is a very modest decrease of three in FTE between the estimated result and the budget for next year. Can the minister elaborate on why that reduction has occurred and what significance it may have for the offering of SACE?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I apologise to the member, but could you repeat the last part of the question?

**Dr CLOSE:** Still on page 13.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I see the reduction.

**Dr CLOSE:** A small reduction. Could you elaborate on what that reduction represents and whether it has any consequences for the offering of SACE?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My advice is that it is mostly in relation to projects coming and going, for example, the Australian curriculum project, which ended on 30 June 2017. That is now being reflected in reduced salary costs. There is the SACE Board's modernisation project, which was always about delivering things in a better way. In the long term, part of the point was that things are not necessarily going to cost as much to deliver. My advice from the SACE Board is that no impact on service delivery is expected.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am still generally on pages 12 and 13 regarding the SACE Board. You have referred to the curriculum for entrepreneurialism, in addition to four additional schools, as we previously discussed. Is that curriculum to be entirely within SACE—I think I understood that from something you said earlier—and what resources are being devoted, within the SACE Board, to developing that curriculum?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think developing curriculum is a key component of what SACE does. I am reminded that part of the question was about outside of senior secondary. The SACE Board's role is, of course, related to senior secondary only—so that is the work they are doing.

**Dr CLOSE:** My question was: what kind of resources are being devoted? Are there one or two people working on it or are there 15 people working on it? It is a brand-new curriculum area.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My advice is that it is incorporated into the work the SACE Board is doing within its subject renewal program.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13. Does the minister still consider the position occupied by the executive director for strategic policy and external relations as nothing more than that of a spin doctor?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think that we had a crack at this during estimates last year, and I was very welcoming of the person filling that role doing an extraordinary job of work. I think that if their role was limited to communications, as might have been suggested by the initial job ad, I would have been more disappointed, but there is a very vast body of work being done by the role, and I am pleased to see it.

**The CHAIR:** You have exhausted the amount of questions, minister.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We can provide extra time for TAFE. I am very pleased.

**Dr CLOSE:** I can ask another question. I just thought it was 1 o'clock.

**The CHAIR:** One quick question.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister give me the numbers of—

**The CHAIR:** Remind us of where we are.

**Dr CLOSE:** Pages 12 and 13.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Dr CLOSE:** Referring to SACE. Can the minister give me the number of students who are undertaking languages at stage 1 and stage 2 this year and how that compares to the previous five years?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I can do my best and I will even try to bring back a full response to the committee that talks about the last 15 years, if we can.

**The CHAIR:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio administered items completed.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Ms A. Reid, Interim Chief Executive, TAFE SA.

Mr J. O'Dea, Chief Financial Officer, TAFE SA.

Ms C. Feszczak, Director, Further Education and Pathways, Department for Education.

Mr J. Farren, Finance Director, TAFE SA.

**The CHAIR:** I would like to now look at the portfolios of TAFE SA and higher education. The Minister for Education is at the table, with the estimate of payments unchanged from the previous two sessions. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 2. If the minister could please introduce his new advisers once they are seated, and, if he likes, make a brief opening statement.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you. I thank Martin Westwell and Karen Weston for their work and their time here in the committee. As they depart, I indicate that I am hopefully being joined any minute now by Alex Reid, the Interim Chief Executive of TAFE SA, John O'Dea, the Chief Financial Officer of TAFE SA, and behind us will be the other staff with this in their remit of responsibilities. Rick Persse, the Chief Executive of the Department for Education, which now has oversight responsibilities over TAFE SA, remains at the table.

In terms of an opening statement, I do not want to take up too much of the committee's time. I refer all members of the committee to the ministerial statement that I gave in the house on, I think, 4 September, describing our responses to the Nous review, the Moran/Bannikoff review and, more broadly, the government's approach of a fresh start for TAFE SA. This is a tremendously important area of public policy. We have a lot of work to do.

We are joined in that task by some very, very dedicated educators within the TAFE SA organisation, and some extremely hardworking public servants. I will single out Alex Reid, to my left, who has done an enormous body of work in the role since she had it thrust upon her in December last year. I have not checked if she was a conscript or a volunteer—I hesitate to ask. She has worked extraordinarily hard. I particularly also want to identify those members of the TAFE interim board, who have been appointed and have been working extremely hard. All but one of them are public servants doing the work in addition to their existing responsibilities since the new government has put in place that new board.

The work is complex and large in volume and they are doing a terrific job of ensuring that we can, indeed, give TAFE SA that fresh start to ensure that it continues to be the public training provider that has all of the quality expectations and service delivery expectations that one would assume would come with that name. It is tremendously important for the state's economic future that we get this right.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Deputy leader.

**Dr CLOSE:** Thank you very much, Chair. I also welcome the people who are here. Let's start with the campus closures that have been foreshadowed in the budget. I am, of course, referring to Budget Paper 5, page 172, which covers TAFE, both in additional resources and operating efficiencies. Regarding the savings included on this page that will be made to TAFE as a result of the campus closures, are they predicated on the campuses being sold or simply closed?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The savings indicated are in relation to reduced operating expenses only, they do not include any of those other potential benefits. We are talking about things like cleaning the toilets, paying for the electricity, sweeping the corridors. Those savings alone are, from memory, the \$9 million gross savings anticipated.

**Dr CLOSE:** With the seven campuses that have been identified in the budget papers—although I note the word 'including', which may mean there may be others at another point—can the minister detail when the savings are anticipated for each of them so that that then results in the table we have before us in the paper?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I can reduce any anxiety anyone is feeling by the inclusion of the word 'including'. The seven campuses are the only ones identified. Potentially an earlier version of the text might have referred to fewer than all seven and it was the government's intention to be honest and transparent, so that is why all seven are identified, and the word 'including' was not deleted. I hope that clarifies it. You were talking about time lines.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The expectation is that in 2018-19 it is Parafield and Tea Tree Gully, and the others are in the 2019-20 year. To enable best support for students who are currently doing their work at those campuses at those locations I think any changes will be done in semester breaks and, of course, particularly for those in 2019-20, where the larger number is, there will be significant levels of consultation that will occur between now and then to ensure that we have that transition done in the best possible way.

**Dr CLOSE:** For Parafield and Tea Tree Gully closing in 2018-19, if you are using a semester break, that means that they will not reopen after the end of the calendar year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes, that is the expectation: that the 2019 academic year would be where it starts. But I am reminded of some advice I read from somebody who was at some stage certainly considered an expert in the field, and I quote:

But what is important is that that is not about withdrawing presence of TAFE; it is about making sure that we are using the best locations best possible and not spending money that is not necessary but that we are reaching students.

That was said by the member for Port Adelaide on 29 July 2016 in this house.

**Dr CLOSE:** I am flattered with your description of me. What processes were used to identify each of these campuses for closure?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can the member repeat the question? I just want to make sure that I get it exactly right.

**Dr CLOSE:** What process was used to identify those seven campuses as being ones that could be closed?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The process was that we sought advice from TAFE. In relation to that the CE might provide some further background.

**Ms REID:** The process goes back some way. There has been consideration of campuses and the consolidation of face-to-face training delivery as opposed to online or what we would describe as blended learning, a mixture of different methodologies for learning in the VET sector. For some time now successive boards have been considering that. There has been a phased reduction in the physical and administrative presence of TAFE SA across the state over a period of time.

We started with a fresh analysis of that work that had been done previously. We looked at that again. We looked at the consideration of those numbers and those locations as they stand presently and worked on that basis. There is a further consideration about those campuses that we wish to consolidate across the state and develop even further, such as AC Arts in the city, as an example. Where we have seen those benefits accrue over a period of time we have employed that methodology as well.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, can you identify how many staff are likely to lose their jobs in each of the campuses as a result of the closures?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There are no FTE savings identified in relation to that—as I have been advised.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Budget Paper 5, pages 171 to 172 and Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 127. Can the minister advise the total number of individual enrolments in TAFE courses, subjects and/or units run at the Tea Tree Gully campus in 2017-18?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I can. I am very pleased to be able to provide some context here, because I think it will help people to understand the situation. I can even go back a little bit further, if the member would like—down to 2015; would that help?

**Ms BEDFORD:** I do not think in the time allowed people would like you to reminisce too much.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Okay, I will not do too much, but I will give you eight numbers. In semester 2, 2015, Tea Tree Gully total headcount—this is delivery on campus of courses—was



1,030; semester 1, 2016, was 895; semester 2, 2016, was 630; semester 1, 2017, was 584; semester 2, 2017 was 417; semester 1, 2018, was 292; and semester 2, 2018, was 227. Of course much of that load shedding, if you like—a lot of the reduction in student numbers—at the Tea Tree Gully campus is as a result of decisions that were taken previously.

In recent times there has been a reduced requirement for classroom space at the TAFE SA Tea Tree Gully campus, which is largely attributable to a number of things. There is the moves from face-to-face to a blended learning delivery model, incorporating online learning; these are approaches to the delivery of training that have been welcomed by students. There has been a relocation of programs such as the creative industries, graphic design, screen and media, printing and photography to the expanded TAFE SA AC arts campus.

The response to those moves has been positive in terms of student delivery of services. Indeed there has been a 250 per cent increase in enrolments in those courses, such as screen and media and graphic design, since the move occurred, but of course those are now enrolments at the AC arts campus and not the Tea Tree Gully campus.

