

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**Wednesday, 25 November 2020**  
**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

**Chair:**

Mr M.J. Cowdrey

**Members:**

Hon. S.C. Mullighan

Mr. J.P. Gee

Mr S.K. Knoll

Ms A. Michaels

Mr S.P. Murray

Mr T.J. Whetstone

*The committee met at 08:15*

*Estimates Vote*

**DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE, \$148,367,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE,**  
**\$2,439,548,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. R.I. Lucas, Treasurer.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms A. Hughes, General Manager, South Australian Government Financing Authority.

Mr T. Burfield, Director, Risk and Commercial Advisory, South Australian Government Financing Authority.

Ms J. White, Director, Insurance and Fleet, South Australian Government Financing Authority.

Mr D. Reynolds, Chief Executive, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Ms D. Bennett, Chief Executive, Super SA.

Ms J. Townsend, Chief Executive, Funds SA.

Ms K. Birch, Chief Executive, CTP Insurance Regulator.

**The CHAIR:** Good morning. As they say in the movies, take two. We will start with the opening remarks again. I apologise to everyone for that, but away we go. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask questions. I understand 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 and amended multiple times is now accurate?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Changes to 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 Clerk Assistant via the answers to questions mailbox no later than Friday 5 February 2021.

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 not on 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 and referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit those 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 statistical and limited to one page in length.

All questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response, if appropriate. The committee's examinations will be broadcast in the same manner as sittings of the house are broadcast, that is, through the IPTV system within Parliament House via the webstream link to the internet and the Parliament of South Australia video-on-demand broadcast system.

The proposed payments to be examined this morning relate to the portfolios of SAFA, SA Government Insurance and Fleet, Funds SA, Super SA and the CTP Regulator. The minister appearing today is the Treasurer. The estimate of payments remain open for the Department of Treasury and Finance and administered items for the Department of Treasury and Finance. I advise that the proposed payments were adjourned earlier in the week and remain open for examination this morning. Treasurer, do you wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No, Mr Chairman. Other than to say this particular session is a bit complex with a number of different agencies and heads of those particular agencies, and because of COVID arrangements, I am in the hands of the committee, but I think it would be useful to minimise the extent of officers having to change at the front desk here, and to perhaps move sequentially in whatever order members of the committee would like.

At this stage, I have Ms Anna Hughes, the General Manager of SAFA here with me, so if it suits the committee, we could do SAFA-related questions, etc., and then separately questions in relation to superannuation with Funds SA and Super SA, and then issues in relation to the CTP regulator. Again, I am in the hands of the committee, but if it suits the committee we could propose to concentrate the questions in blocks, which would be useful and would minimise the extent of officers having to switch over.

**The CHAIR:** Sounds like a sensible approach to me. Mr Mullighan, as lead speaker for the opposition, did you wish to make an opening statement or perhaps provide some guidance to us in that regard?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to start with SAFA and perhaps after that we could move on to Super SA.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Mullighan.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Budget Paper 5, page 6, the Economic and Business Growth Fund. I understand that SAFA will be administering any payments or grants being made from that fund; is that correct?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** When you say administer, they will process the things. The allocations are taken by me but in terms of processing, if there are any grants and/or loans then they would be managed and processed by SAFA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** SAFA's most recent annual report outlined that of the \$100 million that was committed to the Economic and Business Growth Fund, I think in the 2018-19 budget—

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Sorry, can I just clarify that? Was the member referring to the Economic and Business Growth Fund?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Sorry, my apologies, I was locked into the business and jobs fund. We have so many funds at the moment. With the Economic and Business Growth Fund, there is a process through cabinet committee where the government makes some decisions. But, ultimately, in terms of any grant and/or loan decisions made by the cabinet committee, of which I am a member, SAFA again would process those and manage the oversight of those particular grants and/or loans.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** My question was: of the \$100 million that was committed in the government's first budget, SAFA's annual report for the 2019-20 financial year outlined that it had so far processed or made available \$10.2 million of that. Is there an update on how much has been provided say today, or to last week, or the most recent end of month?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am happy to take that particular question on notice and update it as per November this year.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What are the criteria to meet for a successful application to that fund?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think the criteria are up on the website. The eligibility criteria for that particular fund are actually on the Treasury website. The broad structure and guidelines are on our Treasury website but, as I have said in parliament on a number of occasions, this is primarily a fund that the government has directed in the main to industry sector support in terms of the government's growth agenda.

It is not a fund where we call for applications and consider applications; it is a fund the government uses to prosecute its growth agenda, of which again, the details are on various government websites. The specific answer to the member's questions is that the broad guidelines are available on the Treasury website in terms of how the government broadly makes decisions in relation to the economic growth fund.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Who did that \$10.2 million, which SAFA says it has doled out either as grants or loans as at the end of the most recent financial year, go to?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I would have to take that on notice. The fund actually allocates funds in a number of cases to government departments and agencies. As one example, the government has made funds available to the energy and mining department to broadly support growth plans in the minerals and resources sector generically, in terms of growth plans there.

Those particular allocations out of that fund are not processed by SAFA, so the \$10 million to which the member has referred is not the sole allocation out of that fund for that particular financial year. It would just be that section of the fund that has to be managed by SAFA. In relation to government decisions that allocate money out of the fund to support industry sectors such as minerals and resources, that sort of funding is just transferred to the particular department. In this case, it would be Energy and Mining. They would manage the funding, and SAFA would not be involved in recording, processing and oversight of that.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How much has been transferred to other agencies like the energy and mining agency?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I would need to take that on notice. I have a recollection we may have answered questions on notice in relation to allocations out of the fund in the 2019-20 financial year. Certainly, I can update it with the November figures as to what has been allocated.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Do you know how much is left unallocated from the Economic and Business Growth Fund?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes, I think we do. If I refer to the Budget Measures Statement, Budget Paper 5, pages 12 and 13, from its original allocation of \$100 million into this fund the government has made a number of subsequent decisions, including part of the stimulus package, which now sees the total allocation into that fund of \$220 million. As I said, Budget Paper 5, page 13 indicates that, at the time of preparation of the budget documents, the balance available out of that fund, out of the \$220 million to support future initiatives, was \$112.7 million.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is it your understanding that that figure, \$112.7 million, still remains available, or has it been defrayed by some commitments in between the preparation of the budget papers and today?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Again, I will need to take that on notice, but I have a recollection there might have been a small allocation out of the fund subsequent to the preparation of these budget papers. I am happy to take that on notice. Again, Budget Paper 5, page 12 makes it clearer that a number of those allocations out of the fund are essentially overseen by other government departments and agencies as opposed to SAFA having to manage a particular allocation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On that same table, on that same page reference, the second to last line is 'Other', which is \$16 million. Has SAFA been responsible for disbursing those funds on behalf of government?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think the answer would be 'part of them'. Some of those are not specifically listed because they are commercial-in-confidence. SAFA probably will be responsible for some of those, but not necessarily all of that particular allocation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are you able to advise which payments SAFA is responsible for out of that \$16 million?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No. As I said, that particular section is commercial-in-confidence.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So they can never be revealed; is that the advice?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am not sure about 'never be revealed', but certainly not at this particular stage. Consistent with the practice of the former government in relation to certain decisions being allocated, the details of those are not made publicly available.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So you cannot advise how much Accenture, for example, was provided by the government?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I would need to take that question on notice to see what the Premier has made publicly available in relation to the Accenture arrangement.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I turn the committee's attention to Budget Paper 5, page 36, regarding school loans. Can I just be clear: the former government allocated \$250 million in the 2016-17 budget for this purpose. Is it this budget's intention to increase the total sum to \$320 million?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes. Budget Paper 5, page 36, to which the member referred, indicates that there was a remaining balance of \$122 million from that original allocation from the former government, quite some time ago, now—it is a reasonably longstanding scheme—and the government has added to that to take it up to the \$320 million mark.

Briefly, one of the issues in relation to the scheme is that the Catholic school sector in particular did not find the provisions of the scheme attractive enough for them to utilise it. When it established the scheme, the former government obviously thought it may well be attractive and utilised by both the Catholic and the Independent school sectors. I think there might have been one non-systemic Catholic school—possibly; I will check that—that might have availed themselves of the scheme. By and large, the Catholic system, which is obviously a very significant part of the non-government school sector in the state, did not utilise the scheme, so there was a very significant proportion of the original allocation of \$250 million which was not utilised.

We hope this new scheme is more attractive in that it is interest free for the first five years and then at low cost interest for the remaining term of the loan. The other inhibiting factor in the original scheme was that, by and large, the terms of the former government's scheme were for two

central purposes: it was for STEM facilities and early childhood-type facilities within schools, so a whole range of other potential uses the non-government school sector might have had for a loan scheme were not eligible for the scheme.

We broadened the eligibility criteria beyond just STEM and early childhood. In the case of schools wanting to increase capacity, for example, if their enrolments are growing by way of general classroom capacity, those sorts of facility improvements will be eligible for this new scheme. So there is a much broader eligibility criteria and, secondly, a more attractive financial package for the non-government school sector.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** You said that it will be interest free for the first five years of the loan term and then low interest rates there after. What is the maximum loan term that is available?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It is 10 years. Consistent with the former government's scheme, which was 10 years, we are proposing 10 years.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** And it is no longer ring-fenced, as you said, to early childhood or STEM facilities, so independent schools could apply to use it really for any purpose.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am not sure whether it is 'any purpose'. The eligibility criteria is on the website. I think 'any purpose' might be too long a bow, but it is certainly a much, much broader range of criteria for which a non-government school might be able to apply for the loan.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is it a requirement that it be used solely for an educational purpose?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes. I am sure if it is not explicit, it is implicit in the scheme that it is intended to be for improving school facilities for educational purposes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So any other use would be precluded?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Do you mean as in non-educational?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Alright.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Did you have anything in mind?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** No. That is not of direct interest to me. I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 66, debt raising and costs. How much debt does SAFA have out in the market in SA as at 30 June this year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised \$20 billion.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** And what are the durations of those debt holdings?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that as at 30 June, total debt outstanding was, as I said, \$20 billion with the duration of 4.62 years across all portfolios—funding, liquidity and Treasurer's cost of funds. The debt duration increased during 2019-20 as we issued a new 2023 floating rate and 2032 fixed-rate maturities to manage client new borrowing requirements and liquidity. We are forecasting that by 30 June this year total term debt will be \$24.3 billion, with a duration of 5.59 years. So SAFA is extending the duration as part of its ongoing borrowing program.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Could you compare that number to 30 June last year, 2019? Do you have that handy as a comparison?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I do not know that we would actually have that with us at the moment. We would have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On page 66 of the budget paper, it says, 'Debt is managed within a duration range of one to five years' and I think your advice is that at 30 June next year, 2021, you expect an average date of—did you say 5.59 years? Could you explain to the committee how that works?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that regarding the range of one to five years, which was valid at 30 June, very imminently the SAFA Advisory Board will be considering a paper which will be recommending extending that from one to five to one to eight years. That is consistent then with the proposal or the suggestion that the duration will increase to 5.59 years by 30 June.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So essentially what that would mean is that rather than having debt out which might mature in five years, for example, you could turn that debt over in an eight-year time frame?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think, as I have indicated publicly and also in parliament, given the current historically low interest rates, governments maybe across the world but certainly across the nation are looking to take advantage of that and locking in longer term borrowings.

I have indicated that the advice I have received is that, broadly, in the last 10 months I think we have borrowed \$6½ billion approximately at an average rate of about 1.3 per cent. Shorter term bonds we have been borrowing at around about 0.69 per cent and 20-year bonds we have been borrowing at 2.29 per cent, I think. Consistent with that, the government, through SAFA, is managing its debt profile by taking advantage of those historically low, long-term interest rates.

I think I recounted recently that 100 years ago when I was last the Treasurer, we were looking fondly at long-term housing mortgage rates that we had with the commonwealth of about 4 per cent or 4½ per cent as being low interest and how good it would be if we had our total debt at that particular rate. The whole world has changed in 25 years, whatever it is, since I was last Treasurer, in terms of the interest rate environment. SAFA and the government are looking to take advantage of that by managing its debt profile and locking in as it can the benefit of the historically low interest rates.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** That is right. So, as you say, SAFA is looking at changing its policy so that it can take longer term positions to take advantage of current low interest rates.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** SAFA has always had the capacity to borrow both short and long. The range that you are referring to, one to five, are sort of average figures, etc. There has been no restriction on the capacity for SAFA, even under the one to five, obviously as we have been doing, borrowing 20-year bonds and two or three-year bonds or whatever it might happen to be, utilising 20-year bonds or two or three-year bonds, so it is not a restriction in terms of particular bonds that can be issued.

As I am advised, it is a risk management tool in relation to how the government manages its debt profile. As I said, it does not restrict the type of borrowing that we might issue. It is the risk management tool and in the end it is an average over the lot in terms of the debt profile for the state.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So SAFA can have debt out that would mature in 20 years; is that right?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes, and we have. As I have indicated publicly, through the last 10 months we have utilised 20-year bonds. Some state governments have actually issued 30-year bonds. We have not done that yet. So there is no restriction in relation to that, other than you manage your debt profile and your risk profile and you obviously have to look at what the costs are. The longer you go, the more expensive it is. At the moment, the shorter it is, the cheaper it is. It is a balancing act in terms of SAFA and the government having to manage its debt and risk profile.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I turn your attention to Budget Paper 3, page 167, regarding the Adelaide Oval Hotel loan. Has the Stadium Management Authority sought any additional support beyond the \$4.1 million of relief provided to date?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** They have certainly sought relief on a number of occasions but—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I think my recollection is that it was publicly reported they asked for a lower interest rate, at one point.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The history of this is that we provided some assistance, which I think we were asked questions on last year in the estimates committee, and reported on that. We may have been asked to lower the interest rate last time, I cannot remember. The assistance we provided last time was to, in essence, say to them that their money they had to pay into the sinking fund in terms of the maintenance of the asset for that particular year, they did not have to.

I think that was worth about \$3 million that they did not have to pay into it; but that was actually money that was required under the original agreement for that. I think the money that they had to pay into one of the sporting recreation funds—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** The sublease fees?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** On 31 March, we assisted the Stadium Management Authority with waiving the \$3 million contribution to the sinking fund for the 2020-21 financial year. As I said, that is just their money that they are required to pay in. The second relief we provided at that particular time was ex gratia relief of the \$1 million payment of the annual sublease fee which goes into one of the sporting funds, and the government allocated the \$1 million into that sporting fund so that sporting facilities did not miss out. That is possibly the \$4 million to which the member has referred.

We also did for them what we did for many other government loans as a result of COVID: we deferred and capitalised the interest payable under the facility for the six-month period to 30 September 2020, and that was consistent with a range of government loans that we entered into. Then, in June, I think publicly, and also to us, they wrote seeking relief in relation to a reduction in the interest rate, which I think is 4.5 per cent. We have not agreed to that but we have provided further relief this year in terms of the budget decisions.

My clear recollection, and I can clarify this, is that they certainly asked for a reduction on the 4.5 per cent interest rate on the basis that that was clearly above what I had publicly indicated that the government's current borrowing rate was—the figure that I referred to earlier. On average, we borrowed at 1.3 per cent, and their proposition to me as Treasurer was that, therefore, we were making a profit on the 4.5 per cent interest rate that we were charging them.

I politely declined the invitation or request to reduce the interest rate, so it stayed at 4.5 per cent, but we have provided further assistance, similar to the assistance that we provided earlier in the year, and that is in relation to the approximately \$1 million contribution into the sporting fund. We indicated that they would not have to make that contribution and the government—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Again?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Again, yes. The government would make that contribution into the sporting fund, so that assisted them to the tune of \$1 million. Secondly, in relation to the sinking fund, my recollection is that instead of making a payment—it is a bit over \$3 million now; I think it actually goes up by an indexation factor each year—the government, out of the budget, would put \$2 million into the sinking fund. Again, that assisted them to the tune of about \$2 million.

In broad terms, and again we can clarify the precise numbers, the assistance provided as part of the budget arrangements was about \$3 million in terms of money that they did not have to put in, but the budget provided \$2 million for the sinking fund so that the sinking fund was not further reduced from what the extent might have been over the 30-year period, I think, that they were planning, or 20-year period.

Community sporting facilities did not miss out because the government made a budget allocation into that and that assisted them to the tune of around about \$3 million, but the interest rate request on the 10-year loan, which they asked to drop from 4.5 per cent, closer to the government's borrowing rate, remains at 4.5 per cent.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Was the SMA required to make up the balance of the sinking fund payment?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes. In broad terms, it was a bit over \$3 million in total, I think, that needed to be made up with the indexation factor. They continue to make an allocation of about \$1 million and the budget made an allocation for this financial year of about \$2 million.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What performance monitoring arrangements does SAFA have in place for the hotel's operations?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The standard for all government loans. SAFA manages I do not know how many loans. I am advised it is around about 565, to be specific. Anyway, it is over 500 loans. Sorry, I am advised 300 loans, so I will correct that. I do not know whether it was under

the former government, but certainly under this government SAFA has become in essence the agency that manages a whole series of loans. A range of loans that other departments and agencies originally had issued have now been transferred over to SAFA to manage the compliance of those.

This is just one of over 300 loans that SAFA has to manage compliance for. I am sure the member and all other members will be delighted that the hotel project was finished, as I understand it, certainly on time or within time and on budget and is, subject to COVID impacts, operating as it was intended to operate.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is the SMA required to provide its monthly performance for the hotel to SAFA?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am not sure whether it is monthly, but whatever the standard compliance reporting requirements are. My advice is that, as with most of our loans, it is not as onerous as people who have government loans having to provide monthly statements. As SAFA obviously has ongoing contact with them, they provide at the very least certainly annual and quarterly reports. They have to meet their payments as with most of our loans.

If I can go to the other end of the continuum, because they meet their payments, for some of our people who have loans where they struggle to meet payments or they are late, SAFA obviously has a much tighter degree of compliance in relation to those and has more regular, ongoing contact. If you have someone who is meeting their payments on a regular basis and there are no red flags being raised, nothing as onerous as monthly financial statements is required. That is standard practice from SAFA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to turn my attention to insurance services. On Budget Paper 3, page 166, business interruption claims, how many have been lodged and by whom?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised it is around about 12. For the benefit of the committee members, without going through the long list, it includes the Zoo, the venue management authority, the Festival Centre, the Convention Centre and those sorts of things, so mainly arts and related organisations.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What is the total quantum of those claims?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that we will need to be clear in terms of this information; that is, broadly the claims that have been made have been just above \$100 million, but there is now a complicated process of assessing what the actual losses are, and that is likely to be less than that particular number. Agencies will make claims, as anybody in terms of insurance will make a claim, and we are now going through a process of assessing what the actual losses are, and that is likely to be a number less than the claims number. Committee members should not assume that is going to be the final number in terms of assessed losses.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** The Zoo is not a government entity in the same way as are the Art Gallery and Museum—I presume they are part of the 12 and the Venue Management Corporation entities. The Zoo does not fit into the same category as those. It is not really a government entity in the same way, is it?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It is true that they are a different type of agency, but I am advised that under the former government there was an agreement that they would be covered by the insurance arrangements of the government. The member may or may not be familiar with that decision, or it may have predated his time in the ministry, but evidently on some previous occasion it was agreed that they would be included in the insurance arrangements.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It was 2001; is that right?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I do not know.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** 2000? Was this a non-performance clause for the pandas?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** That would predate the pandas, would it not? I do not think they have been trying for that long, have they?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It seems like forever so far.



**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It does seem a long time, but I do not know that it has actually been 20 years.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Depends on which panda's perspective, I guess. How much is the claim for the Zoo?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We would have to take that on notice and see what information we can provide. As I said, the claims and what we eventually agree on in terms of the assessed losses will be two different numbers. We will take it on notice and see what information we might be able to provide to the member.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On Budget Paper 3, page 67, how many claims have been received for the insurance fund established for the National Redress Scheme?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that this process is one where the claims are actually assessed, as to whether they are eligible or not, by the commonwealth. We then make the payments on the basis of the decision the commonwealth makes in terms of eligibility. So far the commonwealth has assessed 49 claims as having been eligible, but evidently they are still assessing a number of other outstanding claims.

I am advised that the 49 claims the commonwealth has assessed appear to have been given an allocation of \$4.9 million. So 49 have been assessed by the commonwealth as being eligible; we have made the payments on the basis of those decisions, and I am advised that the total payments are about \$4.9 million.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Does SAFA receive any advice about how many claims the commonwealth is receiving, not so much forwarding on the payment to SAFA but how much they are receiving for assessment?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that we do, but we do not have the information here. We might be able to take it on notice to try to find out what might be in the pipeline being considered by the commonwealth.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I turn your attention to the fleet management arrangements. What are the new fleet arrangements, which are outlined in Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 166? It is the last dot point at the bottom of that page. And sorry, when I asked you the questions about the business interruption claims I said Budget Paper 3. That should have been Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 166.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that the outsourced provision of fleet management and also vehicle disposal just went through a procurement process again in 2019-20. The incumbent providers—which are LeasePlan in terms of fleet management and Pickles for disposing of the vehicles—were the successful tenderers in the procurement process. It was just going back to another procurement process, but the incumbents actually won the fleet management and vehicle disposal.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many vehicles in the fleet are plug-in electric vehicles?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We do not have any figures. We would have to take on notice the issue in relation to the number of plug-ins. The advice I have here is that as at 30 June we had 6,742 vehicles, and 51 per cent of them qualified as low emission, including 1,488 hybrid petrol electric vehicles. There were 44 vehicles in the fleet with the ability to operate as zero emission vehicles, and they include plug-in hybrids, long-battery electric vehicles and one other vehicle, so there is a mixture there. We would need to take on notice the issue of hybrid electric. It would be a very small number from the looks of that.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to move to Super SA.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Mr Chair, Ms Anna Hughes is replaced by Ms Dascia Bennett, the Chief Executive of Super SA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 168, regarding Super SA's activities. What modelling has been done by Super SA regarding the proposed choice of fund regime?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Modelling in relation to what? The number of—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Superannuants and fund balances.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** There has been a lot of modelling done. I am advised that, as the member will know, the package that the government is asking the parliament to consider is a combination of both choice of fund for existing members but also a limited public offer that will allow Super SA to offer superannuation to employees, such as nurses and teachers, who might have employment both in the government sector and in the non-government sector.

Regarding the package that Super SA has put to the government and the government is putting to the parliament for consideration, their estimate at this stage is that once it settles down they are looking at a potential loss of somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent, with a combination of both of those. That is of both new members and existing members when it settles down.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I notice that Super SA's website outlines 'significant changes' or 'notifiable changes', I think they are called, or something similar. There is a recent series of notifications about an increase in fees. How much is this designed to raise in a financial year or in the current financial year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised we will need to take that particular question on notice.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I note from Super SA's previous annual reports, there was in the 2017-18 financial year something in the order of \$48,000 spent on consultants, and in 2018-19 it was \$200,000. I received a response to a question on notice outlining that in the 2019-20 financial year—not the whole year, just up until April in that year—\$917,000 had been spent on consultants. Can I ask why?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Not unexpectedly, the issue of introducing choice of funds has required a quite comprehensive, detailed and expensive actuarial and specialist superannuation advice to Super SA which is not available within its current skillset base within Super SA. This issue of choice of funds has been quite complicated.

As the member would be aware, I think the Hon. Connie Bonaros introduced legislation some 18 months ago for choice of funds, not for limited public offer. Super SA and the government have been working basically over 18 months in terms of trying to resolve the complexity of what would be offered, what would be outlined in the legislation and what the impacts would be. Super SA and the board have required, as I said, specialist and expensive actuarial advice and superannuation advice to assist them in developing the proposal.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is that the reason why fees are increasing as well? To cover additional costs across the management of the scheme?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It would not be for the payment of the consultancy advice because that is one-off expenditure in terms of the preparation of the scheme. The second part of your question was in terms of the ongoing management of the scheme, did you say?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes; why are the fees increasing if it is not for consultancy fees?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that Super SA had not increased its fees for eight years. In terms of providing improved member services, improving things such as their website, their member services and the like, the board took the decision they needed to increase the fees. Even after the increase in fees, I am advised that Super SA's fees in comparison to comparative funds are still in the best quartile—I was told the top quartile, but the best quartile—in terms of lowest cost fees. Super SA would maintain that their fees for their members are still very competitive with other comparable funds providing superannuation services.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I note on Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 169, that there is a budgeted increase in staff from 144.7 FTEs at the end of June 2019 to 210. I make that a more than 65 FTE increase, or a 45 per cent increase in staff. Why is that?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am told, again, coming back to the previous question from the member, that the increase in members' fees is associated with this particular question as well. That

is, in terms of providing improved services to members, Super SA and the board have taken the decision to increase the staffing levels in terms of improving member services for members. There are also, as I think all members would be aware, increasing regulatory requirements from APRA and other regulatory bodies on all superannuation funds, and obviously Super SA is impacted by many, if not all of those directly or indirectly.

For those reasons, the board and management have decided there needs to be a significant increase in staffing levels to improve those member services and their capacity to manage the regulatory impacts. Again, that is included in the member fee issue that the member referred to earlier. As I repeat, even with these increased staff members for member services and increased fees, Super SA's fees remain super competitive when compared with other comparable funds.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** This is part of an overall strategy signed off by the Super SA board, is it?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So fewer members and less funds under management as a result of super choice, higher fees and more staff; it does not sound like the most compelling strategy.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** And improved services; you forgot that bit.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Improved services?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So the investment returns will increase by how much?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Improved services to the members in terms of being able to manage the services for those particular members.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** To be fair, Treasurer, I guess that is, in part, true. Part of the consultancy was Karmabunny Web Design that was paid \$5,700 to improve the website, and Spark Group were paid \$940 for Super SA's online calculator modifications. Beyond that, what are the improvements in member services?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised there is a range, and we can take on notice the further detail of some of the improved services. For example, the call centre has had improved staffing levels in terms of being able to respond to, I am told at some stages, up to a thousand calls a day, to improve the member service in relation to that particular area.

But I am happy to take on notice the other specific details of the member services that have been provided to improve member services, and I think also try to respond to what has been indicated to me as some level of criticism from members in relation to the quality of the service that was being provided by Super SA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to turn my attention to Funds SA.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Mr Chairman, Dascia Bennett from Super SA has been replaced by Jo Townsend, Chief Executive, Funds SA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** In Budget Paper 3, page 81, there is a 60 per cent increase in FTEs for Super SA forecast across the forward estimates. Can I ask why?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that there are a couple of factors: one is similar to the discussion we have just had with Super SA about the increased regulatory environment but also the decisions that Super SA has taken, which obviously had flow-on impacts for Funds SA in relation to choice of funds, and that particular impact was also on Funds SA. Funds SA and its board have also taken a decision in recent times to insource some investment functions.

I am advised that a better description is that Funds SA are increasing and enhancing their capability in terms of their investment function, giving them more capacity inside the organisation to interact, on an ongoing basis, with all these fund managers that Funds SA has always had and to have more capacity within Funds SA in terms of providing advice to management and to the board.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are more investment classes being pursued or offered for clients of Funds SA?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Can you clarify the question?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are there more investment alternatives that will be provided as a result of having these additional staff on board?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that there are a number of clients of Funds SA—that is, government agencies—who now require a bespoke investment strategy, whereas previously they might have just invested in the balanced fund option that was made available to everyone. One example of that is the Defined Benefit Strategy, which is now a bespoke strategy for that particular option. The LSA is also a bespoke strategy, I am told. For each of those bespoke strategies, Funds SA now has to develop and manage those particular differing options for some of the clients—there are about 10 clients currently; I think there was one new one in the last 12 months, the Legal Services Commission. So there is some increase in complexity in terms of the workload of Funds SA and its staff.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Do they pay a higher management fee for these bespoke services?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The fees can be higher, but it is reflective of the investment strategy they require, so, depending on the investment strategy they require, it can be higher fees, but it might not be.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** According to Funds SA's financial statements, in 2019-20 there were 19 executives remunerated at over \$150,000 a year, up from 14 the year before, a 36 per cent increase, and they received \$5.2 million in remuneration, up from \$3.9 million, a 25 per cent increase. Why has there been an increase in the number of executives?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think it would be consistent with, in essence, the answers to the previous questions, in terms of improving the capability of Funds SA in terms of its funds management capability and the increasing complexity. Funds SA and its board made the decision that they required an additional number of executives, in terms of their starting profile.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Funds SA has its own enterprise agreement, I understand. Are there any provisions in that enterprise agreement for bonuses for staff or other remunerative instruments?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised there are no bonuses in the enterprise agreement.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** When is the enterprise agreement due to expire?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think we are about to negotiate that. I am advised that it expires in May of next year.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Was that a three-year agreement or a two-year agreement?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It was a three-year agreement.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What was the last salary increment afforded to those staff?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Under the former agreement?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Under the current agreement.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that it was 1.5 per cent.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I ask why IT expenses in 2019-20 increased to \$1.4 million from \$356,000 the previous year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised there are a couple of reasons. One is just a general improvement in IT, in terms of the earlier discussions we have had about improving the capacity of the organisation, but one of the other impacts, which would not just be Funds SA—it is certainly across a number of government departments and agencies—is as a result of COVID to allow people to work from home. There was a larger number of laptops that had to be provided to staff so that

they were able to work from home, rather than work from the office, and that was part of the reason for the expense in that particular year.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I think an earlier response indicated that the projected increase in FTEs over the forward estimates was in response to a strategy that had been adopted by the Funds SA board to take some of those functions in-house that were previously done by external managers. Was that a strategy that you were required to approve?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** On clarification, I think I was advised that the better way of describing what has occurred, rather than my first description, was to enhance the capabilities of Funds SA in terms of working with its funds managers, as opposed to my simplistic first description that we are insourcing certain functions that had been previously outsourced. Sorry, what was your question at the end of that?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** If this is part of a strategy adopted by the board, was it one that you had to approve as Treasurer?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No, I did not, and I am not sure under the act that I actually have the power. I think there is a restriction in relation to investment decisions or something. It says it is verboten for treasurers of whatever colour and persuasion to involve themselves in investment decisions or the like.

There is some strict provision in terms of limiting the power of treasurers in relation to those sorts of decisions. The answer to the question anyway is, no, I was not involved in that particular decision. I would have been advised in terms of my regular updates with the chief executive and the board chair of what Funds SA is doing, which is appropriate, but I do not approve or not approve of those sorts of decisions.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Other than the enhanced focus on clients' bespoke needs, is there any change, or is there forecast to be any change, to the investment return objectives over the forward estimates period?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Mr Chairman, I am advised that, from 1 January next year, the revised investment strategy only impacts on the conservative funds. I will revise that: it is not the conservative one, it is the capital defensive. The Capital Defensive Fund for Super SA only is being revised down from CPI plus 1.5 per cent to CPI plus 1 per cent, and that just reflects what is going on in the market at the moment. The cash and bonds are obviously very low as we have been discussing earlier in relation to SAFA.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, the time allocated and agreed for the examination of proposed payments in regard to the portfolios for SAFA, SA Government Insurance and Fleet, Funds SA, Super SA and the CTP Regulator has expired. Therefore, there are no further questions, and I declare the examination of the portfolio agencies just mentioned to be closed.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Ms J. Holmes, Commissioner of State Taxation, Revenue SA.

Mr D. Reynolds, Chief Executive, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr M. Carey, Executive Director, Government Services, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Ms E. Stavreski, Executive Director, Procurement, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr L. Jones, Acting Director, Financial Services, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr I. Nightingale, Industry Advocate, Office of the Industry Advocate.

**The CHAIR:** This next session runs from now until 10.15 am. The portfolios for examination are Revenue SA, Strategic Procurement, Shared Services and the Industry Advocate. The minister appearing is the Treasurer. Estimate of payments are as outlined earlier in today's session. I advise

that the proposed payments remain open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 4.

Treasurer, would you like to make your opening statement with regard to these portfolios, and, if you could, introduce the advisers?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I have no opening statement, but again we have a number of different sections represented in this 45-minute period, as understand it. I am joined at the table by Julie Holmes, Commissioner of State Taxation, RevenueSA. Again, if it suits the committee, if we could do the questions in blocks, with RevenueSA and then potentially, in whatever order members choose or you choose, Mr Chairman, we have Strategic Procurement, Shared Services and the Industry Advocate. We are in the hands of yourself, Mr Chairman, and the committee.

