

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Thursday, 29 July 2021****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chair:**

Mr M.J. Cowdrey

Members:

Ms Z.L. Bettison

Mr D.R. Cregan

Dr R.M. Harvey

Ms J.M. Stinson

Mr T.J. Whetstone

Ms D. Wortley

*The committee met at 09:00**Estimates Vote***DEPARTMENT FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT, \$43,949,000****Minister:**

Hon. S.J.R. Patterson, Minister for Trade and Investment.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms L. Muldoon, Chief Executive, Department for Trade and Investment.

Ms M. Antcliff, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Trade and Investment.

Ms S. Adlaf, Director, Strategic Operations, Department for Trade and Investment.

Mr J. Ross, Director, Policy and Analytics, Department for Trade and Investment.

Ms R. Lang, Manager, Finance Procurement and Facilities, Department for Trade and Investment.

The CHAIR: Good morning and welcome back to Estimates Committee B. I will open with some remarks from the Chair. The estimates committees are a relatively informal process and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers; potentially not in this case. Can the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition confirm the timetable for today's proceedings, previously distributed, is accurate? I will take the indifference as a yes.

Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur, and I have a number of those to make in a minute or so. 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 24 September 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. A member who is not a member of the committee may ask a question

at the discretion of the Chair. All requests are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response, should they wish.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identified 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*. I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply in committee. Consistent with the rules of the house, photography by members from the chamber floor is not permitted while the committee is sitting.

Ministers and members may not table documents before the committee. However, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution. 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. 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.

We will begin today with the portfolio of the Department for Trade and Investment. The minister appearing is the Minister for Trade and Investment. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and call the minister to make an opening statement, if he wishes.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chair. I would like to introduce the department representatives who we have here today. To my left, your right, we have Ms Leonie Muldoon, Chief Executive, Department for Trade and Investment. Also, behind me is Ms Megan Antcliff, deputy chief executive; Ms Sophie Adlaf, director, strategic operations; Ms Rebecca Lang, manager, finance procurement and facilities; and Mr Justin Ross, director, policy and analytics.

I am pleased to be here to talk about the work of my department in what has been one of the most challenging periods on record. Despite this, we have continued to drive investment, drive exports and create jobs and careers for people in South Australia, positioning our state as a global investment destination. However, the recent lockdown we have had in South Australia, and also the deteriorating situation in New South Wales, serve to illustrate as a reminder of just how delicate this situation is and how quickly things can change.

Reflecting back on the past year, how South Australia has performed and what my department has been able to achieve, there is much to be proud of. On the investment front, my department has delivered significant investment and was directly responsible for \$703 million worth of foreign direct investment in the last financial year, creating more than 3,495 direct and ongoing full-time equivalent jobs for South Australians. This is a significant achievement, considering the extremely constrained environment the world has been operating in for the past 18 months.

If we include the 1,688 construction jobs associated with these projects, we have achieved a total of 5,183 jobs for South Australians. Through foreign and local investment, the Department for Trade and Investment has been directly involved in achieving almost \$1 billion worth of investment over the past financial year. Some examples of the businesses we have attracted to South Australia over the previous year include global tech companies like Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud and MTX Group. These follow from on Accenture establishing in South Australia, creating 2,000 jobs.

A lot of the investments in this area focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and the world-class expertise we have in this space, thanks to institutions like the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML) and the MIT Living Lab. As a government we have been focused on investing in areas where we can be globally competitive, and this is definitely an area in which we excel, which is why in this budget we have committed to our new \$1.6 million AI in health program, to further grow and commercialise this important sector and create jobs.

Other significant investments include Qantas announcing its regional hub with new Embraer E190 aircraft based at Adelaide Airport and DCI data centres investing \$70 million expanding their data centre facility. I am happy to talk about these and many other investments in detail later on. For small-scale investments we have the Landing Pad program, which continues to attract international companies with high growth potential. Last financial year, a total of 14 overseas and interstate companies were welcomed as South Australia Landing Pad grant recipients.

My department is also leading the across government economic reform agenda in Growth State and assisting South Australian companies within our priority sectors to apply for funding through the Australian government's national modern manufacturing initiative (MMI). Almost a year ago the Invest in South Australia website was launched, showcasing investment opportunities. Currently, there are around 38 investment opportunities listed, and it has supported the sale of investments such as the Titanium Security Arena, a \$30 million investment. This has been a crucial tool for our overseas office network, which has been vital in connecting businesses with investors and investment opportunities.

Moving to trade, despite a significantly disrupted and challenging year, we have continued to deliver, facilitating \$54.3 million worth of exports and 179 successful trade outcomes for South Australian exporters. The Department for Trade and Investment also supported 141 South Australian businesses to become first-time exporters or to enter new markets. We have continued to invest in our network of trade offices around the globe—a signature policy of this government—with a new trade and investment office in Singapore to cover South-East Asia, and new trade and investment specialists in Seoul in South Korea, New Delhi in India and New York in the United States.

In this budget we have doubled down on our policy and are investing in a trade and investment office in Paris, France, to cover Europe, and I am happy to talk about these and many other successes in detail a little later. As I have already mentioned, digital engagement has been the cornerstone of our work through 2020-21. During that time the department has delivered 88 digital webinars, seminars, business-to-business matching and hybrid events. We have also just finalised our business-to-business virtual platform to enable clients to interact efficiently with both the Department for Trade and Investment's trade advisers, our overseas offices and companies around the world, further bolstering our capabilities.

In other trade programs, we launched the second round of the eCommerce Accelerator Program, round 9 of the South Australian Export Accelerator Program and the \$2.2 million Global Expansion Program. Again, I can talk about these in detail a little later on. From a whole-of-state trade perspective, South Australia has done exceptionally well, despite the global headwinds. In the year to May 2021, South Australian merchandise exports totalled \$12.6 billion, a 13.7 per cent increase compared with the year to May 2020 and more than \$1 billion ahead of last year's export performance.

I note that preliminary trade data has also been released for June 2021, giving us the latest financial year. Subject to any revisions when the final trade estimates are released for June, this pointed to yet further growth. In fact, we achieved an all-time record high of \$12.8 billion for South Australian merchandise exports. This was up 15.1 per cent on the 2019-20 financial year.

Despite the positive trade numbers, there are many challenges still ahead, which is why in this budget we launched the new \$5.4 million Wine Export Recovery and Expansion Program to support South Australian wineries, increase commercial opportunities, diversify into new markets and grow sales channels.

Lastly, we continue to work with the education sector on a plan to bring international students back to our state, which has been endorsed by the Australian government. We are the first jurisdiction to receive this approval. International students are a vital part of our society, culture and economy, and the objective is to have them back in South Australia very soon through our International Student Arrival Plan.

To not take up any more time, I will quickly summarise by saying that it has been an incredibly difficult year, but throughout it all my department has risen to the challenge, delivering for South Australia through stimulating significant investment and trade outcomes. As the world still grapples with COVID-19, South Australia is well positioned to further enhance our economy. We will continue to focus on driving investment, driving export growth and creating jobs and careers for people in South Australia.

The CHAIR: Lead speaker for the opposition, did you wish to make an opening comment?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I do not have an opening remark. I think we will go straight to the omnibus questions. The member for Badcoe has kindly offered to do those.

The CHAIR: That is what we call a handball. Member for Badcoe, proceed.

Ms STINSON: Absolutely.

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
 - What is the actual FTE count at 30 June 2021 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; and
 - 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 2021-22, and for each of the years of the forward estimates period;
 - The top 10 providers of goods and services by value to each agency reporting to the minister for 2020-21;
 - A description of the goods and/or services provided by each of these top 10 providers, and the cost to the agency for these goods and/or services; and
 - The value of the goods and services that were supplied to the agency by South Australian suppliers?
3. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 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 (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 2020 and 30 June 2021 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 2020-21 and what was their employment expense;
 - How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and what is their estimated employment expense;
 - The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2020-21 and budgeted cost for 2021-22?
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 contractors between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2021, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices?

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

- How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2020-21;
- What department funded these TVSPs (except for DTF estimates);
- What number of TVSPs were funded;
- 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; and
- 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 2020 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 2020 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 2020-21 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 2021-22?