As a result of this the decision has been made to transfer remaining activity from the Tea Tree Gully campus to the Adelaide and Gilles Plains campuses along with increased online and blended learning during 2018-19. It is important to note that there is no reduction in training activity, and currently enrolled students will continue their studies as planned. TAFE SA will continue to deliver training in the local area using its blended learning model whereby training is delivered from a range of community sites and by more flexible methods.

Transfer of remaining activity will take place during 2018-19 at a convenient time, as we discussed before, to ensure minimal disruption to student studies. Further, TAFE SA will continue to provide updates to students and direct them to additional information and support as required. The member is aware that the IT services firm Datacom—

**Ms BEDFORD:** That was my next question, but go on now.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Florey! The minister is giving his answer.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Well, I might provide some information, and we can go even further. Datacom has established a new IT hub on the Tea Tree Gully campus which will, we certainly hope and believe, create hundreds of new jobs for customer service representatives in the first two years of operation, with more to come in the future. Further to this, Datacom's training needs will be supported by TAFE SA, with a customised pre-employment and post-employment training program, to allow accelerated job creation in northern Adelaide.

One of the key things in the training sector, of course, is that training increasingly is not just happening within brick and mortar classrooms on identified sites but in the workplace. So while the TAFE SA sign may come down and Datacom's replace it, you may have students receiving training on the worksite from TAFE SA staff in the future in that same place.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Two supplementaries to your fulsome answer—

**The CHAIR:** No supplementaries are allowed, but you can have two questions.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Well, two separate questions to your fulsome answer. Can the minister advise, when deciding to close the TAFE campus, what consideration was given to the current use of TAFE campus resources by students living in the north-eastern suburbs enrolled in courses at other TAFE campuses but who utilise the Tea Tree Gully campus resources for their studies? And how many of those students do you know about?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There were a few aspects to that question, and I would not want to miss anything out in detail, so to enable time for more questions, I will take it on notice and provide a response to the member.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Okay. The next question from your fulsome answer was: can the minister advise if the government has entered into discussions with Datacom regarding expansion or with any other private enterprise about the use of the Tea Tree Gully TAFE campus premises for their business purposes and whether those negotiations were before or after the budget?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is not within the responsibilities of TAFE SA, so I cannot provide an answer there. The member might like to put it to the relevant minister which from memory is either minister Ridgway or minister Knoll. We will do one better: we will take it on notice, and we will do that referral for you.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Super kind. Thank you.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer to budget paper—which one are we on here—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Probably 4, Volume 4?

**Mr BOYER:** Yes, the TAFE SA—

*Dr Close interjecting:*

**Mr BOYER:** Page 172, thank you, member for Port Adelaide. What communication has there been with staff and students of the TAFE campuses at Tea Tree Gully and Parafield, given that I believe they are first cabs off the rank to close?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have provided some information in regard to Tea Tree Gully. I will come back to it, but I will provide some information about Parafield in the first instance. The Parafield campus has been the location for TAFE SA's aircraft maintenance training for some time. The buildings are ageing and isolated from other key industry-based activity at the Regency Park campus. It is intended that this training will be relocated to the Regency Park campus during 2018-19. Presumably, that is at the end of this year, before the beginning of next year.

The benefits of relocating the aviation training program to Regency Park campus include improved management and administration of a complex and heavily regulated training program, and the ability to use appropriately qualified staff from complementary programs and vastly superior facilities to those at the Parafield location. Reduced overhead costs of maintaining a stand-alone training facility we have sort of touched on. There will also be savings on lease and maintenance costs, and improved student access and accommodation at Regency House for interstate and regional students. The facilities at Regency are really quite good, and if you want to visit both you will see the difference.

TAFE SA will follow a full consultation process with any affected TAFE SA staff. In terms of the delivery, to get a sense of the scale of what we are talking about, there has been a substantial reduction at Parafield from 2015 to 2018. There were 54 in semester 2 of 2015, and there were 13 at the beginning of this year.

**Mr BOYER:** I refer to the same budget line. What communication has taken place to this stage with—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, I just wanted to ask the CE to respond to that aspect of the question, and I will do so now.

**Ms REID:** I will confirm this, but I recall I wrote to every student associated with the individual campuses on or about budget day. We have a variety of methods of communicating with staff. In particular, we have something called a TAFE com, which goes out reasonably regularly from the interim chief executive. Certainly, on or about budget day, I released a TAFE com as well that referred to that.

We are in the process of convening and pulling together a consultative steering committee, which will be representative of all the sites and relevant decision-makers and staff associated with those sites. There will then be operating committees sitting under that steering committee for each of the sites. We will work through the issues and consult as necessary with staff, with industry and with the community.

**Dr CLOSE:** To return to the question of staff losing their jobs as a result of the closures, I understand your answer was that there will not be any loss.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There are no FTE savings identified related to that. There is an FTE saving identified that is not necessarily related to the campus closures. It is dwarfed by those that were identified in the last six years. Nevertheless, there is an FTE savings measure, but it is not necessarily as an outcome of the campus closures, is my advice.

**Dr CLOSE:** My specific question then is about staff who are at the rural campuses that are closing, where it would be difficult for them to easily move to a different site. What is the plan for them?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We are not reducing training activity in those regions. The bricks and mortar buildings themselves—I think one of them was described in a different form—are not necessarily going to be there, but the training will go on. There is a continued need for TAFE staff to work in those communities.

**Dr CLOSE:** Can the minister give me the number of students who will be affected by the closure of the seven campuses?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** What I propose to do is identify the student headcount delivered on campus. We have touched on Tea Tree Gully, and Parafield we have already done. Port Adelaide has gone from 976 students in semester 2 of 2015 to 450. The Urrbrae campus is 354. It was 386. Wudinna was four in semester 1, 2018. In semester 2, 2018, I do not have any students listed but we are still in semester 2, so it is possible they just have not been identified yet, so I will use semester 1 figures.

Semester 2, 2015, was 60 at Roxby Downs. That was down to 34 and, it says here, 10 in semester 2, but there may possibly be some added to that. At Coober Pedy, we had 80 in semester 2, 2015, and 10 in semester 1, 2018. There were seven certificate II and seven certificate I students in semester 2, 2018, for a total of 11, which means that I assume some of those students must have been doing a certificate I and a certificate II within the period, or alternatively there is a typo. At any rate, in semester 1, there were 10.

**Dr CLOSE:** Minister, in the operating efficiencies table on page 172, are any of the operating savings associated with the closure of campuses about a reduction in the offering of training?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I would encourage the member to have another read of the ministerial statement because obviously there are going to be some new opportunities in training and some courses that are not seen as necessary because either there is no demand or there is a lot of depth in the market. There will be some adjustment to what is needed there, obviously, but those seven campus closures are not identified in order to reduce training.

Indeed, we are hoping that the money that is freed up from no longer having to sweep those corridors, clean those toilets and pay for those electricity bills in the bricks and mortar facilities is therefore available to reinvest in that \$109 million extra that is being invested in TAFE as part of the rescue package and 'A fresh start for TAFE SA'. That is an extraordinary amount of new money that we are investing in this organisation to help it put its best foot forward in the future and deliver great training outcomes for South Australian students.

**Dr CLOSE:** With the closure of the seven campuses, particularly Urrbrae in this instance, the people in the southern suburbs seeking to undertake a course of horticulture or conservation and land management will have some distance to travel. What is the expectation for those students? Where will they undertake their courses?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I make some comments about Urrbrae. Obviously, the bricks and mortar at Urrbrae is one aspect that is identified to close. TAFE SA is likely to continue delivering specialist training using the other dedicated facilities at the Urrbrae campus, subject to consultation with staff, students and industry, which has already begun. We are talking about things like the wetlands. There are adjunct facilities around there, and those are very special facilities.

The expectation is that TAFE and potentially other training providers will continue to have access to those facilities in one form or another. We have a period now in which to consult and get the best possible outcome to ensure that those facilities will be able to be best used not only for students, as there are two groups when it comes to training. There are students, whether they be young people or adults who have been doing other jobs. Basically, the first group is people who want skills to get a new job and a career, and then there are the needs of business and industry, who have a skills need to be able to be productive for the people of South Australia.

For those two groups of people, we have a facility at Urrbrae that in one form or another will continue to provide part of the training solution. TAFE SA, I expect, will continue to utilise some of those facilities. We do of course deliver horticulture and a number of those other courses at other campuses already.

**Dr CLOSE:** In reference to the members of the interim board, are they being paid and, if so, how much?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The only one being paid is the one who is not a public servant, and she is on what she was on before she was invited to be the chair by the member for Port Adelaide. The others are public servants and, in accordance with the usual practice, are not receiving any extra pay, but they are doing it for love, and because I asked them to and because it is their job to do that.

**Dr CLOSE:** Exactly right. At the time of appointment there was a six-month time line put on having a new board in place; is that still the expectation?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** They were appointed for a six-month period. It was gazetted a month or two ago. There was an extension to the end of the calendar year. We are not expecting that we will use that full extension, but the government did not want to come up hard against a time line and miss out by a few weeks, so we gave ourselves that extra time, but we anticipate some further changes before the 31 December expiration date.

I will comment on Jo Denley: she did an enormous body of work. There is a payment associated with her board position. Her hourly rate would have been very low—certainly below what she would earn in her previous industry day jobs—and the people of South Australia and everyone involved with TAFE owes her a debt of gratitude.

**Dr CLOSE:** I echo that comment, and I was glad to see that she was the one kept on from the previous board; I think that was a wise decision. When does the minister expect the new chief executive to be appointed, and what is the expected salary range?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** No doubt we will hear from the new board their viewpoints on that once it is appointed.