**The CHAIR:** Would the lead speaker for the opposition, member for Lee, like to make an opening statement, or are you happy to begin with RevenueSA?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 164. RevenueSA obviously has a responsibility under the current environment to administer the Small Business Grants. Can I ask, of the second tranche which was announced recently, how many applications have been received and how many have been paid?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** As at 9 o'clock this morning—hot off the presses—we have received 4,432 applications, of which 381 are sole traders or partners. We have currently paid 1,552. Of those, 127 are sole traders. The sole traders and partners are eligible for the \$3,000 grant and others are eligible for the \$10,000 grant. So far, \$14.6 million has been paid out.

Treasury is getting much better, as I have said, at throwing money around and handing money out. The first one was quite complicated. There were more than 20,000 applications, and eventually I think about 18,700 payments of the \$10,000. We had to set systems up quickly and manage applications and calls and complaints and the like, but the systems have been set up. My thanks to the staff within Treasury. It was within basically the first week, I think, that the first eligible grants were actually paid out to small businesses. We hope to get as much money out there into eligible small businesses, pre-Christmas, as we can.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many of those applications have come from those who were in receipt of the initial round of grants? I ask that question because, when you announced the second round of grants, I think the Premier had in his press release that this would take the small business assistance up to \$20,000 for eligible recipients.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** How many? I am not sure. We would have to take that on notice. I am not sure how easy it is to cross-reference those, but it should be able to be done. But certainly for eligible recipients, that would be true. That is, if you are eligible for the first one, you get \$10,000; if you are eligible for the second, you get \$10,000.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can you just briefly remind the committee what the criteria are between the two for the \$10,000 and the \$3,000—the \$3,000 for sole traders and those in partnership arrangements?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** There are specifically different criteria, which are on the website. But in relation to the \$3,000 grant, there has been criticism in the first round that one of our eligibility criteria was you actually had to employ people. The government's response had been, yes, this was about trying to protect as many jobs as we could, and therefore we targeted the assistance. As I said, there were almost 20,000 grants paid, just under \$200 million that was paid, to those small businesses that were employing people. That was our decision to do that, and there was criticism of that.

In the second round, we have actually extended it, I think similarly to Victoria, which had a similar scheme. I am not sure that every other state did. Essentially, it was for sole traders and partnerships, as long as they operated out of commercial premises for a period of six months, or something like that, and there are a number of other criteria as well. Broadly, they were the criteria that applied. The criteria for the \$10,000 grant was exactly the same as the first, and then there was the different and new criteria, obviously, for the \$3,000 grant that applied.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Does RevenueSA or Treasury have any visibility or idea of how many businesses in South Australia are in receipt of the JobKeeper assistance from the federal government?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think ex-post we might get figures occasionally. I am advised we do get the information. We do not have that with us at the moment, but the ATO do provide that information to Treasury and/or RevenueSA.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are you not able to provide any past information that you can recall about how many were perhaps in months previous to the current?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I do recall seeing past figures but, again, I would have to take it on notice. I do not have them with me at the moment. It is obviously a commonwealth government scheme, but I would have to take it on notice. There have been figures quoted, I think mainly from the federal government, in relation to the number of eligible JobKeeper business nationally, and I think there have been various occasions where they have broken it down state by state. That is certainly publicly available, not on a regularly updated basis, but certainly I have seen a number of releases or pieces of information that detail that sort of breakdown.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I ask, given the circumstances over the last week, whether the government is considering any further support to small business?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** As I have indicated, the whole budget has been geared around jobs and supporting small, medium and larger scale businesses. For example, the relief that we are providing in the payroll tax area is \$230 million of relief, so every small business in this state with a payroll up to \$4 million will not pay any payroll tax for 15 months from April through to June of next year. So any small business in the state is getting and will continue to get significant payroll tax relief.

At the top end of that range, my recollection is that the monthly benefit is about \$14,000. I think it is a total of about \$210,000 or something over the 15-month period. If those figures are slightly wrong, I will correct them. It is a very significant benefit at the top end of that \$4 million range. Then, for businesses that are above \$4 million, because there had been criticism of the government in relation to pay—'We are not uber-large businesses; we believe we are a medium-size business and all you have given us so far is a deferral of payroll tax if you are COVID impacted'—we are actually doing two things. We are actually saying to them that to assist their cashflow, if they were COVID impacted and they are no longer COVID impacted, that instead of having to pay all their payroll tax in January, they can pay their payroll tax instalments over 18 months.

Instead of having a large cashflow hit in January of 2021—that is, all the deferred payroll tax that had been deferred—they can make those payroll tax payments over an 18-month period through to June 2022 basically. So that significantly assists their cashflow. Secondly, for any ongoing COVID-impacted business of above \$4 million, we will actually be waiving payroll tax from January to June next year in terms of significant further benefit.

So this is significant payroll tax relief. There is ongoing land tax relief, which the member would be familiar with. There was a reduction of over \$100 million in land tax collections this year, either \$200 million or \$230 million over three years in terms of land tax reductions. There are very significant reductions in water prices.

I will not spend too much time, although I am tempted, in going over the history of that again, but we have had significant reductions in water prices for lots of businesses. An average business will save about \$1,400 a year on their water bill. There are some bigger businesses, admittedly, saving about \$1 million a year in terms of their water bill costs this year as a result of the decision we have taken in this particular financial year.

Right across the board we are providing, and will continue to provide, significant assistance for small, medium and larger sized businesses, together with these small business grants, to try to save as many jobs and businesses as we can and to help grow jobs as we emerge from COVID-19. But to make a final statement, as I have said on a number of occasions, the taxpayers just cannot save every job in the state and cannot save every business in the state, much as we would love to.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many small businesses would otherwise be liable for payroll tax, i.e. have taxable payrolls above \$1.5 million?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I will have to take that on notice but we would have that number.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Could you also provide it for—

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** When you say 'small business' are you defining that as over \$1.5 million and up to what level?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Perhaps if you could provide those figures for the number of businesses liable for payroll tax.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Above \$1.5 million.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Above \$1.5 million and also \$4 million.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** So between \$1.5 million and \$4 million?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Above \$1.5 million and also above \$4 million. I will be able to work out the in-betweens.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think some people would say that some of the businesses above \$4 million would not be a small business. They would—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** No, just businesses. You do not have to—

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** All businesses, not just small businesses.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** That is doable. I am happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On Budget Paper 5, page 84, how many applications have there been for residential land tax relief? There is a \$3.061 million fund that has been allocated for that.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** This is a complicated response but let me share all of it with the committee. As at 31 October, we have received 1,832 applications for relief from commercial landlords and 122 from residential, which I think is the member's question. These applications still have to be assessed. Some have been assessed and some are still being assessed. The estimated value of the 1,832 applications—again, I repeat, these have not been approved or agreed—is just under \$20 million. The estimated value of the residential relief is obviously much smaller at about \$325,000. Some have already been approved but some are still being assessed.

Just to remind members that the land tax bills started arriving for many people in October, so we are at this particular stage now where RevenueSA is receiving applications because landlords have received their bills. I am advised that some landlords in some cases will be receiving their June quarter 2019-20 land tax bills and some will be early receivers of their September quarter 2020-21 land tax bills. Some of those are occurring in and around October/November—this particular period now—so there will be a combination of bills from the last quarter of last financial year and the first quarter of this financial year all being received at the moment.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I refer to Budget Paper 3, Chapter 3, page 16. Can you advise how many landowners have higher land tax liabilities in the current financial year due to the application of the aggregation measures?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The advice I have is still the same as the advice we shared some time ago, that is, 8 per cent of individuals as a result of the government's aggregation will pay higher; 92 per cent of individuals will pay lower; 75 per cent of companies and related companies will pay lower; and 25 per cent will pay higher. RevenueSA does not have any update on those particular estimates we made at the time of the debate.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So 8 per cent of how many individuals?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** So 8 per cent of individuals and 25 per cent of companies and related companies.



**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What is the number of individuals that the 8 per cent is derived from?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I would have to take that on notice. The other thing to bear in mind, of course, is that as part of our stimulus activity we have said that in those calculations we would have included people who in the first year—that is, this year 2021—would have received, as a result of aggregation, an increase in land tax of between \$2,500 and \$102,500, and we have taken a decision to provide 100 per cent relief for those in this first year.

Those original calculations of 8 per cent and 25 per cent will obviously now be less; by what number we are not sure because we are now going to pay 100 per cent compensation for any increase in land tax in this first year as part of our stimulus activity. The impacts this year in terms of those numbers—the 8 per cent and the 25 per cent—will be lower but we are not sure at this stage by what extent.

We have not finished billing and therefore we are not sure yet what that number is, other than we know that that will now be a lower number because, as part of our stimulus, we are providing greater land tax relief. I think that is estimated to cost \$13 million. I will take a punt. My recollection is that, of this over \$100 million, I thought it was about \$13 million. It has just been confirmed: \$13 million, so I win compared to them, Mr Chairman. The \$13 million was additional land tax relief that we are providing this first year to compensate those people who might have been in the 8 per cent or the 25 per cent category paying higher taxes as a result of the government's aggregation changes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** That is on application rather than automatic?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many people have applied?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Again, we are still going through the process of billing. At this stage, I am told, we have only received 30 to 35 applications, but it is still early in the process because we are still going through the billing cycle. People have to work out what the impacts are going to be on them before they decide whether they are in the 8 per cent category or the 25 per cent category.

One of the lessons, which I was aware of at the time and subsequently, was that a significant number of people who said to me, 'We're going to end up paying X dollars more as a result of your aggregation changes,' when they actually sat down with their accountant found out that they are paying less. That is contrary to what they were saying publicly—and some very prominent people, I might say. At some stage before I retire—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Name them.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** —it would give me great pleasure in identifying the people who publicly indicated that they—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Well, you enjoy privilege. Let's take it for a drive around the block.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I think that is probably not allowed, but they might out themselves.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I think in a press release you outlined that the 8 per cent and the 25 per cent are approximately 7,400 people together between the individuals and the companies. So far, you have had 35 people apply for that transition fund.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** As I said, because they are only starting to get their bills, they cannot do the calculation to then apply. Until they get their bills, they cannot actually apply.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What is the additional revenue estimated as a result of the aggregation measure alone?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We are not interested in the aggregation measure alone.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** You might not be, but I am.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Well, I do not have that number.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Could you get it for me, please?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No. I will consider whether I can share any further information or not. I will reflect on that, but the government's position is quite clear. We are collecting significantly less land tax this year, next year and the following year from our changes as a package, and I am not much interested in revisiting the differences of opinion of the past.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** You advised *The Advertiser* in September last year that it was forecast at that point in time to raise an extra \$85 million a year. Subsequent to that, there were a number of different iterations to the legislative package. Do RevenueSA or Treasury have a final number for how much additional revenue is estimated to be received as a result of the aggregation measure alone?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The whole world has changed since September last year, I might remind the member. I am not interested in going back—

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Not everything in the world.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Well, I am not interested in going back to the battles of September last year. We are interested in growing jobs and reducing land tax, and that is what we are doing. I will leave the member to go his hardest in terms of trying to revisit the battles of the past.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So you will not provide a number to the committee?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No, I am not inclined to and I do not intend to.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many people have sought deferrals of land tax?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that we do not have any information on that. We offered the deferral to everybody. They do not actually have to apply. They get their bill anyway, and they might choose to pay. Some obviously do, and some will just defer. Eventually, we might get some sort of line of sight of that, but the offer of deferral is there for all. They do not have to apply, so we do not have a formal application process for that. They just have that option to defer.

Some people, for their own reasons, are not impacted and just prefer to pay their bills as they get them and pay the land tax bills as they go. We do not currently monitor that or have any number for those who have paid and those who have not. I assume that at some stage we will have a number of how much land tax we have collected, but in relation to how many people or individuals, I am not sure. We might eventually, when the dust settles on this, be able to produce a figure but we certainly cannot at this particular stage.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So you cannot advise how many bills have been paid by the due-by date?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Not at this stage, no, I am advised. We are not in the position to do that.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** RevenueSA is administering the federal government funded HomeBuilder scheme. That is correct, I think.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** When the commonwealth announced the scheme, the federal Treasurer's press release estimated that there would be 27,000 grants available nationally. Is there a specific share that is available for South Australia or is it first in first served?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No, it is uncapped. The notional share of the \$27,000 estimate—it is not capped, so it is not first in first served—was just under 2,000 or something, was it not?

**Ms HOLMES:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We said publicly, and also to the federal government, 'We think you have underestimated the number of applications and grants that will be eligible in South Australia.' Some industry sectors were estimating up to 4,000 might be eligible. We certainly thought it was going to be more than just under the 2,000 number. Testimony to that is that, up to 9 o'clock this morning, I am told, we have had 2,464 applications, so that is already significantly greater than that.

I am aware of one particular large builder that is claiming that they have 700 applications which they have not yet submitted. I assume it is true, but even if it is only half true, that certainly heads us up closer to the 3,000 mark and then potentially over the 3,000 mark. As I said, one industry association was predicting we would have up to 4,000 applications. The answer to the member's question is that it is not capped.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So the federal government will pay however many come through?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes; a very generous federal government.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It makes a change for the state.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The point of view that I think the member would agree with—and he has heard me say this on any number of occasions—is why we resisted, with great respect, the calls that we got to add an additional state grant to the 40,000 combined grant for first-home owners, that is, 15 state and 25. It was our view that \$40,000 in the Adelaide market was more than enough to stimulate residential housing in South Australia. It is more of a challenge in Sydney and Melbourne, and that has proved to be the case because 40,000 is obviously a smaller component of the total cost of land and housing packages in those particular capital cities.

Testimony to the fact that 40,000 is more than enough in South Australia is that you cannot get a tradie to scratch yourself at the moment. Two of our builders closed off their books a month ago or six weeks ago. They delayed lodging contracts because of this three-month provision because there needed to be a period of three months between the signing of the contract and the commencement of construction, so there was this delay.

We have announced, and the commissioner has made a decision consistent with what Western Australia and Victoria have done, a blanket exemption for six months between the signing of the contract and the commencement of construction. We hope that will bring some of these contracts forward. Also, it will inevitably bring some of the applications forward in terms of the scheme. It will be significantly more than our pro rata share of the original 27,500 national figure that the commonwealth talked about.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many of the 2,400 applicants are first-home buyers?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We do not have that information here, and I am advised that we are not currently monitoring that difference. At some stage we might be able to pull that sort of information out, but we do not currently have that information.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** If RevenueSA is not monitoring that, how will it know whether to pay \$25,000 or \$40,000?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The commissioner has advised me we would be able to pull that number out. We have not done that yet. But we would be able to pull that number out and provide some information to the committee.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many of the 2,400 applications have been paid?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Of those, 303 have been paid and conditional approval has been given to 500.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** A further 500? Okay. And how many of those were also first-home buyers?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Again, we do not have that information with us.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Do you know how many of those 303 or those 500 are for \$25,000 or for \$40,000?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Just to clarify, the commissioner has advised me that the 303 and the 500 conditional approvals are solely for the \$25,000 HomeBuilder scheme. Some of those would also be applying for and eligible for the separate \$15,000 grant from the state, which was the member's earlier question. These particular numbers are just the numbers for the commonwealth's HomeBuilder scheme \$25,000 grant.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So you have to do a separate application if you are a first-home buyer?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** And how many are for new builds and how many are for renovations?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The answer to the member's question is, I am advised, there are 392 substantial reno applications.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** That is out of the 2,400, is it?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes, of the 2,464, 392 are substantial renos. I am told that in the categories that RevenueSA has provided me there are 1,722 new builds, there are 344 off the plan and there are six unclear. I am not sure what that means. Please do not ask me what 'unclear' means.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Of the ones that have been paid and the 500 that have been conditionally approved, how many have been for renovations?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We do not have that here. We could take that on notice and provide that to the member.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can we turn to procurement, now?

**The CHAIR:** I just advise the member for Lee we just need a couple of minutes towards the end just from a procedural perspective to get things tied up for the extension post the sitting of the house. Minister.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am now advised by Elizabeth Stavreski, Executive Director, Procurement, in the Department of Treasury and Finance.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 180, when will the new procurement arrangements be in place following the abolition of the State Procurement Board and the policies under it?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** That is a very good question, and I better give my response as opposed to Elizabeth's response to this. They would wish it to be much quicker than is currently in place. I currently have a whole series of very, very complex recommendations on my desk at the moment, which I am considering and seeking further advice on from Elizabeth and her team in relation to the implications.

It is fair to say that procurement services would wish it to happen much more quickly and much more imminently. It is likely to be delayed a little bit, because I need to satisfy myself of what the new arrangements are going to be in relation to it. I think procurement services would like this to all start with a new TI by December or January, but they might only just be getting advised by me publicly that that timeline is not going to be met. It will be later than that and we will work our way through how much later than that it will be.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is it proposed that the new unit will have any direct superintendence over particular contracts or just provide guidance and policies?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The team comprises two broad sections. To respond to the member's question, one does manage whole-of-government type contracts. The most recent example of that is the electricity or energy contracts for government services. The one that is on my desk at the moment is for managed platform services, I think, which was being managed by this particular section.

In essence, I think there are two pages of whole-of-government contracts I saw in a briefing note. So two pages is probably about 30. Yes, there are around about 30-odd whole-of-government contracts, ranging from energy to computing-type contract services. One section of procurement will manage whole-of-government services and have oversight; they will manage them and manage the procurement. Then there is the policy branch, which comes to the second part of the honourable member's question, and they provide policy advice to all the other government departments and agencies in terms of procurements that they manage.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Perhaps I could ask as a question on notice what those contracts are.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The whole-of-government ones?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** The whole-of-government ones. The term and the value of those contracts, where possible.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am not sure about the value, but we might be able to do the past value because just looking at the most recent one, the value obviously changes and generally increases. Hopefully, some of them might decrease. I think the energy one decreased. Yes, the energy one did decrease in the most recent procurement.

Certainly in relation to the list, I see no problem in relation to the whole-of-government list. As I said, there are two pages. I was having a look at those pages in the early hours of this morning and some broad details in relation to those. We will look to see what maybe historical value we can place on them. I suspect most of them must have gone on the tenders and contracts website. There is a required value there.

I am sure the member from the disadvantaged position of opposition has found, as I found over 16 years, that the value that goes on the tenders and contracts website is sort of like a maximum number and the reality is significantly different from that. It is generally a lot less when you look at what the number is on the tenders and contracts website and what actually is the delivery of the service.

**The CHAIR:** There being no further questions, I therefore declare the examination of the portfolio agencies Revenue SA, Strategic Procurement, Shared Services and the Industry Advocate complete.

**Mr KNOLL:** I move:

That it be a resolution of this committee that the committee having been disrupted in its examination of the proposed expenditures referred to it, and being unable to complete its considerations on the same, recommends that the house refer the further examination of the proposed expenditures back to the committee.

Motion carried.

**Mr KNOLL:** I move:

That the draft interim report of the committee, incorporating the resolution that further examination of the proposed expenditures be referred back to the committee, be adopted.

Motion carried.

*Sitting suspended from 10:14 to 11:00.*

#### **Membership:**

Ms Cook substituted for Mr Gee.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr J. Oliver, Chief Executive Officer, HomeStart Finance.

Mr A. Mills, Chief Financial Officer, HomeStart Finance.

Mr C. Menz, Chief Executive, Renewal SA.

Mr D. De Luca, General Manager, Corporate Services, Renewal SA.

Mr T. Perry, General Manager, Project Delivery and Property, Renewal SA.

Mr T. Cole, Manager, Major Projects and Pipeline, Renewal SA.

**The CHAIR:** The committee is reconvened by order of the house to further examine the remaining proposed payments in the Appropriation Bill 2020. The committee will now resume examination of the proposed payments that were postponed earlier this morning, 25 November. I refer members and the Treasurer's advisers to the opening statement that I made earlier this morning, and also remind members that all questions should be directed through the Chair and must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget paper.

During this session, which will run until midday, proposed payments will be examined in regard to the portfolios of Renewal SA and HomeStart. The minister appearing before us today is the Treasurer. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 4. Treasurer, would you like to make an opening statement and introduce your advisers?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes. I have no opening statement, but I introduce Mr John Oliver, Chief Executive Officer for HomeStart Finance. In discussions with Ms Michaels, she indicated a preference to lead with HomeStart Finance.

**The CHAIR:** Very good. Ms Michaels, as the lead speaker for the opposition, would you like to make an opening statement?

**Ms MICHAELS:** No, I am happy to jump straight in.

**The CHAIR:** Very good. Member for Enfield.

**Ms MICHAELS:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 193, the first line, under HomeStart Finance. My question relates to the impact of COVID on HomeStart's customers and whether there has been an increase in seeking alternative payment arrangements as a result.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that in the early stages of COVID there were 766 applications generally seeking assistance in terms of deferral of payments, but as of this week that is now down to less than 50, so the other 710-plus have resumed making payments.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Has there been an assessment of the risk of default on those 50 you just referred to?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes, obviously there is an ongoing assessment of risk, I am told, of the less than 50. Approximately 10 might be in the higher risk category, and the other 40 are in the lower risk category, if I can characterise them that way. There might be 10 in that high-risk category, where some of them might be at risk of default.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Other than the deferral payment arrangements that have been referred to, has there been any other assistance provided by HomeStart in terms of financial counselling or anything else?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** No, I am advised that it is just deferrals.

**Ms MICHAELS:** I now move to Budget Paper 3, page 80, line 9. In terms of the community service obligations funding that DTF provides to HomeStart, can you explain what the activities are for those obligations?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that for 2019-20, the CSO payment to HomeStart of \$7.3 million was made via the South Australian Housing Authority. I am advised that it essentially relates to the ongoing financial implications of the former Nunga Loans and the Advantage Loan, which is, I am advised, the secondary loan that HomeStart provides to low income individuals.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Can you advise how many Nunga Loans were provided in 2019-20 and what the target was?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that Nunga Loans were no longer issued after around about 2011, so for around nine years there have been no new Nunga Loans issued. This particular ongoing CSO is just the ongoing financial implications of the preceding Nunga Loans in terms of the impact on the budget.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Can you advise how many Advantage Loans there were in 2019-20 and what the target was?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that 258 new Advantage Loans were issued and I am advised also that the maximum amount of an Advantage Loan is up to \$45,000, but it can obviously be less than that and it is subject to income.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Was there a target for 2019-20?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised there is not a target; it is on a case-by-case basis and demand from HomeStart.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Is there a program for domestic violence housing loans that is undertaken by HomeStart?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that two years ago—I assume in our first budget—

**Mr OLIVER:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Very innovative government—we made an allocation of \$5 million to the South Australian Housing Authority for a domestic violence procurement that the South Australian Housing Authority had been doing, evidently. There is a successful applicant, but that organisation has not been named. That applicant is to actually build a block of apartments that fits the original terms of the money that the government made available to the South Australian Housing Authority. We issued the money—in 2018, I assume—to the South Australian Housing Authority, and they have conducted a procurement exercise.

There is a successful NGO that has not yet been publicly named—I am assuming it is imminent, but anyway that is not my area—and that NGO is going to build apartments that will fit the terms of the domestic violence grant. Evidently, HomeStart are going to do the credit assessments. I am advised that HomeStart have done, or are doing, the credit assessment of the NGO, because it is a 20-year loan.

**Mr OLIVER:** Interest free.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Interest free—very generous government. So it is an interest-free loan. HomeStart are doing the credit assessment, and it sounds like it is getting closer to announcement and, hopefully, offering the accommodation options.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Would we expect that in the current financial year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised yes—hopefully, if we announced it in 2018.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Can I take you to Budget Paper 3, page 81, line 9, in terms of FTEs for HomeStart. Can you advise how many FTEs were employed by HomeStart in 2019-20?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Are you talking about the reason for the increase?

**Ms MICHAELS:** I am talking about how many FTEs, which I think is in there.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It looks like 106.6 in 2019-20, and it is estimated to go up to 111.5.

**Ms MICHAELS:** Are you able to advise how many of those earned more than \$151,000 in 2019-20?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Let's take that on notice, but I am advised that there are no new execs, based on our understanding, in those additional five. I am advised that the answer will be that there will be none, but we will clarify that on notice. If it is anything different we will advise you on notice, but if it is the same as that then we will not.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I ask how much debt HomeStart holds with SAFA?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised, as at 30 June, it would be just over \$2 billion—\$2.022 billion.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How much would you deem as being short-term as opposed to long-term debt?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised, at 30 June, short-term borrowings were \$651 million—and 'short-term' HomeStart defines as less than 12 months and that has been refinanced since 30 June. If it is of any use, I am advised that, as of now, the average duration is about four years.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are you able to advise the committee what proportion of HomeStart's loan book represents those customers who could not get regular bank finance?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised, as at 30 June, a very rough estimate of the percentage of customers who cannot get finance was 84.46 per cent.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So in terms of that 84.46 per cent, are you able to provide the actual number of clients and also the amount that their loans constitute together?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am told that we would have to take that on notice. We will be able to provide it, but we do not have that information with us at the moment.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Does HomeStart maintain any indicators or metrics around that proportion of customer, that 15 per cent, who perhaps could get regular bank finance? How many of those come onto HomeStart's books, and how many of them leave in a financial year—say, the last financial year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We are happy to take the specifics on notice but I am told, as a rough estimate at this stage if the member is prepared to accept it, the average loan length is about five years. This particular cohort of the 15 per cent or so is likely to be less than the five years—that is, they would move off more quickly—and the 85 per cent might be marginally higher than the five years. We can get some greater specificity in terms of the answer but, in terms of an immediate response, it is roughly that. Once people get sufficient equity, they tend to move on to another financier. The average loan length is about five years.

**Ms COOK:** My question relates to Budget Paper 5, page 14, Housing Stimulus Measure. In the last budget it was announced that HomeStart would provide \$10,000 interest-free loans as part of that housing stimulus. How many \$10,000 interest-free loans were applied for in the last financial year and how many of those interest-free loans were approved in the last financial year?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that in the period from September 2019 to September 2020 there were 168 successful loans under that Starter Loan scheme. We announced just before the most recent budget a further extension of that to extend the income eligibility criteria so that it now includes couples earning up to \$90,000 per annum and singles up to \$65,000 per annum.

Our estimate at the time—this is not actual applications—was that it might enable another 1,000 households to receive interest-free loan assistance to help with the up-front costs of buying a home. But given that we announced that in September 2020, we do not have any updated figures. So the September 2019 to September 2020 were the government's first Starter Loan announcements which were the 168 successful loans.

**Ms COOK:** How many were applied for? So how many were unsuccessful?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I will have to take that on notice. I am advised that there might be some limitations in terms of being able to access an accurate answer to that, but HomeStart will endeavour to have a look at their systems to see what they can retrieve in terms of how many were unsuccessful. I am advised that it is likely to be a very small number, as in it is not going to be a huge number, but in terms of whether they can actually give you a definitive a number they will take it on notice. We are not sure whether we can or we cannot.

**Ms COOK:** Was there any modelling done prior to the delivery of this budget to say why you would need to increase the thresholds in terms of income?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that HomeStart got the advice, which was passed on to government, from brokers and others in the market. The advice was that income limits were too restrictive and there was demand for the Starter Loan from potentially worthy applicants with the increased eligibility criteria.



**Ms COOK:** Continuing with the same product, how many people currently residing in social housing would qualify for HomeStart loan packages?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We might have to take that on notice and see, together with the South Australian Housing Authority, whether we are able to provide an answer or not. We are not sure. The reality, as I am sure the member acknowledges, is that there are some people in social housing who would be earning income significantly higher than the old levels and even the new levels; that is, they might have been eligible for housing years ago when they were in a certain income bracket, and they have continued to stay in social housing.

I am aware of people earning significant incomes in the public sector who are still in social housing, and they would be way above both the old income levels and the new income levels. We might be able to give some broad estimates. We will take it on notice and see what information, if any, we can provide, but it certainly will not be definitive. It will be based on estimates that the Housing Authority have looked at in terms of estimating who is in their social housing stock at the moment.

**Ms COOK:** It might interest you to know that 95 per cent of people living in social housing are in receipt of a benefit, so the incomes are quite low on average. In respect of this question that you do not currently have an answer for, I look forward to getting the answer, but has any modelling been completed by HomeStart or requested from HomeStart by any other department or minister related to being able to tailor this product to people to facilitate exit or transition from social housing to home ownership?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Again, we are happy to take that on notice and see what information we can provide, but we are able to say that part of the reason the government agreed to this scheme was in essence to try to provide assistance to those people who were in social housing who might be interested in getting out of social housing and into their own home. One piece of feedback we received from government departments and agencies and the South Australian Housing Authority was about the up-front costs in terms of moving all your stuff and purchasing new stuff for a new home. It might be your own.

Essentially, part of the reason for the Starter Loan was that it was designed to assist someone who was having to move into their own home and had startup costs, hence the name. It was to assist them with that. The HomeStart loan packages were there in essence to help them with the purchase of the home, but there are these up-front or transition costs, as you move out of one option into another option, that are not insignificant.

If you are in social housing, you might not have accumulated savings to enable you to do it. One reason the government decided to agree to the Starter Loan—not the sole reason, but one reason—was to provide that sort of assistance to people in social housing to see whether that would assist them in making that transition. I am advised that, while that helps there, the big issue for social housing residents is the deposit figure that is required. That is the challenge for many.

**Ms COOK:** Do you know how many social housing tenants in the entirety of the last financial year applied for HomeStart products in general—that is the \$10,000, a loan or any of part of—and how many were approved?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that for 2019-20 it was a very small percentage of the total loans; Housing SA tenants were less than 1 per cent. So it might be of the order of 13 to 15—of that order, anyway.

**Ms COOK:** My last question is, has there been any marketing or any proactive communication to people living in social housing in order to try to increase this amount of people who are applying?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The answer is yes. HomeStart has assisted the Housing Authority in terms of trying to market the availability of these products and to encourage those who might be interested in the product. I am sure you could speak to the minister, but certainly from the minister and the government's viewpoint we are very much about trying to encourage people to take advantage of these products. The reason the Starter Loan was offered was to provide an additional financial incentive for those who might be minded to exploring the option of moving to their own home. So the answer is: yes, there has been marketing, but at this stage there is a very low take-up.

One of the explanations someone gave me when we discussed this last year was that there was a view that of those people who are in social housing, those who were keen on moving out and taking up the option had done so through previous initiatives that governments had taken and that the ones who remain were the ones who were pretty set in, 'Hey, were going to stay there' in terms of social housing. So it was a much stickier group, if I can use an economic term, in terms of their capacity or willingness to move.

**The CHAIR:** Minister.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Mr Chairman, Mr Oliver is replaced by Mr Chris Menz, Chief Executive of Renewal SA

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I direct your attention to Budget Paper 3, page 78, which summarises Renewal SA's operations. There is a dividend, I think, to reflect the ASER site, the Adelaide station and environs precinct. The Auditor-General's Report outlines a change to the leasing arrangements for the ASER site. Can you provide some detail as to what the change in those arrangements is?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that, on 1 January coming, this particular site will be transferred from what used to be DPTI, now DIT, to Renewal SA, so that will be the significant transfer of asset from one government entity to another government entity.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So the ownership will change. Will the lessee change?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that all that changes is the landlord changes; Renewal SA will be the landlord, but the tenants remain the same.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Any change to the rental income proposed?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Other than the complexity of the arrangement with DIT, which is another government entity, in relation to the others there is no change in the rental income.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Regarding the Lot Fourteen precinct, what is the total budget for the development?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** There is a very complicated answer to this one. I am advised that the whole-of-life budget that has been allocated by the state government to Renewal SA for this project is about \$425 million, which includes both capital expenditure and operating expenditure. But, as members would be aware, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has taken responsibility for one of the significant projects on Lot Fourteen—and the member's question relates to Lot Fourteen—and that is the Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre, as it is now called.

The allocation we made in the budget for that was increased by \$50 million, so there is a total \$200 million budget for that, but part of that is actually federal government funding—part of that \$200 million that we are talking about is for that particular centre. We will take the question on notice and give you a more detailed and specific answer.