13. In the 2020-21 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 2021-22? How was much sought and how much was approved?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Balance of the grant program or fund;
- Budgeted (or actual) expenditure from the program or fund;
- Budgeted (or actual) payments into the program or fund;
- Carryovers into or from the program or fund; and
- 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 2020 to 30 June 2021, 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 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 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 2020 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 2020 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; and
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 114, looking at the objectives of trade and investment. How many jobs in South Australia are related to the export of our goods and services? The department advised in November 2020 that there were 74,220 FTE jobs, down from 79,000. What is the current advice?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised in terms of this figure as well—it is worth the committee noting—it is a derived figure, so it is not in the ABS statistics. It is done with the best modelling intentions, but that is, I think, a caveat that is worth considering, and I will touch on that a little bit later. In terms of the numbers for the 2019-20 year that you are looking for, I am advised that that number is 74,220 exporters.

As I said in my opening remarks, it certainly has been a tough year for exporters, but we know as a state and as a government that what we are really leaning in on and knowing is that to help grow our economy, one of the big levers that we have at our disposal is to grow exports. We are firmly committed to growing exports and helping out all those export companies and through that the jobs that come out of that, at an estimated value of 74,222. It is worth knowing they involve export more broadly as well.

If I could just reiterate that it has been hard for these exporters because of international border closures. Naturally, being an exporter you would want to be into those international markets and that has unfortunately not occurred because of international border closures. In lieu of that, we are leaning in and helping these exporters and these over 74,000 export jobs via our significant trade office network. That has been really useful for all our exporters over this period of time. As I said in my opening statements, we have rolled out some trade offices. We have further leaned in on that in the 2020-21 financial year, opening up Seoul in South Korea, which is an emerging market. It is going to be—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Sorry, Chair, my question was very specific. I have lots of questions and would like to move on.

The CHAIR: We are very early in proceedings, so I am going to give the minister a little bit of slack to provide an answer to you.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: He did provide the answer.

The CHAIR: Yes, he is able to provide an answer as he wishes.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chair. I do feel it has been such a challenging year for these exporters and there is concern and they want to know what the government is doing to assist them because it is really important for our state's economy. It is not just these 74,000 jobs, of course, that rely on exports, it is all the indirect jobs that come out of it as well. I will continue on and further explain our assistance to these exporters in New York as well, which is a significant

market. It is our second biggest export market, with over \$900 million of trade there. So opening up in New York where we did not have a presence is very important.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: It is not relevant.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: New Delhi is an emerging market as well, and we are helping out exporters there, and just recently, we opened a trade office in Singapore. That ASEAN region has a massive growing middle-class food bowl. They are ravenous for our food and that will assist our exporters. Thank you for allowing me that time to reassure our exporters that while they cannot travel we are helping them out.

The CHAIR: That was a very fulsome answer, minister.

Mr WHETSTONE: Mr Chair, a point of clarification: I am just wondering whether the member for Badcoe has some form of dispensation for not having to wear a mask.

Ms STINSON: Thank you, I appreciate the reminder. I was speaking earlier and I neglected to put it back on.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Members, let's—

Ms STINSON: As a point of clarification, Mr Chair, I understand that if we are speaking then we do not have to wear it, but maybe you could shed some light on that.

The CHAIR: Correct.

Mr WHETSTONE: Were you speaking?

Ms STINSON: Well, I was, yes—and I am speaking right now; there are words coming out of my mouth.

The CHAIR: Members, from both sides, please!

Mr WHETSTONE: Do as you are told.

Ms STINSON: Oh, sorry, I have to do as you tell me, is that what you are saying?

Mr WHETSTONE: What, are you going to bully me like you bully your staff?

Ms STINSON: You just told me to do as I am told. By you?

Mr WHETSTONE: Are you going to bully me like you bully your staff?

Ms STINSON: By you? You are going to tell me to do as I am told?

The CHAIR: Members!

Mr WHETSTONE: You are a bully!

Ms STINSON: Whatever!

The CHAIR: Members, this is completely unacceptable.

Ms STINSON: It is completely unacceptable.

The CHAIR: Completely unacceptable—

Mr WHETSTONE: Put your mask on.

The CHAIR: Completely unacceptable, from both sides. Please, enough! We are here to do a job for the people of South Australia. Let's remind ourselves of that. Member for Ramsay.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will ask two questions in one, and I am asking specifically: how many South Australian businesses are considered exporters, and how many direct clients of DTI are there?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Seeing it is a two-part question, I have the first question at hand and while I am answering that we will be able to provide you with the second answer. In terms

of the number of South Australian merchandise exporters that we have here, this is ABS data so we can rely upon its accuracy. It talks to 3,000 merchandise exporters, according to the latest data available. Of course, this will be updated as we go along. You will notice that in the opening remarks and the highlights of these export companies it talks to the number of South Australian companies we have assisted; however, that is by no means the entire number on the database. As we are waiting for that information, the number in the database—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: We will give it a little bit more time but while we are waiting for that, it also talks to the TradeStart network that the department has here. We have TradeStart officers and they are really the conduit between these South Australian exporters and the global network. In the highlights it talks to this network assisting over 120 new exporters and companies to capture these new markets. In the absence of an answer I will take the second question on notice.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you, minister. Moving on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 116. Why has the budget for the DTI office relocation and refurbishment gone from a budget estimate in 2020-21 of \$448,000 to a total project cost of \$879,000?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that as part of the relocation into the new SA Water building, the original budget—once the move started happening the furniture there or the office fit-out was not fit for purpose and so that caused more money to be spent on the fit-out. However, the long-term advantage of this move is that it will reduce the costs around the lease. It is also worth noting that the accounting standards—how this lease was accounted—have changed. However, on a long-term basis, this will produce savings that can then be reinvested back into supporting South Australian exporters and attracting investment into South Australia.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Does this include the \$120,000 expended in 2019-20 or is that in addition, taking it to more than a million dollars?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that that includes the 120.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So the full cost of relocation for this department is \$879,000?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes, that is what I am advised is the full capital cost.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Looking at the answer, this is a blowout of more than \$430,000. You have mentioned that the office fit-out was not fit for purpose: who approved the previous office fit-out?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Of course, I was not the minister at the time the move was put in place. However, it occurred right at the outset of COVID and so there were further delays in terms of that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Did I hear you correctly? The former minister signed off on this fit-out?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: No, you did not hear that. What I said is I was not there. I was not the minister at the time, so I am just being advised. From what I have here, the government office accommodation committee approved this.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can you please provide an itemised spend for this blowout, including a breakdown of the refurbishment costs and the relocation costs?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: We will take that on notice.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: You will take that on notice? Fantastic. I am quite concerned that we have spent nearly a million dollars relocating an office. It is obviously a very important part of our economy, but was this the right decision, given the challenges, the difficult time that we are facing at the moment? Do you think it was a mistake to spend nearly a million dollars on relocation?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that in the previous premises the department was spread across four floors and now this relocation allows them to move to a single floor, open plan. That, of course, gets all the synergies of having people working alongside each other, so just from an operational and staff effectiveness point of view, there is a big upside there.

In terms of the actual money itself, I am advised that the rent reduction from moving into this facility is in the order of about \$500,000 per annum in operating costs and therefore repays itself. As I said, that money is able to be used at an operational level to further other programs—assist South Australian exporters to grow their business to assist investment into the state.

Maybe I could talk about one of the great programs that we are running. We talked about exporters and the challenges they have had, being unable to travel. That has brought into play digital as a really effective tool to be able to connect. One of the fantastic programs the department has run during COVID—we have had to be nimble and adapt—is the eCommerce Accelerator Program. That is a fantastic program, which actually allows businesses to upgrade their—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Point of order: my point of order is relevance.

The CHAIR: Yes, I will uphold the point of order, Member for Ramsay.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you. Minister, since you became the minister, have you had the opportunity to cease this relocation and this spend of nearly a million dollars?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, it is providing an ongoing rental saving of \$500,000 every year.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: No, my question is did you have the opportunity to stop this happening?