**Dr CLOSE:** What will be the selection process for both the new board members and the chief executive?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We advertised for the new board members and—I do not have the exact number—in the order of about 200 people expressed an interest. This is an important body that has a big job ahead of it. A lot of people in South Australia and further afield expressed an interest in being part of that process, and the government will make announcements when making those appointments.

**Dr CLOSE:** I will briefly turn to Higher Education and, if there is a minute, I will ask one more question on TAFE—I can always put questions on notice. With the possibility of the merger occurring between two of the institutions, what work has the government done? That is in two parts.

**The CHAIR:** What budget paper and reference?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12, should cover most things.

**Dr CLOSE:** Page 12 would cover that sufficiently, thank you very much, minister. Two parts of the question: firstly, what work is being done to analyse the merits of a merger from the perspective of the state, rather than simply from the perspective of the two institutions and, therefore, amongst other things, would it also consider the situation of Flinders University? Secondly, is the government considering provisioning any funding to make the merger go smoothly, should the two institutions decide that they wish to go ahead but come asking for some financial support?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The member is right: it is fundamentally and firstly a matter for the two institutions, but the government obviously has an interest. On 9 August the Nous Group released a discussion paper, 'Creation of a new university through merger' to drive the universities'

external consultation process. The merger discussion paper sets out arguments for and against and presents a potential vision. It does not provide sufficient detail to come to a firm position.

The consultation further review is intended to bed down a final recommendation that will come from the universities. More detailed reports, including economic modelling, will be produced before the end of this year. Submissions in response to the discussion paper have been sought from communities, the government, business, industry and other stakeholders. While the merger is primarily a matter for the universities, the government, obviously, wants to be assured that any merged entity responds to the needs of all key South Australian communities and sectors, taking into account the reference that the member made to other institutions as well.

So as the minister responsible for administration of the Higher Education portfolio, I am also responsible for leading the preparation of a whole-of-government submission in response to the discussion paper, but I note that industry and skills, trade, tourism and investment, primary industries and regional development and other government departments have a key interest in this area as well. So we are working with them on that government response.

If the universities go forward and decide that they would like to seek a merger, then that is the next phase, where we would consider some of these questions in more detail. Certainly, in relation to providing support for a merger, that is not something that is on my program right now, but I think the first step we have to come to is whether the universities themselves choose to proceed and, if they do, I am sure we will have lots of discussions.

**The CHAIR:** Before I declare the close of the papers, we have students with the member for Flinders. Welcome Tumby Bay Area School year 7s. I hope you have a great time in parliament.

I declare the examination of proposed payments for the portfolios TAFE SA and Higher Education, and the estimate of payments for the Department for Education, and Administered Items for the Department for Education, completed.

*Sitting suspended from 13:31 to 14:30.*

## **DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION, \$533,546,000**

### **Membership:**

Ms Stinson substituted for Dr Close.

### **Minister:**

Hon. R. Sanderson, Minister for Child Protection.

### **Departmental Advisers:**

Ms C. Taylor, Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection.

Ms J. Browne, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Child Protection.

Ms F. Ward, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection.

Ms B. Schumann, Director, Office of the Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection.

Mr M. Burton, Acting Chief Human Resources Officer, Department for Child Protection.

**The CHAIR:** Good afternoon everybody. The estimates committee is a relatively informal procedure and as such there is no need to stand to ask your questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. Can the minister and the

lead speaker for the opposition confirm that the timetable for today's proceedings, previously distributed, is accurate? Minister.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Yes.

**Ms STINSON:** In that there is one session of an hour and a half, yes.

**The CHAIR:** If that is what has been agreed to, very good. Changes to the committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 26 October 2018.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each should they wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced.

Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*. There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house—that is, that it is purely of a statistical nature and limited to one page in length.

All questions are to be directed to the minister and not the minister's advisers, and I will be hot on that. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. The committee's examination will be broadcast in the same manner as sittings of the house are broadcast, and that is through the IPTV system within Parliament House and via the web stream linked to the internet. I now proceed to open the following lines for examination: the portfolio being the Department for Child Protection, and of course we have the Minister for Child Protection here. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 1. Minister, if you would like to introduce your advisers and then make a brief opening statement if you are going to do so.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I would like to introduce Cathy Taylor to my left, the chief executive; Jennifer Browne, the chief financial officer, to my left also; to my right, Fiona Ward, the deputy chief executive; and behind me we have Brette Schumann, the director of the Office of the Chief Executive; and Michael Burton, the acting chief human resources officer. Before making my statement, I would like to acknowledge that we meet on the land of the Kaurna people today.

The Marshall Liberal government's 2018-2019 budget is the first opportunity in 16 years to reset the priorities for child protection in South Australia. For years we advocated 'A strong plan for real change' with the knowledge that the child protection system in South Australia was in crisis. As a government, Labor had failed in its duty to adequately protect and provide a safe environment for our most vulnerable children and young people.

The new state government takes child protection seriously. We take our responsibilities and duties to those children in care seriously. Billions of dollars were spent by the Labor government to bandaid a broken system. Sadly, research shows that if the Labor government had done nothing, the outcomes would have been the same or even better. It is well known that under the Labor government, most of the vulnerable children and young people were failed. Many were being accommodated in locations such as motels, caravan parks and hotels. Simultaneously, the costs of commercial care and residential care per child were spiralling out of control, as were the numbers of children in this type of care.

Over the years there have been multiple reviews, inquests and royal commissions, all damning of the toxic culture in what was Families SA. Many of the same recommendations were repeated by multiple experts. In 2003 Robyn Layton recommended the appointment of the state's first Commissioner for Children and Young People. The appointment was finally made in 2017, some 14 years later.

As early as 2005 the Guardian for Children and Young People first drew attention to the unsafe conditions for children accommodated in large residential facilities. Despite this, two years later in 2007 the Labor government announced it was building two additional 12-bed facilities, which opened in 2010. In 2011 the Labor government announced its intention to build two more large residential facilities, despite clear evidence recommending against it. In November 2011, at the urging of the guardian, the then minister for education and child development agreed to incrementally close the six larger and older residential care facilities. However, in February 2015 yet another large 12-bed residential facility was built.

On coming into government I was advised of plans to build another 12-bed facility, comprising four houses of three bedrooms each at Davoren Park. I had reservations about the development being, in essence, another large multi-bed facility, albeit in a different configuration. I also raised concerns about the economic model of three-bedroom as compared to four-bedroom single houses. The department is engaging in consultation as to what alternative models might be suitable options.

In response to shocking allegations of child sexual abuse within a Families SA residential home by a government worker in 2014, the Nyland royal commission was established. In 2016 the damning findings in the report 'The Life They Deserve' were delivered. I do acknowledge the positive action taken by the former Labor government in response to the Nyland recommendations; it promptly accepted an interim recommendation to establish a stand-alone Department for Child Protection on 1 November 2016. This had been a Liberal policy since 2014.

The Liberal government took this a step further by appointing a dedicated minister in recognition of the importance of fixing the huge mess that had been left by Labor. The new child protection legislative framework, the Children and Young People (Safety) Act, was passed in July 2017. Phase 1 of that legislation commenced in February this year, and the second and final phase is due to commence later this year. The act will underpin all child protection reforms.

Unlike its predecessor, the new act has an emphasis on listening to and incorporating the voices of children and their carers in decision-making. It establishes a framework to drive early decision-making and supports stability and permanency, with an emphasis on safe and nurturing placements where children and young people can develop and flourish. Where appropriate, the act encourages connection to family, culture and community. I acknowledge that at the time of the last estimate committees no children were living in motels, caravan parks or hotels. I am pleased to say that as at today's date there are still no children living in such arrangements.

Whilst child protection is a problem throughout South Australia, and indeed most of the world, South Australia has consistently performed poorly compared with other states, as reported in the report on government services released in 2018. I am focused on reforming our child protection system by better supporting our children under guardianship, by individualising their care, and focusing on family-based care options. Staff are being supported by filling long-term vacancies, improving their work conditions, and being listened to and respected when they express ideas on how to make positive changes.

As a government we are also focused on a whole of government solution to prevention and early intervention to stem the flow of children coming into care. With figures such as one in four children being reported to the Child Abuse Report Line by the age of 10, major reforms must be undertaken. Since coming into government I have met with hundreds of stakeholders and service providers and many carers, staff and children. I have listened to each of them and I am taking on board that information, looking at a multitude of ways we can improve our child protection system.

Rather than a reactive response, or indeed throwing more money at a broken system, I am supporting my department as they direct resources towards proven and evidenced-based programs across the entire system. With the assistance of the Early Intervention Research Directorate's work, I will continue to support my department as they foster innovation and align services accordingly.

Only yesterday, an expert in child protection from New York spent the day in Adelaide with my department and stakeholders. I will support the department to focus on its core business and to build an organisation for the future as it works to stem the flow of children entering the child protection system, producing better outcomes for both those in care and those exiting care.

**Mr BOYER:** Point of order.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, point of order.

**Mr BOYER:** Has the 10 minutes for a statement not expired?

**The CHAIR:** Indeed there is, and the minister has three minutes to go. Minister, continue.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Since forming government in March, the Marshall Liberal government has delivered on many of its child protection promises. First, an audit was conducted of near 500 children and young people living in residential commercial care. This identified that 47 per cent were suitable for home-based placements. As a result, the department is working with the non-government sector via awareness raising and recruitment campaigns to identify new people who are willing to become foster carers.