There is this split control of the Lot Fourteen site between Renewal SA, whom we have before us today, and DPC—and I do not know if they have already been before the estimates committees—but DPC has control of a significant project on the Lot Fourteen site, which is this particular centre. If you are interested, as I am sure you are, in the total commitment from state and federal governments to this particular Lot Fourteen site we will take it on notice, but broadly that is the answer.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Thank you, I appreciate that. In coming back to the committee, if you could outline how much of that is for the demolition works, which continue, how much is for the renovation of the existing heritage buildings, and how much is for site works and construction that would be appreciated.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Sure. We are happy to take that on notice and provide as much information as we can in relation to the member's question.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Have any leases been provided over any portion of the site to private entities?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** There have been lots of leases within existing buildings—I am told about 70 for businesses and entities within—but, if the member's question is more particularly, 'Have any ground leases been offered to private sector entities', at this stage, no. There has been a public expression of interest process for one particular site, which would involve—but it has not been signed yet—a ground lease once that decision-making process has been concluded. That is for the Entrepreneur and Innovation Centre (EIC), I am advised. Nothing has been signed in relation to a ground lease, but a public process has been conducted for a period of time. We are coming much, much closer to a final decision in relation to that, and potentially an announcement of that, but no ground lease has yet been signed.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Of the 70 or so other leases, presumably for tenancies in the building, have there been any lease incentives or rental subsidies provided?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am told that, from Renewal SA's viewpoint, all with the exception of the Space Agency (I will speak to that in a minute) are market leases, rents and incentives in terms of market assessment. In relation to the Space Agency the government provided a subsidy of \$12 million for the Space Discovery Centre and mission control, which was to fund the fit-out costs and lease incentive for a period of time—we do not know what that period is, but we can take that on notice. That was part of the package in terms of the Space Discovery Centre and mission control.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** You may need to take this on notice: can you outline to the committee what the value of the lease incentives or lease subsidies that are being provided by Renewal SA to those tenants are?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** For the Space Discovery Centre?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** No, to the other ones.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We will need to take that on notice to see what we can provide, but again the advice I have is that, in relation to the current market arrangements that are being offered, all lease arrangements and tenancies are a combination of both rental payments and lease incentives that commercial operators operate. I am advised by Mr Menz that Renewal SA is operating commercially in relation to those things. That is his assurance he has given me privately and just again then. It is a mix of both rent and lease incentives, but it is nevertheless attuned to current market conditions.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Does Renewal SA look after the government's interests with regard to the 88 O'Connell Street site, the old Le Cornu site on O'Connell Street?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that that is not one of the challenges we currently have; it is the Adelaide City Council.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** The government has no role in the site?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We do not own the site, and Renewal SA has no involvement in that site. We got involved in a lot of others.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Budget Paper 3, page 81, with regard to the employees of Renewal SA. The financial statements for Renewal SA show that in 2019-20 the top remuneration bracket for an executive was \$514,000 to \$534,000 and in 2018-19, the top band was \$434,000 to \$454,000, so an \$80,000 increase between financial years. Can I ask why the increase?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am advised that for one or two employees it involves termination payments. I am sure the member is aware that there are a number of agencies where people in the top bracket are not actually earning those salaries. It may well be their salary together with whatever termination payment there was in that particular year. I am reliably informed by the chief executive sitting next to me that that is not his salary.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I ask what the total of those termination payments is?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** All I am prepared to put on the public record is that the aggregate number for the two individuals is \$425,000 and for one of the people that is just their statutory entitlements; that is, it does not involve any termination pay or voluntary separation package, it is just their accrued leave entitlements, etc., to which they are entitled. In the other case, it does include

the payout of both their statutory entitlements and also a voluntary separation package payment for that particular individual. So the \$425,000 in aggregate for the two combines statutory entitlements together with, in one case, for one individual, a voluntary separation package payment.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Can I ask how many staff have been recruited to fulfil the functions that were previously carried out by Georgina Vasilevski?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Renewal SA is happy to take that on notice, but the position which that individual had, which was People and Place, no longer exists. It has been replaced by a series of positions, so Renewal SA would have to work out which particular responsibilities that individual had under the former title of People and Place Executive, or whatever it was called, and how those responsibilities have been divided up between remaining individuals. We are happy to do our best endeavours to assist the member in terms of providing some information.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I would be most grateful. So those responsibilities or duties of Ms Vasilevski are being carried out by other parts of the organisation at present; is that correct?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am told that some of the responsibilities of that individual are being carried out by others but some responsibilities are no longer being carried out by the organisation. There has been a decision taken that some of the responsibilities that former position had are no longer required and the remaining ones which are required have been allocated to other individuals within the organisation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I understand from evidence provided by the chief executive to another parliamentary committee, the Economic and Finance Committee, that she was 'terminated' on 2 June, which was the day before her court appearance on 3 June. Can you advise the committee what the reason was for her termination?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The advice I have received is that, putting the court matter to the side, the new chief executive had taken decisions in relation to a new corporate restructure and for the reasons I have partially outlined earlier, that is some of the functions of that old position are no longer going to continue to be functions, there was no longer the need for that particular position. So that is why there was no need for that position to continue and therefore that particular skill set base to continue, and that is why the decision was taken. The advice I have received is that was unrelated to the other issue to which the member has referred in his explanation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** How many other staff were terminated as a result of the restructure?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The new chief executive has swept a new broom through the organisation, so I am told, and 13 positions were terminated, some of which were actually contract positions. So it was just a non-renewal of a contract position; that is, the reasons for the particular contract, in the new chief executive's view, no longer existed. Some of them were terminations; that is, the restructure meant that particular position was no longer required.

When Renewal SA comes to report the 2021 figures, there will be, again I assume, an aggregate figure. With the contract positions, obviously you do not have to make any termination payment, but there will be termination payments for some of the positions there. They were no longer required within the organisation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Did their employment come to the end on the day before Ms Vasilevski's court appearance as well?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The chief executive will need to check and will provide an answer on notice but some of the contracts might or might not have. We cannot recall, at this stage, whether some of the contracts expired prior to 30 June or after 30 June. In relation to the positions that are no longer required, they occurred after 1 July this year. In terms of the restructure, the new chief executive took the view that there are various responsibilities within the organisation that are no longer required. The member has referred to one, but there are a number of others. We will try to provide some detail in relation to those decisions the chief executive has taken.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** On Budget Paper 3, page 76, Renewal SA has purchased the former Le Cornu site at Forestville. What planning controls are being sought by Renewal SA to manage future development on that site?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** My advice is that, at this stage, the existing zoning and planning requirements, together with the planning code, are within the contemplation of what Renewal SA has for the site. However, depending on which particular developer may be involved in the site, if they were to seek further changes Renewal SA would have to consider those at that particular stage. Certainly, in Renewal SA's current contemplation, it is just the existing planning requirements, and the new planning code is sufficient for what Renewal SA currently has in contemplation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What would that mean in terms of density and height limits?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We can take that on notice, but I am advised that the current height limits, whatever they are at the moment, would remain the same. We can take on advice as to what the current height limits are. The chief executive thinks it might be about eight storeys, but we will clarify that. The current contemplation is that it is whatever the existing ones are.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Is it to be offered to market either for sale as a whole or by portion, or are ground leases being offered? What is the intention of Renewal SA?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** In relation to Forestville, my advice is that Renewal SA are looking for a single development partner and that they are likely to go out to market sounding, as opposed to anything more intensive than that, prior to Christmas.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Have any works been budgeted for by Renewal SA for this site?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The answer is, nothing at this stage, for this financial year. The only cabinet approval so far is the purchase of the site. Renewal SA and the government are not yet far enough advanced along the lines of the honourable member's question.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** What was the purchase price?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The government has not released the individual value of the two sites that Renewal SA purchased, but we have released publicly that the aggregate sum was \$34.75 million for this site and the Prospect site.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** In a similar vein, what is proposed for the Prospect site, in terms of development controls?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** At this stage, in terms of the development controls, there are no proposed changes from the ones that exist at the moment. The current thinking is in relation to affordable housing and, potentially, medium density, but this is in the early stages of Renewal SA's contemplation.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** You might need to take this on notice, but how many square metres are the two sites?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I will let you do the calculations. It is 3.6 hectares at Forestville and 2.36 hectares at Prospect.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Have any funds been budgeted for any of the works at Prospect?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It is a similar answer to the one provided for Forestville: no, there is nothing budgeted at this stage.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Are you able to advise what the current development plan imposes in terms of heights and density at Prospect?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We will clarify that if we have to, but the current understanding is that it is residential and four to six storeys maximum in height. If it is any different to that we will clarify that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, the allotted and agreed time for the examination of payments in regard to Renewal SA and HomeStart has expired; therefore, there are no further questions. I declare the examination of the portfolio agencies Renewal SA and HomeStart completed and the estimated payments for the Department of Treasury and Finance closed. I declare that the administered items for the Department of Treasury and Finance be referred to Estimates Committee A.

*Sitting suspended from 12:00 to 12:15.*

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, \$907,939,000**

**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, \$182,700,000**

**Membership:**

Ms Wortley substituted for Hon. S.C. Mullighan.

Mr Gee substituted for Ms Michaels.

**Minister:**

Hon. J.M.A. Lensink, Minister for Human Services.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms L. Boswell, Chief Executive, Department of Human Services.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Strategic Reform Projects, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Hawkins, Executive Director, Youth Justice, Department of Human Services.

Ms A. Hayes, Executive Director, Community and Family Services, Department of Human Services.

Mr T. Lovegrove, Director, Screening Unit, Community Support Services, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** Good afternoon. This is Estimates Committee B. I will just make some opening remarks and then we will move into examination of proposed payments. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or to answer questions. I understand 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?

**Ms COOK:** The latest version, yes.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, the latest, if that is one you are talking about.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, the version that has been most recently circulated, I should say. Changes to 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 Clerk Assistant via the answers to questions mailbox no later than Friday 5 February 2021.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of around 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 not on 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 and 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 statistical and limited to one page in length.

All questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response, if necessary. The committee's examinations will be broadcast in the same manner as sittings of the house are broadcast, through the IPTV system within Parliament House via the webstream link to the internet and the Parliament of South Australia video-on-demand broadcast system.

The portfolios for examination during this session are the Department of Human Services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I declare that the proposed payments are open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, in particular Volume 3. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement and introduce your advisers?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Certainly. To my left, we have the Chief Executive of the Department of Human Services, Ms Lois Boswell. Behind Ms Boswell, we have Nancy Rogers from the Office of the Chief Executive. Behind me, we have Nick Ashley who is the Acting Chief Financial Officer. We have Ann-Marie Hayes who is Executive Director for Community Services, Katherine Hawkins who is the Executive Director of the Youth Justice Division and we have Trevor Lovegrove who is the Director of the Screening Unit.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. A key focus in 2020 has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the year this has included initiatives to reduce financial stress, keep vulnerable children and adults safe from harm, build resilience and support communities. Given the rapidly changing current situation, DHS is now reactivating plans and responses made earlier in the year to both reduce the spread of infection and support vulnerable people.

Through Concessions SA, DHS is administering a range of government stimulus which have benefited thousands of South Australians. These include the advance payment of the 2020-21 Cost of Living Concession with a \$500 boost for 24,540 households receiving the JobSeeker payment. As of 30 October, a total of \$15.98 million has gone to South Australians through this measure. Payments of \$500 each have also been made to 3,861 international students experiencing financial hardship.

DHS is continuing to administer these programs into 2021 along with the Residential Rental Grant Scheme, which opened in late June, and the Paid Pandemic Leave Scheme announced by the SA government in August and now being delivered in partnership with the commonwealth government.

In April 2020, the government allocated an additional \$1.6 million to support the food security and emergency relief sector in response to COVID-19. In May 2020, funding of \$350,000 was allocated to support vulnerable migrants. The government has now invested in further measures to support vulnerable South Australians with an additional \$4.1 million announced in the 2020-21 budget. DHS is monitoring the current situation closely with regard to any additional targeted measures that may be required.

Earlier in the year, a special 2020-21 COVID-19 supports grant round was held; \$1.33 million was distributed to 166 community organisations. For many, this funding enabled them to purchase vital IT equipment which has helped them to adapt their services to remote working. Actions taken by Safer Family Services to support vulnerable families and children during pandemic restrictions have included:

- fast-tracking the establishment of 10 child and family safety networks across the state;
- distributing 5,220 essential food and goods packs in May and July for families in need;
- distributing 1,080 essential food packs to NGOs for newly vulnerable cohorts, which includes international students and temporary visa holders;
- reassigning staff to support critical community functions, including the Women's Safety Services SA, 1800RESPECT, the DV crisis line, YMCA school holiday programs, Telecross REDi, Foodbank and Treasure Boxes;
- a series of online webinars, which reached about 2,700 parents and carers;
- actively working with government and community partners to ensure school vacation programs for vulnerable children; and
- establishing a centralised referral and intake triage team as a single streamlined pathway for referral of vulnerable children and families.

Importantly, DHS is also working closely with NGOs to provide intelligence to the State Emergency Centre and share plans and public health information with frontline workers across the state.

I would also like to note other highlights for 2019-20. Improvements continue to be made to the customer experience in concessions. For example, customers may now choose to get quick up-to-date notifications of their progress of their applications via SMS. Secure data sharing arrangements have been established between Concessions SA and RevenueSA which means customers no longer need to submit a copy of their emergency services levy bill in order to receive a remission.

The SA Bushfire Appeal was activated in late December 2019 as a result of the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island bushfires. This was administered by the State Emergency Relief Fund supported by the department. I am pleased to confirm that over \$9 million of community and state government donations to the SA Bushfire Appeal were distributed to over 1,000 bushfire affected families, individuals, businesses and community organisations.

In 2019, the launch of a new effort to reduce child abuse and neglect by building a connected system of evidence-based support services for families with multiple complex needs took place. It is a major codesign process which was undertaken to guide reform. The next steps, as agreed between the government and the sector, are now well underway and include recommissioning of \$11 million in evidence-informed intensive family support services. Importantly, 30 per cent of this investment is being ring fenced for Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

On 11 June this year, 'Young people connected, communities protected: South Australia's youth justice state plan' was released, outlining how we will work with young people, communities, other government agencies and non-government organisations to deliver youth justice services. There were significant steps taken to support the safety and wellbeing of young people and staff at the centre.

These include prohibiting the use of resident-worn spit protection, trialling body-worn cameras, implementing full body scanners, a new electronic logging system and an independent review into the use of isolation, segregation and force. I am pleased that the 2020-21 state budget includes significant funding to consolidate youth custodial services at the Goldsborough Road site. When completed, this will enable all young people to benefit, with better access to facilities in a high-quality contemporary environment.

**The CHAIR:** I invite the lead speaker for the opposition to make an opening statement.



**Ms COOK:** All I will do is thank department staff in their entirety, executive down, for their response during COVID. I will have a number of questions in relation to that and other functions, but that does not take away from the gratitude I have in terms of the support of vulnerable people.

**The CHAIR:** With the opening statements complete, I call on members for questions. The member for Hurtle Vale.

**Ms COOK:** I would like to start on Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 89. I will be asking questions in relation to the personal alert rebate scheme. Last financial year, you cut the PARS funding, which resulted in the federal Minister for Aged Care, Richard Colbeck, intervening to bail the state out in relation to this program. Minister, can you confirm that you did not consult with the federal minister prior to transferring the responsibility for the subsidy of PARS to the commonwealth?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the characterisation of the honourable member's question is incorrect. We have had a budget blowout in the personal alert rebate scheme for some time. The rebate for the initial item of \$390 is quite generous, with a \$250 monitoring fee. So that the scheme would not continue to escalate, we determined that we would cap the fee at \$200. We also changed the criteria so that it would be available to those who are on a level 1 Home Care Package.

I think the commonwealth government felt obliged to pick up the scheme. We are in a fairly different environment than we were in some 10 or 20 years ago, and certainly since the scheme's inception, in that My Aged Care funds a lot of services. If you go onto any of their websites, you can see a range of particular items that people might be able to avail themselves of through a Home Care Package.

This is one example of duplication of a scheme, so we needed to make some changes in that budget to ensure that the scheme would not continue to blow out. We are also undertaking a review of the systems. People can use different systems these days. Some have falls protection in them. So we have undertaken a review, and we have that out at the moment. We are hoping that we will be able to announce improvements to the scheme.

**Ms COOK:** Was the—

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hurtle Vale.

**Ms COOK:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Please wait for the call.

**Ms COOK:** Was the budget blowout that you are referring to because people were unnecessarily getting access to this scheme, or were the people on the scheme requiring it?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** People obviously need to meet eligibility criteria. In terms of the generosity of the scheme, if you think that you can buy a smart device in this day and age that probably costs two times what the pendants are, I am not sure that is value for money for the customer and therefore for the taxpayer.

**Ms COOK:** In relation to this, did you consult with the federal minister prior to transferring all responsibility to him for that shortfall?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I do not think we transferred responsibility. I think they chose to adopt it. But, no, I did not consult him, and we often do not consult our federal colleagues on budget measures.

**Ms COOK:** Can—

**The CHAIR:** Please wait for the call if you can, member for Hurtle Vale.

**Ms COOK:** We have a lot of questions. Minister, can you please confirm that the federal minister, Richard Colbeck, actually just ran into the Premier in Canberra and told him that this change was 'a problem'?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am aware that they had conversations. I also subsequently met with Minister Colbeck myself. They have chosen to pay for people who fit within particular eligibility criteria, and that is a good thing.

**Ms COOK:** So confirming that the first Minister Colbeck would have known about this was when he ran into Premier Marshall in Canberra?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am not sure that I can confirm anything that he may or may not have—I cannot remember whether that is something he specifically said to me or not. But it was certainly in the budget papers, so that was a pretty transparent way of letting the world know that it was happening.

**Ms COOK:** On 19 July on radio, Minister Colbeck said to Leon Byner and his audience:

I ran into Steven Marshall in Canberra one night, had a conversation, said this was a problem, he said, 'well let's have a discussion about it and see what we can do to fix it', we had that conversation, my department was in touch...

Then it went on. You would be free to follow that up. In relation to these actions, following the generosity, clearly, of the federal government, the requirement of a contract that was then signed very quickly after this is that you—and you signed the contract—would provide a midyear progress report to the commonwealth in December 2019. As of July 2020 this had not been completed. Can you please advise the committee if this has now been done?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I understand that there was a report on the number of clients waiting for the Home Care Package who had accessed the scheme. Whilst no written progress report was made to the commonwealth, a verbal report was delivered when DHS representatives met with relevant senior commonwealth government representatives on 20 November 2019. There were no challenges or difficulties in delivering and implementing the contract; therefore, there was nil to report in written format. An administrative oversight resulted in a failure to return a nil report to the commonwealth government, which should have been provided to the commonwealth government at the same time that the client data was provided.

The commonwealth was informed that 122 clients awaiting Home Care Packages had accessed the scheme during the period July to December 2019. This was provided to the commonwealth in two quarterly invoices. There were no challenges or difficulties encountered by CASS in implementing the agreement with the commonwealth. I will just ask Ms Boswell if there is anything to add to that. That is it.

**Ms COOK:** To confirm, there was not a full report provided. It was due in December 2019. So that was not provided at that point, and at that particular point in the contract you would then be in breach of those obligations to the commonwealth.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** My understanding is that we are not in breach of those arrangements, as there has been a verbal report provided. Did the CE wish to make any further comments on this?

**Ms BOSWELL:** There was a verbal report provided, and that has been followed up with commonwealth officers since.

**Ms COOK:** Thank you. I believe you just said before that there were 122 clients waiting for Home Care Packages that were funded to have a PARS or a home alert system. What date was that at?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am advised that is the first six months of last year.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hurtle Vale, if you could please refer to a budget line as well. If it is the same—

**Ms COOK:** We are still on the same budget line.

**The CHAIR:** If it is the same, if you could just reference that you are referring to the same line for me as well. That would be much appreciated.

**Ms COOK:** Same line. It has not changed, thank you. So in terms of that number, is that how your forward projections for costing for the scheme have been done moving forward?

**Ms BOSWELL:** The forward projections are based on the state funding, not on the commonwealth's funding package, which that 122 clients refers to.

**Ms COOK:** Does the state have any consideration in regard to other people, such as people with disability, who may or may not qualify for NDIS and are waiting for assessment, other people who have shorter term requirements for a home alert monitoring system? And has any of that been included in the modelling for your costings?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The home alert package has only ever applied to older people, so clearly somebody on the NDIS would be able to access it through their equipment allowance. I am not sure if we have had any concerns raised by stakeholders about cohorts who might potentially be missing out on this particular scheme.

**Ms COOK:** I would like to move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 86, Sub-program 1.1: Community and Family Services. Minister, you referred to grants in your opening statement, and due to the COVID pandemic there were some changes made to the usual Grants SA funding rounds, which were suspended. Particularly concerning is the major grant round, which allows for capacity building in the not-for-profit sector. They have very little or no access to any other funding, particularly during this pandemic when philanthropy is also reduced.

Many organisations have expressed concern that there continue to be business imperatives that they need to attend to and sector development that needs to occur in order to be agile and respond to needs in the community, so when will these major funding rounds be reinstated?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In relation to the COVID-19 round, as the honourable member has identified, in April Grants SA ceased normal operations and introduced these specific COVID-19 support grants, which I understand were in response to matters that had been raised by the non-government sector to support this particular round.

The modified Grants SA initiative supported not-for-profit organisations to continue providing services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people in South Australia during the public health emergency. Eligible organisations could apply for funding of up to \$10,000. Funding was provided for a range of purposes, including information technology, enabling organisations to adapt their services to remote working, food items and supplies, PPE and other equipment to help organisations to provide services in a safe way. The round closed on 30 October. I understand the department will be looking at initiating a new round shortly, but we will let everyone know through the usual channels when that takes place.

**Ms COOK:** What is the maximum amount that an organisation can apply for, and are there any restrictions in relation to other funding sources they have secured?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Broadly, in the past, we have had separate rounds, two minor rounds of up to \$10,000 and two major rounds of up to \$100,000. The criteria generally is that they are not for ongoing operations, they are for one-off things, but we will be announcing what the next round will be fairly soon I think.

**Ms COOK:** Generally, within these grants there are some specifications in relation to ensuring ongoing viability and sustainability, and these large major grants are the ones that I am talking about in terms of building capacity within the sector and responding to the ever-changing needs of vulnerable people. While there is the focus on COVID, currently, none of the grants this year have been able to provide the opportunity to invest in program opportunities which, with all due respect, cost much more than \$10,000 to invest in. When will those larger grants be reinstated?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We will be announcing fairly soon about what the next round will be, but we will take the member's concerns on board in relation to her particular concerns. I have to say that I think DHS is very good at listening to the sector and seeking their input on these things.

**Ms COOK:** Minister, do you project that the legislated amount from the community fund will be spent this financial year?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Community fund?

**Ms COOK:** From the grants pool, Grants SA community benefits.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We expect that, subject to organisations putting in submissions that are eligible, etc., that we would be able to fund that full amount. Hopefully that answers your question.

**Ms COOK:** Are you able to advise what was the total expenditure from the community fund for the years 2018-19 and 2019-20?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The advice I have is, in relation to Grants SA, that the actual amount spent in 2018-19 was \$3.258 million. The actual for 2019-20 is \$2.801 million, and the budget for this financial year is \$3.070 million.

**Ms COOK:** With respect to this current environment, has the minister considered using it as an opportunity to consult and reset with the sector in terms of how the grants rounds are offered?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will ask my CE to respond.

**Ms BOSWELL:** We have been looking at and consulting with the sector on a social investment framework, and we will be talking to the sector more in the next little while regarding the next set of grant rounds.

**Ms COOK:** We have seen a list of grants approved from the COVID fund, and I am sure all organisations are very grateful—we have heard from many of them. Is the minister able to supply the committee with a table of COVID-19 grants that were rejected?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We might take that on notice, because we might need to consult with the organisations as to whether they are happy for that information to be released.

**Ms COOK:** Thanks, I would be happy to communicate with you regarding that later. Are you able to confirm for me that the COVID grants that we have been talking about are the amount usually allocated to the community fund? Was there any stimulus or additional money provided from any other source to fund the COVID grants that have been offered during this cycle?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The advice I have received is that the COVID grants came out of the COVID fund. There was other stimulus funding, but not through that particular program.

**Ms COOK:** So COVID grants were funded by a COVID program?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They were funded out of the normal Grants SA community benefit fund.

**Ms COOK:** Moving to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 89, talking about the Cost of Living Concession. I appreciate that you have given some summary with respect to that. I have a question that relates to two contracts issued to PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2019 that were on the DHS tenders website but have since been removed. The total commissioning value of these reports was \$383,608, split into two lots, namely, \$135,234 and \$248,374. They were for the proposed transfer of energy concessions to retailers analysis. Were both of these projects undertaken, and were reports provided to you by both of those tenders?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have obviously reviewed these particular programs for service improvements and efficiencies, which is really about shifting from some of the less efficient ways of handling concessions to ensure that things are streamlined for consumers. The 2019 review undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers identified that Concessions SA had achieved considerable efficiencies and improvements.

This related to transferring an energy concession, which was something that the South Australian Council of Social Services had requested in the lead-up to the election. They had suggested transferring the energy concession administration to retailers rather than it continuing to be administered by Concessions SA. We did look at that in some detail. The improvements that Concessions SA has made to the system have ensured that the improvement that would have taken place by changing that arrangement would have been negligible in terms of the speed of the transaction, but would have come at a reasonable cost.

We have introduced a range of other improvements to Concessions SA, which means that customers can now choose SMS notifications and people can do telephone applications. There is an online application for Funeral AssistanceSA, a simpler emergency services levy remission, faster companion card applications, and reissuing concession payments also takes place more rapidly.

**Ms BOSWELL:** We also consulted with SACOSS along the way to make sure that we were fulfilling the needs of the clients that they were concerned about. They were concerned about clients having to call people multiple times, and we have been working through that issue with them as well, because it was considered that the improvements to the speed of the way concessions were paid made it such that a transfer to the energy retailers was not going to benefit the community particularly and would cost additional money.

**Ms COOK:** To be clear, there were two projects. One was for concessions generally, and efficiencies. The other one was for transfer to energy retailers. Which was which? There was one for \$135,234 and there was one for \$248,374.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Are we in the previous financial year?

**Ms COOK:** We could be, but it is still related to the Cost of Living Concessions.

**Ms BOSWELL:** I have a list in front of me of the consultants in the last financial year. I think that the contracts you are referring to are in the financial year before last year. For the purpose of the financial year 2019-20, PricewaterhouseCoopers has a contract for a consultancy for a review of the screening unit and also we had them do a sort of quality assurance check before we put out the Cost of Living Concessions boost payment, to make sure that we had our processes lined up and we were keeping our audit trails very clear.

**Ms COOK:** What are the values of both those contracts?

**Ms BOSWELL:** For the review of the screening unit, the value is \$162,808, and for the review of the COLC it was \$17,835.

**Ms COOK:** In terms of the reports, however, from the review of concessions and energy concessions, as far as I can see the numbers are DHS-110 and DHS-110-01. Have those reports been released publicly?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They were both provided to cabinet, so they would be cabinet-in-confidence, but I can assure the honourable member that they are not very interesting reading.

**Ms COOK:** Prior to sharing those with cabinet, were they shared with anyone outside of the department?

**Ms BOSWELL:** I am advised by the person who was the director at the time that they were consultation disclosures made with both the Department for Energy and Mining and with SACOSS, but the reports themselves were not provided because they went to cabinet.

**Ms COOK:** In the interests of transparency and the fact that they are not very interesting reading, why would they not then just be provided publicly for people to be able to see whether they got value for money out of nearly \$400,000?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am advised that there is some risk to the energy retailers themselves because there are some matters that are commercial-in-confidence.

**Ms COOK:** So then the summary that was provided to the Department for Energy and Mining and SACOSS would not have that information in it, I am assuming, if it has been shared. So can the information be shared?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am advised that the consultation with SACOSS was through verbal meetings.

**Ms COOK:** So there was not actually a physical report provided, a summary report?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** No, everyone behind me is shaking their head. We will double-check, so I will take that on notice if you like.

**Ms COOK:** Is it usual for awarded contracts to be removed from the tenders website? Why was this one removed when others are still there?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Sorry?

**Ms COOK:** The contracts that I have said the numbers of—

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hurtle Vale, I am not sure that that question directly relates to a budget line or the responsibilities of the minister to be—

**Ms COOK:** It relates to the delivery of the Cost of Living Concessions and energy concessions.

**The CHAIR:** It does, but the management of the tenders website is not the responsibility of this minister.

**Ms COOK:** I am sure she does not mind answering.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We will take that on notice. I will see if there is a particular reason that we can find.

**Ms COOK:** Yes, there are others that are on there, so I just wondered why they had fallen off. I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 89, Cost of Living Concessions. You provided some updated numbers to what I had, so I thank you for that. The 20-odd thousand that you mentioned, that was a COVID concession number that you said. I have it written down here somewhere.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, 24,540 households receiving the JobSeeker payment receive a \$500 boost, a total of \$15.98 million. In a separate program, which is the international student one we administer, 3,861 international students receive \$500.

**Ms COOK:** Do those numbers that you have just provided sit within the total Cost of Living Concessions provided number in the table of activity indicators, so they would sit within the actual of 183,530?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am advised that the number which appears in the budget paper on that page is the regular COLC payment and does not include the boost.

**Ms COOK:** In South Australia, there are 23,000 carer support recipients, give or take change, and, again, a rounded figure of 66,000 disability support recipients. I, amongst many members, have been lobbied by these 90-odd thousand people in South Australia on those payments who face significantly higher costs during COVID for health and hygiene products and other items and face absolutely greater risk than many others in relation to infection and exposure to COVID, isolation, and dealing with children and adults in their homes with significant behavioural problems, etc. Why did they not get any additional payment from you in respect of cost of living through COVID?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We refer internally, I think, through this process of the COVID-vulnerable who have been disproportionately impacted more than other cohorts of people in our community. The decision to do the COVID boost for people who were receiving a JobSeeker payment was one that was made quite early on; it was quite a strategic decision that we as a government could either provide a lower amount to a larger number of people or we could provide a larger amount to people who were being very significantly impacted. That is why that decision was made by the government.

I would also point out that people who were already Centrelink beneficiaries received two separate payments of \$750 for people on some benefits. In fact, I think pensioners received both those payments. So the commonwealth government has provided support in that regard.

**Ms COOK:** In respect of these people you refer to, people on JobKeeper received the Cost of Living Concessions and a significant boost in their weekly income, in terms of their supplement payments from the federal government. So, with respect, that does not really respond to the question, in terms of people who are supporting highly vulnerable children and people in their care within their own homes in a period of sustained isolation, requiring delivery of hygiene, health and other products, such as food, etc., who were absolutely impacted and did not receive the additional \$500 payments

that people on JobKeeper did. Was there any modelling, question or investigation by yourself that could show these people that you made an effort to get them more money?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I need to correct myself: the boost was for JobSeeker, not JobKeeper. The department did provide quite a lot of support to vulnerable families, particularly, through packages and emergency relief, which I have outlined. I am happy to go through all of those again. I have also provided those sorts of details in the parliament to assist families who were vulnerable through that time.

**Ms COOK:** Current state debt is heading towards \$30 billion for many projects that actually will not start for some time; that has been widely publicised and acknowledged. I would like to ask where the objection is to—

**Mr KNOLL:** Point of order, Mr Chairman: can I ask the member to provide a reference?

**Ms COOK:** It is the same budget line of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 89, regarding Cost of Living Concessions. Thank you, member for Schubert. Debt is heading towards \$30 billion, as I said, so where is the objection to providing immediate, one-off support to people who have been doing it really tough? Was there any modelling done on that? Did you seek for any modelling to be done regarding the economic benefits of providing these additional people in South Australia that payment?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think it is worth stating as well that income support is primarily the responsibility of the federal government. Where we can, we have provided additional support. We do that through the Cost of Living Concession and a range of other concessions for people who are on low incomes. I think South Australia, if you compare it with other jurisdictions, provides a greater suite of concessions than a lot of other jurisdictions. This particular COLC boost payment was something where the government quite specifically, as I said previously, had the choice of either providing a larger amount to a smaller number of people who were being impacted, or we could have provided a smaller amount to a larger number of people.

As I have also outlined, the federal government has provided particular payments themselves. I think both levels of government have been very supportive of the situations that people have found themselves in in terms of their need for additional support at this time. I am not sure whether it is helpful to compare some groups against others in this way when we have all had our level of need.

**Ms COOK:** Just to confirm in regard to this same budget line, were you lobbied yourselves by anyone in relation to this payment not being provided to that cohort of carers and providers of support in the home? Did you follow up at all with your cabinet members, anyone within your government, as to whether or not you could provide that payment to these people?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think I received a letter from the Hon. Emily Bourke in this regard. I do not recall receiving any other correspondence from anybody else. We also spoke to the commonwealth government in terms of what information they were receiving in regard to payments. Obviously, everybody has had to be quite nimble and respond to changing situations. I have provided a written response to the Hon. Ms Bourke, which in part outlined where the commonwealth was at in relation to those particular payments.