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay, the minister can answer the question as he sees fit. Like any proceedings of the house, we let the minister provide his answer.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I refer you to my previous answer. I think it speaks for itself.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Can you explain the significant increase in cost of fleet vehicles outlined in the budget, from \$68,000 in 2020-21 to \$100,000 in 2021-22?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that this change relates to a change in accounting standards, which relates to capitalisation of fleet vehicle leases. That is why the figure has become \$100,000.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: With your increased digital footprint and our restricted movement, would you expect this to decrease in cost in the future?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: To help you with the answer, these leases relate to our TradeStart advisers. We have seven who operate, and a number of those TradeStart advisers are in the regions. In Eyre Peninsula, for example, it is a massive network they have to cover, including as far away as Port Pirie. I have been there many times and been accompanied by the TradeStart adviser, both in Port Pirie and in Port Lincoln and also down in Mount Gambier.

So these are used to assist our regional businesses to connect with exporters. It is a vital network. As I said, our TradeStart advisers have assisted over 120 businesses to generate some really positive results. In terms of the accounting treatment, as I said, they did change.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Minister, let's move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 120. This activity indicator talking about international student enrolments was discontinued in March of 2021, but you obviously have a plan to recommence international student arrivals. When will the international students start to arrive in South Australia? Which countries will they be from? How many do you expect to arrive each month?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said in my opening statement—I think it has also been released in June—the industry itself is a vital sector for the South Australian economy. It contributed over \$2 billion in the 2019-20 financial year, so from an economic point of view it is very important. Just from the social and cultural fabric, students are very important as well. With the closure of international borders in March 2020, there were many students who were getting towards the end of their studies and were stranded overseas. That has continued to increase, I am advised. The last estimates were around 10,000 students.

It is imperative, long term, that these students have a pathway back, and so we were the first state to announce a pilot program to try to get some students to come back. That was about ready

to be undertaken when the cluster occurred in November 2020, but since then we have still been working with the sector to try to find a way where this important part of our society can come back.

As I said, some of these students while they have been overseas have been able to continue to study online. I think the universities have been fantastic in providing that support. The state government provided a \$13.8 million student support package as well to help these students who were here in South Australia over the course of COVID. We have continued to progress working with them.

The industry has identified a site that could be potentially used for students to come back and quarantine because, of course, COVID quarantine has to occur for all international arrivals. The federal government was quite clear in this, and the state government has been supportive, that there are so many Australians stranded overseas that we do not want to see one Australian not able to come back because of these student arrival plans.

It has been mandated that these arrivals are outside of the flight caps and outside of quarantine. Hence, this site at Flight Training Adelaide out at Parafield has been identified. It is cabin-style accommodation, not really suitable to, I suppose, a quarantine facility for returning Australians.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Excuse me, minister, I was quite specific about my question about when. When, which countries and how many will arrive per month?

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay, you are entitled to raise a point of order. The minister is able to answer as he sees fit.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: It is important to put it in context because it is an issue that I think needs to be understood by the committee and also by the broader community. I think overall people understand that these students have spent their time sometimes investing four years. They can do all that they can online but they need to finish off some practicals. They need to come back here.

As I said, the Flight Training Adelaide school has cabin-style accommodation. It is envisaged to be able to cope with about 160 students at a time. These need to be quarantined for 14 days of course, so if you do the numbers, after they have been quarantined, there are probably two cycles a month. That gives you a bit of an indication about the numbers.

It does have to be signed off by the Chief Medical Officer, so the plan initially submitted to the commonwealth has been signed off by the Chief Medical Officer. That has gone through to the federal education minister, Minister Tudge, and has been approved. That is just one part of the process. That has been well received.

Since then, there has been a sector reference group set up. The offer has gone out to many of the institutions and universities. There is the ELICOS sector. There is TAFE as well. That gives you a bit of an idea about the sector support for this but it is going to have to work with the expert advice as well in terms of where these students are coming from. Of course, the universities know which students are most in need. They are the ones the universities are wanting to have the ability to come back first.

That is one of the issues, but of course there is also the fact that it has to be done in a safe and healthy way, so there will be advice relied upon when it gets to that stage, when the universities have been able to identify students, from the AHPPC and from the centre of communicable diseases branch as well in terms of saying which markets are able to allow repatriating students to come here. But, at all stages, it is being done methodically.

Our aim is for it to occur as soon as possible but only when it is safe, working with the medical advice. What has held South Australia in good stead through this whole pandemic is the expert advice given by the medical officers. We will be guided by that and so will this plan as well.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Just so I am clear, your expectation is there would be 320 students per month and you would like this to commence as soon as possible.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: What I would say is as soon as is safe, of course. We are being very methodical and listening to the expert advice.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Talking about safe, given the recent outbreaks in New South Wales—and of course they have just extended lockdown for another four weeks—Victoria and here, New South Wales has announced a pause on bringing in international students. Are you still on schedule for what you intended to do? What was the original start date? What is our start date now that you are working towards?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, the plan was announced in June and things change. You do need to be agile. There have been lockdowns in Victoria, New South Wales and even here, so that no doubt will cause some delays in terms of how it goes about, but in terms of the expert advice I see that it is still reliant on that.

The other thing worth noting is around the border closures as well. Where there is a commonwealth hotspot, that is how that impacts on the plan. The federal government ultimately will need to consider that as well. Our expert advice will be considered in terms of that, but we are working collaboratively, as I said, with SA Health, with universities and with the international education sector. It is not being rushed; it is being done in a safe way and I expect that to continue.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Minister, just so I am clear: 320 students a month as soon as possible. You are not actually able to tell me here, tell the committee, which countries these students are coming from. I think you would probably be able to tell me your top three countries, but as of today surely you have a pathway forward, you have a date that you are working to. Can you share that date here with the committee?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, this is an industry-led plan. The sector reference group are meeting continually around this. They will be guided by the expert advice. It is not my place to put my—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: You are the minister responsible. On 5 July, the Australian *Financial Review* reported that a spokesperson for the federal education department said the government was in discussion with all states and territories about the return of international students when conditions allow. You said you had a sign off by the Chief Medical Officer. You said you have been approved by the federal education minister. Do you still have that approval? Is that approval live right now?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes, I am advised that the approval remains.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So you have a green light for us to bring back international students today. When was the last time you discussed these plans with the commonwealth?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Your statement before is misleading. What is your final statement? What is your question?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am sorry, I did not hear you.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Your statement is misleading so I reject the statement, and can you ask the question again?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My statement is misleading, that on 5 July the Australian *Financial Review* reported that the federal education department was in discussion with all states and territories about the return of international students?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: That was not what I was referring to.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: What are you referring to?

The CHAIR: Perhaps, minister, you would like to provide an answer to that question and perhaps in that process clear up what you wish to say.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: That is why I am asking for the question, Chair.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: My question was: when was the last time you discussed with the commonwealth your plans for returning international students?

Mr CREGAN: In which budget line does this appear?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 120, Activity indicator, South Australia's share of international student enrolments in Australia.

The CHAIR: Continue, minister.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I was saying before, it is a complex process. First, the plan was submitted. The first part of the plan had to get signed off by the Chief Medical Officer. As I said, we are listening to the health advice, but that is one part. The universities, the education institutions, they need to work their way through this. They need to identify the cohorts of students that are most in need and satisfy the health conditions, and then the students have to come back. My comments from before stand. We have to work our way through this methodically, with the safety of South Australians as a priority.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: On 18 June, you issued a press release regarding the approval by the commonwealth for an international student arrival plan. In the very last paragraph, you state, and I quote:

One of the Commonwealth's pre-conditions for when students arrive is that the state border must be open for domestic travel...