It has also been long known that for many fostering kinship carers, their relationship with the previous department had broken down. At some points in time, more carers were leaving the system than entering, despite the millions of dollars announced by Labor to recruit more foster carers. That is changing. This government recognises that carers have a positive and valuable contribution to make and should be treated with respect. The department is working to improve relationships with current carers and, as part of the recruitment and retention plan, is removing red tape and administrative obstacles for those caring for our children.

Significantly, funding was announced for a single advocacy agency to support fostering kinship carers. Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA is the peak body and provides independent support and advocacy for those engaged in caring for our children. Secondly, consistent with the value we place on our carers, the Marshall Liberal government has delivered on our election commitment to extend payments to carers looking after children and young people to age 21. Payments will commence from 1 January 2019.

Thirdly, we have also delivered on our commitment to broaden the scope of degree level qualifications for applicants wanting to work in child protection, to assist in filling the long held vacancies that have been there for several years. In addition to social work, those recruited will be able to hold other relevant qualifications, such as in the fields of health and human services. Reducing vacancies will reduce the pressure on staff and give better outcomes for children and young people.

Whilst in opposition, both the Premier and I signed the Family Matters Statement of Commitment which aims to eliminate the national over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care by 2040. Within the department, the director of Aboriginal practice leads practice relating to Aboriginal children and young people.

I am pleased to report that for the month of July 2018, the average wait time for the Child Abuse Report Line was eight minutes and 55 seconds, a reduction on the 42 minutes and 22 seconds for the financial year of 2016-17. The callback system was finally activated in July 2018, despite being available since 2014, and is anticipated to further reduce waiting times.

**Mr BOYER:** Point of order: has the 10 minutes for the opening statement expired? It has been three minutes since you told me there was three minutes.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, member for Wright, I hear your point of order. Minister, I hope you are wrapping up as leniency will not be granted for too much longer.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am excited to be the minister at this time and to lead the transition of child protection in South Australia, as described by the Early Intervention Research Directorate from 'Horror to Hope' and towards world's best practice.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe, do you have an opening statement or straight into questions?

**Ms STINSON:** I do not have an opening statement. I do note, though, that that is now the longest opening statement that we have had in estimates and—

*Members interjecting:*



**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms STINSON:** —it is clearly a sign that the minister is a bit nervous—

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms STINSON:** —about answering questions.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I am sorry. I remind the member for Badcoe that estimates is not over so who knows what tomorrow will bring in terms of opening statements. If you do not have an opening statement, I suggest you go straight to questions because it is your estimates, and I am happy to be here all day and not take any questions from the member for Badcoe. I will go straight to the member for Florey if I need to, and she is ready. Member for Badcoe, you have the call.

**Ms STINSON:** I do thank the minister, however, for pointing out a number of Labor initiatives there, and it is great to see this government carrying those out. My first question is: why has the minister not updated the Department for Child Protection's statistics and reporting web page since July? It was updated monthly by the previous government. The budget paper reference is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. It is not that hard to find—just wasting a bit of time there.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe, we have been pretty good today, and I want to keep it that way. Minister.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Thank you. The information for the July figures has gone up on the website, and August will be due shortly.

**Ms STINSON:** When will the August figures go up?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Shortly.

**Ms STINSON:** They are usually up on the first of the following month, so they are a month late. When will they go up?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I have not received the August figures yet. They cannot go up until they have been approved by the CE and seen by myself.

**Ms STINSON:** There were a few months where the figures were not posted.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Badcoe—

**Ms STINSON:** Same budget paper reference.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe, I appreciate that this is your first time asking questions in estimates. The quicker we get into the habit of referencing where we are, the better the day will be. The members who have been with me all day know how I chair.

**Ms STINSON:** No worries. Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. Several months, including March and April, were also not put on the website, as they were under the previous government. Will those be publicly disclosed or made available?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am advised that the figures are going up the same as they have always gone up; that is, they take several weeks to close off at the end of a month, then they have to go through the CE's office and then through my office before they are uploaded.

**Ms STINSON:** Is the minister able to provide the monthly breakdown, since the election, for those sets of figures that are usually publicly disclosed?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** You already have March, April, May, June and July. They have all been up on the website, so you can see those for yourself.

**Ms STINSON:** No, you cannot, actually. You have only been publishing the current month. You have not been publishing the previous months—

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is the same process.

**Ms STINSON:** —which is consistent with the previous government.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Exactly.

**Ms STINSON:** However, March and April were not posted. Will those be available, or can you produce them for the committee?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am not aware that they were not up. I will get that checked and get back to you. I will take it on notice.

**Ms STINSON:** Will you be able to provide those on notice to the committee?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** If they have not already been put up on the website, I will endeavour to do that.

**Ms STINSON:** And if they have? Surely they are public information?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** As you mentioned yourself, this is the way that it was done by the previous government. This was how it was set up by the Labor government, and we are merely continuing a process that was formed by your party. That will continue, at this stage, unless I determine to change the policy.

**Ms STINSON:** Is the minister committed to the government's stated aim for open and accountable government?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** What budget paper reference is that?

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. Exactly the same one. Is the minister committed—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Badcoe. Could you tell me where it says 'accountable government' on page 87, please?

**Ms STINSON:** These statistics are—

**The CHAIR:** No. You can ask a question in relation to statistics.

**Ms STINSON:** I am happy to take the failure to answer as an indication of the position—

**The CHAIR:** And I am sure you can rephrase your question to meet the requirements of the standing orders.

**Ms STINSON:** I think I will just move on, to be honest.

**The CHAIR:** That is up to you.

**Ms STINSON:** There are lots of questions I want to ask the minister, and clearly they are taking a long time to answer. Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. What are your projections for the numbers of children in care this year and in the coming three years?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** You can see the figures in the budget papers. The estimate, the projection, for 2018-19 is already listed. The increase from the previous year, 2016-17 to 2017-18, was around 5.5 per cent. However, as you would know, from the Nyland recommendations and from the clear policy of the Liberal government, our goal is to reduce the number of children coming into care through a focus on prevention and early intervention. We are aiming to slow the number of children coming in. We expect that that will take a little while to do, but indicators are that we will be slowing the number of children coming in each year and we are working on different policies to slow that down.

That requires across-government intervention right from mental health, domestic violence, through to education. There are a lot of different departments that are involved in that. We are relying on research also from the Early Intervention Research Directorate to direct the best way to reduce the number of children coming into care.

**Ms STINSON:** I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. I understand, from the numbers, that you are predicting a rise of just 33 children in this financial year. How confident can you be of achieving that figure and how did you arrive at that figure?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** This is a figure that is actually provided by the Department of Treasury and Finance as far as funding our department. That will be reassessed as part of the Mid-Year Budget Review. I would expect that figure to be higher, even if we halve the intake from the previous year. However, I am advised that that is not a figure that our department gets to set. It is to do with budgeting and money coming in, not actual numbers.

**Ms STINSON:** What are your figures?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Just as an indicator—I will see if I have my figures here—the number of children coming into care has been increasing year on year. Last year, it was around I believe 5.5 per cent. I do not have my percentages here.

**Ms STINSON:** Sorry, was the rise of 5.5 per cent the rise on the previous year? What was the 5.5?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I can give you the actual figures from 2011-12 onwards. In 2011-12, there were 2,548 children in care. That rose to 2,678, then 2,631, then in the 2014-15 year it was 2,838. It rose exponentially in the 2016-17 year to 3,520 and it has continued to rise. There was an increase of 6.6 per cent last year in the number of children coming into care.

Certainly, a goal, obviously, is to reduce the numbers coming into care. It would be unrealistic to say that we could have none coming into care immediately; however, my goal would be to halve that if possible. That might take more than a year. That could take a couple of years to halve. I believe the New South Wales government, through changes in policy initiatives, did halve the number of children coming into care within two years. We are looking at the programs and policies that the New South Wales government entered into with an aim of really slowing that down.

**Ms STINSON:** Just to be clear, obviously you are saying the figures that I pointed to earlier with a rise of just 33 children are not to be relied on?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** That is the advice given by the Department of Treasury and Finance. However, I suspect that that will be updated.

**Ms STINSON:** It does not really reflect what you think it is going to be?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It has been a standard practice by every government for many years that that figure would be readjusted in the Mid-Year Budget Review, which will be in December, I assume.

**Ms STINSON:** Just to be clear about what you have just said about your goals, you referred to a halving—a halving of what? Are you saying that you are going to halve—

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The rate coming in. If the rate was 6.6 per cent coming in then half of that would be a 3.3 per cent increase. That could take two years. I do not know that I could achieve that in one year, but everything possible is being done to reduce the number of children coming into care through early intervention and prevention strategies.

**Ms STINSON:** Do you have a number that you are looking at rather than a percentage?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** No, I do not.

**Ms STINSON:** I just want to get this really clear: it is 6.6 and you want to halve it. Can you be just a little bit clearer?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am halving the rate of the increase in numbers coming in. There was an increase from 2016-17 to 2017-18 of 6.6 per cent. Within two years my goal would be to halve that rate so that it would be a 3.3 per cent increase.

**Ms STINSON:** Do you have a target beyond the two years?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** We will continue to try to reduce that but, as we have seen from the 16 years under Labor, that number was actually increasing. We have a lot of work to do to change systems and change policies and have evidence-based programs, and we are working very hard, the whole department, in order to reduce those figures.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. On what basis do you think that is achievable? For example, has any modelling been done or are there any projections? Obviously, there are projections in the budget but we are saying that we are not relying on those Treasury projections, so what projections have you or the department done to be able to say that you expect to achieve 3.3 per cent?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I just remind the member that the Nyland royal commission, which was released only two years ago, stated that it would take at least five years to turn the figures around and to make a real difference in child protection. However, where we are getting our ideas and estimated changes are from world's best practice around the world. As I mentioned, only yesterday we met with an expert from New York who has access—they actually have costed and proven evidence-based programs that have made significant inroads into reducing the number of children going into care throughout the world, in other countries.