**Mr KNOLL:** Can I refer to Budget Paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, Part 2, page 81. Can I ask for the minister to please outline how the government is improving services to children and families who require support to address complex needs?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Certainly. I thank the honourable member for his question. This government is committed to improving services to children and families by ensuring that the right support is available at the right time. A key focus of the Marshall Liberal government is our investment in a new Child and Family Support System (CFSS) to keep families safe and well, so children can thrive.

The Child and Family Assessment and Referral Networks (CFARNs) were established in response to recommendations of the Nyland Child Protection Systems Royal Commission 2016 and are prescribed in the Children and Young People (Safety) Act. They were established to deliver better

collaboration and coordination of early intervention services and to meet the needs of families whose infants and children are at risk of harm or maltreatment.

In March 2019, cabinet approved the implementation of a new Child and Family Support System to improve services to children and families who require support to address complex needs. A key area of system reform involves embedding local level service coordination and service capacity in CFSS, with CFARNs providing the backbone of local coordination in high-priority regions. The CFARNs aim to reduce gaps and duplication, promote information sharing and a common assessment framework, foster strong links and service pathways and provide case management.

This government announced earlier this month, as part of our 2020-21 budget measures, that \$8.9 million will be provided over the next 3½ years to continue the CFARN program in the metropolitan area and to expand it to the regions, with an additional 10 CFARNs to support at-risk families in the following priority regional areas: Riverland, Ceduna, Whyalla, Gawler, Port Pirie, Kadina, Murray Bridge, Murraylands, the Limestone Coast, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln and Mount Barker.

We continue to invest in the CFARN program because the evidence has shown that it is working to improve support to families with a risk of engaging with the child protection system. An evaluation of CFARNs during the pilot stage undertaken by Telethon Kids and BetterStart at the University of Adelaide has validated the value and effectiveness of the program. It found that they are working as intended.

They are improving support to families with child protection risk, appearing to halve the deeper contact with the Department for Child Protection, improving system knowledge of families, which is therefore likely to reduce system dysfunction, improve targeting of statutory services and enable a more informed approach to connecting families with relevant supports, and deliver a reduction in the child protection burden.

In addition, \$900,000 will be provided over 2020-21 and 2021-22 for a trial program known as Breathing Space to provide coordinated support to young women at greater risk of requiring child protection intervention for their current and any future children. The contract was executed with Centacare Catholic Family Services in August. The program targets women under 25 who have experienced or are at risk of repeat removals of children from their care.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 82. Do you, minister, or your department operate any discretionary funds? Are you able to supply a list of payments made from these funds over the past financial year and do you have projections for the current financial year?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I do not have a discretionary fund.

**Ms COOK:** That answers that one, does it not?

**Mr KNOLL:** I am sure we would all like one.

**Ms COOK:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I could have had one. I chose not to.

**Ms COOK:** Was there a particular reason, minister, why chose not to have one?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I just think there are brighter brains than I who sit behind me, put it that way.

**Ms COOK:** I will leave it alone.

**The CHAIR:** Perhaps that is best, member for Hurtle Vale.

**Ms COOK:** Indeed. Moving to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 84, there is an expenditure line regarding the Restrictive Practices Information System. Can you outline what is planned in regard to the information system?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes. We look forward to bringing a bill before the parliament, honourable member. In the new world that we live in under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the states are required to have an authorisation regime for restrictive practices. We have not had



one in the past, so we will be working towards that and, therefore, this budget has allocated \$5.8 million over four years so that we can provide that authorising regime. Our current system for authorising restrictive practices is complex and does not meet nationally agreed principles, so this will assist us to achieve that goal. The budget includes ongoing funding for the authorisation unit within the department, including a senior authorising officer. It is proposed that the unit will:

- educate NDIS service providers on authorisation processes and provide guidance on authorisation and prohibited practices;
- oversee the training and accreditation of officers within NDIS providers and oversight of low-level authorisation undertaken by providers;
- authorise high-risk restricted practices and enable independent review decisions by SACAT; and
- provide ongoing sector education and training.

Does the CE want to add anything to that?

**Ms BOSWELL:** We will be looking to consult the sector very soon on the structure because we need to ensure that what is being proposed works with the Guardianship and Administration Act. We are talking with the Attorney-General's Department and will shortly go out to the sector. I advised the NDS, Peter Hoppo, on the day of the budget and it was welcomed that we were moving towards this.

**Ms COOK:** Will there be any recurrent costs after the original outlay for the system? Do you have any idea of how much that would be and for how long?

**Ms BOSWELL:** Yes, there will be recurrent costs based on the need for staff, the process over time. The budget measure includes some of the operating expenses going forward. But in the first instance, we are setting up the program and then there will be staffing and we are working it out still. It will depend on what the bill is that will eventually be passed by parliament as to what the exact staffing will be, but at least it will include a senior authorising officer and some support staff as just explained by the minister.

**Ms COOK:** Given there are some legislative mechanisms federally now that are governing and dictating how NDIS clients are handled in relation to restrictive practices, do you have a date when you must have all assessments completed on your clients who are in your care?

**Ms BOSWELL:** Are you referring to—

**Ms COOK:** Restrictive practices.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** How does it take place at the moment?

**Ms COOK:** Your assessment processes will need to change. Is that correct?

**Ms BOSWELL:** Are you talking about people in the care of the South Australian government service?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Or all NDIS clients?

**Ms COOK:** Yes, people who are living within the state government.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The restrictive practices regime will apply to all providers across South Australia, not just to the South Australian government. That is the authorising regime. We are going through a process of ensuring that there are restrictive practice behaviour support plans in place for all clients within the service. In terms of a specific date, it would be when we go into a direct relationship with the NDIS in terms of cash payments. At the moment, we are in kind still for group homes.

**Ms COOK:** I might take the opportunity, given this is the longest session, to entertain everyone with a reading of the omnibus questions, if that is okay.

**The CHAIR:** From my experience so far, you might need to get on with things because it has taken some time.

**Ms COOK:** The omnibus questions are:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
  - What is the actual FTE count at 30 June 2020 and the projected actual FTE count for each year of the forward estimates?
  - What is the total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates?
  - What is the notional FTE job reduction target that has been agreed with Treasury for each year of the forward estimates?
  - Does the agency or department expect to meet the target in each year of the forward estimates?
  - How many TVSPs are estimated to be required to meet FTE reductions over the forward estimates?
2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
  - How much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2020-21, and for each of the years of the forward estimates period?
  - The top ten providers of goods and services by value to each agency reporting to the minister for 2019-20; and
  - A description of the goods and/or services provided by each of these top ten providers, and the cost to the agency for these goods and/or services.
  - The value of the goods and services that was supplied to the agency by South Australian suppliers.
3. Between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more which has either (1) been abolished and (2) which has been created?
4. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing:
  - the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier;
  - cost;
  - work undertaken;
  - reason for engaging the contractor; and
  - method of appointment?
5. For each department and agency for which the minister has responsibility:
  - How many FTEs were employed to provide communication and promotion activities in 2019-20 and what was their employment expense?
  - How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 and what is their estimated employment expense?
  - The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2019-20 and budgeted cost for 2020-21.
6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide a full itemised breakdown of attraction and retention allowances as well as non-salary benefits paid to public servants and contracts between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020.

7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2020, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices?

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

- (a) How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2019-20?
- (b) What department funded these TVSPs? (except for DTF estimates)
- (c) What number of TVSPs were funded?
- (d) What is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how are these packages funded?
- (e) What is the breakdown per agency/branch of targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year) by FTEs?

9. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive terminations have occurred since 1 July 2019 and what is the value of executive termination payments made?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what new executive appointments have been made since 1 July 2019, and what is the annual salary, and total employment cost for each position?

11. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many employees have been declared excess, how long has each employee been declared excess, and what is the salary of each excess employee?

12. In the 2019-20 financial year, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on operating programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2020-21?

13. In the 2019-20 financial year, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on investing or capital projects or programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2020-21? How much was sought and how much was approved?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years:

- (a) 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; and
- (g) Details, including the value and beneficiary, of any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.

15. For the period of 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, 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.

16. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budgeted expenditure across the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years for each individual

investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

17. 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.

18. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total cost of machinery of government changes since 1 July 2019 and please provide a breakdown of those costs?

19. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what new sections of your department or agency have been established since 1 July 2019 and what is their purpose?

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

- What savings targets have been set for each year of the forward estimates?
- What measures are you implementing to meet your savings target?
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

**The CHAIR:** With those questions taken on notice the time allotted and agreed for the examination of the portfolio of Department of Human Services has now been completed. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the portfolio agency of Department of Human Services completed. Are we needing a change of advisers to shift to the portfolio of volunteers? If we are, it would be fantastic for that to happen now.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Ms L. Boswell, Chief Executive, Department of Human Services.

Ms A. Hayes, Executive Director, Community and Family Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Strategic Reform Projects, Department of Human Services.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms F. Curnow, Director, Community Services, Department of Human Services.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We welcome Fiona Curnow, who is the Director, Community Services.

**The CHAIR:** Fantastic. The next session runs from quarter past one to 1.45pm. The examination of proposed payments will be in relation to the portfolio of volunteer services. The minister appearing again is the Minister for Human Services. The estimate of payments is as outlined earlier relating to the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for this examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 3. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement in relation to this portfolio?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, a very brief one, thank you, Mr Chairman. The year 2019-20 has been a difficult year for the South Australian community, from the summer bushfires to COVID-19. The year has also highlighted just how much we need our volunteers. Right across our state, volunteers from all walks of life have yet again stepped up to help and provide crucial support to individuals, families and communities under pressure. South Australians have volunteered to fight fires; rebuild farms and communities; distribute food and practical assistance; look after their neighbours; and give support, care and friendship to those around them.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally acknowledge the contributions made by so many volunteers and volunteering organisations throughout the year. Throughout this year

Volunteering SA&NT has formally managed registrations from relief volunteers on behalf of the state government. Volunteering SA&NT also worked with community organisations to determine their needs for additional volunteers.

The Red Cross Telecross REDi has also been activated by the state government to reach people who may be particularly isolated and vulnerable during the pandemic. Trained Red Cross volunteers ring preregistered clients for a friendly check-in and remind them of important measures to help them cope. It was a great reassurance for families and carers to know that their loved ones are regularly contacted.

The challenges of COVID saw many not-for-profits undergo rapid transformation of their people, engagement and service delivery models. The COVID-19 support grants of up to \$10,000 have allowed community organisations to continue to operate and adapt their existing programs or to provide new programs or services.

The year 2020 has also marked the last year of the first volunteering strategy for South Australia. On 27 August the cosignatories reaffirmed our commitment for a second volunteering strategy and signed a declaration of cooperation. I am pleased to advise that the second strategy will set the vision for South Australian volunteering over the next six years and signpost how we will continue to improve the volunteering experience in South Australia. A statewide consultation process is currently underway, with an anticipated launch date of February 2021.

This year, due to COVID-19, the annual volunteers thankyou day was delivered via an online event on 8 June. A special feature was the presentation of South Australia's prestigious volunteer awards. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the award recipients, they are:

- the Joy Noble Medal to Ms Jennifer Howard, who I understand is known to the member for Hurtle Vale, the founder and CEO of Safe Pets Safe Families;
- the Premier's Award for Corporate Social Responsibility to The Ghan Kebab House;
- the Andamooka Community Project Award went to the Archie Badenoch Project; and
- the Excellence in Volunteer Management Award went to Mr Michael Feszczak, who is the Human Resources Business Partner, Volunteer Management of the City of Onkaparinga.

In lieu of a live event, each recipient was video interviewed, providing insights into their motivations and their drive to help. This government is committed to supporting and growing volunteering and fostering a thriving and diverse culture of volunteering in our state. I look forward to the release of the new strategy in 2020-21, and thank all of our wonderful volunteers.

**The CHAIR:** Lead speaker for the opposition, do you wish to make an opening statement?

**Ms COOK:** No. Again, I wish to thank all department staff and particularly volunteers who always work extremely hard but particularly in the last 12 months they have obviously worked even harder. My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 86. Within the FTE count, how many people there are specifically allocated to volunteer services?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I might just ask the CE if she could provide a response.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The Community Services branch works across in much more of a matrix model than every individual having a very specific portfolio. However, there is certainly a secretariat to the Volunteering Strategy Partnership Group, as well as someone dedicated to working with the WeDo app. Other FTEs within that division have much to do with volunteers and, obviously, the grants team this year has been very involved in assessing and working through volunteer grants as part of COVID.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing on with the same, how many FTEs are currently allocated to implementing the Volunteer Strategy 2021-27 and are these volunteer administrators, or people working on this strategy, secured moving forward?

**Ms BOSWELL:** It is the essentially the same answer as I just gave, and the staff involved work across—there are not many NGOs that do not avail themselves of volunteers in some form,

and all of the staff in the Community Services division work with NGOs of all sorts. There is a lot of involvement with volunteers; it is not necessarily a dedicated individual role for every person.

**Ms COOK:** To be clear: is there not one person allocated to oversee the delivery of the Volunteer Strategy 2021-27?

**Ms BOSWELL:** The Volunteer Strategy is a partnership between the Local Government Association, Business SA and ourselves. We have the executive director sitting on the partnership, and we also have the director responsible for delivery of the service, so the executive of the department is responsible for delivering the strategy.

**Ms COOK:** To clarify: there is not anyone specifically allocated to provide support to those people?

**Ms BOSWELL:** As I said in my first answer, there is a specific role of a person who is—

**Ms COOK:** Yes, sorry.

**Ms BOSWELL:** —dedicated to the secretariat of the Volunteering Partnership Board.

**Ms COOK:** To clarify: that just provides administrative support? It is not strategic?

**Ms BOSWELL:** It provides strategic and policy support as well.

**Ms COOK:** She does, okay, thank you. In relation to the Volunteer Strategy that is currently being completed, have all the aspects of that been ticked off, and are all partners satisfied that the Volunteer Strategy was fully completed and delivered?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Do you mean the previous one?

**Ms COOK:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the partnership board thought that it was valuable. Obviously, the new strategy builds on and matures, and I think it is fair to say that in South Australia we have quite a mature volunteer sector which is very professional, and I think as part of that as well we have to give credit to Volunteering SA&NT, who have been our partners. I outlined in my opening statement the level of support that they provided in terms of matching people who had come forward to help in bushfires and those sorts of things.

The new strategy, I understand, is out for consultation, so obviously we will expect some feedback from that, which will be fed into the process going forward. The 2014-20 strategy had four focus areas, which were to invest in the foundations of volunteering, promote and inform the benefits of volunteering, implement leading practice and high-quality standards and progressively adapt through continuous improvement.

**Ms COOK:** On Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87, when do you expect the new strategy to be released in 2021?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In the first quarter. I think I might have mentioned February in my opening statement.

**Ms COOK:** As a comparison, have any calculations been done as to how much the previous volunteering strategy cost to deliver, versus what you expect the new strategy will cost to deliver?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In terms of calculating intangible costs, I think it is probably difficult. We often refer in this sector to the benefits volunteering brings. We think the direct costs to government will be much the same under the new strategy as under the old, given that we fund Volunteering SA&NT. There would be some small costs here and there, such as the printing of certificates and those sorts of things, staging of events. It is hard to say, because there are a lot of partner organisations and a lot of organisations themselves involved in this space and we would not have access to knowing what costs they might incur in terms of their volunteering.

If you look at some of the organisations, we were just discussing Adelaide University. They have hundreds and hundreds of volunteers across some very focused and well-developed programs, and they would incur some costs in that sense. They often have, particularly for their students, particular programs, which means people engage in volunteering as part of their university course

work or contributing towards their degree. One assumes that they would have costs relating to having proper volunteer management processes in place.

**Ms COOK:** On Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 86, what is the progress of the Liberal Party's commitment to engage with Volunteering SA&NT and work towards the implementation of a volunteer advocate?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I have had my colleagues confirm with me that there was not a firm commitment that there would be an advocate implemented. It was something that we said that we would look at, something that is a matter of ongoing discussion with the department into how those sorts of functions might be managed going forward. I know that Volunteering SA&NT has concerns about how people who are engaged in volunteering can make formal complaints. We have been looking at a lot of those different issues and ways in which we can address those through particular means.

**Ms COOK:** Keeping on the same page—Volume 3, page 86—certainly my understanding is from the sector that they understood the letter that you sent to them confirmed that an advocate was going to be put into place. They feel that that was a strong election commitment and something that they are expecting. As you would be aware, particularly in the last 12 months, with current traumatic volunteering experiences around the bushfires and COVID, there is more need now to provide that type of support for volunteers within the system. Do you currently have a working group set up to look at this?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The department meets regularly in relation to these matters. As part of our second volunteering strategy, we are looking at options for things that I think some in the volunteering sector would envisage an advocate might look at, which would be, as I said, managing those disputes and governance training, resourcing and any potential changes to legislation. We are looking at the best mechanism to implement those particular things, which I think are the concerns that were raised.

**Ms COOK:** Would it surprise you that people are disappointed that it has taken three years to have this discussion about providing a mechanism for sorting complaints and disputes and improving the support of volunteers?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the discussions have been ongoing. I have certainly had these discussions with Volunteering SA&NT for some time, and the department also has particular discussions with the sector on these very matters.

**Mr KNOLL:** On the same sort of topic, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 88. Can the minister provide an update on the government's implementation of free screening checks for volunteers, and outline when those free checks first came into place?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** As we know, because it was a bill in this parliament, we were able to in perpetuity ensure that volunteers across South Australia could access free checks. The introduction of the free screening checks took place on 1 November 2018, and the state government estimates that we have saved the South Australian volunteers themselves and their community organisations over \$6 million.

Under the previous Labor government, volunteer screening checks were \$59.40 each. The commitment to abolish the cost is one example of how this government is lowering costs for hardworking South Australians and their families. As the honourable member would be aware, the passing of the screening bill took place in 2019, which means that free screening checks are now enshrined in legislation and it is easier for people in South Australia to volunteer so that the cost of screening does not act as a barrier.

In the 2019-20 financial year, the screening unit received and determined 67,744 applications from volunteers, and 51,653 of these were applications for working with children checks. As the honourable member, as an excellent community member, would be aware, it has been a boost for lots of organisations. Talking to people from Little Athletics, it has been of huge assistance to them, because it means that people can access those free screening checks and it has expanded some organisations' volunteer bases significantly.

**Ms COOK:** It is a nice segue because I was going to move onto that very same area myself. I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 88. What is the current average wait time for a volunteer screening check?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is no difference between how long it takes for a screening, whether it is a volunteer versus a worker or a student. We do not have an average wait time. That is not the way we measure it. What we measure is actually how many are done within a certain period of time. In 2019-20, the percentage of screening applications finalised within one calendar month was 97 per cent and that is the target going forward. It does fluctuate, depending on the time of the year.

The weekly statistics that I show is that the current percentage of people who can expect that their application, regardless of whether it is for a volunteer or other, would be processed within a week would be about 75 per cent, but it does fluctuate depending on the time of year. So within a one-month waiting period—there is probably about 3 per cent over a financial year that may receive that in a three to four-week period. Then there are the more complex assessments, which may take quite a bit longer, sometimes.

If there has been slowness through COVID for many reasons—many things have slowed down—we have noticed that during that particular period the ACIC data was much slower, so that would have resulted in some delays for some applicants.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing with the same line, in the table of fees and payments for said checks, there are five types of checks that we can get. In the column for volunteers, there is zero dollars applied for all of them. So do volunteers apply for all of those different types of checks, depending on what they are volunteering for? Do you have a breakdown of how many volunteers apply for what type of check?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I do not think we have the data about how many people apply for multiple checks. There are some, of course, and some would be required to, the ones who are mandated with the working with children check and disability services. The vast majority are working with children checks, that is the largest number. I am not sure that we have a breakdown on volunteers who have applied for multiple checks. There were 67,744 applications that were approved in 2019-20, and of those, 51,653 were for working with children checks.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing with the same line, there was some debate when we were discussing the bill in the early stages in respect of a worry that people would apply for a volunteer check and then just go and work. Have there been any flags raised in respect of people doing this? What is the process currently when people transition to paid employment? Are they being made to get a new check, or can they transfer their volunteer check until it expires?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The exemption was the Santa Claus clause. If you are doing less than seven days of work in a financial year you do not need to apply for a new screening, but if you are working the requirement is that you do a fresh application for the screening, which is important because there are things that are assessed upon application that are not assessed on an ongoing basis.

**Mr KNOLL:** To follow up on the same budget line, minister, you cited a figure of 97 per cent of checks being finalised within 30 days. How has that figure, or that KPI, been achieved over time; that is, do we have figures for previous years on what the rates of those checks are within that period of time?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we can probably get that for the honourable member. Certainly, when we first came in there was a backlog of checks that needed to be done, and that slowed things down considerably. So the KPI for what percentage was done within that one week was lower than it is now. I generally carry that around in my other parliamentary folder, but I do not have that with me at the moment. We will see what information we can get for the honourable member.

**Ms COOK:** You could perhaps have a chat in caucus, or something. In respect of volunteers who are transitioning or working longer than the Santa Claus clause length of time, what is the mechanism to police this or check this or make sure that this is actually happening?



**Ms BOSWELL:** There is an obligation on the employer to check that someone has a screening when they employ them. When they go to have a look, they will be able to see whether or not it is a volunteer screening or, in terms of a working with children check, whether it is valid for paid employment. If it is not valid for paid employment, the employer will be requiring the person to get a paid employment check.

**Ms COOK:** In respect of this obligation, is that the same one that obligated Integrity Care to do checks on their staff when they came to work for them?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They were working. They were workers, so Integrity Care had a very clear obligation to have their workers screened. It was under the Disability Services Act.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to the same line. Would we be confident, then, that current employers would be doing the right thing and checking all the people who come to work for them and making sure that they get checks done? Are we confident of that?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The obligation is on the employer, as it has been for many years.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to the same line. In respect of modelling that was done prospectively, and in respect of the numbers of volunteer checks that we see being done now, my memory is that we are seeing a lot more than was predicted. Minister, have you made any inquiries as to whether or not people are getting full working with children volunteer screening checks done for roles that really do not need that level of check and could be satisfied by a VOAN check through SAPOL?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is always potential for overscreening, so we try to make sure that the information on the website is as clear as possible. Organisations will have their own policies as well. I have received correspondence from some members of parliament in relation to organisations that have requirements that are over and above what the legislation says. That is a policy decision that those organisations make themselves. I think the legislation sets out the standards, and organisations can choose to go above that or not, as they see fit.

**Ms COOK:** Going back to the same line, when you were talking about the two different types of checks, disability checks versus working with children checks, what is the main difference between the two checks in terms of the thoroughness or the mechanism by which people are screened?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They are very similar tests. They both go to the ACIC website. I might ask the CE to respond. She is the lawyer among us, so she knows the details of this inside out.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The main difference is that there is a national agreement associated with working with children checks that allows for the checking of expanded criminal history associated with child protection information. Therefore, there are things associated with child protection information that are able to be reviewed as a result of that.

The NDIS screening check, when it starts next year, will also allow for a type of expanded criminal history check. However, the risk assessment done is different for children than it is for people with disabilities. For example, in terms of some minor fraud offences, children do not tend to have assets for someone to defraud them of in white collar crime, whereas people with a disability may well have assets. We therefore put a different weighting on that kind of offence for those sorts of checks.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, the time allocated and agreed for the examination of payments in relation to the portfolio of volunteer services has expired. Therefore, there are no further questions and I declare the examination of the portfolio agency volunteer services completed.

*Sitting suspended from 13:46 to 15:00.*

#### **Membership:**

Mr McBride substituted for Mr Whetstone.

Mr Ellis substituted for Mr Knoll.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms L. Boswell, Chief Executive, Department of Human Services.

Mr J. Young, Executive Director, Disability Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Strategic Reform Projects, Department of Human Services.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services, Department of Human Services.

Mr T. Lovegrove, Director, Screening Unit, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back everybody. We continue with Estimates Committee B this afternoon. This afternoon we are examining proposed payments in regard to Disability Services. The minister appearing today is the Minister for Human Services. The estimates of payments are as read out earlier in this session in regard to the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 3. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement in regard to the portfolio of Disability Services or to introduce your advisers?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes. I introduce for the first time Mr Joe Young, Executive Director of Disability Services and we welcome back Mr Trevor Lovegrove who is the Director of the Screening Unit. I have some opening remarks. Firstly, I am pleased to advise the committee that, as of 30 June 2020, the South Australian government's investment in the National Disability Insurance Scheme is enabling over 36,000 people in South Australia to receive NDIS supports. This means that far more people than ever before are receiving services and supports that they need and are entitled to.

Throughout 2020 a major focus has been on the quality of supports and safety of people with disability as well as promoting inclusion, dignity and choice. In response to COVID-19, DHS has faced the challenge of ensuring safe care to people with disability including the provision of essential support services. This has included a focus on the Department of Human Services' own accommodation services which have put systems and protocols in place as well as establishing a facility to support NDIS participants to leave hospital.

More broadly, DHS worked closely with SA Health, the non-government sector, the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission supporting two-way communication and collaboration and addressing issues as they arise. This work is ongoing. In May 2020, following the knowledge of the tragic death of Ann Marie Smith, the government immediately established the Safeguarding Taskforce to independently examine gaps in oversight and safeguarding for people with disability in South Australia. The final report was released on 3 August. It has identified 14 key safeguarding gaps and seven associated recommendations to the state government and all have been actioned or completed.

The government brought forward the expansion of the Adult Safeguarding Unit so that its scope includes vulnerable adults with disability of any age from October 2020. The state budget also includes \$1.8 million over three years to continue the work of the Disability Advocate and to support individual advocacy in South Australia. The government has also committed to maintaining the Community Visitor Scheme in South Australia and has developed and signed new information sharing guidelines with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. I will continue to work with the federal government and other jurisdictions to ensure we have appropriate arrangements under the NDIS for safeguarding people with disability.

The 2020-21 state budget includes \$5.8 million over four years to establish a restrictive practice authorisation unit within the department. The new system will ensure South Australia is meeting its obligations under national principles for restrictive practices. The authorisation process, to be outlined in legislation, will aim to provide the strongest safeguards for people with disability.

DHS accommodation services has also placed a strong focus this year on improving quality, safety and client and customer engagement. In April 2020, we farewelled the last resident from Highgate Park into his new purpose-built accommodation. This was a great move for this individual but also for South Australia, marking as it does the end of an era of institutionalised disability care in our state. Our commitment now is to enable people with disability to live in the community, to have choices and to be included in the life of their community.

This commitment is exemplified in the first State Disability Inclusion Plan, Inclusive SA, which came into operation on 31 October 2019. The first action completed under Inclusive SA was the launch of the inclusive play guidelines on 3 December 2019. These guidelines provide a tool for local government, schools, early childhood learning centres and other organisations to improve outcomes for children living with disability and their families and carers.

Access and inclusion for people with disability has progressed significantly throughout the year, with state authorities developing disability access and inclusion plans (DAIPs) as required under the Disability Inclusion Act. I am pleased to advise that 80 state authorities published DAIPs by 31 October 2020, which included 25 state government agencies and 55 local councils. DHS is currently preparing the inaugural report on the state plan, which will include progress on all 39 actions.

DHS has also continued work associated with the transition to the NDIS, which has included closing the Disability Transition Unit's country offices and supporting the move of remaining clients to NGOs. Domiciliary Equipment Service withdrew from home modifications, wheelchair and seating and on-road repair in early 2020. By December 2020, a non-government supplier will commence delivery of the remaining refurbished and readily available loan equipment services. The equipment program will move out of DES but remain in the South Australian government to provide services to approximately 3,000 state-funded clients each year.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hurtle Vale, did you wish to make an opening statement?

**Ms COOK:** No, thank you very much.

**The CHAIR:** You have the call.

**Ms COOK:** I have some questions in relation to Budget Paper 5, page 80, in respect of advocacy, which you have started to outline in your introduction, and also the Safeguarding Taskforce outcomes generally. Minister, what have you done to communicate all the matters raised in the Safeguarding Taskforce report to the commonwealth government and ensure their delivery?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have obviously provided the report to the commonwealth. It is an item that has been placed on the Disability Reform Council agenda. The commonwealth had its own report, undertaken by Alan Robertson, a retired Federal Court judge, which had very similar themes at least and recommendations to our task force report. Those matters are ongoing.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing on the same line, minister, are you aware that the federal government is not committing to deliver on all the recommendations made by Alan Robertson? They are in fact just commenting currently on ones that link to the terms of reference for his inquiry.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Could you be more specific?

**Ms COOK:** I am specifically relating my question to the Community Visitor Scheme, which I will continue to do. Are you aware that the federal government has made no commitment in terms of rolling this out more broadly and supporting all people who could require a visit?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am aware that they have not jumped into the space of adopting a community visitor scheme. That has been their position for some time, but we continue to work with them on areas that we think are in the scope of our scheme. It continues to be our position that, in the long term, community visitor schemes sit more logically with the commonwealth now that we have reached the full scheme.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing on the same line, minister, what will you do to ensure that the federal government actually follows through on this and ensures that the full potential scope of a community visitors scheme is delivered for all people in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** It is one of a number of matters we have under discussion. The Disability Reform Council has always got a fairly robust list of things that we are working through, and that will continue. Clearly, the federal government has primary responsibility for quality and safeguarding. That has been the case since 1 July 2019, when we were at full scheme.

My understanding is that they have adopted other things which are both in the Robertson report and in the Safeguarding Taskforce recommendations which relate to things such as identifying people who are vulnerable, and particularly during COVID they have adopted the practice of telephoning people at home. So they are certainly aware of these issues and are working through them.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing the same line, in respect of the case that you have presented on a number of occasions as to why as a state government you have not broadened the scope to allow for community visitors to visit environments run by non-government entities as well as private homes, the commonwealth government taking the lead role has been one reason and also you have talked about section 109 of the constitution.

Given that the advice was provided in February 2018 to a question about what obstructions are in place to delivery of the community visitors scheme across those other areas, have you sought to ask the Crown for advice as to how you could deliver the Community Visitor Scheme across those other areas, including private homes and places run by NDIS providers?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There are a few issues to unpack there. First and foremost, the Crown advice, which we have provided publicly, from 2018 was very clear that the scope of the scheme had to be limited in the way the government has now implemented. The question of private homes, I think, is not one that is something that the task force members were particularly keen on themselves.

Given that we had a number of people on the task force with lived experience, they looked at that matter, and I think there is a tension often between what people who do not have lived experience believe might be the answers to things and the people who do have lived experience believe, which is that in implementing such measures we need to be careful we do not undermine the rights that people with disability have fought so hard for.

I think it is probably fair to say that there are people with lived experience who would regard the concept of a community visitor scheme coming into their home and checking on their care plans as quite patronising. So in all of these things I think we need to consult very carefully with people with lived experience and other people with experience to ensure we are not winding back things they have fought so hard for.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, have you made any inquiries with other jurisdictions that do operate within either private homes and/or facilities run under the NDIS such as Victoria as to how they manage to do this without contravening any constitutional issues?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we need to put to bed this concept that community visitor schemes visit people in private homes in other jurisdictions. The advice that we have is that they do not visit people in private homes in other jurisdictions. Each state and territory will need to take their own legal advice on these matters, and it would be a very brave minister who would expose those visitors potentially to being at risk of being sued or not being covered for injury if they were enabled to follow the scope that they used to follow.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, so in Victoria and other jurisdictions is it true that community visitors go into facilities run under the NDIS?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They may well be able to go into facilities under the NDIS, but the scope of a lot of these schemes is quite variable. Some are available to go to, some have a greater focus on mental health than others. There is a wide variety of variance amongst the schemes. South Australia is one of the only jurisdictions that utilises volunteers as part of their scheme, so there is a large variance in terms of how the schemes operate and their scope throughout Australia.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing the same line, are you able to provide the committee with a full report on the implementation of all recommendations of the Safeguarding Taskforce and the time frame at which they have been completed?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have tried to keep all of that information as contemporary as possible. We can give you a progress report against the recommendations.

Recommendation 1 is that the state government communicate matters raised in the report to the commonwealth government with special reference to safeguarding gaps 1 to 9, seeking a response and how these gaps must be addressed as soon as possible. An out of session paper was distributed to ministers—of the Disability Reform Council—on 29 September to note the Safeguarding Taskforce final report and action taken in response to the report.

Recommendation 2 is that the state government address the need for vulnerable NDIS participants to have regular health checks. The response is that the chief executive of SA Health has written to the Safeguarding Taskforce in response to this recommendation to advise that this is a commonwealth responsibility, and we have written to the commonwealth as well.