Obviously, now that our border is shut to New South Wales and will be closed for the foreseeable future, it will be a challenge for this to happen. Have you requested that the commonwealth remove this precondition?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I think the thing to clarify about that precondition is that it takes into account whether there are declared hotspots, which is the case at the moment. That will have to be worked through, but, yes, the intent of it is that borders are open between states where there is not a commonwealth declared hotspot.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: As it stands today, we do not have a start date, although you would like to proceed with it as soon as possible. We have had all the ticks, we have had the green light from the commonwealth. The precondition still stands that, while our border is shut to New South Wales or any of our borders, you cannot proceed; is that correct?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: It is worth pointing out that, for a particular jurisdiction, it relies on their borders being open, as opposed to another jurisdiction having their borders closed. The other caveat is around commonwealth-declared hotspots as well, so where there is a commonwealth-declared hotspot that protocol around borders is not to stand.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Sorry, can I just be clear: we would have to have no commonwealth-declared hotspots and all borders open for this to go ahead?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: You have misunderstood that. Where there is not a commonwealth-declared hotspot, then the border would have to be open is what I am advised.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Where there is not a commonwealth hotspot, the border would have to be open?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: That is what I am advised. That is what is in the protocols and preconditions by the commonwealth government for us to proceed.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Would you be willing to table that information provided by the commonwealth?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: It is a publicly released document I am fairly certain, their protocols and preconditions, so there is no need for me to provide it.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So that information is publicly available?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes, I am advised that the protocols and preconditions for international student arrivals is available for you to look at. You will be able to work your way through. We have worked our way through that, as has the industry. It is an industry-led plan. It is really important to understand that the industry is leading the sector—it is a really important sector, as I have explained before—and they are working hard on this. This is really important for those students, for the sector.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Will all international students be required to be vaccinated before they arrive in South Australia?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, as we work our way through the universities and the institutions, they need to identify their students and then, in consultation with the expert health advice, which relies on SA Health and also on the Communicable Diseases Control Branch, the experts there, the AHPPC (Australian Health Protection Principal Committee), which will provide input to that as well. That is quite important. That is what we have been working on. Going into that, it was signed off by the Chief Medical Officer. I have to stress that we have relied with our responses throughout this whole pandemic on the expert advice, and we will continue to do so.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I am just a little unclear, minister: will vaccination be mandatory for international students to participate in this program?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I think my response before explained it—I rely on my previous response.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I think there is a lack of clarity here, because people are looking for certainty. If you are going to do this, South Australians want to know that the students will be vaccinated, how you are going to accredit it and what vaccinations will be acceptable for this purpose. When the Chief Medical Officer signed off, was there a condition that the students be vaccinated, and did it detail which vaccinations are acceptable?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: In terms of the quarantine facility, I am advised—because you have to remember the quarantine facilities are to take these students—that it has been signed off by the Chief Medical Officer in terms of the risk profile of countries, whether people are vaccinated and what vaccinations they have used. Once institutions identify their students—that of course is required—then SA Health can look at it in consultation, as I said, with the AHPPC and the CDCB as well; that is really important.

We have to put in place a quarantine facility because we know that vaccines do not stop transmission. Vaccination just means, for the people who get the vaccines, that the effects of COVID are mitigated. So we still have to treat people, from a health perspective, with quarantine. That is what the facility at Flight Training Adelaide is about: doing it safely. We have relied on expert advice previously throughout this pandemic and, again, the plan has been signed off by the Chief Medical Officer; it has held us in good stead.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Minister, I want to be really clear here. We have the green light to go ahead with this. There are some preconditions that are still there, but had we not been in lockdown, and had New South Wales and Victoria not been in the situation they were in when we closed the border, you would have had the green light. However, you cannot tell me if the students need to be vaccinated, what vaccination is appropriate and how you would accredit it. Is it correct that right now you cannot tell South Australians that?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: In terms of the process, as I said, the first stage is to get approval from the federal government that, as a jurisdiction, we can progress our International Student Arrival Plan. It did not mean that the very next day the plan could be implemented. There were conditions that had to be gone through, and they are still being worked through with the institutions. As I said, this is an industry-led plan and we are still working through a lot of those issues. That is done in conjunction with expert health advice.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: What will be the staffing model at the Parafield quarantine facility? Will it be police, police security officers, private security or health staff?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, those details are still being finalised, but they are working very closely with SAPOL and SA Health, relying on expert advice, to make sure that the health of South Australians is paramount.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Perhaps you could take that on notice for me, to be clear about the staffing model of the Parafield quarantine facility.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, it is still being finalised. Once it is finalised we should be able to respond, if we are able to do that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Thank you. Perhaps we will seek a briefing for that. Will the international students be coming on charter flights or commercial flights?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, some of the preconditions for the International Student Arrival Plan are that it is done outside the flight caps and also that it does not displace Australians who need to go into medi-hotels, so that as many Australians can return as possible. In the actual preconditions and protocols it says that the preference is for commercial flights. Those details are still being worked through. Once the institutions have been able to identify their cohorts it will further inform what the flight use would be and what flights are available.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Given that this is a pilot program, who will evaluate the success of the trial and on what criteria?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: In terms of the evaluation, I am advised there will be a number of players. SA Health will definitely be involved in that because that is one of the primary factors in any evaluation—a health perspective. SAPOL will be involved as well. The higher education sector will have to evaluate it, because it is not only the actual pilot itself.

Part of the preconditions is that once those students are out of quarantine they are continuing studies as well. How they have been supported, from a pastoral care point of view once they are integrated back into the university, is really very important for them as well. That will give a number of perspectives, and my department, which is working with industry, will also have input into that.

As I said, there is a sector reference group at the moment trying to contribute. We understand that it is really important to have a successful plan because it sends a message. In terms of the numbers, as I said there are about 10,000 students who cannot get back into South Australia and study. This can take—as we said before there is 160 at a time, so you can see that is not a big number compared to the 10,000.

What it does, though, is send a message that there is a pathway there: students can start their studies online, they can enrol in courses based in South Australia and then eventually they will be able to do face-to-face learning. Studies show, when they are doing surveys of these students, that they really do value the face to face. Online is important to them. They value the information and education they get from our institutions, and it is world class; however, the face to face is really important. It gives them other aspects—just the cultural issues of coming to another country.

From a South Australian perspective, this pilot sends a really good message. Even for Australia as well it is really important, I think, for Australia's positioning in the world from an international education point of view. It really does put a lot of focus onto Australia and says, 'There is a pathway for you to study in South Australia.'

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: On your numbers, we are looking at about 4,000 students a year coming through the Parafield quarantine facility. What will be the total cost of the trial? Who is going to be paying for it? Is it funded by government or the universities or will it be a full cost recovery?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: In terms of arriving at the cost, there obviously will be a cost for the Flight Training Adelaide quarantine facility. It has been quite well known within the industry sector and among the students that the students and the international education providers, the education institutions—and also in terms of the actual accommodation provided by Flight Training Adelaide—would bear the bulk of the costs. That has always been up-front. They have known that. They are still working through it, of course. Once they identify the student cohorts and all the protocols are in place, that will give them the cost and then that will allow the student to make a decision to come or not.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So when we consider the cost to the state, is it an 80-20 split, a 70-30 split? What will be our overheads? Obviously, we are going to have a lease cost for the Parafield quarantine facility. I guess my question is: how long is this lease for with Parafield? Obviously, we are going to have to take some responsibility. What are the costs to the state?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: We have had to be agile on this in terms of COVID and how long it takes. Those leasing considerations will, of course, be worked through by the sector reference group. We are all hopeful that we can get back to normal life as soon as possible and that international borders will open up. I do not think it is helpful to give a time line at this stage.

In terms of the costs, there may be some incidental costs associated with it because there are police involved in terms of making sure the quarantine arrivals land at the airport and then they get out to the centre. There are police resources that are used for that, health resources for COVID testing and things like that. So there are incidental costs, but as I said—and it has always been well advertised so that the education providers and the students are quite clear on this—the bulk of the costs will be borne by students, the educational institutions and Flight Training Adelaide itself, which is doing the quarantine facility.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Minister, will you, through DTI, take responsibility for the head lease of the Parafield quarantine facility? Will you be signing off on this lease?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that my department will not be—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: The department is not signing off?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: —signing a lease, no.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Are there any discussions about expanding the capacity at the current Parafield Airport to cater for more international students? You have indicated about 4,000 a year, 320 a month, but are there discussions going that this could be larger, post the pilot?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, the sector reference group containing the institutions are working their way through this. Let's be quite clear that what we have submitted to the plan countenances that site and that site only.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So that is the only site we are looking at? We are not looking Edinburgh Air Force Base, nothing else is under consideration?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: We have submitted the plan because it requires health to sign off on any plan. I think it is quite clear that you need to look at a particular site. We have put the plan through with this site and that is where we are going. As I said, this is a pilot. Let's get this going as soon as possible, taking into account those health and safety requirements. Let's get that worked through.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Moving to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 130, Statement of cash flows. The funding for the Agent General was allocated \$174,000 in 2019-20, but is estimated to be \$394,000 in 2021-22. What has caused the significant increase in funding for this position over this short time period?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Could you tell me which line that was again, which budget paper?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: We are looking at the statement of cash flows, page 130.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Could you repeat the question, please?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Funding for the Agent General was allocated at \$174,000 in 2019-20, but is budgeted to be \$394,000 in 2021-22.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: You will notice in the budget line for 2021 there is \$388,000, and then moving to \$394,000. What I am advised is that it accounts for a full-time role but in fact is actually part time, and hence the difference between the actual and the budgeted amount because the role itself, which is appointed by the Premier I might add, is on a part-time basis.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So is there a mistake in the budget papers?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised by the department that it is always budgeted as full time when you do your budget, but the actual, as it works through—because the position is part time, when it floats through at the end of the year and you get the actuals then you get the part-time result reflected in the actual results.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Was it a full-time position in 2019-20 when it was allocated at \$174,000?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that in 2019-20 it was part time. As I said, the budget amount is as if it was full time, but because it is actually part time what we will find is that