We also know that New South Wales halved the number of children coming into care within two years through changes in policy and different programs. We are working across government. Of course, all of the prevention and early intervention programs are not funded nor delivered through my department. We have a cabinet committee that meets fortnightly that has the Department for Education, the minister, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Human Services, myself and several others, who are working on a plan across government to deliver early intervention and prevention strategies to reduce the number of children coming into care.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Activity indicators. So far none of the things that you have just mentioned are in the budget, though. Has any modelling or have any projections been done to arrive at a figure of a 3.3 per cent growth?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** There are case studies, of course, as I mentioned, throughout other countries in the world and even just in New South Wales. We have the Early Intervention Research Directorate that is working toward that reduction, and there is further work being done. Obviously, we have only been in government for six months and there is a lot to sort out. As Margaret Nyland mentioned, it will take at least five years to get significant changes in the department.

It is a culture that has been well documented since 2003, with the Robyn Layton report that it had a toxic culture. Sixteen years of Labor failed to turn that culture around or change it or make any inroads. In fact, things just got worse. We are very ambitious and hopeful of changing as soon as possible, but in terms of six months, I think you will agree we need more time.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87. Considering that we have just found out that that rise—that projection of just 33 extra children in the system—is only for accounting purposes, how confident can you be that this budget is actually accurate?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Far more confident than any of the budgets under Labor that I have seen. I used to believe that a mathematician had written the figures from the previous government because none of the figures reflected at all the outcomes—ever—previously. So I am far more confident in the figures in this budget than I have been in the four years that I was investigating budgets under a Labor government.

**Ms STINSON:** So you cannot really have any degree of confidence, can you, if you are relying on figures that you have actually said do not represent the truth of the situation and the figures your own department is working off? I kind of wonder why you have a budget.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will let the chief executive, Cathy Taylor, enlighten you.

**Ms TAYLOR:** We have done quite a lot of work, obviously, not just in concert with the Department of Treasury and Finance but also with the Early Intervention Research Directorate. Quite rightly, as the minister flagged, we have been able to see a growth of children and young people coming into care. What we really needed to understand was: what were the drivers behind why children and young people were coming into care? What were the reasons they were coming to attention?

There is some really what I would describe as a world-leading work being undertaken by Professor Fiona Arney and Professor Leah Bromfield. We have opened up our files to them so that they can look at what in fact is driving the reports that are coming to CARL and, more importantly,

are we responding to the issues that will actually stem the flow of children and young people coming to the attention of the department?

I do not think this was a surprise to people but I think, as Professor Fiona Arney said to us, she was surprised by the extent to which domestic and family violence features as one of the most pervasive and significant issues in matters coming to the attention of the department. As the minister said, this is not an area that we share by ourselves. We have had the benefit of accessing not just world-class epidemiologists such as Professor John Lynch and Dr Rhiannon Pilkington, we have also been able to work with the Australian Centre for Child Protection, which has really been walking alongside us as we open our files, thinking about: how do we actually address this?

The big issues for us are obviously the prevalence around domestic and family violence, what is happening in terms of mental health matters but also, critically, drug and alcohol. We are far more confident that we now better understand what is driving the reports to child protection, why those reports then are screened in and, critically, how do we address those and reduce the numbers who are not only coming into care but are spending longer in care?

**Ms STINSON:** That is great, and I look forward to seeing those initiatives put into the budget and carried out. Obviously, they are just ideas at the moment. My question, though, through the minister is: we have now found out that you are saying that these Treasury figures are not to be relied on, that a rise of just 33 children is not accurate, and yet the budget is based on that. Why?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will give you the financial officer.

**Ms BROWNE:** It comes down to the timing of when we have the discussions with Treasury. We have the discussions around numbers very early on in the year, and obviously there can be a difference, in the later part of a financial year, of young people coming into care. That is why we often do an adjustment in the midyear budget submission, if those assumptions no longer stack up.

**Ms STINSON:** But you know they do not stack up; you just told us that 33 is not correct.

**Ms BROWNE:** Young people coming into care changes month by month; there is not a smooth pattern of young people coming into care. The conversations we would have had with Treasury at the time of setting these budgets would have commenced around February, March, and obviously there was a greater intake of young people coming in in the latter part of the year. We will catch that up in the midyear budget submission.

**Ms STINSON:** My question remains how accurate this budget is if you are basing it on figures that you have just admitted are not accurate. Anyway, we can move on.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Finniss has been waiting patiently. Maybe we will just jump to you.

**Mr BASHAM:** Thank you, Chair. My question relates to Budget Paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, page 25. I have a question on FTEs. Can you please explain the restructure of the financial wellbeing service delivery?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** As part of this budget, the department reviewed its own delivery of services and programs, ensuring that they align to the core business of keeping children safe from harm and neglect. Our priority has been to ensure that every child has a caseworker, that every child has a case plan, and that every child has a voice. The decision to restructure the way financial counselling services are delivered in our sector has been made to streamline our core business in the provision of statutory child protection services.

The department recognises and remains committed to the recommendations within the Nyland report. However, DCP is of the view that these services are best delivered by partnering with organisations that specialise in the provision of financial counselling and related support services. The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) also recognise that this role is better suited to the non-government sector. Indeed, they asserted that the NGO sector does financial counselling better than the department does anyway, and is already doing it.

Relationships Australia have received increased funding to provide post-care services, including counselling, case management, mentoring support and referrals. This measure is

supported by an additional \$1 million investment per annum to the NGO. With this efficiency, we are able to invest more in front-line staff at places like Elizabeth where we know there is an increasing demand for child protection services. This budget measure effects 59 FTEs, with no forced redundancies, and will not be realised until June 2019.

The department has been transparent in its communication of this budget measure, providing personalised support, including the department statement from the chief executive, a letter to the PSA, working with the PSA and staff, inviting interest to establish a financial wellbeing services consultation group, conducting a meeting and videoconference for staff, letters to current clients using the services, and an offer of targeted voluntary separation packages or transition to other employment opportunities. The department will continue to support clients for the next nine months to access financial services during this transitional period.

**Ms STINSON:** Following on from what the minister was just saying in her Dorothy Dixier question—is that what we are going with, question?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe, we do not have Dorothy Dixers in this chamber.

**Ms STINSON:** No, they are questions, are they not?

**The CHAIR:** Every member is entitled to ask a question as they see fit through the budget line items.

**Ms STINSON:** That is right. Well, it was actually a very good question, and I want to ask some questions about it myself. I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 25, Operating efficiencies, regarding the financial counselling service. Why is it being outsourced?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Pardon?

**Ms STINSON:** Why is the service being outsourced?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I refer the member to the answer that I just read fully into *Hansard*.

**Ms STINSON:** Excellent. Fair enough. What budget savings do you anticipate from the outsourcing of the service?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** We estimate that for a full year that would be \$3.9 million per annum, due to streamlining and better servicing the needs of young people.

**Ms STINSON:** By 'streamlining', do you mean outsourcing?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I can give you some other initiatives to support the young people. There has been an increase in funding to Relationships Australia South Australia to provide post-care services, including counselling, case management, mentoring, support and referral. There is support to access the National Disability Insurance Agency benefits and in turn ensure a plan and supported transition is in place for all care leavers who have disabilities.

There is support to access resources such as the commonwealth-funded Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA), which is internally provided brokerage funding, and the Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Fund, a trust established with funds from the South Australian government and SACOSS. There is also support to access services provided through CREATE Foundation, including the Sortii 'sort your life out' app. There are the Go Your Own Way kits and Exploring Partnerships with CREATE, who also provide financial help for young people. We also have a Uniting Country pilot program that will be instituted soon for care leavers in the Iron Triangle, I believe.

**Ms STINSON:** A number of those are quite familiar to me because they were part of the Nyland response package. My question, which is on the same budget line, is: how many FTEs are being cut due to the removal of the financial counselling service?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I did refer to that in my previous answer, and I believe that number was 59 FTEs with no forced redundancies. This will not be realised until 30 June 2019. The department, as I also listed, has been very transparent in this. There have been offers of targeted voluntary separation packages and transition to other employment opportunities. I also note that the department, under Labor for at least the last four years when I was the shadow minister, was holding

over 200 FTE vacancies. Some of those are front line, which would not be suitable; however, many of those are administrative roles that might suit the same staff if they want to stay in the same department.

**Ms STINSON:** What is the budget allocation to outsource the service? What would you be paying an NGO to run it?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Again, this was in my answer, if you were listening. The measure is supported by an additional \$1 million investment per annum to the NGOs, as well as funding to CREATE for the Sortli app that has recently been released. There are other things which I have also already listed.

**Ms STINSON:** And that will come in within the \$1 million, or is the \$1 million simply the amount that is going to the NGO explicitly to run the financial counselling service?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is a new \$1 million to further fund the providers who are already working in this space, such as Relationships Australia, CREATE and Uniting Country.

**Ms STINSON:** So there will not be a separate tender that goes out for the financial counselling service?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am advised that the tender will be going out over the next nine months, before the transition occurs.