Recommendation 3 is that the state government extends the scope of the Adult Safeguarding Unit to include younger adults at risk of abuse prior to 2020-22, commencing with people with disabilities. The response is that the ASU remit to include vulnerable adults with disability over the age of 18 commenced on 1 October.

Recommendation 4 is that DHS revisits the information sharing guidelines as they impact on screening of workers and in particular the availability of relevant information from the commonwealth. The response is that the NDIS Commission has executed information schedules with the Health and Community Services Complaints Commission, three with DHS, and that includes the Incident Management Unit, disability and reform, which were agreed on 10 July.

This screening unit was agreed on 31 July. The NDIS Commission has also executed information schedules with the Department for Child Protection, the Department for Education, SA Health, South Australia Police and the Office of the Public Advocate. Work continues to progress the schedules with the Coroner of South Australia, Consumer and Business Services and the Community Visitor Scheme.

Recommendation 5 is that the state government reaffirms the value of a community visitor scheme as an additional safeguard for potentially vulnerable participants, acting in conjunction with relevant commonwealth legislation. The DHS chief executive wrote to the NDIS Commissioner in response to the independent review handed down on 4 September, seeking to work on progressing recommendations. A meeting was due to occur in the week of 16 November but is being rescheduled due to the COVID restrictions.

Recommendation 6 is that the state government assist agencies to better provide for inclusion and to build the capacity for people with disabilities. State authorities were required to publish their individual disability access and inclusion plans by 31 October, and DHS supported this process by establishing an online community of practice to provide clear advice and support for conducting consultations and reinforce legislative requirements.

Recommendation 7 is that the state government invest in individual advocacy to improve the capacity to assist individuals with accessing what they need from the NDIS and the community. The responses in the state budget include \$1.8 million over three years for disability advocacy, an open invitation to supply was released on 7 September and closed on 8 October, and we expect to announce the results of that shortly.

**Mr McBRIDE:** I refer to disability, question 1, and refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 97. Can the minister outline what steps have been taken to improve the quality and safeguarding arrangements for NDIS participants in supported accommodation?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I thank the member for his question. This is very important work the department has been undertaking in its own accommodation services. Over the past two years, DHS has had a focus on improving quality and safeguarding within state-run supported accommodation services. This has resulted in substantial reforms to the overall accommodation services structure and to practices more broadly.

Before going into the details of these changes and reforms, I would like to acknowledge the work of DHS staff in these areas and the commitment they have demonstrated in improving the lives of residents in supported accommodation. New initiatives have included:

- a quality and safeguarding framework, which was endorsed in March 2020;
- a zero tolerance to abuse and neglect strategy, which was launched also this year after clients were consulted within the service;
- a quality and practice team was established to monitor and improve practice;
- team supervisors were placed into homes to provide improved leadership and coaching of support workers;
- announced and unannounced internal audit site visits of homes were conducted, in addition to visits from the Community Visitor Scheme;
- consistent training and development for all staff to do their jobs well;
- steps were taken to improve complaint reporting, including anonymous complaints—options for staff, clients and families;
- a review was conducted of all restrictive practices to ensure appropriate documentation and orders; and
- an audit by external providers against NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission requirements is also being conducted this month.

These initiatives have helped to build a solid foundation going forward. We have also been supporting our clients to ensure they receive quality services. That has included a restructure to include dedicated layers of staff for families and clients, capacity building officers to support and empower clients to make their own choices, and quality and safeguarding officers to improve practice within the service.

Members may have seen on my Twitter feed that I have met with the people's advocacy, which I think has been very well received and is looking to expand its reach. We also have the CCTV camera pilot, which is still in the planning phase.

**Ms COOK:** I will segue after that statement of claims on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 94. It has come to the attention of the opposition that, in respect of the 1,200 or thereabouts staff in Disability Services, under half of them have completed advanced manual handling task training in the last three years.

Earlier this year, with the highlighted death of Debra Pearce, following complications after her leg was allegedly broken while a registered nurse was moving her on their own, we have been approached by a number of people to say that manual handling training is insufficient, inadequate. Is it true that under half of your disability service staff have not been correctly trained in advanced manual handling of clients over the last three years?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Can I just say at the outset, it would be preferable if the honourable member would cease from using the client's name—

**Ms COOK:** I will not use it again.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Thank you. In terms of the training, my understanding is that there has been a great deal of work go into making sure that all of the training for staff is contemporary and up to date, but I might ask Mr Joe Young to address this in a bit more detail.

**Mr YOUNG:** Thank you, minister. The staff have had manual handling training. This is now at another level, so the advanced manual handling training we have stepped up in terms of the training we require for staff, particularly as they go through their compliance, which we do on a three-year rolling basis. They have had manual handling training as part of that.

We recently introduced the advanced manual handling as part of that compliance training, which is at another level. A part of the work that we have been doing under the quality and

safeguarding improvements is for those staff who are required to do manual lifting. We have brought forward the advanced manual handling training, it is to be completed in a shorter space of time, so not as part of their three-year rolling space but to have that as part of a new training regime.

**Ms COOK:** In the same vein, I take it from that answer that the officer is implying that this is something new. In regard to advanced manual handling, I am well versed with what it is. I attest that this is nothing new and it has been done for a very long time, but currently DHS does not have anybody within its ranks qualified to deliver this advanced training, which is vitally important for people who are unable to move themselves in bed, of which you have a large cohort.

A variety of manual handling aids, as well as techniques, are used to reduce traction of people across beds and reduce manual handling incidents. I attest it is not new, but it has simply fallen by the wayside because there is nobody within the department who is qualified to actually deliver this. Is the minister aware of that? Is the minister able to provide any more information about that?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think there are a couple of issues there. The member says that we have a lot of people who do need assistance with moving. There are also a lot of people who are ambulant and can get about by themselves. My understanding of the training space is that there are a lot of providers who are outside of government who are engaged in terms of providing the appropriate training, but I might see if the officers want to provide some more detail as to the specifics.

**Mr YOUNG:** We have been delivering manual handling training.

**Ms COOK:** Advanced, sorry.

**Mr YOUNG:** Yes, the advanced. As I understand it, the training package for manual handling has been developed by a specialist in this field and has been delivered by an appropriate person in terms of delivering this. As part of the work that we have been doing around improving the space around quality and safeguarding, we have engaged the person who is the specialist in this space to continue delivering this training.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, has the department gone out to seek somebody to come in from an external source to provide this training, and when will this training start? That is very important. It is quite specific. It is not general manual handling training, it is advanced manual handling training that all staff would expect to have received.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think inherent in Mr Young's reply was to say that it is actually an external provider.

**Mr YOUNG:** That is right. We have engaged with somebody who is a specialist in this field and they have been responsible for developing the manual handling training package, as well as instructions, over time.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, who is delivering this advanced manual handling training?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We will have to take that specific detail on notice.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, with respect to the incidents that might lead to a patient falling out of bed and injuring themselves and then perhaps, sadly, passing away—I will not say the person—would the minister investigate or know whether or not this particular incident that I am referring to involved a staff member who did not have advanced manual handling training?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will ask the CE to respond to this.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The incident involved a person who did have the relevant manual handling training.

**Ms COOK:** Sorry, advanced manual handling training.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The person did have the relevant manual handling training. They had been trained in the SafeWork instruction that was relevant. That has been the subject of an investigation that has been completed by the investigation management unit, which is made up of qualified investigators. The director then passed it on to the misconduct team, who assessed it. Without

wanting to go into what happened for a particular staff member, that matter has been closed and the matter has been dealt with.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, with respect to this incident, is the minister aware that the employee in question actually got themselves removed from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (AHPRA) nursing register so that they could not be investigated by that said agency?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** That is a matter for a federal agency to regulate their own members. We undertook our own investigation.

**Ms BOSWELL:** The person was not working as a nurse for our service.

**Ms COOK:** I would like to jump back to advocacy, if I could, just quickly. I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 80. In respect of the financial commitment, does that include the wages of Dr David Caudrey and/or any of his staff?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** As the honourable member may recall, the budget amount that we have had for the independent Disability Advocate has been \$200,000 a year. I might just check whether that includes support staff.

**Ms BOSWELL:** It includes some support, but Dr David Caudrey does not work full-time, so there is Dr David Caudrey's salary in there as well as some support. The department also provides some additional support when need be from our own resources.

**Ms COOK:** In respect of Dr David Caudrey, is his contract due to expire and will this be renewed?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am not sure about the details of his contract. I keep telling him that he is like Dame Nellie Melba: we will not let him retire, and beg him to not consider retiring ever, but I am not sure of the details of where his contract is at the moment.

**Ms BOSWELL:** I believe that his contract is about to be renewed, in fact, for a period.

**Ms COOK:** I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 94. You referred to Domiciliary Equipment Service before in your statement and I believe you said that that the program will continue to be delivered for around 3,000 people. Is that within the government or with an NGO? Could you just clarify exactly how that is happening, because my understanding was that you put it to tender as a whole entity or out for sale as such?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have a few components to the equipment program, so we might need to just provide you with some more details. Last year, in terms of the Domiciliary Equipment Service, we went through a process to transfer DES as a whole service to the non-government sector. That was not a successful program. The DHS Equipment Program continues to fund service to approximately 3,000 state-funded clients each year and will remain in the government with options being discussed with the Department for Health and Wellbeing. These would be palliative care equipment items, including beds and shower chairs and the like.

Following a public tender, we have had a provider selected to begin supplying equipment services to the DHS Equipment Program on 14 December on a three-year contract, with the option of two single-year extensions. Remaining services include home modifications, wheelchair and seating services and on-road repair services, which are being provided by the non-government sector. The priorities in this process are ensuring minimal disruption of services to clients and staff through the change. Does that answer your question?

**Ms COOK:** Thank you, yes. On the same line, have you named the non-government provider?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The non-government provider is ALTER, which is a business unit of Cabrini Health.

**Ms COOK:** In regard to the people who were provided letters from the Domiciliary Equipment Service to say they would no longer be getting services from there, are you confident that everyone who received those letters is very clear about how to seek assistance moving forward with their equipment needs? Have you had any feedback regarding that, or any difficulties from people?



**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I might just ask Joe Young if he can provide some more details.

**Mr YOUNG:** I think the member is referring to the repairs and maintenance, in particular. There was a large number of people who received repairs and maintenance under the NDIS that Domiciliary Equipment Service had been providing. During that process, we actually undertook a really thorough engagement process with our client reference group around the information, as well as doing an initial 50 to get feedback from them. We then provided the letters to the broader group of people who were receiving services. We have also kept the phone line available for clients to ring. Certainly, any feedback that has been coming through there we have been following up with people.

We are pretty confident that people are continuing and know an alternative provider in this space. We will continue to monitor that, particularly while DES remains open up until the end of this year, and that change happened in I think August or September, I am pretty sure.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have also transferred ownership of equipment to individuals themselves.

**Ms COOK:** I have two questions. The officer might need to answer this one. What is the tender number for this particular tender for the outsourcing of the equipment?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we would need to take that on notice.

**Ms COOK:** Thank you. I refer to the same line in the table, regarding depreciation and amortisation expenses.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Sorry, what page are you on?

**Ms COOK:** I am on the same line on page 94, where it refers to depreciation of equipment, or depreciation in general. Is any component of that a written-off amount for equipment transferred to clients? I understand that clients have received just delivery of equipment.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, we had to go through a process with the Treasurer to ask his permission to transfer them. People are using them, so it makes logical sense to provide—

**Ms BOSWELL:** It is not in that line because that is a budget forward line.

**Ms COOK:** So, to clarify, it is not in that line; it is somewhere else?

**Ms BOSWELL:** The CFO is advising me that that does not include that. The write-off would not come through to depreciation and amortisation; however, it would be in our financial statements.

**Ms COOK:** It would be in the financial statement.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Yes.

**Ms COOK:** Okay. Do we have a value?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, but we would have to take that on notice. I signed a memo, and the Treasurer cosigned the memo to the value of how much we think that amount might be. I do not have the detail in front of me.

**Ms COOK:** Will you take that on notice?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, we will take that on notice.

**Ms COOK:** Thank you very much. In terms of the next area, I move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 95, where it refers to disability access and inclusion plans. Again, you have referred to some of that in your statement. What would the minister consider to have been an expected or appropriate amount of time for a disability inclusion plan to be publicly consulted on?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** That is an odd question. I got this question in the Legislative Council as well. I think it depends on the client group and the people with lived experience who were being consulted with. What we also learned through the task force is that obviously there are some people who will need to be given more time than others to provide that sort of feedback. It depends on whether somebody has verbal difficulties and whether they have the appropriate equipment at home to be able to translate things so that they are able to be transcribed into an audio file or whether it needs to be done in simpler English. So it depends on the client group.

As the honourable member would be aware, people with disability are very diverse. Some people would be able to respond in a very short space of time, and then there would be others with particular diagnoses or functional incapacities that would mean that they would need to have more time allowed.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to the same line. In respect of that, you would appreciate that I was pretty shocked to see that Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia only consulted for three days, given that they are consulting with a group of people who potentially have disability compounded by substance abuse issues and, potentially, mental health problems and a whole range of things. Would the minister undertake to speak to the responsible minister about that and bring an answer back about why there was only a three-day consultation with that particular group of people, which I think is pretty unreasonable?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We can certainly do that.

**Ms COOK:** Sorry if I missed it—same line—how many plans have been completed? How many are still to be completed? What is the total number of plans that you expect? How many do you think have not even been consulted on as yet?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** All the ones that have been published should have been consulted on.

**Ms BOSWELL:** It is a requirement.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, it sort of goes without saying. As far as being captured by the act, there were 80. That does not mean that there are other organisations that are not captured by the act that might also choose to implement a DAIP. So there were 25 state government agencies and 55 local councils, and then there were eight state government agencies that were not captured by the act who chose to publish.

One state government agency not captured by the act published their DAIP after 31 October. Twelve state government agencies not captured by the act are currently developing a DAIP. Two local councils published their DAIP after 31 October. Eleven local councils did not meet the time frame but are continuing to develop their DAIPs. Three councils advised they did not meet the deadline due to the impact of COVID because, I understand, two of those are in bushfire-affected areas. Eight are expected to publish DAIPs in either November or December 2020. Most are currently undertaking final approval processes. The remaining three have advised that they may not have their DAIPs published until early 2021.

I think we also need to commend the Local Government Association because they did provide significant support to assist councils. Some councils have really got some very good practices, and they have been able to assist others that needed some support in that endeavour. Overall, it is probably quite positive, but there are some who are still lagging.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, are you able to supply a tabled list so there is a comprehensive list of who needs a plan so that we can refer to that?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we can probably put that on the website under the Access and Inclusion.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, why did you change from not requiring the plans to be gazetted?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In order for local government DAIPs to be gazetted, there was a very significant cost involved in that process. It was a cost per page. The councils requested that they not be required to gazette, and we thought that was fair and reasonable as long as they can publish them by other means.

**Ms COOK:** Is there a particular person responsible to review the DAIPs from agencies—is it the role of someone particular—and provide support?

**Ms BOSWELL:** We do provide support through our Disability Inclusion Unit, and we are working through developing a communities of practice to provide additional assistance to people. Obviously, this is the first round. There is work in terms of trying to bring people more and more up

to speed as this program develops over time. The director of the Disability Inclusion Unit is responsible for assisting agencies to make sure that they comply with the legislation. That does not mean that they review everybody's individual plan and approve it. As a reporter gets the state plan, the actions of the various DAIPs will be reviewed.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, is Ms Kelly Vincent, who was the co-chair of the independent task force as a disability adviser, involved in this process?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Kelly Vincent has been part of our inclusion planning. Can you just describe her role a little bit more accurately?

**Ms BOSWELL:** Kelly Vincent is part of the Disability Inclusion Unit, and she helps promote disability access and provides advice on our own disability access approaches. She is in that team. I cannot tell you exactly what every person in the agency does, but she is involved in that team and that team is responsible for providing advice on DAIPs and how to improve access and inclusion throughout South Australia.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, on what date was Ms Kelly Vincent appointed to that position? Was that a competitive recruitment process?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We will have to take that on notice, I think, unless the CE is happy to answer.

**Ms BOSWELL:** I am happy to answer it. I do not have the specific date on me. I know that I asked Ms Vincent to work in the Disability Inclusion Unit in the lead-up to getting disability inclusion access plans created. I did so quite deliberately because she has quite a significant profile. I did not run a merit-based process for that, but it is a contract, and I think she clearly has a very broad following and access within the community that supports that appointment. It is a policy advice appointment.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer—

**Ms COOK:** A final question in the last 30 seconds, sir?

**The CHAIR:** No, the time has expired unfortunately. I do need to be stringent in that regard.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I can give you an answer on the specialist—

**Ms COOK:** The advanced manual handling training?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes. The advanced manual handling training is Alister Morton.

**Ms COOK:** He is currently doing it?

**Ms BOSWELL:** I believe so, yes.

**The CHAIR:** The time agreed and allocated for the examination of proposed payments in the portfolio of Disability Services has now expired, therefore there are no further questions. I declare the examination of the portfolio agency Disability Services completed.

#### **Membership:**

Ms Michaels substituted for Mr Gee.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M. Buchan, Chief Executive, South Australian Housing Authority.

Ms B. Hallsworth, Executive Director, Governance and Strategy, South Australian Housing Authority.

Mr N. Symons, Chief Financial Officer, South Australian Housing Authority.

**The CHAIR:** For the member for Hurtle Vale's benefit, any questions that she was not able to get to can be put through to the assembly paper as previously mentioned at the start of the day.

**Ms COOK:** No problems.

**The CHAIR:** We move on to the portfolio of the Housing Authority and affordable housing, two separate portfolios. The minister appearing today continues as the Minister for Human Services. The estimates of payments are as previously noted relating to the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for the examination and refer members to the Agency Statements Volume 3. I call on the minister to make an opening statement and to introduce her advisers.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** To my left, we have the Chief Executive of the South Australian Housing Authority, Mr Michael Buchan. We have behind us Ms Belinda Hallsworth, who is the Executive Director of Governance and Strategy, and Mr Nick Symons, who is the director of finance.

To make some opening remarks, we have certainly faced some challenges in 2020 in South Australia, with multiple bushfires occurring during the 2019-20 fire season and the COVID pandemic. I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues who had those fires in their electorates, the member for Narungga and the member for MacKillop.

Before I go any further, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the caring and hardworking South Australians who have worked and continue to work tirelessly to assist those in need during these events, both on the frontline and behind the scenes. The willingness of staff and volunteers to jump in and help others, often spending time away from their families and loved ones, speaks volumes to the character of those in our community.

The state government acted swiftly to respond to these events and continues to support ongoing management and recovery efforts. The South Australian Housing Authority has worked collaboratively with other government agencies and non-government organisations, assisting with emergency responses and addressing housing and accommodation needs arising from the events. We continue to monitor the current situation and will act as needed.

The 2019-20 fire season saw an unprecedented number of relief and recovery centres—six relief centres and three recovery centres—established due to multiple bushfires across the state. Two recovery centres are still operating, in Parndana and Lobethal, to support people affected in those communities.

Recovery staff in Lobethal and on Kangaroo Island are providing case management to those most severely affected by fires in partnership with other services. They are expected to continue to be open until March next year. The recovery centre teams are working in partnership with local recovery coordinators to build resilience and independence within affected communities and connect clients with localised supports that will continue once the centres close.

This government's rapid and strong COVID-19 response for rough sleepers enabled an unprecedented number of rough sleepers to be housed in a short amount of time. We committed \$8.2 million to responding to homelessness during COVID-19, and we provided commercial accommodation for people who were rough sleeping or who did not have safe accommodation through the COVID-19 Emergency Accommodation Rough Sleeper (CEARS) response. Over 250 rough sleepers transitioned into longer term housing options with support packages.

The authority worked closely with Aboriginal communities, SA Health and SAPOL to assist Aboriginal people wanting to return to their communities. Appropriate quarantine accommodation was arranged to ensure people got home safely. While the CEARS response has been effective, an opportunity to provide greater support to some cohorts was highlighted.

This government has subsequently committed \$6.3 million over two years from 2020-21, and \$2.3 million of this will be spent on the redevelopment of the Holbrook public housing site at Brooklyn Park to provide additional security and amenities for 18 supported accommodation units. Onsite care and case management will be provided to assist tenants to transition to sustainable independent housing.

With Aboriginal people representing a significant proportion of rough sleepers in the Adelaide CBD and 55 per cent of rough sleepers housed through the CEARS response identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the response highlighted the need for targeted and tailored housing support for Aboriginal elders. There has been \$4 million in grant funding committed for the delivery of 40 targeted long-term housing outcomes in Bedford Park for Aboriginal elders.

The government has also moved quickly with measures to boost the economy in the housing sector. We brought forward \$10 million in March 2020 from our \$75 million capital maintenance budget to be spent by the end of this year as a COVID-19 stimulus package. As at 21 October, 91 per cent of maintenance works have been completed, with \$9.1 million of the \$10 million expended.

As most people are aware, in December last year the government released the state housing, homelessness and support strategy, Our Housing Future 2020-2030. This strategy provides a pathway for social and affordable housing in South Australia over the next 10 years through key projects and initiatives led by the South Australian Housing Authority in partnership with the housing industry and the housing and homelessness sector. I would like to update the committee on the progress of some of these key initiatives.

Firstly, the specialist homelessness and domestic and family violence system reforms, the new model with four geographically-based alliances and a separate statewide domestic and family violence alliance, will create a contractual environment that supports collaboration, flexibility and innovation. Alliances will have collective ownership, responsibility and accountability for service provision. The reforms seek to improve responses and outcomes for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with government and non-government organisations combining their skills, assets, experience and information across alliances.

After a series of briefings and consultation with the sector, on 16 November the Housing Authority opened a tender to establish five alliances to service the complex and evolving needs of its clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness across South Australia. The tender will close on 25 February next year. The alliance model does not result in reduced funding. Funding across the system will be maintained. The goal is to make sure that the funding is better spent more effectively at a whole-of-system level to provide better services to vulnerable South Australians.

Another highlight of Our Housing Future is the Affordable Housing Initiative, which will deliver approximately 1,000 new home ownership opportunities for low to moderate income earners by 2025. In addition, under the housing stimulus package the South Australian Housing Authority is constructing 100 new homes to help more South Australians achieve home ownership while supporting jobs and local construction businesses. The 100 homes located across the state are scheduled to be built by early to mid-2021, with the majority to be sold as affordable.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Initiative will renew concentrations of aged South Australian Housing Trust assets over a five-year program. Under this initiative we will work with builders and developers to develop a number of projects across the metropolitan Adelaide area, which will encompass a mix of social, affordable and market housing and provide significant stimulus to the residential construction industry.

The government is investing \$75 million over 10 years to address the public housing capital maintenance backlog and to improve sustainability and energy efficiency of public housing, which started in July 2020. The strategic outcomes are to improve amenity, serviceability, safety, operating efficiency and appropriateness of public housing stock.

The benefits include improved quality and increased value of assets; prolonged usable life of assets; reduced carbon emissions; and improvement to common areas of group sites, including paving, public lighting and security.

In line with Our Housing Future 2020-2030 a new 10-year Aboriginal housing strategy is being developed to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal South Australians. This is being guided by the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, which was established to inform the South Australian Housing Trust on these matters. Significant community consultation has been undertaken to ensure the

engagement process captures the voices of Aboriginal people, and it is due to be released in April next year.

**The CHAIR:** Lead speaker for the opposition, did you wish to make an opening statement?

**Ms COOK:** No, thank you. On Budget Paper 3, page 81, how much is Mr Gary Storkey remunerated as the Chair of the SA Housing Authority?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** He would receive payments in line with the standard state government presiding member fees, which are that a presiding member receives \$70,759 per annum.

**Ms COOK:** That is roughly double that of the previous Chair of the SA Housing Trust. Along with that, does he receive any other non-financial benefits?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I might ask the CE if he wants to provide some further details.

**Mr BUCHAN:** The chair is also a member of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, and the remuneration of that committee, from my recollection, is some \$5,000.

**Ms COOK:** Ten thousand for the chair or presiding member.

**Mr BUCHAN:** That is correct.

**Ms COOK:** So is the minister aware that Mr Gary Storkey also has a government credit card and he has used this government credit card to pay for Qantas Club membership as well as car parking?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, I am aware of that.

**Ms COOK:** Is the minister aware of Premier's circular 16, remuneration for government boards, and the commissioner's determination 3.2, allowances and reimbursements?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Look, this is the usual Labor open—

**Ms COOK:** No, it is following the rules; that is what it is.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** —book exam thing where you have something in front of you that I do not.

**Ms COOK:** Okay. On the same line, can the minister explain, in regard to Mr Storkey claiming reimbursement and using his credit card—because under FOI we have received receipts for this—whether or not he has been asked to reimburse those amounts which have been claimed? Because under 13.1 of the commissioner's determination it states that reimbursement of expenses which are clearly the board member's responsibility, such as car parking, childcare expenses, which I do not think he has claimed, but we will check, are not to be provided. Will the minister ask him to reimburse?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will check what the rules are and follow that one up.

**Mr McBRIDE:** My question refers to Budget Paper 5, page 132. Can the minister outline how the funding outlined in the state budget for bushfire recovery through the South Australian Housing Authority has supported families getting back on their feet?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge the good work he did with the people of Keilira—hopefully I have pronounced that correctly. I get in a lot of trouble if I do not.

The South Australian Housing Authority leads the emergency relief functional support group which is responsible for establishing and managing relief and recovery centres following an emergency event. The 2019-20 fire season saw an unprecedented number of six relief and three recovery centres established due to the multiple bushfires across the state.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we still have recovery centres operating in Parndana and Lobethal to assist those communities. The recovery staff in Lobethal and on Kangaroo Island are providing case management to those who have been most severely affected by the fires, in partnership with other services.

Outreach temporarily ceased during COVID-19 restrictions but recommenced in July. Services continued within the centres over the phone and throughout the year. The recovery centres are expected to be open until March 2021 to assist the affected communities on their road to recovery.

The recovery centre teams are working in partnership with local recovery coordinators to build resilience and independence within the affected communities, and connect clients with localised supports that continue post closure of the centres. I would like to thank all of the local recovery coordinators who have worked across the state during these challenging times for our local regional communities.

**Ms COOK:** On Budget Paper 3, page 81, has SAHA engaged an external organisation to oversee the 250 homes and walk-up flats project?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The answer from my officers is no.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, under what tender or process or role has Capisce, the quantity surveyors, been engaged in regard to these two projects?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Is that one of the consultants that the agency has used, that you are referring to?

**Ms COOK:** What is their role?

**Mr BUCHAN:** If it is okay I will take that on notice. I imagine that they would be providing specialised services in terms of the delivery. By way of background, we have our own internal project management but we do not pretend to have the skills necessarily of the private sector. We do not engage all of those skills within the organisation because it would not be efficient at the time so we will often outsource things like engineering, surveying services, and other technical services to provide support for projects, including land identification, potential costs and things like that. But as to that particular consultant, I will certainly go back and review it and determine what their scope of works was.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Marketing and sales I think is another area that is often contracted out.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, and in respect of this, while you are finding out what they are doing, it would be prudent to find out when that happened, how much it cost, and what the process was to engage them, whether it was a competitive tender process. You said just now that you thought that you generally did use external contractors for various things. My advice is that this is a deviation from normal practice in terms of what they are doing.

I do not know their full scope so I am not being tricky, but I understand that this is not usual in terms of these types of projects because they are not massive projects. There is skill generally, and has been in the past, in order to manage this so I am wondering what changed around this time to necessitate their engagement. Those questions would probably all be on notice because you are not aware of the use of Capisce anyway.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We can get the small details about what that particular one involved.

**Ms COOK:** In regard to one of the walk-up flat projects, I am interested in Mellor Court about which you have spoken before. I am not asking for a run-down on it. I understand why, and the benefits to the community within Mellor Court for the works that have been undertaken. I am just wondering, is the work there completed and how much has been spent in respect of perhaps the area of flooring, for example? Have all the floors been recovered, and how much did that cost?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Mellor Court has a reputation which is unenviable. It has had a range of social challenges over the years. I am not sure if the honourable member has actually been to any of these sites—

**Ms COOK:** Yes, several.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** —but they are a bit rugged at times. There are things like the external laundries where, particularly at Mellor Court, people have been squatting or been there for nefarious purposes, so we have been removing the external laundries and some of the carports, and some other really strange construction things. We could not work out what they were, whether they were for stashing wheelie bins or the like—pretty terrible stuff.

Things that I think have been really important for tenants going into the future have been refits inside each of the dwellings. I am not sure whether there were roof replacements at that site, but certainly the one at Parkside has had a roof replacement, which has enabled us to put solar panels on there.

A lot of tenants now have their own washing machine, which has been supplied to replace the external laundry situation, replacement of kitchens and bathrooms—a whole range of things, including repainting and repainting externally. The Parkside site has also been rendered, new awnings have been installed and a lot of landscaping done, too. When you remove a lot of these external structures, which are not really serving a particular purpose, that enables much more attractive landscaping, which improves the amenity for the tenants but also improves the safety, not just because you have removed the sites where people might be there for nefarious purposes but it enables line of sight and improved lighting.

At a number of sites we have implemented patrols, and those are not just the three walk-up flat sites we have talked about frequently. Perhaps the CE would like to talk about some of those other sites that have had additional support for similar reasons.

**Mr BUCHAN:** To a large extent the three sites, being Mellor Court, Bonython and Yeomans, have been identified as part of that additional budget stimulus measure, which was some \$10 million and was worked as a trial and a way to ensure that these sites function better. We have identified another 11 sites where we are also undertaking works that are similar to the work we have done in advance, particularly pertaining to the security issues of the individual sites and certainly to increase visibility.

A lot of the security by a design-type element—CPTED I think the police refer to it as—has been rolled out. The budget provided for within Mellor Court was \$3.5 million. To date we have spent some 60-odd per cent of that and are working through it. We are also looking at our scope across all of them. There are a number of proposals as part of our broader management and maintenance across the entire portfolio to ascertain whether it has achieved all the outcomes, and whether we need to do additional works to really leverage and close off any gaps we may have identified through the development process. The learnings we can take from that we can then take into our asset planning and roll out across the remainder of the portfolio.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, with respect to Mellor Court, is the minister aware of any plans or any current activity with regard to ripping up the new vinyl flooring that has been put in place and replacing it with floating floor and using part or all of Mellor Court for student accommodation?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** No; we are all looking a bit quizzically.

**Ms COOK:** Will the minister follow that up and bring back an answer?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, we can follow that up.

**Mr BUCHAN:** If I can enlighten, in some circumstances tenants have made their own improvements and will actually choose to put in things like floating floors and things like that, if they seek our approval, but I am not aware that that was specifically within the scope of the nature of the updates we have commissioned ourselves.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing on, with respect to SAHA in its entirety, since March 2020 I have been advised that a range of people have departed the organisation from a number of different levels, citing some toxic culture, specifically issues around bullying. Is the minister aware of any of this?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** No.

**Ms COOK:** No?



**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** No, I am not aware that anybody has raised that, either verbally or in written form, with me.

**Ms COOK:** Is the minister aware, or can she find out, whether there has been a larger number of people leave, particularly in SAHA's central office, compared to last year—this year compared to last year, 2019-20 compared to 2018-19?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In the central office? What is that referring to?

**Ms COOK:** Riverside.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Riverside: we can look into that, but I think it is worth bearing in mind, too, that there has been a TVSP program across government, so there may well have been some departures related to that, but that is across government.

**Ms COOK:** This would also be the same line. I am keen to understand what division most people have left from, or if there is a division within SAHA where more people have left than others, and whether they were senior staff, like ASO7 and above. Again, I have asked about the comparison, and I am wondering if there is a disproportionate number of women who have left.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hurtle Vale, your questions are now bordering on hypothetical. I think perhaps it may be better to try to add some more detail, if you have it, to the questions, rather than their being so broad that they are consequential to each other.

**Ms COOK:** They said that they would need to get back to me. She did not have that knowledge, so I am asking a range of them that she could just put on notice and get back to me.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Of course, we will see what we can do.

**Ms COOK:** I can give one piece of information in relation to this, from the same line.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, if it is phrased as a question. This is not a time for statements. It is questions, it is estimates.

**Ms COOK:** I recently submitted an FOI and asked very clearly for documents, emails, memos, briefings, correspondence and any other documents relating to bullying and harassment by Andrew Atkinson to any South Australian authority staffing member, and I was told that there were 20-plus documents available, none of which would be released to me. They came up with that search on that particular person around bullying and harassment. That is why I am asking these questions, asking for any information regarding that culture and what might have happened, and whether that in fact may have led to the requirement to put on additional project management from external sources, because the skills are simply not there.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the honourable member at times has a very vivid imagination.