when the actuals for 2021 come out it will be less than the 380 and it will go down to reflect the part-time nature of the role.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So what is your expectation, given this is incorrectly—

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: It is correctly budgeted; that is how the budget is done. It is budgeted at full time, so it is correct. Let's be clear on that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I still think there has been an increase here. I am just trying to understand that. What is your expectation that the actual result will be for 2021? You are saying we have an actual figure—this \$174,000—but in the budget it reflects full time. We know it is now a diminished role because it is not for the whole of Europe. We know that the recent announcement of David Ridgway as the new Agent General in this diminished role is only three days a week. What is your expectation of what the actual figure will be?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Of course, you will remember that when the budget is put out, it is put out in June, which is before the actuals come in. Now that we have moved over, the department is going through the finals and so that will be known very soon. I am certain that by the time the Auditor-General's Report comes out you will have that result. In terms of the actual position itself, it is an appointment of the Premier and the money flows through from the Premier's budget into my budget, so it is paid on that basis. I hope that helps.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: If we think about CPI costs and think about different things, what would your expectation be of what the actual result will be?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As I said, I am not going to go into a guessing game. When we are able to provide that I am happy to provide it. That is a number that will become known as they work through the final actuals for the 2021 budget. When we are able to provide that I am happy to do that because it is quite—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I will take on notice that you will provide it to me. Yes, you are correct, minister, that the appointment of the Agent General is the responsibility of the Premier, but did you or your department participate in the selection process for appointing the Agent General?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: The appointment is a decision made by the Premier. The Premier makes that decision and appoints the Agent General. It is worth saying that the previous Agent General, Bill Muirhead, has been in the position for a really long time—I think he was appointed by former Premier Mike Rann, reappointed by former Premier Weatherill and then reappointed by this government as well.

It is worth taking this opportunity to thank Bill for his tireless advocacy for South Australia over there. He has been a credit to South Australia. He has been a great ambassador and on every occasion has put South Australia up in lights in London. It is a really important role. When I first became minister, Bill was one of the first to reach out to me and since then we have had a great working relationship. You never like to see change when good people are involved, but Bill is a credit to himself and has worked really hard for South Australia, so this is a great opportunity to thank him.

We look forward to the new Agent General taking up that role. It is important for South Australia. We see that the role can certainly play an important part in advocacy for South Australian exporters to help with our trade and also identify investment opportunities. Moreover, there is the Office of the Agent General. It is not just the Agent General, it should be noticed. There is a number of staff in there and some of them do some really good work from a trade and investment point of view.

I might just reflect on one of the undertakings from the Agent General's office in Europe. They have supported a defence system battery export into the United Kingdom valued at \$4.3 million, which is really a credit to them. We are having troubles with wine as well. The wine industry has been facing heavy headwinds because of bushfires. That has really caused concern. There is COVID, of course, and then the market access issues into China.

One of the key priorities that the wine industry is telling us about is the need to diversify, to expand into other markets. That is why it is a really pleasing result that this budget allocates \$5.4 million to a wine export recovery and expansion program. One of the markets identified to really

help the industry diversify is the UK. The Agent General's office will have a key role to play. They have been fantastic in assisting our wineries, and there has been an increase, an uptick in wine exports into the UK recently: I am advised \$100 million over the last six months, which is significant.

China was a massive market. Even Brian Smedley, who is the CEO of the SA Wine Industry Association said you cannot just replace China, especially in the short term. It is imperative that we diversify, and so to diversify into the UK is a good result. The Office of the Agent General will be really important in continuing to do that, especially while exporters cannot travel. I think that positive reinforcement for our wine industry will promote others to say yes, it is hard to expand into other markets, but we can see a path forward. I am really encouraged by that.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Chair, if we can wind this question up, please. Can I just be very clear, because you did not actually answer my question. Did you or your department participate in the selection process for appointing the Agent General? 'Participate' might include a briefing, a description of what you would be looking for. Did you participate in the selection panel?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I certainly did not participate in the selection panel. I think the Premier discussed this—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Did your chief executive participate in the selection process?

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay, let the minister provide an answer to you before you move to your next question.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chair. I think the Premier was quite clear in this. He made the decision around the appointment itself, yes, but—

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Very clear that the Premier made the decision?

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay!

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: —I was not involved in any panel, and I am advised that the chief executive of the department was not involved in any panel.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Moving to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 117. What is the total cost of the creation and maintenance of our trade offices since the Marshall Liberal government was elected?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that the budget for the trade office network over four years is \$12.8 million. That covers a significant number of trade offices and a massive increase in representation for South Australian visitors since we came to government in 2018. I will just go through the network of trade offices that have been established in that time. Back in November 2018, we established a trade office in Shanghai. Since then, we have established a trade office in Tokyo in March 2019. That trade office in Japan has been pivotal in helping some of our food exporters get deals done there.

More recently, there has been some virtual wine-tasting as well. From an energy and renewable space, it has been critical in attracting some significant Japanese companies here to South Australia to look at green hydrogen as a real opportunity for export for South Australia but also for Japan to reach their ambitions of reducing their carbon footprint. That is going to be an important investment for the state going forward.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Point of order: my question was very specific about the cost.

The CHAIR: I believe the minister has provided that information, so I will call him up.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes, I was just going through, because this is a significant investment. I really think it is important for the committee to understand what stands behind that. Maybe if I just talk more about the trade offices. Yes, they have had significant achievements.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Chair, I am very specific about the cost.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: In February 2020, we opened up the Houston trade office—

The CHAIR: Minister, I was upholding the point of order.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Apologies, Chair.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Do you have a total cost for the running of the trade offices? Can you repeat the answer?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes, I was advised that the budget for the four-year program is \$12.8 million.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: For the four years?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Yes; budget 2018-19 to 2021-22.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Will you provide a breakdown of the cost for each of the trade offices and which would be the most expensive to run? I am happy for you to take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay, the minister can answer as he wishes.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised the actual figure here for the China office in Shanghai is \$1.3 million, and I said they have done some fantastic trade. China, as a market, is worth \$3 billion of merchandise exports, so they are really assisting the trade. In the Tokyo office, I am advised the actuals is at \$1.6 million.

I am advised that the USA Houston office is \$0.6 million. I was going to allude to the fantastic work done attracting some fantastic South Australian food exporters via their Central Market program. Just recently, nine exporters were able to send their produce over to Texas to a retailer there, Central Market. It is a high-end retailer. The average salary of their customer base is over \$100,000, and so they are looking for unique, high-end products and we were able to introduce them virtually.

This is in the middle of a pandemic. The Houston office opened up, as I said, in February 2020, which is just when COVID was starting. Even despite these challenges, these trade offices are producing some fantastic results. In all, 318 Australian companies have been supported across 24 markets in these five regions.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Point of order, Chair: my question was very specific—the breakdown costs of each trade office. We started—

The CHAIR: I believe the minister is getting to the answer. He has provided an element of that answer.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I would like to provide an element around the US Houston office, because they have worked hard. As I said, they have basically been under pandemic conditions the whole time they have been working for South Australia, and that Central Market is a great opportunity.