**Ms STINSON:** How many FTEs are expected to make up that \$1 million, or the tender package, if you like?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I might get the deputy to explain this, as she has a lot of knowledge in this area.

**Ms WARD:** Thank you. One of the things I just wanted to talk about was this is not necessarily a like for like in service delivery. What we are really trying to do with this change is focus on the core business of the department, which is case management and casework in relation to child protection matters. But, more importantly, where we see duplication or inefficient delivery of services or ways in which we can make pathways clearer for children, carers, etc., we are looking to do that. The minister made reference, for example, to the Sortli app. That is a new initiative that we just recently—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Ms WARD:** Yes, that is right. One of the things that the appropriate

and program does really efficiently is use technology to give people access to information really quickly. So it is kids actually accessing information themselves, whether they are under 18 or young adults over 18. That is doing the job of that information exchange without having someone in between—it is direct information. Moving forward to looking at the tender process, that is picking up a component of face-to-face service delivery, but there are a lot of other ways you can ensure services are provided, which is not through the exact same way the service is transacted now.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you very much. Same budget paper reference: by my calculation \$1 million probably would be about 10 FTEs, plus some overheads. How does that compare with the 59 positions that are being axed from the financial counselling service?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I think the deputy just answered that. Quite clearly, it is not like for like but is further enhancing the services already being provided. As we know, years ago everybody used to go into a bank to do a transaction; now they do them online and on computers, and that is the preference of many young people. The Sortli app has recently been released. We are also funding Relationships Australia further to provide extra services to young people, which they are already successfully doing. I met a girl recently—they will help young people have a SEEK profile and apply for jobs. That is the kind of thing we need our young people, who are transitioning into independent living, to learn.

**Ms WARD:** If I could just add to that, minister. Also, implementing the policy, which is extending to children the ability to stay in family-based care and also expanding the post-

guardianship support services, means that there is a different transition trajectory for children now. Children have an opportunity to stay in families longer and have another opportunity to develop those skills in a family setting, but also children who are not in family settings have the opportunity to pick up those services and skills and supports through post-guardianship services as well.

**Ms STINSON:** I have one final question on that. A number of the initiatives you have spoken about, minister, including the Sortli app, were initiated under the previous Labor government. Are any of them actually replacing the financial counselling service, or are you simply just moving the money around, because they were already funded?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Well, the CE was there before and after.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you very much for the question. You are right in that a number of these initiatives had been envisaged by Margaret Nyland. There is a fantastic section in the recommendations, which is 'Transition to adulthood'—there are some 12 or 13 recommendations. It is certainly not a case of moving money around but rather bringing to fruition the real intent.

One that I thought was worth flagging was that, I often think people lose sight of what the recommendations asked us to do. To use the initiative that was a specific recommendation under Nyland, it was to say, 'Test, pilot and trial a service with post-care leavers that actually enables them to shape that outside of government'.

So, really, you are absolutely right: we are bringing to fruition the intent that was expected through Nyland around those 12 to 13 recommendations. In particular, one of the pieces of research that CREATE have led nationally is that young people best respond to peer-led work. This is the benefit of harnessing not just Sortli but the CREATE Your Future initiative that we have been discussing with them for some time.

You are absolutely right: Nyland is an important part of how we deliver on this initiative. I am very committed to seeing this through and, as my deputy flagged, in providing those additional supports for 18 to 21 year olds we hope that children and young people in care find themselves on a similar trajectory to all children and young people, where they might move out of home, then come back for a period of time, and are supported through the learning, the education and the housing pathways.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you. Just for the record, Labor supports those initiatives, and that is why we put them in the budget to the tune of \$600 million last time around. Budget Paper 5, page 25, Residential care facilities. The minister spoke about this in her opening statement. The budget papers talk about the fact that this new accommodation is no longer needed, this \$3.9 million new facility, because of expected growth in family-based placements. What are the projections for that growth?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Just the last part of that question? I know you are talking about the residential care.

**Ms STINSON:** Yes, sure. In the budget papers it talks about the fact that the new accommodation is not needed because of an expected growth in family-based placements. I take that to mean that there will be foster or kinship positions available and, therefore, children will not need to go into residential care. Can you inform me: what are the projections for such growth in foster and kinship and other forms of care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will just clarify. The reason it is not going ahead is not only for that reason. As I mentioned, the Guardian for Children and Young People, as early as 2005, had indicated that the larger residential facilities gave very poor outcomes for children. We know that they have the highest numbers of missing persons reports, the highest incidents of bullying and what have you. As I mentioned in my opening speech, on coming into government and seeing that the former government—and I must say that it was in 2015, so in three years they failed to deliver on their own promise.

Four houses in a row of three bedrooms, in my calculations and to the Guardian for Children and Young People, was no different than building a 12-bedroom facility. It was just in a different configuration. So we are looking at different ways to provide facilities, if there is the need. It is not saying that there is definitely no need and we will never build anything new but four houses in a row



could be seen as 12 beds. Yes, we are actually reducing our numbers of children in residential care. In fact, I can give you some figures because they are quite exciting.

Whilst in the budget there is a very conservative estimate or target of a 1 per cent increase in family-based care, we are certainly more ambitious than that and we are working very hard with all of the foster care agencies to increase the numbers of families that are available. As mentioned, one of the first things that we undertook was an audit of all children in residential and commercial care which identified 45 per cent of the near on 500—so that is several hundred children—who, had we families available and ready, would be able to be placed immediately. That would reduce the numbers in commercial care and residential care. Certainly, that is what we are aiming for. We have been quite conservative with the estimate. However, we are hoping to under promise and over deliver, as our leader would say.

**Ms STINSON:** Just on that, following on from your answer, I know that you said the budget is only forecasting a 1 per cent increase in those family-based placements. What is your real target then?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** That is the target and we will certainly be aiming higher than that.

**Ms STINSON:** How much higher are you thinking?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I think it would be unwise to state a figure. The budget has a 1 per cent increase. My goal is to beat that, outdo it, and if we have already beaten it then I imagine the Mid-Year Budget Review would be the time to make any changes.

**Mr ELLIS:** I would like to take this committee to the Budget Measures Statement on page 24 of Budget Paper 5 and ask the minister: why is the department spending \$6.4 million on office accommodation? I know that the Kadina office in Narungga is bursting at the seams and I would be interested as to whether there is any inclusion of that in that money.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for his fantastic question and I note his interest in the Kadina office in his electorate. In the 2016-17 state budget, the Labor government had a budget line for a Families SA northern office. This announcement was made before the Nyland royal commission findings were delivered and sought to merge three offices being Gawler, Elizabeth and Salisbury into one at the disused Smithfield Plains High School site.

This concept was not supported and the member for Light was successful in petitioning that Gawler was not included in the merger. After the budget, Gawler was removed and the City of Playford suggested an alternative site at a new building yet to be developed in the Elizabeth CBD. Known as the northern super hub, the proposal was cost prohibitive. While the department was to be a tenant in the building at Elizabeth, the proposed fit-out alone was an estimated \$15 million.

The proposed annual rent was approximately \$2.8 million per annum, \$2 million higher than the combined rent of the current Elizabeth and Salisbury DCP offices. Significantly, such expenditure would provide accommodation relief only to Elizabeth without any regard to accommodation pressures at any other offices. Consequently DCP, in conjunction with DPTI, undertook property market investigations to review and source alternative accommodation across areas experiencing capacity tensions.

I visited all the offices involved and heard directly from the staff regarding their concerns about their cramped spaces and their need for change. So in the 2018-19 budget we seek to address accommodation pressures by providing \$6.4 million to meet the needs of six different offices, including: Kadina, which we are looking at moving and expanding; Elizabeth, where a second office will be opened; Gawler, where we are looking at either expanding in situ or moving to a new site, depending on market availability; St Marys, where we are expanding and incorporating the Marion site office; and Netley, which will also be expanding.

This has been a responsible budget decision that delivers better outcomes for our front-line workers. Staff at six sites will have a better working environment than the previous plan for two. Consultation has taken place with affected staff, who are supportive of this decision.

**Ms STINSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 24, and child protection additional resources. That reference states that 12 roles are being axed in this financial year in association with that budget measure. Are those current positions? If so, what roles are they? It is associated with the residential care facility.

**Ms BROWNE:** The reduction in 12 relates to the shift between non-family based placement and family-based placement. It is a shift in where the dollars sit.

**Ms STINSON:** Just to clarify, were those 12 positions residential care workers that would have worked in the \$3.9 million facility that is now not being built?

**Ms BROWNE:** Not directly related to that, but related to residential facilities.

**Ms STINSON:** What sort of roles were they?

**The CHAIR:** Minister, I remind you that all questions should be through me and all answers through you. I remind your advisers to adhere to that practice as well, and not engage with members of the committee.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am advised that figure relates to growth. I believe that for the first time we actually have a full staff number for residential care; that has been the first time in many, many years. In fact, last year's budget had 118,000 hours of backfill because the former Labor government failed to employ the right amount of staff in residential care. We have achieved that in our first six months of government.

**Ms STINSON:** To clarify, those 12 staff who are being removed on that budget line, who are they?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** They were staff who did not exist; that was projected growth.

**Ms STINSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 90. Carrying on with that residential care theme, how many residential care facilities are there with how many beds?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I cannot see a budget line on page 90 that refers to residential care.

**Ms STINSON:** I am happy to come back to that question then. My other question is: how many residential care facilities currently have single-handed shifts?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will take that one on notice; I do not think we would have those figures here.