**Ms COOK:** Really? I am not very good at imagining things.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We will see what we can get, but bearing in mind that there are processes within and across government, we take advice from the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. Once again, I would ask her not to name people. She may have heard particular rumours, but I think it is always preferable that people not be named, that we protect individuals and their reputations, because if we were not there, then it is hard for us to make those judgements.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, clearly the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment has not been involved in any investigations recently regarding culture or employment matters within SAHA. Is that correct?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think there are surveys that are done. That is a very operational question. There is a range of things that exist across the public sector. I do not necessarily have line of sight into a lot of those things. I am not sure whether the CE has anything to add at this point.

**Mr BUCHAN:** No, I have nothing to add at this point.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Okay.

**Mr ELLIS:** I have a question originating from Budget Paper 5, page 134, specifically the budget line, Support for rough sleepers. Can the minister outline how the \$13.6 million in that budget line is being used to reduce homelessness and will continue to help vulnerable South Australians?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I thank the honourable member for his question and state that yes, the response for rough sleepers has been swift, enabling an unprecedented number of rough sleepers to be housed in a short amount of time. I think it is instructive for people to also examine the Adelaide Zero data that they keep. We have traditionally managed to house about 10 people a month through that particular program. As a result, in a short space of time, we have managed to provide accommodation for 250 people through that program.

The budget includes some \$7.3 million over two years to provide for the CEARS response and that program accommodated some 546 rough sleepers during the pandemic. All participants who are eligible and maintained accepted support—that is these 252 rough sleepers—were transitioned, as I said, with a 12-month support package, which is going to be very useful for them as they go through their journey.

This has included linking people up with necessary support services and long-term support to be successful in their tenancy. The response also included assisting 60 vulnerable Anangu women and children from the APY lands through Baptist Care at their Mylor camp. It was utilised by Anangu women and children who predominantly lived in Adelaide but whose houses were overcrowded with visitors from the APY lands, which made the children and women more vulnerable to COVID-19.

The budget will provide funding for specialised accommodation that provides a greater level of support for vulnerable people, including Aboriginal visitors, through the upgrade of the Holbrook walk-up flat site on Marion Road in Brooklyn Park for some 18 support accommodation units, which will provide support to approximately 60 rough sleepers each year. People housed there will be provided with support over a three to six-month period to increase their independent living skills and secure the services they require before transitioning to independent living.

There are also 40 long-term housing outcomes at Bedford Park for Aboriginal elders at risk of homelessness. A \$4 million grant will be provided to the Aboriginal Community Housing Limited upon completion of the development, and dwellings will be leased to Kurna elders as community housing properties. We think these are very important initiatives, which will assist people who might otherwise have chronic homelessness needs.

**Ms COOK:** I refer you to Budget Paper 3, page 81, and Budget Paper 3, page 49, in respect of the Office of Homelessness Sector Integration. In addition to Mr Ian Cox, how many FTEs are allocated to this office and at what level are those FTEs?

**Mr BUCHAN:** I understand that there is approximately a dozen people who are actually within that office and on average they are ASO-5 and above.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, who is actually setting the direction of the homelessness sector reform? Who is responsible for setting the direction?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** It is a very collective approach. It was something that the sector had asked us for. The honourable member might be aware of some of the comments that I have made in this chamber before in relation to the fact that particular leaders in the homelessness sector had suggested that this new model was a very effective way to operate and that had been used successfully in Chicago. It has operated quite successfully over there. We have been on this journey for quite some time. We have had the group which has been shaping this process up until now and now that we are at the point of where we have now released the tenders, the reforms will continue.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, are all those positions that you referred to in that Office of Homelessness Sector Integration currently filled, and are they permanent or casual or contracted people? Are all positions filled?

**Mr BUCHAN:** The positions are filled and they are public servants.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, in regard to the homelessness reform, is Mr Ian Cox on the SAHA executive committee? Does he attend all of the meetings that SAHA conducts in relation to homelessness?

**Mr BUCHAN:** Yes, he does, from my perspective. Ian does not sit on the executive management group of the organisation; however, he is commonly invited to attend those meetings to discuss them whenever there is an issue associated with homelessness. He also attends the board meeting to discuss all the issues associated with papers and directions of the homelessness reform process.

**Ms COOK:** In respect of Budget Paper 3, page 49, continuing on with homelessness, last week, when the state went into lockdown for six days, minister, did you raise the need with the Premier or the health minister to escalate the homelessness options immediately?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have discussions at cabinet, and the honourable member would be aware that I cannot discuss cabinet decisions. That is probably all I can say on that matter.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to the same line. During that period, how many additional people who are categorised as homeless, either on the by name list or not, were placed in hotel accommodation?

**Mr BUCHAN:** During that period, we had 70 requests for emergency accommodation, of whom 29 were rough sleepers.

**Ms COOK:** Were 29 people placed in hotel accommodation?

**Mr BUCHAN:** Yes, that is what I understand from what is in front of me.

**Ms COOK:** What happened to the other people who requested it?

**Mr BUCHAN:** No. For clarity, 29 of the 70 who were housed were rough sleepers.

**Ms COOK:** So 70 were housed, and 29 were rough sleepers and the others were people who asked for support to get accommodation during that period.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** From what I understand, the request came in through the emergency accommodation assistance program. Some of them would have been through the domestic and family violence specialist providers and a range of other outlets

**Ms COOK:** How many of those people were Aboriginal?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I do not think we have that data here.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing, last week I received a cc email from Mr Buchan, an email to Shelter SA regarding the CEARS program. In the letter, Mr Buchan states:

We have also ensured that people who have public housing allocations which cannot be accessed during lockdown and have no alternate housing options, are able secure accommodation.

What exactly does that mean?

**Mr BUCHAN:** At any one time, we have a number of allocations that have been made to people through that process. What that effectively means is that, as a result of the lockdown, people were not able to move around, so we could not have removalists moving, we could not have individuals moving and we could not have our staff going between offices and setting people up. So during that period we effectively deferred those allocations, or those entries into those homes, that individuals had been allocated to. To the extent that they could not stay in their existing accommodation, they were provided with emergency accommodation for that period.

**Ms COOK:** Given that Aboriginal people are not allowed to travel back to their lands or to Yalata, and the hotel accommodation, I understand, is predominantly for people on the by name list, were Aboriginal people from the lands included in, or proactively offered, any specific care arrangements during the period of restriction once this lockdown was announced? Was anything proactively done to support Aboriginal people?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think probably the best way to answer it is with a general response in that there is a range of homelessness services that operate throughout the state. They were declared as essential workers and continued to operate. As we know, there is a large proportion of people who are a part of the homelessness system at any one given time who identify as Aboriginal. Clearly, those services were continuing to operate during that time and providing support as necessary.

**Ms COOK:** Can I clarify two things. The number 29 that you gave before, is that the number of people specifically provided CEARS accommodation and the others are just generally being reached out from another organisation, or are they all classified under the CEARS program?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is no CEARS program, but there is the emergency assistance program that operates all the time. All of the providers are very familiar with the process in terms of how to register people for the program and how to access support.

**Ms COOK:** Again, asking about the Aboriginal cohort, were any SAHA staff who were trained in language or have First Nations language, particularly Pitjantjatjara language, sent out into the field to proactively communicate with people of the lands who have found themselves in Adelaide during that lockdown period last week?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** SAHA staff, if I can use a bit of poetic licence, and the CE will correct me if I am wrong, are generally office based. I think the honourable member might need to ask the specialist homelessness providers whether they have that sort of specialist advice. I am not sure whether it would be appropriate for SAHA staff to be suddenly engaged in activities that they are not regularly engaged in, because most of them are involved in either supporting people who are existing tenants within the system or assisting people with private rental applications and the like. They are not what I think one would consider to be the frontline service workers in the way that a lot of the non-government frontline services are.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, I understand that SAHA does have employees specifically with language skills, who are trained and that is their job. Were any of those people activated to go out into the field last week once lockdown was announced? Was there any response, particularly for Anangu?

**Mr BUCHAN:** Absolutely, SAHA makes it a point to ensure that we have a significant population of employees who are both Aboriginal people but also with particular skills, including language skills. Those employees, however, are engaged essentially in the housing system, not in the homelessness system.

So those staff would essentially support people who are in housing, who are at risk of losing their housing, by going out and providing support to them in their existing dwelling. Equally, they would be providing support to them upon being awarded a house and going into a dwelling and working through the processes with them to ensure that, from a very clear language point of view, there is no confusion, that they understood the nature of the arrangements that they were entering into.

They do not work on the frontline in terms of providing outreach services from the street, such as Neami, which is, if you like, the primary city non-government organisation that provides significant outreach across the city to go and visit people. It is not the role of the staff that we have employed internally.

**Ms COOK:** I might just jump quickly to a question on Budget Paper 3, page 75, regarding capital investment programs. Is it true that the SA Housing Authority projects that social housing numbers will reduce over the next five years?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think what the honourable member goes to is the viability sales that were put in place by one of her former treasurers. When we came to government—and I apologise to the honourable member because some of her colleagues have heard this before—I think it is fair to say that the public housing system was very poorly managed. There was a lack of financial viability across the organisation and a whole range of strange policies, which if anyone could explain to me they would be doing really well. We are projecting to reduce from the peak sales under the previous government in 2014, which numbered 582 properties. We are continuing to reduce the number that we have, with a goal to reduce that to—

**Ms COOK:** It is about total numbers, not sales.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Our goal is to try to reduce the number of properties being sold to support the organisation, which is quite a stark policy change compared to the previous government, because we appreciate that it is harder to obtain new properties in this system than it is to sell old ones.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, the time allocated and agreed for the examination of proposed payments in relation to the Housing Authority and affordable housing has expired, therefore there are no further questions. I declare the examination of the portfolio agencies Housing Authority and affordable housing completed.

**Membership:**

Ms Hildyard substituted for Ms Michaels.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms F. Mort, Director, Office for Women.

Ms L. Boswell, Chief Executive, Department of Human Services.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Strategic Reform Projects, Department of Human Services.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** For the next half an hour until 5pm the proposed payments to be examined relate to the portfolio of the Office for Women. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. The estimates of payments are as outlined earlier in proceedings relating to the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I refer members to Agency Statements, Volume 3. Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement in regard to this portfolio and perhaps for the benefit of the committee to introduce your advisers.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. We have a new adviser, Fiona Mort, who is the Director of the Office for Women. The other officers you will have seen before, so they need no further introduction. I am delighted to provide an opening statement in relation to this part of the portfolio.

During 2019-20, we have continued to make significant progress on our 2018 election commitments which illustrate our focus on addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. I am pleased to advise that we have met the majority of our election commitments or they are well underway, including:

- continuing our commitment to consultation through domestic violence round tables;
- providing new crisis accommodation beds for women;
- commencing a trial for perpetrators, which will see them actively engaged with services and other assistance, including accommodation so that women and their children may stay in their home when it is safe to do so;
- extending the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme trial and making this an ongoing part of the early intervention landscape in South Australia;
- ensuring that the personal protection app will be part of an ongoing response to keep women safe; and
- continuing to roll out safety hubs across the state. Murray Bridge and Berri are already operational, and a further five are currently in development in Mount Barker, Gawler, the Limestone Coast, Whyalla and Port Augusta.

We also have a strong focus on primary prevention, with the Office for Women currently developing a statewide primary prevention plan in consultation with a number of key stakeholders, including the National Council of Women, YACSA and the Australian Refugee Association. The South Australian government continues to engage with the commonwealth on the fourth action plan of the national plan. As announced in October 2019, the state government has also committed almost \$1.9 million

over three years to contribute to the new national sexual violence prevention initiatives and the continuation of Stop it at the Start.

Responding to the increased risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has been a major focus throughout 2020. The federal government acted quickly by providing \$150 million in funding to bolster responses to domestic and family violence across Australia. South Australia received \$2.4 million in 2019-20 to ensure South Australian services are supported to continue providing outstanding service during this difficult time, which they have clearly done. This funding has been directed towards perpetrator interventions, brokerage packages, a targeted communications campaign and workforce upskilling.

A website, [www.breakthecycle.sa.gov.au](http://www.breakthecycle.sa.gov.au), has also been launched, which acts as a one-stop shop for all domestic violence information in South Australia. In 2020-21, we received a further \$6.9 million. Work is currently underway to determine the allocation of this funding. It is imperative that we do not just focus on women and their children and removing them from their homes. Perpetrators must also be held accountable. This includes removing them, rather than women and children, from homes when a crisis occurs and supporting men to change their behaviour.

Funding has been provided to the Men's Referral Service and Don't Become That Man locally to provide support services to men at risk of becoming perpetrators or concerned about their current use of abusive behaviours. During 2020-21, we have continued to consult with the business sector to finalise the Women's Leadership and Economic Security Framework. We are also continuing to progress actions under Committed to Safety, the South Australian government's framework for addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. The first annual report on progress is now available on the Office for Women website.

**The CHAIR:** For clarity, the lead speaker for the opposition is the member for Reynell?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Did you wish to make an opening statement?

**Ms HILDYARD:** No, thank you.

**The CHAIR:** That being the case, I call on members for questions. The member for Reynell.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Thank you to the minister and your advisers. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 90, and specifically to the program summary in relation to expenses, income and full-time employees. What is the number of current full-time employees at the Office for Women?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will ask the director if she is happy to take that.

**Ms MORT:** Thank you. In 2020-21, there are 18.6 full-time equivalent positions supporting the Office for Women. Of these, 16.5 are based in the Office for Women and the remaining 2.1 reflect the notional appointment of support and back-of-house services to the Office for Women from the Department of Human Services.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How does that number compare with the previous year?

**Ms MORT:** The reduction from the previous year is because of the cessation of two positions that were internally funded from the department related to safety hubs.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Has the Office for Women used external contractors in the past financial year?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think I would need to ask the director if she can respond. We might need to take that on notice.

**Ms MORT:** We might need to take that on notice.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I might add the next question because you might want to take it on notice, too, and that is: how much did the contracting of external providers cost in that reporting period?

**Ms MORT:** Yes.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I continue to refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 90, specifically to dot point 3 under highlights 2019-20 and dot point 1 under targets 2020-21, both in relation to safety hubs. How were the locations for the new safety hubs identified?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Broadly speaking, through our round tables. As the honourable member is probably aware, we had as part of our election commitments that we would look at extending the safety hubs. The very successful Women's Safety Services effectively operates as a particular model of safety hubs.

We had statewide consultation, which took place within the first 30 days; it was a scramble, but it happened. We then decided that the round tables were a really excellent way to engage with communities and to seek from them information and details about how services operate in their area and how safety hubs could be applied in the various models. So there are different models. The Murray Bridge site is very much a volunteer-driven one. The one at Berri is more of a services hub for women and children to access professional services. Is there anything we can add to that?

**Ms MORT:** Thank you, minister. As the member asked, the decision around the locations was driven by the round table's and the advice from workers in the area, and the models were identified by further consultation with them. The priority focus initially was on regional locations outside of the metro area, given that Women's Safety Services' Mile End hub connects across the metropolitan region.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how much additional funding is being provided to services and other support agencies to be part of these hubs, and exactly what resources are allocated within the Office for Women to support those hubs?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** That might be quite difficult to answer, because each of the hubs operates differently. I know, for instance, that the one we opened in Murray Bridge we provided some capital funding, and it effectively is a community centre that already exists. With the Berri one it was more a question of ensuring that the right service mix was available through that particular site. So I am not sure whether there is—

**Ms HILDYARD:** So was their additional funding provided for each of the safety hubs?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We can identify what funding we have provided, such as the capital works and other funding.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Did they both receive funding?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Did the Berri one receive funding? For infrastructure, yes.

**Ms HILDYARD:** And what about for ongoing operations of the hubs for either?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We have been clear in relation to the safety hubs that they needed to be quite lean. There was not any election commitment funding attached to that particular commitment, so we have been managing to beg, borrow and steal money for—I am not sure if the honourable member has actually been to the Murray Bridge site; I was there before and after, and it was a dramatic difference. That site certainly needed some upgrades to make sure that there was the capacity for people to have quiet rooms and quiet spaces for contemplation and those sorts of things—

**Ms HILDYARD:** So just so—

**The CHAIR:** Member—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Sorry. I thought you had finished.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** —if they were having a difficult time. I think in relation to the next rounds of safety hubs there will be some capital, but there is also the support through the Women's Information Service in terms of training of volunteers, which is on top of that. I am not sure that there is a particular budget line that we can attach to that.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, just in terms of process in the committee, for me to be able to switch between members and to give everyone an opportunity, if you could just wait for the call after each question is answered, that would be fantastic. The member for Reynell.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Thank you. Sorry, I am just rushing, because we only have a very short time. Just so I am really clear, there is not any ongoing funding provided to the safety hubs? I have been looking for it in the budget, and I cannot find it, so I am presuming it is not actually there.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In terms of an FTE allocation on ongoing basis, no, that is not something we have—and obviously the Office for Women has provided support, and there would have been expenses associated with determining sites and providing support to volunteers and managing all of those processes going through, which is not going to appear in a budget line.

**Ms HILDYARD:** What funding will be provided to other hubs—not just in terms of initial capital or infrastructure upgrades but ongoing funding? Is there a commitment to providing ongoing funding for any new hubs?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** No, not a budget allocation, no. That has never been the—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes, thank you.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** It was not the election commitment and we have been very clear through the consultation processes.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How many hubs will the government create?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we have outlined the next round that we are continuing to roll out. The ones that are operational now are Murray Bridge and Berri. The next ones will be Mount Barker, Gawler, Limestone Coast, Whyalla and Port Augusta. I will ask the director if she can add to that.

**Ms MORT:** In addition to the locations that the minister has named there will also be a rollout to Port Lincoln and Port Pirie, and we are working in terms of the APY lands and the site that SAPOL is actually the lead for, and there have obviously been some delays around that in relation to COVID, etc.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Will hubs be created in the outer southern suburbs and the outer northern suburbs?

**Ms MORT:** As we have advised previously, we are looking to consult with the women in the south and the organisations in the south. We were planning to do that earlier this year but obviously COVID occurred, so we are looking to do that around February/March next year. As the minister has indicated, there is no additional funding for the hubs, it is about how we enable services to be delivered better or be improved or for access issues to be addressed, and support the local community around that.

The early intervention hubs, which are the WIS model, are the ones where communities have identified the need to connect and support people in the community—families, friends, workers, etc.—to intervene as early as possible and to seek advice through volunteers, etc. That is the extension of the WIS. We are not clear what the model in the south is actually going to look like, but we have committed to doing a consultation early next year.

**Ms HILDYARD:** If you are located in an area without a DV hub or any prevention services, where can a woman—who is not in immediate danger but beginning to experience DV—go for face-to-face support?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is a range of options. As has been described, women's safety services operate across south Australia, and there is also a range of services located in other areas.

**Ms MORT:** There are a number of services available. There is a national 1800RESPECT line that operates 24/7

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes, but face-to-face, though.

**Ms MORT:** It is not necessarily just for crisis. There is the DV crisis line that can connect women—obviously that is at a crisis point. There is the Women's Information Service as the first point of contact to connect women with support services in their local area. There is also a range of



services operating through organisations such as Relationships Australia, and other sorts of NGOs that operate that we are connecting them to.

If a woman is concerned about what is going on and is unsure, or her family member or colleague is, we have the domestic violence disclosure scheme that they can apply to. That is now ongoing, as the minister indicated, to find out and we can connect them to support services through that.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Moving now to page 90 in relation to the 'Ask for Angela' campaign. Exactly what funding has the government contributed to the 'Ask for Angela' campaign?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we will have to take that on notice because it is actually in the Attorney-General's portfolio.

**Ms HILDYARD:** My next series of questions relate to sentences 1 and 2 in the paragraph under the title 'Description objective' on page 90. What is the department's specific job creation strategy for women in terms of the objective around enabling women to equally participate in employment?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is a range of things that are taking place. We have talked about the women's leadership and engagement strategy which we are continuing to work on. Clearly, there is a lot of work going on in Minister Pisoni's portfolio as well in terms of—I think it is also worth monitoring the response in South Australia to COVID and how well South Australia is recovering in a business sense.

My understanding is that we have more people in full-time employment than we had this time last year. In addition, people who have been underemployed and have been seeking more hours are able to, and there would be a lot of women in that area. A large number of apprenticeship and trainee programs have been rolling out, many which specifically target women. One of these examples is the Women in Civil program, which provides a civil-ready induction and professional mentoring, empowering career options in SA, and that includes a project for women who are domestic violence survivors to equip them with particular skills and support them on a pathway to employment and participation.

South Australia's bespoke programs are delivering nation-leading results across many key areas and demographics, and that demonstrates that the 45 years and over age group increased by 83.3 per cent, and women apprenticeships and traineeships increased by 22.6 per cent. So, there is a range of areas. We also look at the employment statistics and hours being worked. The response has been patchy. Some sectors have been more affected than others. Some of the areas that are quite heavily feminised, such as in the education area, have actually been doing very well.

I think it is hard to pick out particular cohorts because, in a sense, it has almost been a sector-by-sector response. There has been specific support from the state government to support a range of industries, which the honourable member would be aware of, including payroll tax relief, grants and the like. When we drill down there are other areas where there has been specific industry support. I think we would rather be in South Australia than in most other places.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Noting that women are more than twice as likely to be engaged in insecure work than their male counterparts, with recent data showing that 22 per cent of women work less than 20 hours a week compared with just 10.6 per cent of men, how does the budget specifically meet the objective of addressing equality for women in employment, and what specific jobs targeting women will be delivered through the budget this financial year?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Can the honourable member provide a reference for her statistics?

**Ms HILDYARD:** At the top of page 90 it states:

The Status of Women program supports the full and equal participation of women in the social, political and economic life of the state. Priorities include addressing domestic, family and sexual violence, equality for women in every aspect of life, and women's employment and leadership.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Sorry, what I meant were the particular statistics you are quoting on underemployment?

**Ms HILDYARD:** From multiple sources.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Are they national?

**Ms HILDYARD:** They are national, yes.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** They might not be relevant to South Australia.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I will rephrase the question, or I can find another statistic. I suspect that it will be easier to rephrase the question. Noting that women are over twice as likely to be engaged in insecure work, including here in South Australia, how does the budget specifically meet the objective of addressing equality for women in employment, and what specific jobs targeting women have been created for delivery through the budget for this financial year?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Has the honourable member put this question to the minister for employment?

**Ms HILDYARD:** I thought you might be specifically interested in that.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I have provided some responses in response to this, and clearly—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Is that your response?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Well, clearly, there are areas in which women are doing much better than male employment, quite frankly.

**Ms HILDYARD:** So what jobs will be created for women specifically through this budget this year? What jobs?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, you have asked your question. Please let the minister respond in silence.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is a range of apprentices—

**Ms HILDYARD:** I guess I was asked a question also, so I am just trying to—

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There is a range of apprentices and employees. We are also seeing through the construction industry that there is a greater tendency to employ women through that area as well. There is a range of ways in which we are supporting all South Australians. Women will benefit through some of those more than in other areas. Obviously we know that, for instance, the childcare sector is highly feminised. In dentistry, my understanding is that there are a large number of female graduates. We can talk about healthcare practitioners, retail and a range of areas in which women are specifically benefiting from a range of policies of this Marshall Liberal government.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How many jobs specifically for women will be created through this year's budget? How many?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the honourable member probably has a fundamental difference in philosophy to my party, in that it is not the government that creates jobs, it is the private sector.

**Ms HILDYARD:** So is there a number in the budget in terms of prediction, a target for jobs to be created for women? Is there any reference whatsoever in the budget for job creation strategies targeting women?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The honourable member is clearly asking a question that she should put to the employment minister.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I thought you would be interested.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I am very interested in it, and it is something that I monitor all the time, but I am not the minister for employment.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How is the department addressing modern slavery in South Australia, an issue most commonly found to impact women?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** My understanding is that the federal government has recently had an initiative in relation to this matter. Slavery is essentially a matter that is more likely to sit within the Attorney's portfolio, but I am advised that the National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery is still being finalised. It is expected to align strategically with the current National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, and it will be a framework to take into account in developing the next national plan to reduce violence against women.

In particular, the national action plan on modern slavery will retain a focus on women and girls as victims and survivors of modern slavery, given the disproportionate impact on females. The commonwealth will invite Border Force to present to officials at a future meeting, and so we expect that we will be able to provide further information on that. I wonder if the director has anything that she is able to add to that particular—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Do you think the New South Wales government—

**Ms MORT:** I will just add a few comments to that. Obviously, we are aware of the issue. As the minister has indicated, I sit on the senior officials group for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. We will be working in terms of that national action plan and then looking at what we implement in South Australia.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Do you believe that diversity in decision-making contributes to the achievement of equality in every aspect of life, as your objectives at the top of page 90 state?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I have a sense of memory coming back from the last two estimates questions, but yes, of course I do.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How does the lack of female representation in your government and in your cabinet reflect the diversity needed to make good decisions that improve equality?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I refer the honourable member to my estimates response for the last two years and wonder if she has a new line of questioning that she might have thought up, given that she has had additional time to think about it.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Sure. Has the Office for Women provided advice to the government more broadly in relation to crisis accommodation and general housing insecurity for South Australian women impacted by domestic violence?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The Office for Women is the policy unit within government in terms of a whole range of policy advice. Obviously, the housing sits within the South Australian Housing Authority as they are providing the funding for a range of these matters, but the Office for Women has a very close working relationship with the South Australian Housing Authority.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Why was the Premier's Women's Directory axed?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** The directory has not actually been highly utilised for some time. In fact, there is a system that sits within DPC called BoardingCall, which is much more highly utilised, so we determined that we would transition that particular service across to there. That will expand the number of women available for any of those searches, and we think it will be providing a much better service going forward.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How many women—

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Sorry, we had not finished. I was just going to invite the director to add to my comments.

**Ms MORT:** The decision was made because of a reduction in usage of the Premier's Women's Directory from searches and also a reduction in women actually applying to be on the directory. With the advent of BoardingCall, it has a greater capability to support a range of different reporting methods as well as provide women centrally into a whole range of processes, so we transitioned all the women who wanted to over to BoardingCall and we continue to work with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on ensuring that we promote that.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many—

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, sorry, the time has expired, member for Reynell. The time agreed and allocated for examination of payments in relation to the Office for Women has expired. Therefore, if there are further questions, they can be submitted through the processes outlined at the beginning of proceedings today.

**Ms HILDYARD:** We did start at 4.33pm.

**The CHAIR:** Well, there is an introductory statement at the beginning of every session that has been common practice, unfortunately, member for Reynell. I declare the examination of the portfolio agency Office for Women completed.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Ms L. Boswell, Chief Executive, Department of Human Services.

Ms F. Curnow, Director, Community Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Strategic Reform Projects, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Hawkins, Executive Director, Youth Justice, Department of Human Services.

Ms A. Hayes, Executive Director, Community and Family Services, Department of Human Services.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** With everybody in place, I do not think there are any new faces, unless I am mistaken. The portfolio that we will be examining for the next 30 minutes, concluding at 5.30pm, is the portfolio of youth services. The minister appearing is again the Minister for Human Services. The estimate of payments is as mentioned earlier today in relation to the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services.

I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination and refer members to Agency Statements, Volume 3. I call on the minister to make an opening statement if she wishes, and to introduce her advisers, but I do not believe that will be necessary. Minister.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Yes, you have met all of these advisers previously. The government shares a vision with the community for a South Australia where every young person can learn, connect, grow and reach their fullest potential. Our aim is that young people have necessary resources, opportunities and support to achieve their potential and lead productive and fulfilling lives. This will build strong futures for them and for our state.

On 17 April this year, the government launched Strong Futures, the SA Youth Action Plan for 2020 to 2023. This three-year action plan coordinates and enhances efforts across government agencies and key stakeholders to provide young people with real opportunities, now and for their futures. Strong Futures is a culmination of hundreds of young people's voices, identifying the big issues that affect their lives. The plan commits to making a real change in four priority areas:

- 'earn and learn', to ensure that young South Australians are ready for work and life;
- 'fair and inclusive', which will assist our young people to be included and reach their potential;
- 'wellbeing and environment', helping young people to be safe, healthy and resilient; and
- 'connect and grow', making sure that young South Australians have every opportunity to be engaged and have influence.

The plan supports continuing collaboration and partnerships across government, the youth sector and with other stakeholders to implement practical, coordinated strategies that improve outcomes for all young people.

As we all know, 2020 has brought many new challenges. Young people have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including through disruptions to education and employment, as well as through social isolation. Accordingly, the first phase of the Youth Action Plan has been pivoted towards projects that respond to the challenges of 2020 and the impact on young South Australians and the people, services and systems that support them.

These include additional resources in key organisations to assist in meeting the recovery needs of young people; a one-off, youth-led COVID-19 recovery grants program administered by the Local Government Association of South Australia with councils commencing projects from 1 November; and a specific sector training project, Principles of Practice, in partnership with the University of Adelaide.

In addition, the government has continued to maintain existing programs, sponsorships and community funding for youth-focused work. As we navigate this challenging year, it remains vital to ensure young people remain connected to social and economic supports that keep them on pathways to achieving their goals and potential.

The government has made significant commitments in this regard in the 2020-21 budget. This includes \$32.9 million over four years to support 750 additional traineeship and apprenticeship places in government agencies and funded projects, including 150 places in DHS accommodation services. This significant investment will equip many young people to move into employment opportunities in areas that are expanding and diversifying. They will result in real jobs.

The government has also provided, through the state budget, \$5.7 million in payroll tax relief for employers who take on a new apprentice or trainee. I note the significant investment in the budget in the consolidation of youth services into a single site at Goldsborough Road. This will mean that all children and young people in custody will benefit from contemporary, state-of-the-art facilities that will assist their rehabilitation and enhance their wellbeing.

**The CHAIR:** Lead speaker for the opposition, do you have an opening statement?

**Ms COOK:** No. I just want to say that I am really pleased to see the continuing downturn of numbers of young people in detention for any reason whatsoever. The younger they are in, the longer they are in and the more likely they are to be in as adults. So the trend over recent decades has been extremely promising, and I thank all staff for their commitment in regard to that.

I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87. You have referred to the Youth Action Plan, minister. On what date did consultation on the draft Youth Action Plan close, and how many submissions were received as part of that process?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** There was a range of consultation that we went through in order to shape the final plan, including one where, from memory, we had a weekend where we had 40 or 50 young people who had nominated themselves and were randomly selected to work through that. For the other consultation, I might ask Fiona Curnow if she can go through that for us. She has all those details.

**Ms CURNOW:** Thank you for the question. Can I confirm that you are asking about the dates for the consultation.

**Ms COOK:** Yes.

**Ms CURNOW:** We asked for an online engagement on YourSAy from 9 July 2019 to 2 August 2019. The Youth Panel nominations closed on 29 July. On 2 August at 5pm we had a closing date for stage 1 for developing the Youth Action Plan—this is all our online YourSAy conversations. The youth survey closed on 2 August, and the Youth Panel workshop was on 10 August, which is the weekend that the minister is referring to, when the young people came together over 40 for two days. Then, on 31 October 2019 at 5pm, the feedback on the draft that the young people pulled together closed on YourSAy.

**Ms COOK:** So that is the initial consultation—sorry, I said 'draft'. The draft was released to people who were involved in the consultation. What date was that released, and how many people provided a submission regarding the draft? What date was the actual plan released?

**Ms CURNOW:** I will have to take on notice the amount of submissions that were received. We can certainly get that for you. I am not sure what date you mean for the plan closing. Can you remind me?

**Ms COOK:** The draft Youth Action Plan was put out well after consultation. You prepared the work, you put it out and you asked questions. That was done on a date. I am asking because I am advised that that it was a very short turnaround between when the draft—

**Ms CURNOW:** It was four weeks.

**Ms COOK:** Okay. I was advised that it was only a few days, so perhaps take that on notice and double-check that.

**Ms CURNOW:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms COOK:** My next question is in the same vein. It is a lot of women and we are just chatting, you know how it is.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Not just women.

**Ms COOK:** Well, we do good work when we talk. Do you believe, minister, if it were to be such a short turnaround, that the full views of stakeholders could be taken into account between a draft being put out for consultation, it closing and the full Youth Action Plan being put out?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think you are asking me a hypothetical, but I think it is probably best if we get all the information in detail, because, from my recollection, the consultation was quite extensive.