If we move on to the Dubai office, that has an actual cost there of \$0.3 million. They also cover the Middle East, North Africa, India region. Through that office they have been able to secure an international education curriculum development project with Torrens University valued at \$1.8 million. Torrens University is able to provide education into India, and that is really helping them while international students are not able to arrive in person. It helps expand and solidify their business.

If I move into the Singapore-based South-East Asia, that has only just started. Really, the actuals are quite low there. I have \$0.044 million for that office there, but that is in the 2021-22 year. That will be in full operation and we will see that playing out further. I am advised also the London office overall has a budget of around \$1.4 million.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 115. I have some questions about the state promotions unit. How many full-time equivalent staff are employed in the state promotions unit?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: What point was that again, sorry?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Page 115, Workforce summary. How many FTE staff are employed within state promotions?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that the state promotions team has a quite broad remit in terms of promoting the state and also assisting with digital engagement. Especially with COVID, that has been a really important addition and acceleration in terms of our digital footprint. They have been in charge of the Invest in SA website, which has just recently been launched. I talked about that. It has about 38 investments up there.

They have also been heavily involved in digital webinars and seminars and educational pieces around the different sectors that we have in South Australia, which are the competitive strengths which are part of our growth state plan. I have been included in those sector month awarenesses so that really helps grow out awareness.

They have also been in charge of growing out the B2B connection, which is the new export side focus connecting South Australian businesses and exporters to potential importers throughout the world. That has been really important. They also assist with some promotions here in South Australia. We have talked about the market access issues for wine and the troubles there. One of the opportunities to try to mitigate the effects of that is in the domestic arena, so at the start of the year we ran a I Choose SA Wine promotion.

They also work in conjunction with other fantastic organisations that promote South Australia, Food SA being one. They do the I Choose SA, which we have seen South Australians take up in support of local businesses in this pandemic. They have also been in charge of rolling out some of our programs. The eCommerce Accelerator Program that I spoke about helps encourage South Australian exporters to upskill their digital offering and be able to connect with their digital export market.

So this is a broad remit. They not only help promote South Australia domestically; they also work with our trade offices to promote markets, investment opportunities and export opportunities for our trade offices. So there is really good synergy there. In terms of the full-time equivalent, I am advised that to be able to do that substantial amount of work we have budgeted for 16.2 FTE positions.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Probably my final question: does DTI fund Showcase SA?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: I am advised that we do not fund Showcase SA. It is worth mentioning that I talked about them being one of the fantastic organisations that help promote South Australia. Recently, when I was in Port Lincoln they did a regional export awareness program, which opened up export, what the opportunities are, what assistance our department provides and what opportunities there are for exporters in the regions as well. It was great to go along there.

We also at the same time launched our global expansion program, which is about established South Australian businesses that are trading well nationally from a domestic market. We are wanting to assist them to take that success to the next level and be able to export. We launched that on that same day in Port Lincoln. It is a \$2.3 million program that will really I think assist South Australian businesses. We thank Showcase SA for helping out in the regions and being a great ambassador for South Australian businesses.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So, minister, you do not fund Showcase SA but you work with them. Who funds them?

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: As far as I am aware—of course I do not know their business intimately—they are a commercial entity.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Well, you have obviously done work with them.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: They run functions, they charge businesses accordingly and they make their money that way.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: So did they charge you for the—

The CHAIR: Member for Ramsay, let the minister provide his answer.

The Hon. S.J.R. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chair. I have finished.

The CHAIR: The time allocated for examination of payments in relation to the Department for Trade and Investment has now expired; therefore, there are no further questions and I declare the examination of the portfolio Department for Trade and Investment completed and the estimate of payments for the Department for Trade and Investment closed.

Sitting suspended from 10:31 to 10:46.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$3,287,483,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$375,932,000

Membership:

Mr Boyer substituted for Ms Bettison.

Minister:

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

Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr B. Temperly, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

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

Dr C. Croser-Barlow, Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development, Department for Education.

Ms P. Smith, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education.

The CHAIR: Welcome back to Estimates Committee B for our late afternoon session. For the benefit of the minister, given this is his first appearance, I will quickly run through the opening remarks. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions.

I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on 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 still accurate.

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

Mr BOYER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur, and I will note one of those in just a minute. 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 24 September 2021.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of approximately 10 minutes each, should they wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions. A member who is not on the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response should he feel that is necessary. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable and/or referenced.

Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*. I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply to the committee. Consistent with the rules of the house, photography by members from the chamber floor is not permitted when the committee is sitting.

Ministers and members may not table documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution. 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.

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.

I will now proceed to open the lines of expenditure. During the next few sessions, the portfolio that will be under examination is school education. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and call on the minister to make an opening statement, should he wish.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you, Chair. I do not have a long opening statement, but I do have a few words to say. I will first introduce my colleagues in the chamber with me: Rick Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education, to my right; immediately behind is Chris Bernardi, the chief financial officer; and Ben Temperly, the chief operating officer of the department. Behind them are Dr Caroline Croser-Barlow, the executive director for early years in child development, who also has responsibility for support services within the Department for Education; and Dr Peta Smith, the executive director for strategic policy and external relations.

Julieann Riedstra has been the COO for the Department for Education, or similar roles, for an extended period of time. Her role today is being filled by Ben Temperly, who has newly taken on this role. Julieann has retired to spend a retirement, well earned, full of joy no doubt, and chairing the board of Zoos SA, among other roles, for which I am sure she will do a great job.

Julieann served in estimates hearings, from Rob Lucas through to myself—every education minister in these hearings—and from Greg Crafter to myself. She has provided excellent service to ministers and, most importantly, the children and young people of schools, preschools and other child education settings. I know that Julieann would hate to be the centre of attention, but I could not let an estimates hearing go by without drawing radical attention to her absence. We will feel her presence in spirit, if not here. I am sure she is watching—it is very unlikely actually, but if she is watching I am sure she will provide Ben with advice as the day goes on.

I thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement to members of the committee, and I am sure that all members of the committee will join with me in expressing our wholehearted thanks and admiration to all of the teachers and the support staff in education—everybody who contributes to our children's education, particularly at a time of extraordinary disruption, as we have had in the last couple of weeks.

It is notable that every family in South Australia has joined in that mission in the last week and a half in a more hands-on way than many are used to, and I am sure they have been right at the front of appreciating our kids being able to get back to school yesterday. It is noteworthy that yesterday our early figures—and not every school and site has reported in—suggest that we are only about 1 or 2 per cent below regular attendance at schools, and of course 1 per cent of our student population, or thereabouts, are learning at home, mostly because they are directed into quarantine by SA Health, or are in similar circumstances.

There is no doubt that everyone is happy to be back at school. There is no doubt, however, that it was an enormously positive and successful body of work undertaken by our educators, our families and our students to ensure that there was continuity of learning during the week of lockdown. Some staff and students do remain in directed quarantine, including those at Gawler and District College B-12 and many at Westminster School. They are being supported to learn work from home as appropriate by their schools, particularly for the students and staff at Westminster and Gawler and District College B-12.

As Minister for Education I would like to thank them for what is a fairly significant sacrifice they are making, but they are making it on behalf of the people of South Australia. The difficulties associated with being in quarantine are, of course, for our community safety, for their families' safety, for our state's safety and to enable our state to open up. We are very grateful for what they are going through. We look forward to their resuming their education at school.

Throughout the lockdown, all sites, unless they have been closed in a case such as Gawler, have been open to the children of essential workers and children in vulnerable situations. The department has taken the posture that no child would be turned away who needs to be at a school during this pandemic.

Important health and safety measures are in place while we transition out of lockdown to ensure that we are able to reopen our schools and preschools in a way that SA Health is satisfied that they are COVID safe. That includes face masks for adults when indoors, except when teaching or engaging with students; face masks for students in years 8 and above when they are inside; minimising non-essential visitors to sites; and, certainly for now, a pause on excursions and school activities that are not part of the school curriculum. This is in addition to important baseline COVID-safe measures that are in place consistently, like QR check in, physical distancing for adults and staying home if unwell.