**Ms STINSON:** In that case could you also take on notice how many facilities currently have some or all shifts filled as single-handed shifts or double-handed shifts? I understand there are some facilities that already have double-handed shifts.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will take advice as to whether that is possible; I think it would be quite difficult. I remind the member that whilst this was a Nyland royal commission recommendation I do not believe the former Labor government accepted it, and part of it was accepted only in phase 3, which is yet to start—in 2022, I believe.

**Ms STINSON:** I am happy to be corrected. I believe it was in-principle support but it has not actually been carried out.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe.

**Ms STINSON:** I am trying to be helpful.

**The CHAIR:** Indeed you are.

**Ms STINSON:** I am trying to help her out.

**The CHAIR:** You are an extremely helpful member of the house, but the member for Hammond, who has been here for a long time, understands how estimates works—not quite as long as the member for Florey, and I will be giving her the call at the conclusion of the minister's answer.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** This refers to recommendation 150 of the Nyland Royal Commission. Part C was to abandon single-handed shifts. The former Labor government said:

Part C of this recommendation is not supported at this time. A number of safeguarding initiatives and employee screening and vetting processes have been implemented during the period of the Royal Commission that increase the safety of children in residential care. The Department for Child Protection will continue to evaluate and implement other initiatives that may further contribute to the safety of children.

This includes the implementation of a number of other recommendations from 'The Life They Deserve', including:

- introducing a probationary period for new child and youth support workers
- reforming the care concern management system
- establishing better tracking systems regarding employee behaviour
- creating complaints mechanisms that ensure children's concerns are heard
- delivering education programs for children about their rights.

So Labor did not actually support the single-handed shifts being abandoned.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you for that. But I understand that you yourself did, though. So how is that going?

**Mr PEDERICK:** Is that out of the budget?

**Ms STINSON:** It is. I can give you the budget paper reference if you like.

**The CHAIR:** Everyone just—we have been going along very nicely. Member for Badcoe, I said previously once the minister had concluded, I would be going to the member for Florey and I am going to the member for Florey.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 83. Can you please advise the figures for support payments to foster, kinship and other carers?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** In the budget papers, because it is a part year in 2018-19, \$105,000 has been allocated for payments. In 2019-20, it is \$1.392 million and then that increases as more children come into that age category. My understanding is that the calculation was based on the payment to a 17-year-old foster care young person, and that that would continue at that rate. It was \$8.8 million over four years that has been allocated to this initiative.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Again, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, Program 1: Care and Protection, page 85. How much did the government pay NGOs for foster carer recruitment training and support? How do you evaluate the outcome of that training and would you allocate additional funds if more carers applied?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** There are several parts to that.

**Ms BEDFORD:** I know, it is sneaky, is it not?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Thank you. I might just confirm that. To the last part, I believe rather than having a set quota that they are paid to, because of the need for more foster carers, all of the agencies have been told, 'If you take on extras, you will be paid per placement of a child,' so that there is nothing to stop them from recruiting good families and increasing their numbers. Then with the other part, is it a percentage? I do not know. I will see if somebody knows. I believe there is block funding to each agency, which is to include their training and their case work for each of the families they look after. I am not sure if they allocate a different percentage. Different agencies negotiate their own contracts.

**Ms BEDFORD:** And the training and the outcomes of the training are evaluated?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Something that I have actually been looking at as a policy and that I have been getting feedback on and working on—but it is early days yet—is whether we could standardise the training. I am very keen for it to be standardised, modulised and evaluated, whether it be an RTO that is set up between the agencies, where they work together and they have standard training in different modules, or whether it is training that could be delivered through TAFE so that it

is accessible throughout South Australia, or whether it be through the Department for Education's RTO, which also does some training with our residential care workers.

A concern that has been raised with me is that many foster carers would not like to sit some sort of exam and have certificates. We do need to look at being able to train people in a manner specific to their learning style so that we do not lose really good carers because we have made it too clinical in the studies. At the moment, different agencies work in different ways, and I agree that that is something that I am interested in looking at.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Again, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 85. Is there any flexibility in the system to allow for DCP social workers to sign off on alternative, perhaps more costly, forms of respite, such as in-home support and school holiday and weekend camps, for foster families who are currently unable to access respite due to a lack of available carers?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I believe this is looked at on a case-by-case basis. There would be a case manager in each DCP office who would be looking after each individual child. Certainly, if that was needed, that funding would be made available, if required.

**Ms BEDFORD:** Thank you.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 90, Operating activities, employees. I understand that the minister, prior to the election, supported recommendation No. 150c. Is that still the case and is the minister implementing double-handed shifts?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms STINSON:** Has the minister given assurances to this sector that she was committed to implementing double-handed shifts in government?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms STINSON:** You cannot remember?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Could you provide something in writing that states that? I will check and get back to you.

**Ms STINSON:** I honestly did not think I would need to. I thought you would remember.

**The CHAIR:** Member—

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order!

*Mr Pederick interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order, member for Hammond! Member for Badcoe, the minister gave the answer that she would take it on notice. That is a very legitimate answer. You can continue down this line of questioning, if you like, or we can proceed to the next one.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 83, Workforce summary. The minister made comments prior to the election about there being 200 or more unfilled positions in the department. Can she tell us what the overall staffing shortfall was upon coming into government and what it is now?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** As at June 2018, the paid FTE for the Department for Child Protection was 1,999.1, excluding overtime. This was against an approved budgeted FTE cap of 2,242.4. This represents an increase of 195.3 (or 10 per cent) on the previous year. The difference between the cap of 2,242.4 from the actual 1,999.1 was 243 FTEs under as at 30 June. I do not have the figure for the end of March, when we took government; however, we are certainly working on that. In this year's budget, there is an increase of 93.5 extra workers above the 2,242. Not only do we plan to fill the 243 that were under but we are also adding 93.5 extra staff—that is a growth of 30.3 FTE, in line with the implementation of the recommendations of the report, 'The life they deserve'—and 63.2 FTEs for growth associated with children in care.

**Ms STINSON:** With regard to the 243 that were under at 30 June: can you provide what the figure is now?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The August figure is 2,096.5. So you would minus that from the 2,242.4.

**Ms STINSON:** It is always dangerous doing maths on the run. Does the minister know what the shortfall is now?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I can calculate that for you. The figure is 145.9, which means that we have already employed almost 100 people in the last couple of months. We are really aggressively campaigning and advertising. The broadening of the qualifications has certainly helped fill positions. We are working as hard as possible to take the pressure off the staff for better outcomes for our children.

**Ms STINSON:** How many of those positions that have been filled have been filled by people without the qualifications that might have previously been required?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** My recollection was that there was something like 50 front-line positions that were available back in March.

**Ms STINSON:** I realise those positions were advertised, but do you have a figure or can you provide on notice a figure of how many of those were actually filled?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** We will take that on notice.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Performance indicators. The minister has already mentioned that she carried out an audit in terms of children in care facilities. Is that report public?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It has not been made public but we are happy to share the summary.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 85, Highlights 2017-18, dot point 3. How does the Department for Child Protection implement its service model in relation to the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care? Thank you, minister.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for his question and his interest in this area. Thirty-three per cent of children on care and protection orders and 33 per cent of all South Australia children in out-of-home care are Aboriginal—an over-representation, given Aboriginal children represent 4 per cent of the total population. The Department for Child Protection was the first state government department to take the Family Matters pledge, committing to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Family Matters aims to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care by 2040. Operationally, within my department, an Aboriginal recruitment and retention strategy is being developed to increase the department's Aboriginal workforce. Currently, DCP employs 115 people who identify as Aboriginal. This is an increase from 98 employees in November last year. As at 30 June 2018, 54 per cent of the Aboriginal workforce were employed as professional officers and allied health professionals. This represents 8.5 per cent of the workforce.

As at June 2017, DCP had the highest percentage of Aboriginal staff of any South Australian government department. The retention of Aboriginal employees is improving, with separation rates reducing from 17.7 per cent in 2015-16, to 9.5 per cent in 2017-18. In addition, the position of director, Aboriginal practice, has been established to lead practice relating to Aboriginal children and young people. Staff are being trained in culturally safe and responsive practice. The Aboriginal cultural identity toolkit tool is used in case planning for Aboriginal planning to better support children to maintain their connection to family, country, community and culture.

The Aboriginal impact statement accompanies a development of any significant policy and practice change to strengthen culturally responsive policies, practices, initiatives, contracts and agency reforms. The Multi-Agency Assessment Unit and the child and family assessment and referral

networks provide families with the support needed to divert from out-of-home care and the Aboriginal families scoping unit to scope appropriate kinship options, ensuring collaborative decision-making, considering maintenance of family and cultural connections.

In addition, my department is increasing opportunities for Aboriginal families and organisations to lead decision-making about Aboriginal children. In the APY lands there are six lands-based positions and each of them is currently filled, which is the first time in four years. There are two additional lands-based workers located in the Far West who work to support Aboriginal families and communities. My department is working to strengthen partnerships with local APY stakeholders, including the APY Executive, NPY Women's Council and Nganampa Health. My department is supporting a state government effort with the Australian government to establish a multiagency facility in Umuwa.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 84, continuous monitoring of screening. Can the minister inform the committee how many care concern allegations are currently against DCP staff or contracted paid carers?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** As of today there are 77 open serious care concerns and five of those relate to DCP staff.

**Ms STINSON:** This may be evident but how many care concern allegations are currently against foster and kinship carers? I am not sure if it is the remainder of that 77 or whether it is a different makeup.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is 28 for kinship carers and 26 for foster carers.