**The CHAIR:** I am just a Chair trying to do my job, member for Hurtle Vale.

**Ms COOK:** Doing a great job. On the same line, minister, in relation to the Youth Action Plan, will you confirm that the words 'COVID', 'pandemic' and 'coronavirus' do not appear anywhere in that plan, in spite of it being released at the height of the pandemic and it being a primary concern for young people in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** We view these documents as we do the Committed to Safety document in that they represent things at a point in time, but we are assiduous in making sure that we continue to address things. If I can just talk about some of the things that we have done following the release of the plan in relation to COVID and ensuring that we are addressing COVID issues for young people.

In April 2020, we provided school holiday sessions for vulnerable high school aged young people. The Youth Affairs Council and the DHS online youth sector forum provided a direct platform for the youth sector to voice concerns and ideas in relation to shortening the long-term COVID-19 recovery responses. That was, I am advised, on 14 May.

We have provided specific funding for some programs, including \$50,000 to the Peterborough Bakery Project to assist in skills and employment; and \$120,000 to the Working Women's Centre for a 12-month Youth Project Officer. The role is to raise awareness and education for priority groups, including students, newly arrived residents and young employees in industries impacted by COVID-19. The role will also assist these centres' recovery efforts.

There was \$120,000 to the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia for a dedicated 12-month Recovery Project Officer position. There was the COVID grants through the Local Government Association, which was \$550,000. We added new questions to the regular Wellbeing SA survey, and we have continued to update these matters on the website, from my understanding.

**Ms COOK:** On the same line, given COVID and its long-lasting effects and presence in the community, minister, will not the impacts of COVID really last the whole length of the plan? Will they not be there for the whole length of this plan?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** As I said, it is a lot like Committed to Safety, which is the government's plan in relation to domestic and family violence, so there is a PDF document that anyone can look at, but also I think if you go on the DHS website there is a range of information that

is in addition to the plan. It was printed at a particular point in time, based on the consultation that had been received, and we are continuing to respond to these issues.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing on, do you expect that the pandemic will, with its related restrictions, have any impact on the government's ability to deliver on the plan?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think we are just learning to do everything differently. Everybody is having to be nimble during these times and pivot things all the time. I mean, as an entire state, we were meant to be in lockdown for six days and then it lasted three, so you can imagine that there were lots of people who were suddenly getting the call-up to work. We are all learning new ways of doing things and being extremely nimble in doing Zoom meetings and all of those sorts of ways. In relation to technology, young people obviously are very adept with all of these platforms. When it comes to the use of technology, they will master those much more quickly than old ducks like me.

**The CHAIR:** Let that be no reflection on your technical capability, I am sure.

**Ms COOK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 92, looking at targets, specifically around Young People Connected, Communities Protected: South Australia's Youth Justice State Plan. I note that the state plan at page 15 commits to implementing the recommendations of the Ombudsman and the Training Centre Visitor. Did the visitor seek any additional funding in this budget and, if so, was it delivered or was it not delivered?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will ask the CE if she will be able to assist.

**Ms BOSWELL:** I am actually in the process of having discussions with the training centre visitor about her staffing cohort. She is making some changes in her office and we are supporting that.

**Ms COOK:** Good. I might just get questions on record regarding it. Given the value of the visitor's recommendations as noted in the state plan, why have the visitor's concerns regarding the scope of her role not been acted on? This has been an ongoing feature of her reports in the last few years where she notes Crown law advice that she does not have oversight over youth justice centre residents experiencing issues outside of the centre's walls. A specific example would be admission to hospital and they do not have the jurisdiction to continue relationships.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I thank the honourable member for raising this question. I took the initiative after the training centre visitor had first raised these matters to examine the parliamentary debate in relation to the provisions within the legislation that refer to her role. My reading of the parliamentary debate is that it was not the intention of the parliament that her role be broader than just the physical training centre. My understanding is that in a range of those other areas that she has raised there is scope of other oversight programs for those as well. I am not sure whether the CE has anything to add to that particular one.

**Ms BOSWELL:** There was some concern about her ability to delegate that she had raised. We have resolved that. We provide that delegation for her to her officers in writing, or whenever she asks, and that is then provided. So that matter has been resolved.

**Ms COOK:** Continuing with the same reference, with respect to the relationships that are invaluable to young people at a traumatic time of their life and the inability of the training centre visitor and her delegates to be able to continue those supportive relationships with young people who are in crisis, probably more so because they are outside of the walls of the training centre, maybe in hospital, do you believe there is a gap there that needs to be resolved through legislation?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think the training centre visitor's role is quite explicit in that it is to ensure that the training centre is operating in a safe manner and that young people are receiving appropriate care or that, while they are in the centre, it is an appropriate environment and that, if they do need services, they are receiving them. There is a responsibility on the centre itself to ensure that it is a safe and therapeutic environment, and that is something that we are certainly working towards. I might see whether either the CE or the executive director would like to speak to some of the reforms that we are undertaking in the training centre to ensure that we are providing a more therapeutic environment.

**Ms COOK:** Can I clarify, minister? It is more so that for some young people who are in the training centre—sorry, I have just gone off on a tangent—that may be their only trusted relationship that they are able to form with the training centre visitor who visits them on a regular basis. If they are outside of the training centre in a hospital admission, maybe for a mental health crisis or something, and they cannot have access to that one person who is the trusted person in their life, it is actually a massive trauma. The changes that have happened within the training centre, they are great. The reforms, you know I support them absolutely. I know what they all are. There is this specific issue that the training centre visitor relationship is suspended when a young person is in absolute crisis.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I might still see whether the CE or the ED would like to talk about that.

**Ms COOK:** Thanks for your indulgence on that. I just wanted to be really clear that it is that particular issue.

**Ms HAWKINS:** Thank you for the question. I think it is worth noting that we have a very close and productive relationship with the Training Centre Visitor Unit. We have monthly meetings established as well at an executive level. The care, correction and guidance that is required when a young person is under our custody at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre is a subject that we continue to discuss very closely, including how we can better support young people's needs when they are off campus and then return. It is not an active subject of ongoing discussion between us and the TCV, but I am very happy to raise it again with her and discuss that matter further.

**Ms COOK:** This next line might need input as well. Minister, in respect of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 92, last year you advised the estimates committee that concerns had not been raised with you about the lack of an Aboriginal visitor to the youth justice centre. Is that still the case?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** An Aboriginal visitor?

**Ms COOK:** A training centre visitor, an Aboriginal person.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I understand that one of the employees in the training centre is an Aboriginal man. I will just ask the executive director.

**Ms COOK:** Yes. It is a bit tricky, sorry.

**Ms HAWKINS:** That is okay. The Training Centre Visitor Unit does have a full-time advocate position, Travis, who works very closely in the centre. As we mentioned before, there are ongoing conversations between the TCV and the department in relation to future resourcing, as Lois mentioned just before.

**Ms COOK:** In terms of this particular program, supporting young people through culturally responsive services, etc., will you be publishing an Aboriginal staff recruitment strategy, and are there any targets for recruitment of the number or proportion of Aboriginal staff to be employed within the department?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Within DHS or in youth training?

**Ms COOK:** Specifically Youth Justice programs.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I will ask the CE if she could respond to that.

**Ms BOSWELL:** We have been actively recruiting Aboriginal leadership in the department. There is in preparation an Aboriginal recruitment strategy for the whole department at the moment. The person leading that has recently taken up another role, and we are recruiting for that role, but that is under production. As well as that, we have employed a very skilled Aboriginal lead for strategy and policy for Youth Justice in particular, and she is looking at an Aboriginal recruitment strategy that is Youth Justice specific.

One of the ways she is going about that in the first instance is she is going to be having further conversations with community because, as you can understand, for Aboriginal people, working in the justice system has its own challenges and its own potential historical trauma, so we need to talk about how we can better support Aboriginal people. That said, we do have a number of Aboriginal people working in Youth Justice, and we are working to expand that on a regular basis.



**Ms COOK:** Continuing on the same line, in terms of that, I am very interested in how many Aboriginal staff are currently employed in Youth Justice, including as a proportion of the total staffing level, and how that compares with the department overall. Is Youth Justice outperforming general numbers?

**Ms BOSWELL:** I do not have exact numbers for the department overall. Our proportion in Youth Justice is approximately 5 per cent, which is higher than the department overall; however, we are working to improve that because obviously the over-representation of young people within Kurlana Tapa and within community service orders is significantly higher. That is an ongoing challenge, but we are actively addressing that challenge at the moment.

**Ms COOK:** On Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, looking at general FTEs, will you confirm that the budget line shows a cut of 39.7 FTEs, which is actually a 10 per cent reduction in the total number of staff since you were sworn in, minister?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** In this particular section, you mean?

**Ms COOK:** There is a table there that talks to FTEs, on page 93.

**Ms BOSWELL:** There has been an overall reduction in the number of staff within Youth Justice, partly associated with trying to get back to the budget. Youth Justice has actually not met its budget for multiple years in a row; however, what we have been doing as well is actually improving the way we operate.

As you would know, there is a very significant reduction of the number of young people in Kurlana Tapa, which is where most of our staffing exists. We have also consolidated the two campuses out of Jonal Drive, which does have some savings in the number of staff.

The reason we would want to get out of Jonal Drive is that it is a very old and not therapeutic campus. We are pretty thrilled about the budget measure to expand Kurlana Tapa and to have a better mix of the way we care for young people on that campus, which is actually probably the state-of-the-art campus in Australia for Youth Justice.

**Ms COOK:** So just to clarify and tidy that one off, you would attest that those staffing cuts are because of a reduction of need and the movement onto the one site?

**Ms BOSWELL:** Yes, and we have actively gone about ensuring that we get better at delivering services. I would argue there is not a reduction in service. There has been a reduction in both need and a better efficiency in the way we manage the service.

**Ms COOK:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 93. In terms of the reduction of FTEs, does that include the reduction in staffing as a result of privatising the community service orders program?

**Ms BOSWELL:** There is a reduction associated partly with that between the table for 2019-20 and 2020-21, yes.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I think in Legislative Council question time I have provided significant details—

**Ms COOK:** Yes, I think there has been some—

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** —about what exactly the changes to the program meant.

**Ms COOK:** What will be the total saving, from a budget point of view, to the government as a result of privatising this community service orders program?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** I might have answered that in question time already. We actually think it will provide a better service, which will be better connected to the community.

**Ms COOK:** I am happy for you to unpack what you just said, if you want to—how it will provide the better service as well.

**Ms BOSWELL:** One thing we are very much seeking to do—and the tender that is out at the moment is coming close to conclusion but has not yet been decided and announced, but we have been pretty happy with the number of tenders and also the quality of the tenders. The purpose is to have young people connected into community and not just into Youth Justice mandated supervisors.

By connecting into community services that are based in community and hopefully have relationships with the communities of those young people we are hoping to get a therapeutic and good relationship that spans outside the mandate, so can take into account once they are released from Youth Justice and into the community and maintain that for their future.

**Ms COOK:** Are we saying that the current staff working in the offices are not connected to the communities?

**Ms BOSWELL:** They do not have a role outside of the legislative mandate, so they do not follow them into their future, whereas we are hoping within this process for that to be able to occur.

**Ms COOK:** On Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87, the Youth Action Plan includes employment as a key concern of young people. What specific advocacy have you done to ensure that jobs are created to address the crisis of youth unemployment?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** Again, I think it is very similar to the response I gave in the last line of questioning, in that we know in South Australia we have had a softer landing in terms of our economy than a lot of other states. That demonstrates that the support for business has been working and effective, particularly when we look at the number of people who are working now compared with this time last year.

Again, there are particular sectors where young people might be more affected than others, I think in retail and hospitality. Mind you, retail has come back but elements of hospitality, particularly when you are talking about the events sector, have had more difficulty. The Minister for Innovation and Skills has a particular bent for apprenticeships and trainees where there are a lot of opportunities for young people in a range of areas. We also know that young people particularly can pivot their skill if they are already employed in a service industry. They can pick up skills in a new industry very, very quickly.

I know that the Minister for Innovation and Skills is being very active in that space. I have had—apart from other conversations—conversations with that minister both in relation to young people and in relation to women's employment because it is obviously something that we have a shared interest in, but employment is primarily within his bag of responsibilities.

**The CHAIR:** With that answer, given that the agreed and allotted time has expired for the examination of proposed payments in regard to the portfolio of youth services, there are therefore no further questions and I declare the examination of the portfolio agency youth services completed, and the estimate of payments for the Department of Human Services and administered items for the Department of Human Services closed.

*Sitting suspended from 17:32 to 17:45.*

## **DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION, \$606,093,000**

### **Membership:**

Mr Gee substituted for Ms Wortley.

### **Minister:**

Hon. R. Sanderson, Minister for Child Protection.

### **Departmental Advisers:**

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

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

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

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

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to Estimates Committee B. We continue today with our final session from 5.45 to 7.15 this evening. The portfolio for examination this afternoon is the Department for Child Protection; the minister appearing is the Minister for Child Protection. The estimate of payments are in relation to the Department for Child Protection, they being in the order of \$606,093,000. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 1. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement in regard to your portfolio and introduce your advisers?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Yes, I would. I would like to start by introducing Cathy Taylor to my left, my Chief Executive. Behind her is Fiona Ward, the Deputy Chief Executive; Jennifer Browne, the Chief Financial Officer; and Michael Burton at the back, the Chief Human Resources Officer.

This year has been a particularly challenging year for many in the community due to COVID-19, and my portfolio of child protection has been no exception. My department and our partners in the community, such as our carers, service providers and volunteers, have been exemplary in adapting their approach to the challenges faced during this year's public health emergency, and for that I greatly thank them for their work.

My Department for Child Protection, all the staff and all our partners in the community work hard every day to care and protect our children and young people in what can often be challenging but also enormously rewarding roles. Over the last 12 months there have been a number of highlights in the work of my department, which is focused on the care and protection of children and young people.

This year we have had a very full policy agenda and have released a number of policies and set strong foundations for moving forward. Some of these policies include: the DCP manual of practice, released for all DCP staff in December 2019; the DCP Aboriginal procurement policy, which was released in January 2020; Safe and Well: Supporting Families, Protecting Children, the Marshall Liberal government's child protection strategy, released in November 2019; and, in January we released Every Effort for Every Child, South Australia's strategy for children and young people in care 2020-23.

Consultation was undertaken on the adoption from care policy and on the effectiveness of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act of 2017. We are also building on the 'Investing in their future' through a second phase that will make more priority services available to children and young people in care. We have also worked very hard on enhancing our partnerships with non-government organisations and carers. We have announced our statement of commitment to South Australian foster and kinship carers, which was launched on 25 June, undertaken a very successful foster carer recruitment campaign, which ran in May for four weeks, and I am proud to say that we have recruited 82 new primary foster carers above attrition during the 2019-20 financial year.

We have implemented significant steps through our contract reform processes in disability-specific residential care, placement and support packages, recommissioning family reunification services, all of which are child-centred, flexible and cost effective, and we are currently recommissioning supported independent living services.

Other key initiatives commenced this year include the contracting of Relationships Australia for family group conferences, which commenced in January this year. We announced an investment of \$600,000 to roll out the sanctuary model of therapeutic care to DCP residential care homes; that was in June. We announced a two-year pilot for the contracting of three Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver kinship care services, also in June. This included KWy in partnership with Lutheran Community Care, Aboriginal Family Support Services, and Incompro in partnership with UnitingCare Wesley, which are all now licensed and receiving referrals.

COVID-19 has prompted many people to pause and consider what is important in their lives and how they can make a difference. The Marshall Liberal government has a strong and clear plan to help combat the spread of coronavirus and committed more than \$720,000 towards a once-off

\$200 payment for every child and young person in family-based care across South Australia. This was announced in March. This additional financial support assisted those households to buy essential cleaning and hygiene products to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic.

Additional advice and support information was also placed on the DCP carer website throughout the pandemic. Regular online forums for both NGOs also occurred. During this time, we continued to develop strong whole-of-government and across-government partnerships, especially in those necessary areas of response: health, human services and education. This year, we have more children in family-based care, being 86.3 per cent as at 30 June 2020, which has the costs associated with caring per child decrease for the third consecutive financial year. This is reported in the Auditor-General's Report of 2020, which shows the cost per child has decreased over three years from \$76,470 to \$69,100, to now \$68,500 in the 2019-20 year.

Reflecting a greater community awareness that child protection is everyone's business, my department continues to work hard. There was an upward trend of electronic reports, known as eCARLs, with a 7.2 per cent increase over the year, whilst calls to the Child Abuse Report Line were down by 7.1 per cent, primarily due to COVID. This year, we have had great success in ensuring children and young people in care who have a disability have a current NDIS plan and are receiving the necessary support, with 837 approved plans as at 30 June, compared to 635 the previous year.

We are also committed to ensuring Aboriginal children in care are increasingly placed in family-based care, with priority given to kinship care. This is reflected in our results. As at 30 June 2020, 85.5 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people were in family-based care, an improvement on the 84.7 per cent in 2019. As at 30 June this year, 53.6 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people were in kinship care, which is an increase on 51.2 per cent the previous year.

Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle also continues to grow, from 62.7 per cent in 2019 to 63.7 per cent in 2020. The Marshall Liberal government places an important focus on this principle, and will ensure it is of paramount consideration as part of our legislative amendments.

My department is increasing its capacity to respond to the challenges of child protection through providing more frontline workers, lower vacancy rates and a clear understanding of policy and practice. I am pleased to report that our FTE variance to budget is down from 227.23 as at June 2019 to a very low 44.9 FTE on 30 June 2020. We have successfully introduced our broadening of qualifications policy, which has resulted in the appointment of 70 case managers under the professional officer stream, in addition to the recruitment of 249 social workers over the same period.

The vacancy rate for social workers and case managers has decreased, from 9.8 per cent in June 2019 to just 1.2 per cent in June 2020. We have also implemented staff training on the new practice approach and clear guidance through the manual of practice. Whilst I continue to be very proud of what has been achieved in the 2½ years, a great deal has been achieved in this particularly difficult year and there is, of course, a lot more to do in the future. As always, I will continue to work with carers, the non-government sector, my ministerial colleagues and my department to ensure we continue to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.

**The CHAIR:** Would you like to introduce your advisers for the benefit of the committee?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I actually did that at the beginning, thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Pardon me, I missed that; I was taking some advice. I am also advised that I do need to provide a brief opening statement, given we have a new minister and new advisers. I will compile that to the most relevant information.

If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk Assistant via the answers to questions mailbox no later than Friday 5 February 2021. There will be a flexible approach given to the call for asking questions based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. I do request that members wait to be given the call through the process. Supplementary questions will be given as an exception rather than the rule. Questions must be based on a line of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable and referenced.

All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer her questions to the advisers for a response if appropriate and needed. The member for Reynell is the lead speaker for the opposition. Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Ms HILDYARD:** No, thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, you have the call.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 92, and specifically at the top of that page to the Department for Child Protection's objective, which states in its first line, 'the department's primary objective is to keep children and young people safe'. Minister, would you regard the number of children being taken into care as an indicator of DCP's performance?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It depends on how you interpret that, but obviously our legislative role is to keep children safe and that is done by people making referrals to the Child Abuse Report Line. We investigate those if they reach the threshold, and remove children where we believe it is in the best interests of their safety. It is then determined by a court whether a court order should go ahead for a removal. It is our role to keep them safe. The numbers would not determine the safety; we need to remove any child that is not safe.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Just to be clear, are you saying that the number of children being taken into care is an indicator of DCP's performance, or are you saying it is not?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I would say the number of children being taken into care is a reflection on our community. We know that the three main reasons that children are removed from their families are due to domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health. Whilst our government has a whole-of-government approach and we are working on policies for perpetrators, for example in domestic violence, we are increasing our number of shelters available and homes for people fleeing domestic violence, and we are increasing our spending on mental health, there are more drug and alcohol facilities required, and there is more being done by this government. It is really a whole of community that is a reflection of how many children are being removed.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, program 1, page 96, in relation to staff recruitment and training. It is also relevant to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 105. Can you explain the underspend of more than \$10 million in the projected employee benefit and staff development expenses?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The employee benefits expense is favourable as a result of delays in recruitments, so there is \$7.2 million. The staff development expenses are favourable, as in underspent, due to delays in the recruitment. There has been a reduction in expenditure on fleet vehicles as a consequence of the new—although that is not to do with the staffing. Basically, it is to do with delays in recruitment.

Also, regarding staff training, a lot of that went online during COVID, so it was a lot cheaper. You do not have the expense of hiring the Adelaide Oval function room, for example. All of the training went online, so it was actually cheaper and country people were more able to participate as well, in that area.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Given the huge increases in demand and the \$10 million underspend in staffing, what specifically have you done to recruit appropriate staff?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I might refer that to my CE, Cathy Taylor.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you for the question. Obviously, we recruit across a lot of different areas. I reference, firstly, residential care. During that time we went out a number of times. What we have now done, rather than going out two or three times a year, is to have rolling recruitment in residential care. We recognise, quite rightly, that for staff coming in at that level we need to ensure that we can continue to fill the shifts and be able to put them through the training and development needs that they have.

The great news is in terms of our social workers and caseworkers. We have continued to over-recruit. We have actually said, right across the board, 'We know that we will have natural turnover and attrition.' We talked to the four regions about projecting what that looked like across the

year. The fantastic thing was that, in terms of vacancies for our social workers, they were down to a handful by the time we got to 30 June.

Some of the vacancies are in some of our corporate areas, and obviously, quite rightly during COVID, we focused particularly on continuing to deliver frontline services. That is really where we put a lot of our energy and effort. The good news is that the two big areas where we have really made the greatest impact in terms of recruitment are our residential care and frontline caseworkers. Some of that is about the broadening of qualifications, but I also think it (the increased effort) has really helped.

We have trialled fly-in fly-out models in the Far North and Far West regions. We have seen a number of different models that really assist. Obviously, as is reflected in the papers, we now have an increased investment in FTE, recognising the work that we have to do in the coming years.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Can you explain exactly what caused the delays?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will refer that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** In fact, there has never been any hold or delay or something like that. It is simply about COVID, as I said. Each year—the CFO would be able to give you the detail—we have seen that, because of an increase of FTE, it takes us time to recruit. We are very keen to work with the universities because we do the student placements. Usually, the students do not become available until this time of year, which is when we get very excited and welcome all the new students who will take up our casework positions.

So it really was the extraordinary mix, in the last 12 months, of turnover and the impact of COVID, but as I said, it is probably a one-off. We have never said to anyone, 'Don't recruit.' In fact, what we want to do is actually be in the process of ongoing recruitment and support. I am very hopeful that the new assessment centre that we have in place for residential care will mean that people know exactly what they are doing once they hit the floor.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Are DCP staff in head office being permitted to work from home during the pandemic or not?

**Ms TAYLOR:** Can you repeat the question? I am so sorry.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Are DCP staff in head office being permitted to work from home during the pandemic or are they not?

**Ms TAYLOR:** Obviously, our primary role as an essential service is to continue to deliver child protection services. That is particularly around investigations and assessments, family visits and all of that. In terms of head office, during the height of COVID, I think there was a significant proportion—I am just thinking about the four floors of Flinders Street—and I know we were giving regular figures about what proportion of staff worked from home.

We did a couple of different things. A bit similar to others, we split into a team A, team B environment. We did not want at any time all of our people in the one area, so we certainly had people working from home, but also for people, for example, who were in head office, they might have worked out at Netley. For us, the critical thing is, we still need head office staff to be available because, as you can imagine, from a financial perspective, we need to pay our carers. We absolutely need to pay our staff.

The great thing was we probably benefited in terms of rolling out laptops when it started. We were still probably seeing desktops that were being taken to people's cars. By the end of it, we have seen the rollout of more than 1,000 laptops across the organisation. So the great news is staff in frontline and in central can now work from home. That was one of our early challenges.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Is the Elizabeth office currently staffed at its full capacity?

**Ms TAYLOR:** I might actually defer to the DCE in relation to this question.

**Ms WARD:** I could not give you the exact numbers, but what I do know is that we have been actively recruiting across all of our offices regularly and continue to recruit. There is always natural attrition in any particular office, so there may be a few vacancies in any one of our offices at any given time. What I can say is that we have invested significantly in increasing the number of staff at

Elizabeth office. Really pleasingly, we are about to take carriage of a new office, and we are going to double our efforts in that office, having a second, new location for staff to go into.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many positions are currently vacant at the Elizabeth office?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Can I just clarify. I imagine, because we are questioning the budget, that it would be at 30 June 2020 that the question would be relevant for, because that is where the budget time is.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I am asking about now so I make comparisons back to budget.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** That is what we are questioning.

**Ms HILDYARD:** It is reasonable to ask about now because then you can make comparisons back to the end of the financial year.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I did that as a shadow, and I was never allowed. The figures that I only ever got were to May. I never got a full year.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order, Mr Chair: I am not sure what this has to do with the really clear question.

**The CHAIR:** The comments from the floor are not necessary. If there is a point of order, that needs to be raised formally.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I did. I just said, 'Point of order, Mr Chair.'

**The CHAIR:** I could not hear between the two or three people talking over each other, so if we can make that clear, that would be fantastic. In terms of the question that has been put, if you could just repeat it for the benefit of the committee.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many positions are currently vacant at the Elizabeth office?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will take that on notice and if that is an appropriate question I will get an answer.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How does understaffing impact children in care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Thank you for the question. For four years, I was the shadow minister and there were several hundred vacancies for that entire time. There was strike action proposed and a great deal of issues around a lack of staffing and the pressure that that put on the frontline staff.

So on coming in to government, one of the first things we did was to announce our broadening of qualifications policy which, as I have already stated in my opening statement, has accounted for 70 PO positions and we have now reduced significantly our frontline vacancies, from memory, to 44.9 vacancies. We are doing an amazing job. We have also reduced that to a 1.2 per cent vacancy rate for social workers, which I would expect is the lowest it has been in a decade. I think we are doing an amazing amount of work.

The department is working very hard to recruit. For the first time, we are doing continual recruitment for residential care staff. We have glowing reports from the universities, particularly Flinders University, about our programs for new graduates so that there is mentoring. There are very good programs and placement opportunities, as well as employment opportunities, so I think my department has been doing an absolutely amazing job on recruiting. Yes, we would like to get to full employment but we are doing an amazing job on that at the moment. I will see if the CE wants to add anything.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I can help on both the previous question and also this one. In terms of the impact in terms of vacancies on children in care, I thought it would be helpful if I gave some more figures, because I said a handful of vacancies were for social workers and case managers. As at 30 June, it was in fact eight, so what we ensure is that every child in care has a social worker or case manager allocated to them.

Obviously, what we want to ensure is that no-one has an unreasonable case load. In some cases, you may see a supervisor who is allocated a child and a young person in care, so every child

and young person in care has an allocated case manager or social worker. In relation to the question about vacancies in Elizabeth, I am delighted to say that vacancies in relation to the northern region, because I think this is relevant to the previous question—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order, Chair: has this question not been taken on notice?

**The CHAIR:** They are allowed to add to the question if there is further pertinent information. It is absolutely within the standing orders.

**Ms TAYLOR:** There are only 7.3 vacancies in the whole of the northern region, so I can say, of that, a proportion would be at Elizabeth.

**The CHAIR:** If information can be provided now, why wait until a later date? Member for Narungga.

**Mr ELLIS:** I have a question that originates from Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 95 about education. Minister, I wonder if you might outline the initiatives that have been announced or implemented that are designed to improve education outcomes for children in care and also whether you can update the committee on the progress of the Catholic school scholarships.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for Narungga for the question and his interest in improving education outcomes for children and young people. Ensuring children and young people in care can actively participate and achieve in their education and have access to quality learning from birth through all ages and stages is an important priority for the Marshall Liberal government.

To ensure children in care receive appropriate support services, they receive prioritised preschool and school enrolments for government schools. Children in care are eligible for 12 hours of government preschool from the age of three, then 15 hours per week from the age of four. Children in care from birth to age six can also receive free book reading packs every three months from the Little Big Book Club as part of the Read to Me Project which supports children in care to improve their reading and language skills.

To improve education outcomes for children and young people in care, this year my department has worked closely with the Department for Education. Both agencies have committed to a new joint plan of action for the next 12 months. The key actions of this joint plan include:

- developing a joint approach to support children and young people in care transitioning to new preschools or schools that takes into consideration their trauma and cultural needs;
- ensuring foster and kinship carers are better informed about preschool and school supports via the DCP carer website;
- tracking and monitoring learning progress for each student; and
- extending data sharing arrangements between the two departments to identify priority areas for action and inform future practice.

The Department for Education has established a children in care service to provide expert support to improve education outcomes for children in care. My department has nominated and inducted education champions across its services, who will work closely with the children in care service.

As part of my commitment to improving education outcomes, I have taken a strong interest in school attendance records, monitoring suspensions and exclusions, SACE completions, employment and extracurricular activities and ensuring all children in care have a One Plan. I have been visiting schools across the state and meeting with school principals to discuss how our government can assist schools to achieve better outcomes for our children and young people. I also regularly meet with the education minister to advocate for these outcomes and the delivery of services.

The Department for Education has a goal for all children in care to have a One Plan, which is a personalised learning plan that is continuously reviewed and updated. My department will be supporting the rollout of One Plans for children and young people in care. I am pleased to inform the



committee that, as at 3 July, 62 per cent of children and young people in care who were attending a government school had a One Plan. More recently, in September, this had increased to 74 per cent. We are working toward eventually seeing all our children in care with a One Plan.

It is also important to acknowledge the extensive work that the Department for Education is doing to support and respond to the complex behaviour and trauma of all children and young people, including those in care, understanding how this impacts on their ability to participate in test conditions. Our focus remains on addressing trauma and creating learning environments that are trauma informed, so I welcome the Department for Education's provision of \$5.4 million over four years from 2018 for professional development in trauma-informed practice through the Trauma Aware Schools Initiative.

This initiative funds whole-of-school and professional development opportunities for preschools and schools. It supports learning environments that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of students experiencing trauma and builds a capacity to understand and support the differentiated learning needs of all children. This program is offered through the SMART Foundation, and strategies are delivered through the Australian Childhood Foundation Berry Street Education Model and Connected Self whole-school approach.

I am also pleased to inform the committee that the average participation rate for NAPLAN testing for children in care across all year levels and categories has increased from 66.5 per cent in 2018 to 69.1 per cent in 2019. There were also more children in care completing the South Australian Certificate of Education than ever before, with the completion rate for children in care being 26.6 per cent in 2018 and 39.5 per cent in 2019.

I acknowledge the member's interest in the Catholic scholarships. In June this year, I launched a partnership with Catholic Education, which is providing up to 100 scholarships to primary and secondary school-aged children and young people in care across South Australian Catholic schools. This has the potential to be expanded across other non-government schools.

The Catholic scholarship program provides full tuition and covers the costs related to uniforms, textbooks, excursions and extracurricular activities, continuing each year until the child or young person completes their schooling. As at 30 June, we had six children who had been offered the scholarship. At the moment, as of 20 November, I am very pleased to say that about 90 of the scholarships have now been taken up.

In later years, we extended our carer payments to age 21 for eligible kinship and foster carers in order to provide support for further education. We also have our Over 18 Education Initiative, which provides support through to the age of 25. There is also extra funding and support available through the commonwealth through Transition to Independent Living. There are grants through the Dame Roma Mitchell fund to age 29, as well as dedicated traineeships through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment.

We also support post-care services through CREATE and Relationships Australia. A further sign of our government's commitment to education was our recent announcement of a \$1 million investment to support world-leading research through new child protection scholarships and in turn better support our most vulnerable children and young people.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Do agency staff undertake night shifts in residential care? Yes or no: do they undertake night shifts in residential care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Yes. Agency staff would undertake a variety of shifts, days, nights and weekends.

**Ms HILDYARD:** What proportion of expenses related to employment and/or to suppliers and services can be attributed to agency staff?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** What budget paper and reference, so I can find it?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Page 96, same budget paper.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Page 96—so employee benefits?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Are you asking about just residential care staff as a percentage?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly what proportion of expenses related to employment can be attributed to agency staff?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I might refer this. Do you mean non-government organisation agency staff when you say—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes, private companies.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** You do not mean our agency staff?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Private companies.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Private companies. We will need to take that on notice.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 97. Can you explain the sharp rise in the number of notifications requiring further action by DCP?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am just finding the line reference.

**Ms HILDYARD:** It is the first item under 'Activity indicators'.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I might get Cathy Taylor to answer this question.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you very much for the question. What we have seen in South Australia has certainly been an increase in the number of notifications received from the community. We have particularly seen an increase in those that have come in from our mandatory reporters. As you would be aware, with the change to the legislation in 2018, the threshold changed. So obviously, when we look at the question of risk, the community quite rightly as well as the mandatory reporters need to alert us to those matters where they have a concern.