We have refined and well-tested closure protocols in place to respond to confirmed cases, and we work in lock step with SA Health and SAPOL to implement them. This lockdown and the previous Parafield outbreak have demonstrated the effectiveness of the extensive planning undertaken by schools, preschools and the department to respond to constantly changing conditions. The system is able to move quickly and efficiently to remote learning and to quickly return to face-to-face learning. We will continue to prepare for future events in ensuring learning continuity is maintained.

I want to pay credit to the professionalism of our staff across all sites. Their service, and the work of our services, has been outstanding in response to the pandemic. I think the work done by the education head office in supporting sites and keeping our workforce and community informed has been terrific. I would like to thank the non-government school sector for being in lock step with the government, throughout not just this lockdown but throughout the pandemic.

In other jurisdictions that collaboration has not been as close and I think it has been to the benefit of our children that, whether children are on a government school site or a non-government school site, they are hearing basically the same messages from their principals and their systems. It makes things a lot less confusing.

The parents continue to work alongside us to keep our community safe and our students learning. I thank them and pay credit to them for that.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I would like to add some remarks. We have been provided advice by the Deputy Clerk around the wearing of masks during estimates committees. Masks should be worn by all persons who are able to do so when in Parliament House, including during estimates committees, with the exception of a range of circumstances, one of which is when the visibility of the mouth and clear enunciation is important, for example, members and ministers who are participating in committees and need to have clear enunciation for Hansard and broadcast purposes.

I leave that to members to interpret but do note that pre-existing health conditions remain something that should be respected and taken into consideration when somebody is looking to potentially not wear a mask during these circumstances. I appreciate the members' cooperation in ensuring that the guidelines are adhered to as best as possible. Member for Wright, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr BOYER: I have some very brief opening remarks to reiterate the words of the minister in congratulating Julieann Riedstra on her remarkable career. I worked very closely with her in my previous role as a chief of staff and adviser to education ministers. For a very long time she has provided advice of the highest calibre to governments of both persuasions. I am sure she will be missed greatly in the agency. On behalf of the opposition, I wish her well for her life after the education department, which is very well deserved.

I would like to reiterate the comments of the minister in thanking all our school staff who, yet again, have found themselves in an uncertain environment in having to deal with a lockdown and prepare classes for online learning and home learning. As a parent of three young kids, I did a fair bit of homeschooling—or tried to, mostly unsuccessfully—last week and this week. What was prepared was of really high quality, and the engagement of the teachers I think was excellent.

On behalf of the people I represent, but also more broadly as the shadow education minister, I acknowledge the situation that school staff find themselves in. Again, we ask so much of them. When other people might be working from home they are back on the frontline, caring for our children, including my own. I thank them greatly for that.

The CHAIR: With opening statements now complete, I call on questions. The member for Wright.

Mr BOYER: Minister, if we could start at Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 185, highlights. I thought I would kickstart with some questions about COVID. I understand that the TGA has now approved vaccines for 12 to 15-year-olds. Has the department done any planning or work around preparation for how vaccines might be delivered to that cohort or demographic, given that they all or almost exclusively will be in our schools—in government or non-government schools?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I might ask the chief executive to respond directly.

Mr PERSSE: Thank you for the question. The vaccine rollout is being coordinated by SA Health, as you are aware. At this stage planning for rollout for students has not occurred beyond recognising that that will need to happen. The changes—and I note only this morning that New South Wales has prioritised Pfizer for their year 12s. So as that supply frees up I am confident that we will be able to connect in with SA Health's vaccine rollout team to facilitate that.

We are obviously in constant contact with our colleagues in other jurisdictions regarding their plans and will be sharing different experiences with them, but at this stage there is no documented plan on that. But as soon as there is, we will be keen to socialise it so people are clear.

Mr BOYER: Minister, on the same budget line and the same topic, and I refer to the chief executive's answer there. Is Pfizer vaccinations for our year 12s something that we are considering or will consider possibly?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That would be a matter for SA Health to give further advice on.

Mr BOYER: Same budget line, minister. Has any money been set aside by your agency in preparation for possibly being involved in some way with SA Health's—I guess—rollout of vaccinations for the 12 to 15 year age group?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I invite the chief executive to comment.

Mr PERSSE: We have not designated a budget line as yet, because we are not clear on the quantum. Also, SA Health and the commonwealth funding lines will need to be factored into that. But, obviously, as we have dealt with different elements that have come up throughout the pandemic response, like the increase in cleaning and so on, we would do our best to centrally fund those so that costs would not impact on schools. So while we have not got a final position on that, because we have not got the overall cost, let alone the sources of funds, my expectation is that that would not be something that schools would be expected to fund within their existing budget envelope.

Mr BOYER: Minister, same budget line again. How many masks have been provided to each government high school for students, and was the initial delivery based on how many students there were, or did every school get the same amount regardless of their school populations?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will see if we have the number of masks that have been provided while I am giving some reflections. Masks were provided to schools on the basis of their size, with I assume some sort of ratio that was determined on that. I know that a large school like schools of over a thousand received very many masks; the Port Neill Primary School, with fewer than a dozen students, obviously would receive correspondingly a very small number of masks for the staff, given no students would be required to wear the masks in a primary school setting.

So there was reflection given to how many people there are on site. We believe that we have provided a very generous allocation to sites. Also, the experience certainly in the last 24 hours, and we anticipated it, has been that many children are coming to school with their own masks. We are expecting mask use to be more prevalent in the community. It has become more prevalent in the community in recent times and many people now have their own cloth masks or indeed their own supply of surgical masks. As you see around the room today, there is a mix and that mix is in our schools as well.

We believe we have provided enough masks for the short term and that there are more available to schools if they are needed. We anticipate potentially that some schools will be in a situation where very many of their masks may not be needed, in which case I think they have a three-year expiry date and, potentially, if schools are left with more than they need for an extended period of time, we will collect them and keep them in storage.

I am advised that we have delivered a bit over a million masks to schools. There have been two deliveries during the most recent period. There were some site-specific deliveries last year when of course we had the Thebarton issue, I recall. There is also now a new Microsoft form that schools can order more from head office if they are needed. Actually, I have even better data: just a bit over 2.7 million masks.

Mr BOYER: Thank you for your answer, minister. On the same budget line and the same issue around the supply of masks. With 2.7 million masks supplied, how long is it intended that that stock will last? Are you hopeful, I guess from that answer, that that will be enough to get the schools through this period?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will invite the chief executive to respond.

Mr PERSSE: Thank you, sir, for that question. We identified masks as a suitable pre-emptive kind of risk management strategy and had masks delivered to all sites throughout public education many, many months ago. That was largely so that parents, students or staff who felt more comfortable wearing a mask would have access to them. We have a fantastic relationship with SA Health's distribution centre, which has an almost limitless supply of masks. Our distribution centre, which the honourable member would be aware of, at Torrensville there, that has done such an extraordinary job throughout this, has many millions of masks in stock and an almost 24-hour arrangement with SA Health to be able to top that up.

Obviously, now with the health requirement that students in secondary school should be wearing masks, we are now prioritising the masks out to our area schools and our secondary settings. You will have seen in the media Thebarton Senior College receiving many boxes of masks. I would also like to, if I may, just acknowledge Cochrane's Transport, which has been exemplary in assisting us in distributing these and our distribution network has done great work.

As the minister said, we have a very proactive approach to mask supply or any other hygiene products—hand sanitiser, soap, tissues or anything else—and our schools know that they just need to let us know and we can prioritise that. In addition, we have made an offer to our colleagues in the independent and Catholic system that if any school was at risk of not being able to operate due to a shortage of masks or so on that we would be able to help them out. So I am extremely confident in our mask supply, but, as the minister said, what we are seeing is—although it is a bit hard to estimate—nearly half the kids and staff wearing their own cotton masks.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I just add that certainly my observation is that that estimate of half wearing their own cotton masks is only growing and is only likely to grow as people choose to wear their own.

Mr BOYER: I appreciate that you may need to take this question on notice, but do you or any of your departmental advisers know the percentage of frontline workers, teachers, SSOs, and other support staff who are aged under 40?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: What I can provide the member with is an estimate that our department has generated, and it is a pretty accurate estimate of 75 per cent of our staff being eligible for the vaccination. Obviously, all South Australians over 40 are eligible for vaccination, plus all

South Australians in regional areas, all of our workforce in regional areas are eligible today to get the vaccination, and are able to do so upon making a booking.