**Ms STINSON:** How many staff currently have their Working With Children Check suspended? By 'staff' I mean DCP employed staff as well as contracted paid staff?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** We will need to take that one on notice.

**Ms STINSON:** Same budget paper reference: how many DCP staff or contracted staff have had their Working With Children Check revoked in the last financial year?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I think we will need to take that one on notice as well.

**Ms STINSON:** In that case can I also find out how many had their Working With Children Check revoked so far in this current financial year?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Yes.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you. This may be one to be taken on notice as well: how many carers, as opposed to paid staff, have had their Working With Children Check revoked, for both this current financial year and the previous financial year?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am not sure if our office actually maintains those figures because it would be each foster care agency that has those. If it is available we will bring it back, but I am not certain that it is.

**Ms STINSON:** How many workers are not working or are suspended due to a lack of a clearance?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I have some information that I can give you. As at 13 September, 98.8 per cent of DCP employees had accepted Working With Children screening clearances issued through the Department of Human Services screening unit. The remaining 1.2 per cent, which was 33 employees, had no clearance and/or their previous clearance had expired. This is a result of suspension during a disciplinary process, approved leave due to compensatable or non-compensatable injury, and/or other approved leave—for example, maternity leave—secondment to another agency for duties which do not require Working With Children clearances, and DHS screening unit processing time lines. To limit the number of employees with no valid clearance in place, the department monitors and advises staff of requirements to submit clearances.

Further, from 1 July continuous monitoring commenced so that employees are continuously monitored by the DHS screening unit. A collaborative project of continuous monitoring, phase 2,

between DHS and DCP is in development. This project aims to ensure any changes to screening clearance status of the carer or a household member or someone of interest to DCP will be electronically monitored.

Automated processes are in place to manage the ongoing validity of screening assessments of individuals in the child protection system and therefore increase the safety and stability of out-of-home care placements.

**Ms STINSON:** And of those 33 employees who had no clearance, how many of them were at the workplace?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will have to take that on notice, because, as I listed, there were multiple reasons why they might not be there, including secondment to other areas and maternity leave. So, yes, I will take it on notice, if it is able to be broken down.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you.

**Mr BOYER:** Minister, I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 88. Has the minister sought the indemnification of cabinet for the legal action she is bringing against the shadow minister?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I do not believe that that is a budget line. What budget line?

**The CHAIR:** I am looking at the budget line 88. Regarding the line and the question, as you said, if one were to assume it would be correct, then it would not be out of this budget line, anyway. It would be out of Treasury's, which of course was on Friday. You missed that opportunity. Are there any other questions? The member for Stinson—the member for Badcoe.

**Ms STINSON:** I am happy to be the member for Stinson!

**The CHAIR:** Not yet!

**Mr PEDERICK:** You have to die before you get that, so you are lucky.

**Ms STINSON:** I will try not to have that happen.

**The CHAIR:** Or win a VC. The member for Badcoe.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you. Budget Paper 5, page 23, Budget initiatives. How much additional investment in early intervention and prevention is contained in this budget?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am advised that the early intervention and prevention money is part of the Early Intervention Research Directorate, which currently sits with the Premier and Cabinet's budget.

**Ms STINSON:** No worries—sorry, that is not very formal; I mean thank you, minister. Just to confirm: there is no early intervention and prevention money that is in your budget?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** There would be some existing programs that have been ongoing, but last year it was actually the Labor government's initiative that the Early Intervention Research Directorate did an across-government study of all state government-funded early intervention and prevention programs, which included health, education, human services, child protection—all of the different areas—and assessed their validity, their cultural competency and whether they were evidence-based and getting the right outcomes. They are funded from different budget lines, but any extra funding at the moment I imagine might be through Treasury and Finance, but it is administered, at this point, through Premier and Cabinet.

**Ms STINSON:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 84, Investing expenditure. Where in the budget is the construction of a new secure therapeutic care facility, and does this government intend to construct one?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Badcoe, you have referenced a question on a budget line, and then asked where in the budget is something so—

**Ms STINSON:** It is a reference of a whole page, which talks about investing expenditure.

**The CHAIR:** So page 84, was it?

**Ms STINSON:** Page 84, which covers investing expenditure.

**Ms STINSON:** I asked the question because I understand it was a Nyland royal commission recommendation which was supported by the minister in her position—

**The CHAIR:** I think that is a very broad question, and I will leave it to the—

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am happy to answer it.

**The CHAIR:** If the minister is happy to answer it, she certainly may.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Yes, I am. Recommendation 152 of the Nyland royal commission states:

Develop a secure therapeutic care model, supported by legislation, to permit children to be detained in a secure therapeutic care facility but with an order of the Supreme Court required before a child is so detained. The model should include regular evaluation of outcomes for children.

The previous Labor government accepted this recommendation in principle and allocated it to phase 3 of the reform process, which is around 2022—to say how much importance they placed on it. In their budget line they allocated in the 2019-20 year \$50,000 and in the 2020-21 year \$150,000 for this initiative. So you can see how not very seriously this was taken by Labor.

There is only a small number of children currently in or coming into care who may benefit from a highly targeted form of therapeutic care. Developing a secure version of this care would require significant consultation and detailed planning across numerous government agencies. The key feature of secure therapeutic care, as opposed to other forms of therapeutic care, is the restriction of a child's liberty. It involves tailored, intensive therapeutic care in a confined environment for children deemed to be at risk of substantial and significant harm to themselves or others.

As outlined in 'A fresh start', a secure therapeutic model was previously recommended in 'Our best investment: a state plan to protect and advance the interests of children' report and in the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry. However, consultation with the wider child protection sector at the time, including former guardians for children and young people, found that the model was not supported due to the controversial feature of the child's liberty being restricted.

The government recognises the need to build its capacity to provide therapeutic responses within a cohesive system of care for at-risk children. This is being driven through the reform of the out-of-home care system more broadly. Within this context, the government is committed to working with the key stakeholders and recognised experts, including SA Health and the Guardian for Children and Young People, to explore a suite of options for intensive therapeutic care models that will best support outcomes for children in care, including secure therapeutic care.

**Ms STINSON:** Thank you, minister. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 87, Performance indicators. Can the minister detail what advice she has had in relation to the cases raised by the Ombudsman's report this week and how she can be comfortable that the two children who are now in the care of so-called 'Peter' are safe?

**Mr ELLIS:** That was a question about the Ombudsman's report.

**The CHAIR:** The question is fine.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The Ombudsman's report, as far as I am aware, relates to the ICT programs. This is an operational matter, so I will pass to the chief executive.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we do not comment on individual cases, but given that it is in the public domain I want to flag that we are absolutely committed, not just to reporting to the Ombudsman on the two times that he has asked us to do but we have asked for regular reports so that we can continue to understand what is happening for this family.

What this case reflects for us is the much bigger reform agenda that we are undertaking, not just within the Department for Child Protection but right across the child protection system. It is certainly the case that we need to work with our partners, particularly with health, police, education and human services, to ensure that children and young people who may be at risk of harm are



protected and that we are responding appropriately at all times. I think it is one of the reasons why, as the member has previously flagged, we need to ensure that we have prevention and early intervention programs being provided to families who require our support.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Torrens, we have two minutes.

**Ms WORTLEY:** I will read the omnibus questions.

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000, engaged between 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018 by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the estimated total cost of the work, the work undertaken and the method of appointment?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of the forecast expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 for the 2018-19 financial year to be engaged by 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?

3. For each department and agency for which the minister has responsibility:

- (a) How many FTEs were employed to provide communication and promotion activities in 2017-18 and what was their employment expense?
- (b) How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, and what is their estimated employment expense?
- (c) The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2017-18 and budgeted cost for 2018-19.

4. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for the 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years:

- (a) The name of the program or fund;
- (b) The purpose of the program or fund;
- (c) Balance of the grant program or fund;
- (d) Budgeted (or actual) expenditure from the program or fund;
- (e) Budgeted (or actual) payments into the program or fund;
- (f) Carryovers into or from the program or fund;
- (g) Details, including the value and beneficiary, of any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund; and
- (h) Whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instructions 15.

5. For the period of 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018, provide a breakdown of all grants paid by the department/agency that report to the minister, including when the payment was made to the recipient, and when the grant agreement was signed by both parties.

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- (a) The total number of FTEs in that department or agency;
- (b) The number of FTEs by division and/or business unit within the department or agency; and
- (c) The number of FTEs by classification in each division and/or business unit within the department or agency.

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

- (a) How much is allocated to be spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2018-19?
- (b) How many of the TVSPs are estimated to be funded?
- (c) What is the budget for TVSPs for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how are these packages to be funded?

8. For each department or agency reporting to the minister in 2018-19 please provide the number of public servants broken down into headcount and FTE's that are (1) tenured and (2) on contract and, for each category, provide a breakdown of the number of (1) executives and (2) non-executives.

9. Between 30 June 2017 and 17 March 2018, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of SA executive positions—(1) which has been abolished and (2) which has been created?

10. Between 17 March 2018 and 30 June 2018, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of SA executive positions—(1) which has been abolished and (2) which has been created?

11. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budget for each individual program administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

12. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budgeted expenditure across the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 financial years for each individual investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

13. For each department or agency reporting to the minister how many surplus employees are there at 30 June 2018 and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of employee and the total cost of the employee?

**The CHAIR:** There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio Department for Child Protection and the estimate of payments for the Department for Child Protection completed.

At 16:01 the committee adjourned to Thursday 27 September 2018 at 09:00.