We have had the Australian Centre for Child Protection have a good look at that to see: are we having matters referred to us that you might necessarily regard as the worried well? In fact, from the deep dive that the Australian Centre for Child Protection has undertaken, that is not the case. What it reflects is a number of different things. It reflects, obviously, what is happening in community, as the minister has already said and the impact of what is happening in families across this space.

Particularly in 2019-20, it was a most unusual year. We did not see any pattern across the year. We saw a pattern up to February, and then with COVID it then took on a very unusual pattern of notifications and contacts that we had. We saw a slight decrease in March; we saw a further decrease in April. We normally see that, but we actually saw it heightened. We attribute part of that to the school holidays but also to that extra week that we had before the school holidays. But then we saw a significant pick-up in the months of May and June.

So I think it is fair to say that our notifications are when members of the community have concerns, and they are alerting us to it. I think there is no question about it: as the new legislation that commenced in 2018 has asked members of the South Australian community to refer matters they have concerns about, it is certainly clear that we are actually seeing more come in.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many of the 40,000 very worrying notifications were screened into the system?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** For this year? For the 2019-20 year?

**Ms HILDYARD:** In relation to the 40,000.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Screened-in notifications for the 2019-20 year were 39,508. Of those, there were 6,879 investigations.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many of those screened in were then determined to be closed—no further action?

**Ms TAYLOR:** We have a range of different responses under the new legislation. Certainly, under the new legislation what it actually asks us to do is to determine what is the most appropriate response. As the minister quite rightly said, there were some nearly 6,900 investigations. We had

about another 15,000 that were dealt with by other means. In terms of the remaining ones, up until February—as I said to you—we had been tracking at about 38 per cent that were not proceeding or 'closed, no action', using the old titles.

With the shift across the remaining four months what we actually needed to do, as we have said, is to ensure that our staff were focused on frontline and undertaking all of that. We sat at about—if I have done my sums correctly—I think 17,000. When we did a deep dive, we discovered that that was not a fair and accurate reflection of no action being taken, it was simply that it had not resulted in an investigation or referral to other agencies. What we have now done, in figures going forward you will see a much better reflection of the further investigations that we have done rather than this blanket 'closed, no action'.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Exactly how many of the 'closed, no further action' matters were in relation to children and families who had had more than one notification made about them?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I do not believe that that is something we can search for on the C3MS program. I remember, when in opposition, asking for that myself many times, and being told that it was not available. We have made enhancements to the C3MS in order to, for example, get the drug testing reports, but we still have the same program that we were left with from the previous government.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Just to be clear: there is no mechanism for the department to ascertain how many of those 17,000 'closed, no further action' reports about abuse and/or neglect were made in relation to children and families who had had more than one notification made about them?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The deputy CE will answer this question.

**Ms WARD:** What we do know is that a number of children are subject to multiple notifications but what we have also seen since 2016 and 2017 through to this year is a reduction on the double-ups, so the multiple notifications per child are reducing on average. So, we can determine how many children have had how many notifications generally, yes—is the answer to your question.

**Ms HILDYARD:** So you can determine that?

**Ms WARD:** We have to design and run a report to be able to do that but, yes, we can do that. I was just adding to the minister's answer.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Can that number be provided?

**Ms WARD:** What I can say is that there were 75,000 notifications, I think, to the call centre and just under 40,000 of those were screened-in notifications, and they related to just over 33,000 children being notified. Some would have higher rates of notifications and others would have lower rates but, on average, it was just over one notification per child.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Sorry, can I just clarify: I understand that you said in relation to the 17,000 'closed, no further action' matters there is a mechanism to determine how many of those related to children and families who have had more than one notification in relation to them. Is it possible for that question to be taken on notice so I can get that figure, please?

**Ms WARD:** What we do is a child count as opposed to a notification count, so what we can do is provide information about individual children and the number of notifications they have. That is our capacity and, as the minister said, it does not quite extend to what I think you are asking, but there is something pretty close to the middle there.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, given the deeply worrying increasing number of children and young people in care, do you intend to establish a defined target and associated indicators for reducing the number of children and young people in care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** First, I would like to say that the percentage increase year on year has been around the same per cent for about five years, so it is not extraordinarily large at the moment—

**Ms HILDYARD:** I find it worrying. I personally find it very worrying.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, questions have been asked in silence, answers will be given in silence. There is no need to interrupt the minister.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is not significantly higher this year than it has been in previous years. They have been around the same. If you averaged the last five years, there was one year where there was about a 13 per cent increase under Labor. If you took the average for five years, it has been around an 8 to 9 per cent increase of children. Yes, it is concerning. However, I will not apologise for removing a child from an unsafe environment where they are in danger. That is our role and we do it on the basis of the facts of a case, which are presented to a court, the court makes an order and we remove a child and we keep them safe under our guardianship.

As a whole of government we are working on early intervention. As you know, we have put money into intensive family support services, family group conferencing and family-led decision making. We are doing a lot more to support families to prevent removal. We also recently announced a social impact bond for reunification services, as well as another early intervention program that will be starting next year, so we are doing a lot to strengthen families and to work more with reunifying children. It is our role to remove children from unsafe environments.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I was going to ask you a question about prevention/early intervention resources, but I will move on, given your statement. Do you think that an increase in the number of children going into care is an indicator of not enough being done?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Not necessarily. It depends. When coming into government the numbers you would expect to go up because we actually answered more calls, did more investigations and we had more staff. In order to be able to do that, we had more resourcing, so one thing that can happen is that you remove more children because you are taking them out of harm's way.

However, we have also now experienced COVID, where new things are at play, so potentially higher domestic violence, more alcohol use. Drugs are prevalent in our society and in the whole of the country. These are issues that not only Australia is dealing with but the whole world. It is not an indication of how we are doing, it is an indication of society. We have to remove a child that is in danger. That is our role.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Given your answer, why did you state when you were opposition spokesperson that an increase in the number of children going into care is an indicator of not enough being done?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Because you had vacancies of over 200 on your frontline. You had the Nyland royal commission, the Layton royal commission and endless reports stating that the department back then, under the former government, was in chaos and that there was a rotten culture. There was understaffing. We have moved swiftly to fill vacancies, to broaden the qualifications, to change the culture, to train staff better, to nurture, to work as a whole of government, to put in help for mental health, drug and alcohol services, and domestic violence. We are working on this from every angle, and I will not apologise for removing children from danger.

**Mr MURRAY:** My question is based on the detail in Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 95, in particular the dot point which references the increased number of foster carers. I would ask the minister whether she could provide some detail regarding the increase in the number of foster carers and family-based care. My recollection is that we inherited roughly double the proportion of rotational-based care in our system compared with other states. So I would be interested in a contrast with what you inherited and, in particular, the achievement of an increase in family-based and foster carer numbers.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for Davenport for his question. You are correct, the number of non-family-based care was double the national average, and certainly we are working very hard to improve that figure. Where a child is no longer able to remain safely at home, in the first instance extensive scoping of family members is undertaken to find suitable carers. Where kinship carers are not located, we know that for the great majority of children, family-based care is preferred. Research shows that stability and permanency in a family-based setting gives better outcomes. Through Every Effort for Every Child, South Australia's strategy for children and young

people in care 2020-2023, DCP continues to review and improve carer recruitment and support services, based on carers' diverse needs and circumstances.

A key priority area of the strategy is to grow family-based care options for children and young people. My department is committed to expanding family-based care through contract reform, signing a statement of commitment with carers recognising and acknowledging the important role they play, setting up a carer retention and recruitment task force, supporting carers to obtain certificate IV, and funding a peak advocacy body connecting foster and kinship carers.

We have engaged in a statewide media campaign, including a *Sunday Mail* foster carer lift-out and statewide social media campaigns along with our non-government agencies. We have also committed more than \$720,000 to a once-off \$200 per child COVID payment to carers, and made statewide efforts to recruit and retain family-based carers, including developing a more streamlined approach to foster carer recruitment, assessment and training, as well as improving respite options for current carers.

The Marshall Liberal government is committed to growing family-based care in line with national benchmarks. The percentage of children in family-based care in South Australia as a proportion of all care has increased from 85.8 per cent in June 2019 to 86.3 per cent at June 2020. The government has partnered with existing and prospective carers and providers to develop and implement strategies aimed at improving carer retention and increasing carer recruitment. I am proud to say that we had growth in every foster care agency for the last quarter in the 2019 year and achieved a net increase of 82 foster carers in the 2019-20 financial year.

As part of our efforts to expand family-based care placement options, DCP has contracted three Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver a new two-year pilot service to support new kinship carers of Aboriginal children and young people. These include Aboriginal Family Support Services, KWW in partnership with Lutheran Community Care, and Incompro in partnership with UnitingCare Wesley Bowden. This pilot program recognises that Aboriginal organisations are best placed to support Aboriginal children and young people in care and is a significant step towards further embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

DCP will continue to support existing kinship carers and new carers of non-Aboriginal children and young people. The statement of commitment is a joint acknowledgement of the important role that foster and kinship carers play in looking after children under guardianship. This statement was a combined effort between my Department for Child Protection; our carers advocacy service, Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA; and our peak industry body, Child and Family Focus SA.

It outlines the foundation principles that contribute to a strong partnership approach between family-based carers, government and the sector to ensure that children under guardianship receive high-quality care. The statement highlights five key principles that guide our work with carers. Those five principles are that carers expect to be informed, supported, consulted, valued and respected in their roles. It is a reminder of our respectful and mutual roles and contributions.

Our carer retention and recruitment task force is focused on delivery of practical initiatives. Initiatives delivered in the 2019-20 financial year include the DCP carer website page developed to improve information-sharing with carers; a shared training calendar established to support carers' attendance at pre-approval training; carers' agreements implemented between services and carers to identify the carers' support and training needs and the actions required in response; and the publication of an online carer exit survey.

The task force's priorities include a continued focus on improving information-sharing, sector strategies to grow family-based care and to retain carers, improved education outcomes for children in care, and care engagement. I encourage those who may have thought about becoming a foster carer to take the next step to find out more at [fostercare.sa.gov.au](http://fostercare.sa.gov.au) or 1300 2 FOSTER.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, do you think the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service was a deserving winner of the Australia and New Zealand Mental Health Service Award?

**The CHAIR:** Do you have a budget reference, member for Reynell?

**Ms HILDYARD:** I am still going on what I was going on before.

**The CHAIR:** If you could repeat it for the benefit of the committee, please?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 97. Do you think it was a deserving winner?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is not part of my budget and it is not my responsibility.

**Ms HILDYARD:** When will the result of the tendering out of the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service be announced?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will hand that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you very much. Actually, our reunification services—the vast majority are delivered by non-government services; in fact, we have a pre-tender briefing this Friday. The majority of our reunification services are delivered by NGOs who have been delivering it for more than 10 years—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order, Mr Chair: I am asking specifically about this service, not about other reunification services.

**The CHAIR:** Could you repeat the question for the benefit of the committee?

**Ms HILDYARD:** I might just move on, if that is okay. Minister, have Mullighan recommendations 20, 23 and 24 been implemented to ensure all incidents of sexual abuse are monitored, whether they be peer to peer or external person abuse?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Could I have the budget reference, please?

**Ms HILDYARD:** It is on the same page that I mentioned.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Where is it listed? Could I please have the page reference?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Okay, I will go back to page 92, in relation to the very first sentence, 'the department's primary objective is to keep children and young people safe.' Have recommendations 20, 23 and 24 been implemented?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Would you like to read out the recommendations?

**Ms HILDYARD:** I am asking the questions, I think, Mr Chair.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The Mullighan report is not included in the budget. The Mullighan report was during the term of the former Labor government in around 2005 or 2006—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order, Mr Chair: I am asking a question in relation to the very first sentence in the Agency Statement, which states that the primary objective of the department 'is to keep children and young people safe'. This is a question that goes to the heart of that very important objective.

**The CHAIR:** I believe the minister was responding to the question and it was directly relevant, the information that she was providing.

**Ms HILDYARD:** She asked me where it was that I was referring to in the budget.

**The CHAIR:** If you could please allow the minister to provide a response.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Just for the record, the Mullighan report was around 2004 or 2005. There was a Labor government until 2018, so there were 13 or 14 years—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** —for the former government to address this point.

**The CHAIR:** There is no point of order. The information being—

**Ms HILDYARD:** I am asking a specific question about whether those recommendations have been implemented.

**The CHAIR:** The information being provided is directly relevant to the question that was asked. Minister, continue.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will check and take on notice whether the former Labor government, in their 14 years, adhered to those recommendations and whether we have since that time.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, again in relation to the objective, why did you continuously state in September this year that it was an old policy that meant you were not notified—

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, the minister's comments outside of this are not directly relevant to budget expenditure.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Sorry, I am referring to the objective for the agency of keeping children and young people safe. I have not even finished asking my question and you are ruling it out of order.

**The CHAIR:** I am ruling the question out of order based on the fact that a statement the minister has made, making a question based on that statement, has no relevance to a budget line within this budget.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Okay, I will move on; thank you. Minister, are you notified when children in care become pregnant?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will pass that to the CE because there is—

**Ms HILDYARD:** Sorry, this is a question about whether the minister is notified.

**The CHAIR:** The minister is able to direct questions to her staff if she so wishes. Minister.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will direct that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I can confirm that the minister is notified of significant incidents. In relation to a young person who is pregnant who is under the guardianship of the chief executive, as you would appreciate, young people over the age of 16 or 17 may very well find themselves in a consensual relationship, and that would not necessarily be a matter that I would raise with the minister. So I think it is fair to say I absolutely advise the minister of all significant incidents that come to my attention.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Would a child under 16 being pregnant be notified by you to the minister?

**The CHAIR:** Questions should be directed to the minister. If you could rephrase your question.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, are you notified when a child under 16 is pregnant?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will pass that to the CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** As I have just said, I will absolutely notify the minister of significant incidents that apply to all children and young people. I was illuminating that obviously some young people are over the age of 16.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, is the pregnancy of a child under 16 deemed a significant incident of which you would be notified?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will refer that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** What I can say is that we try to define significant incidents not by individual incidents but broad areas. If I just take you to the definitions that we currently provide, you will appreciate that they are broad and that we try to capture things such as an adverse event or a serious injury to a child or young person. We also try to pick up any area that we think means that we need to pay particular attention. We have provided definitions and we continue to refine those definitions.

I think what is really important is, if we get too fixed on a single definition, we will miss something. What we are trying to really say to staff—and we are doing work again next week with staff—is just to say, 'Actually we all have to pay attention to significant incidents.' I want to make sure that if a child or young person is missing lots of days at school that we are paying attention to that, or if a child or young person is not taking care of their health that we are alert to that.

Rather than fixating on whether a child or young person being pregnant is a significant incident, we have to pay attention to their age and obviously whether they are in a consensual relationship. I think it is very important. Fixed definitions are not going to assist child protection. What we have to do is absolutely pay attention. You are right to ask us about what matters we raise with the minister. We refer significant incidents to the minister. We talk about them. I meet with the minister on a weekly basis and we try to flag a whole variety and raft of issues because there really are a lot that can come within that broad definition.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Given what you have just said, over the course of the past financial year and the period since the closing of the financial year, has the pregnancy of any child under 16 been notified to you, minister?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will not be discussing individual cases but, as my CE said, we meet weekly. I am advised of significant cases and I will not be discussing individual cases.

**Mr McBRIDE:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 93, Program 1: Care and Protection. Can the minister please update the committee on the status of permanency pathways for children and young people in care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for MacKillop for his question and his interest in this area. Our government is committed to ensuring children and young people in care are provided with a range of permanency options that best support their stability and proved outcomes. The transfer of guardianship to approved carers has been available for some time now and can be in the best interests of many children in care. The decision to apply for a long-term guardianship order, previously known as other person guardianship (OPG), is made in consultation with the carer and the child or young person. The decision to make the order is a decision of the courts.

Where a court makes an order for a long-term guardianship specified person, this results in a change in the legal relationship between the child or young person and their carer to the age of 18. This change can lead to a greater sense of security and stability for both the carer and the child or young person and, in turn, to improved outcomes. My department continues to grow long-term guardianship as an important care option and during the 2019-20 financial year, 58 children have had their guardianship transferred and a further 40 families, with 54 children, are at various stages of this process.

Last September, I announced that I was proactively consulting on the practice of adoption from care as one of a range of permanency options in South Australia for children and young people in care. To assist with the legislative foundations for our adoption from care policy, the amendment bill introduced to parliament on 11 November, the Children and Young People (Safety) (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2020 included adoption provisions, which, if passed, will provide greater clarity and transparency for the operations of the government's policy.

From the outset, I have made it clear that adoption for Aboriginal children is not being considered. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle will continue to provide the framework for permanency planning for Aboriginal children and young people in care.

In 2019, targeted stakeholder consultation was undertaken. This included permanency consultation workshops that were hosted with key stakeholders to help shape South Australia's adoption from care policy. The core messages we heard throughout the consultations were that each child is different and that the decision to support adoption should be made according to the child's individual circumstances, taking into account their best interests, wellbeing and wishes. This is consistent with our child-centred approach to permanency planning generally.

Based on the information gathered from stakeholder consultation, a policy has been drafted that includes the following key elements:

- that adoption will be actively considered for children in care as part of a permanency planning process;
- that there must be an established relationship with the carer; and



- that financial payments will continue to be available so that no financial disadvantage exists; however it will be means tested, with adoptive parents expected to meet requirements for all or parts of Family Tax Benefit A.

Carers who do not meet the requirements for Family Tax Benefit A or who choose not to accept ongoing financial support payments will be paid a once-off transition payment of \$3,000 and an annual payment of \$1,500.

I have also gained agreement from my ministerial colleagues to ensure that children adopted from care will continue to receive education and health services, including the therapeutic supports they require. This is critical to addressing the impacts of the neglect and abuse that these children have experienced.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Do Kanggarendi staff and the family scoping team staff working together each as one team accord with DCP's practice principles in relation to operating in a culturally safe and appropriate way?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I thank the member for her question. I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work that the Kanggarendi team do. On 21 October 2019, the department wrote to the PSA to commence consultations regarding the proposed realignment of Aboriginal programs. A dedicated consultative group has been established for staff and management representatives to share information, discuss feedback on proposals and provide an opportunity for staff to contribute their suggestions and initiatives.

At this stage, no loss of FTEs is anticipated and the department remains committed to increasing its Aboriginal staff representations. I might pass over to the CE because this is part of a greater plan for the whole department where they are out in the field helping in individual offices.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you, minister. As the minister said, we are currently undertaking consultation in relation to Kanggarendi and the family scoping team. This response to feedback that we have received from the Aboriginal community and also the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children is about the importance of having Aboriginal staff in our offices and up-front.

In addition to looking at those two teams, we are also going to put more Aboriginal staff into our offices, so that we can actually have Aboriginal people dealing with Aboriginal families as they come into contact with our offices. We think that in fact this will have a really positive outcome in terms of cultural supports and cultural responsiveness for Aboriginal families and communities in South Australia.

It recognises that we already have Aboriginal family practitioners in a number of our offices, and this allows us to actually do this now across the entirety of the state. But obviously, at this point, we have not finalised this process.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, given the focused family scoping team was established via a direct recommendation of the Nyland royal commission, can you guarantee that this change will not reduce specialist services for Indigenous children in care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I might pass that to my CE, as she has already started talking about the family scoping units.

**Ms HILDYARD:** So can you guarantee that?

**Ms TAYLOR:** What I can guarantee is that we will continue to respond to Aboriginal families and communities in the most culturally responsive way. We definitely know, and we have seen the increases the minister has flagged, of the number of Aboriginal children who are now placed with family, and particularly with kin. It is so important. The good scoping of family, not just in terms of placement but in terms of support, is critical. So yes, I can guarantee that we will continue to be culturally responsive to Aboriginal families and communities.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Are Aboriginal women always provided with interpreters, where necessary, when discussion about the removal of children at birth is taking place?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Fiona Ward will take that question.

**Ms WARD:** Thank you for the question. I think it is a really important question, to ensure that Aboriginal people have access to information that they can understand. We absolutely have a manual of practice and provide guidance to staff. Obviously, for people whose English is not their first language—in fact, for many Aboriginal people it might be their third or fourth language—it is important that they are offered to bring someone with them who might have English as a language and can interpret it, but we also use interpreter services wherever we possibly can in the time frames.

**Ms HILDYARD:** What provisions in the budget have been made for the request from Grandparents for Grandchildren SA for \$600,000 per annum funding, to enable them to pay staff who run their outstanding organisation?

**Mr ELLIS:** Asking what is in the budget; you are meant to be referring to a budget line.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, member for Reynell.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I do not understand why that is an odd question, because it is in the expenses. They are total expenses; it is not listed whether Grandparents for Grandchildren is in there. I am sorry, I am not quite sure why I am being criticised by the member for Narungga for a totally legitimate question. Can we continue, please?

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Members, I know—

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms HILDYARD:** It is a really important question; can we answer it, please.

**The CHAIR:** Please. We are getting to 7 o'clock. I know it has been a long day for absolutely everybody. The member for Reynell has asked a question and the minister will respond.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** This is one of the responsibilities of the minister for the Department of Human Services.

**Ms HILDYARD:** How many places does the Guardian for Children and Young People need to visit to fulfil their role as children's visitor?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Could you please refer to a budget line?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes, I can. I refer to the total expenses line, as I did for the last question, page 96, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is the Minister for Education who funds the guardian. He is the responsible minister.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, are there any resources provided for the guardian, in their role as children's visitor, to visit children in care—so visiting children in care, which is your responsibility?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is not in our budget line. It is the responsibility of the Department for Education, so the Minister for Education. It is his budget line.

**Ms HILDYARD:** What funding is provided to the Guardian for Children and Young People to conduct annual reviews?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** That is in the education minister's budget. You would need to refer to him for that question.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, are you aware of what funding is provided to the Guardian for Children and Young People to visit children in care?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** It is not in my budget; it is not part of my responsibility. I meet with the Minister for Education and I meet with the guardian as well, but it is not part of my budget.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Going back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 97, why was there a 6.1 per cent decrease in investigations commencing within seven days?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will refer to Cathy Taylor.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you for the question. As the member raised earlier, we have obviously undertaken more investigations this year than ever before. Over the last three years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of investigations. Of those, we have both 24-hour responses and 10-day responses. It also reflects we are paying priority attention to the 24-hour responses and, likewise, responding to the 10-day responses. It is certainly the case that we are doing more investigations, and that we continue to pay attention to both the timely commencement and the timely completion of investigations.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Is this 6.1 per cent decrease in investigations commencing within seven days linked to the reduction of 14,583 CARL calls answered in 2019-20, compared with the previous year?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** No, it is not.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, do you think it is acceptable that this volume of calls has gone unanswered?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Just referring to your previous answer, if you are talking about the investigations—you were saying 6 per cent—the actual figure in the 2018-19 year was 80.9 per cent. There was a target of 83 but the actual was 76.9. So it is actually just a 4 per cent drop, just to correct the record. Could you repeat the current question?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, do you think it is acceptable that this volume of calls in the vicinity of 12,000 to 14,000 has gone unanswered? Do you think that is acceptable?

**The CHAIR:** While the minister is in discussion, Member for Reynell, if you could please refer to budget lines or refer to a budget line and read a reference.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I did. I already have.

**The CHAIR:** We have 10 minutes left; we can always try.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I already did at the beginning of this section.

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will refer to Cathy Taylor.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Point of order: I am asking whether you think it is acceptable.

**The CHAIR:** The member is able to refer questions when she deems appropriate.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Yes; I was just surprised.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Calls are not answered for a variety of reasons. A number of these are the result of measures implemented in the last few years, so we now have the suggestion that you can use the electronic notification system for non-urgent matters, and that message is obviously provided at the beginning of the call. One thing we know is that people recognise that if it is no longer an urgent matter they might actually decide to submit electronically.

In addition to that, we also have a message that explains the sort of information a caller needs to have ready. This might be that it is not just enough to say, 'I saw a little girl wandering down the road.' We might say to them, 'Can you identify for us any information.' It might be about an address, it might be about the nature of the abuse and neglect, and details relating to the caller.

The other ones also depend upon the number of calls that we are receiving, the complexity, but we also offer the option of a call-back service, and I think it is really important that people make that election if they do not necessarily want to hang on to talk to someone. We have seen a significant take-up in the call-backs. What I would say is, rather than seeing them as abandoned, I would see them as not answered. People are making decisions: 'If it is not urgent, I am going to refer it to an eCARL. It might be that I need to get further information.' We do follow up because we want to make sure that we are able to get to it.

Particularly during the COVID period, we also had the issue where we needed to, as I said earlier, split our teams into A and B so that we actually had them split across two different venues. That certainly put us in a position where we needed to think about how do we best respond?

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, what is the proportion referred to eCARL, as your CE just spoke about?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** For the calls received, in the 2019-20 year there were 65,334 calls received, and electronic reports (eCARLs) were 37,496, so totalling 102,830 contacts.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, do you agree that people waiting longer than ever to get through is symptomatic of a system at breaking point?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** Just to be clear, the average waiting time for the 2019-20 year for all call centre lines was five minutes and six seconds, which is a considerable improvement on when the previous government was in.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell, I will give you the call but also remind you that we have 10 minutes remaining in the session, so if you are going to read the omnibus questions it does take some time, as we have previously noted.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, in relation to the volume of calls that have gone unanswered, in your opinion, do you think the level of calls going unanswered is acceptable?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I think it is in keeping with previous years. Of course, the aim is to reduce that, and we are doing everything that we can. We have other referral services and we are expanding, as I have already mentioned, our early intervention and prevention services so that we can address families when they are notified early on. We have our family group conferencing. This is not a new thing. This has been the case for a very long time, and it has not increased by any extreme measure. We are working on many ways to reduce that.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, can you guarantee that this unacceptable level of unanswered care concern calls will be remedied?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I can guarantee we are working very hard to make improvements at every level—again, as I said, strengthening our community, our families, working on early intervention. We have just announced social impact bonds for more intensive family support services and reunifications. This is a whole of community issue. It is drug and alcohol related, mental health and domestic violence. They are the main reasons children are removed. They are the main reasons that people ring our Child Abuse Report Line. So as a whole of community, whole of government, whole of nation, we all need to be working on this.

**Ms HILDYARD:** What is the process exactly for foster carers being provided with information about care concerns being made against them?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I will pass that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I thank the member for the question. It was a Nyland recommendation that we review our care concern policy. We have undertaken that in the last couple of years and a new process is now in place. We have care concerns that are obviously differently graded. They might be a serious care concern, they might be a moderate care concern or a minor care concern.

One thing we have taken the time to do is working with Connecting Foster and Kinship Care and our agencies about the importance of actually talking to carers about care concerns. Certainly, some of the feedback that they provided to us when I first arrived was that they did not always know about minor care concerns or moderate care concerns. We have really flagged that it is very important for our staff to be able to work through that.

Obviously, serious care concerns require us to investigate those, and we will obviously talk to the carer as appropriate, obviously not wanting to jeopardise if, for example, it is a criminal matter or one that is involving the police. But it is certainly the case that we, as part of the work we do with carers, are working with them and taking a full care team approach to discuss care concerns with them.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, can you guarantee that the process just outlined is followed on every occasion?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** I am obviously not the person at the frontline. I will pass that to my CE.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I would never be so bold as to confirm that that is followed on every occasion. What I can say is that our carers, our agencies that support them, our staff, do an almighty job each and every day. I know that we are continuing, as we flagged earlier, to roll out the manual of practice. Certainly, the manual of practice talks about those critical practice principles and part of that is obviously about having those critical conversations.

So what I can say is we are embedding that and we are supporting our people to have those conversations. I am sure that from time to time a carer may raise a concern that they did not feel a matter was raised with them. It is obviously available to a carer to have an internal review if it is needed but I can absolutely say to you that we are a learning organisation. We recognise that we have come a long way but we still have a good way to go.

**Ms HILDYARD:** Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 105. Do you think that it is appropriate that the Treasurer seek \$4.5 million in efficiencies given the high number of children in care and the increased demand for services?

**The Hon. R. SANDERSON:** The Department for Child Protection has been given a \$4.5 million efficiency measure in line with whole-of-government; we are part of a whole team. This is to be achieved in the 2020-21 year which will apply on an ongoing basis. This will be achieved through four measures, including an overall reduction of 22 FTEs, equivalent to \$2.2 million in efficiencies, primarily in corporate support roles. Bear in mind that we have also had an increase in FTEs in our frontline roles. I believe it was 74 FTEs.

The areas of focus were non-client facing, including research, human resources and administration roles. The work of reviewing roles and responsibilities, identifying activities no longer required and duplicate activities that are being performed across key functional areas is ongoing. This FTE reduction will be managed through natural attrition and TVSPs. A reduction of \$1.5 million in childcare payments for children in family based care is as a result of childcare payments being paid by the commonwealth government rather than reimbursed by the department. This is a new arrangement with the commonwealth.

As of 1 July 2020, there were new legislative changes to two acts—A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act and A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act—where the maximum period for an Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) determination increased from 13 weeks up to 12 months for classes of children prescribed in the Minister's Rule which include children in foster care arrangements.

There was a reduction of \$0.5 million in staff learning and development and there was also a reduction of \$0.3 million as a result of changes to the engagement of drug and alcohol clinicians. Four clinicians were previously employed through a memorandum of administration. As to an arrangement with DASSA, this agreement was discontinued on 30 June 2020 with the same services being provided through a combination of in-house service delivery and access to DASSA services through their usual business channels. There is one continuing central worker who will be providing that as well as a manual of practice that has now been developed and is available in every office.

**Ms HILDYARD:** I have the omnibus questions as follows:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
  - What is the actual FTE count at 30 June 2020 and the projected actual FTE count for each year of the forward estimates?
  - What is the total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates?
  - What is the notional FTE job reduction target that has been agreed with Treasury for each year of the forward estimates?
  - Does the agency or department expect to meet the target in each year of the forward estimates?
  - How many TVSPs are estimated to be required to meet FTE reductions over the forward estimates?

2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
  - How much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2020-21, and for each of the years of the forward estimates period?
  - The top ten providers of goods and services by value to each agency reporting to the minister for 2019-20; and
  - A description of the goods and/or services provided by each of these top ten providers, and the cost to the agency for these goods and/or services.
  - The value of the goods and services that was supplied to the agency by South Australian suppliers.
3. Between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more which has either (1) been abolished and (2) which has been created?
4. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing:
  - the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier;
  - cost;
  - work undertaken;
  - reason for engaging the contractor; and
  - method of appointment?
5. For each department and agency for which the minister has responsibility:
  - How many FTEs were employed to provide communication and promotion activities in 2019-20 and what was their employment expense?
  - How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 and what is their estimated employment expense?
  - The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2019-20 and budgeted cost for 2020-21.
6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide a full itemised breakdown of attraction and retention allowances as well as non-salary benefits paid to public servants and contracts between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020.
7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2020, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices?
8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you detail:
  - (a) How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2019-20?
  - (b) What department funded these TVSPs? (except for DTF estimates)
  - (c) What number of TVSPs were funded?
  - (d) What is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how are these packages funded?
  - (e) What is the breakdown per agency/branch of targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year) by FTEs?

9. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive terminations have occurred since 1 July 2019 and what is the value of executive termination payments made?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what new executive appointments have been made since 1 July 2019, and what is the annual salary, and total employment cost for each position?

11. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many employees have been declared excess, how long has each employee been declared excess, and what is the salary of each excess employee?

12. In the 2019-20 financial year, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on operating programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2020-21?

13. In the 2019-20 financial year, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on investing or capital projects or programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2020-21? How much was sought and how much was approved?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years:

- (a) 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; and
- (g) Details, including the value and beneficiary, of any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.

15. For the period of 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, 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.

16. For each year of the forward estimates, please provide the name and budgeted expenditure across the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years for each individual investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

17. 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.

18. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total cost of machinery of government changes since 1 July 2019 and please provide a breakdown of those costs?

19. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what new sections of your department or agency have been established since 1 July 2019 and what is their purpose?

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

- What savings targets have been set for each year of the forward estimates?
- What measures are you implementing to meet your savings target?
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

**The CHAIR:** It is now 7.15pm and that is the time that has been allocated. That has now expired, therefore there are no further questions. I declare the examination of the portfolio agency Department for Child Protection completed and the estimates of payments for the Department for Child Protection closed.

At 19:15 the committee adjourned to Thursday 26 November 2020 at 9:00.