In relation to the relevance for eligibility for vaccination, that 75 per cent figure is applicable. I do not have a specific figure in relation to 40, but there was some work done in relation to the age of 45, for what it is worth, and 49.7 per cent of our workforce is aged 45 and over. In addition to that, obviously, there is another age between 40 and 45, and all of the regional adults aged under 40 being eligible, and there are some people in vulnerable cohorts who are also eligible. There are also people working in disability settings and I think the hospitals as well.

Mr BOYER: In the same budget line again, in reference to your answer there that it is roughly 75 per cent of the workforce eligible for the vaccine, do we keep track of how many of them have actually had their vaccination? Is that kept by the department so that they have an idea of how many of the eligible people are receiving it or have received it?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We are talking about setting up a voluntary survey for staff to notify the department as to whether they have been fully vaccinated or have had their first or second jabs. That is proposed to be a voluntary survey.

Mr BOYER: In the same budget line again, do you support all frontline educators being added to the priority vaccination program?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I support all South Australians being vaccinated. Certainly we do not second-guess the advice provided by SA Health and Professor Spurrier. As a government I think we are in a position where SA Health has done an extraordinarily good job. I am keen for all teachers to be vaccinated as quickly as possible, and all education staff to be vaccinated as quickly as possible. I urge everyone who is eligible at the moment—that being of course the three-quarters of the population determined as, certainly according to age, at greater risk—to get vaccinated if they are eligible now.

Mr BOYER: Moving on to the capital works and transition of year 7 into high school, budget reference page 186, targets. Minister, you have stated on a number of occasions that all building works required for the start of year 7s in high school transition next year will be ready. Is that still your position? Do you stand by those comments?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The short answer is yes, I do. However, obviously the challenge of the last week is something that we are taking into account. Work on a number of sites has obviously stalled through the lockdown and so we are having a look at whether there are any impacts that that has created that will put pressure on those time lines, and what rectifications will need to be put in place.

The overwhelming majority of our projects are due to be completed in September, October, November and I do not foresee any great likelihood or any likelihood that those projects will be put at risk. We have previously identified a couple of projects—I think last year in estimates there were a couple of projects we talked about that the department had under close watch because they were due to be completed in November or December and, indeed, we have been working on that ever since.

The six where there is absolutely expectation, certainly ahead of the lockdown last week, were under close watch, but the core accommodation was on track to be completed by the start of term 1, even if there was potentially landscaping or a car park, or something like that, that was still going to be worked on.

I remind the member that they include Glenunga. That, certainly at the beginning of last week, had the core accommodation on track to be completed by the end of 2021, with the car park and landscaping works to be completed in January 2022.

At Norwood Morialta High School, the core accommodation was due to be completed by the end of 2021, with landscaping, car parks, potentially some work on the sports courts and the facade at the front of the school near the entrance to be completed in February. I will come back to Playford in a moment, because that is probably the most complex one.

Roma Mitchell Secondary College is currently forecast to be fully complete by late January 2022, prior to the start of term 1. That one is in a slightly different circumstance to the others because, as the member may recall, it was established by the previous government as a PPP (public-private partnership).

At the sites that the department is responsible for, we have to have the building works handed over and then we put the furniture in the classrooms and set up the classrooms. At Roma Mitchell, the PPP partner is responsible for that, so that one we have a little more leeway with, but as I say it is currently forecast to be completed on time.

At Seaton High School, core accommodation is to be completed by the end of 2021. Some landscaping and demolition of no longer used facilities would go into the beginning of next year. Unley High School was on track for core accommodation to be completed by the end of 2021, with the covered outdoor learning area structure and all landscape works to be completed in January 2022.

That was the status as it was at the beginning of last week, and we are obviously keeping a very close eye on those to see if the impact of the shutdown has been significant and what mitigation works may need to be put in place. Throughout the process, there has obviously been a governance board, and the Department for Education is working closely with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to identify where there are any risks, and for those to be accelerated where possible or for solutions to be put in place so that the year 7s, as well as the year 8s, 9s, 10s, 11s and 12s, are welcomed at school with the learning spaces that are required.

At Playford International College, I should also be clear, we are expecting the learning spaces that are needed to welcome those year 7s to be in place, with that caveat that I put before. I thought it would be useful to provide the example of Playford, because that is, as I say, the one where there will be some work done next year that will not be required for those core learning spaces but for some of the specialty facilities.

The issue we have had at Playford has been compounded a bit. First, obviously they have had the issue of the last week. Prior to that, they had the three-day shutdown last year on 19 November, requiring all non-essential workers to stay at home. They were also impacted by the closure of SA Structural office for 14 days last year. SA Structural had been contracted to complete the structural steelworks, which were on the project's critical path.

SA Structural entered administration on 17 February 2021, and I note that Mossop Construction and Interiors were authorised to enter into a new structural steel contract on 23 February. The administrator for SA Structural closure refused Mossop Construction and Interiors access to the structural steel fabrication CAD Shop drawings that had been completed by SA Structural for the project. As a result, the newly appointed structural steel fabricators were required to recommence documentation, which resulted in a 12-week loss in time to the project.

The Department for Education, DIT and the builder have been exploring opportunities to accelerate the construction program. To achieve the requirement to provide those extra spaces for the year 7 intake, the building contractor has put forward a strategy that the department and the school have endorsed. That proposes to split each handover into refurbishment and new build separable portion handovers. That allows the handover of the refurbished areas in November this year, very much on time. That includes the 17 general learning areas that are required and two service learning areas and workshops.

There are eight spaces, which are not required to increase that capacity but are serviced learning areas and workshops. They are in a separable portion that is designed to be handed over in March next year. Those existing workshops will be utilised while the new areas are completed. The demolition of those six existing general learning areas is currently planned to occur once all new learning areas have been completed.

Effectively, what we are talking about is probably in the term 1 to term 2 school holidays. Those particular specialised learning areas—I think it is the tech studies, from memory—will go from the older specialised learning areas to a new one. That is not an increase in capacity. That is an upgrade of a particular body of facilities at the school.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line, what measures are in place should some of these works that you just identified in your answer not be complete in time for the transition? By that I mean classroom space. If, for other reasons you mentioned or the lockdown, that pushes back other projects listed on pages 178 and 179 into 2022 as well, what does the department have in place to make sure there are spaces for teaching at all those sites?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think it is best if I describe this as a contingency, for example, if there was a further statewide lockdown that saw no further construction work. I put the caveat in the previous answer that obviously if there are issues at one of those six sites that might potentially create some challenge. Honestly, I am optimistic that those are going to be okay.

What you are talking about is if there was a further lockdown that prevented construction on site for a certain time. With regard to the existing learning facilities, many of these situations are where some existing facilities are being upgraded. Potentially, if there is a refurbishment of a classroom, then their existing site is potentially there. There is \$13 million worth of demountable facilities, modular facilities, that are available potentially for use. Indeed, that is available as necessary in response to growth, but we also have that available for additional capacity to be deployed to schools.

Obviously, while we have contingency plans in place, our focus is on delivering the work on time. If those contingencies need to be kicked in, then we will look at those as are required at any individual site.

Mr BOYER: Thanks for your answer, minister. What is the per demountable cost? With regard to the \$13 million you mentioned, that accounts for how many individual demountables? Do you or your chief executive know?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will have to take that on notice. I note that, with the significant investment the government has made in modular facilities not only for this body of increased capacity work but also because there is an increasing use of modular facilities in the broader building program, in some circumstances in many schools, depending on the layout of the school and the class being provided or the learning area being provided, they can be a more cost-effective way of delivering a project.

As the capacity in South Australia of building those modular facilities locally has grown dramatically, that has had some positive outcomes on the cost of those facilities. A modular facility built two years ago may well have cost more than one being built to the same capacity today. If there is further detail that is directly relevant to the member's question I will bring it back to the house.

Mr BOYER: The same budget line, minister. Regarding the \$13 million worth of demountables to which you refer, I accept your answer that the modular build is a pretty common occurrence now, so this might not be a particularly simple question to answer. How much of that is basically pre-existing stock that is somewhere on a government site in the state, and how much is stock that we have either purchased or have ready in case of projects slipping behind for the year 7 transition?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think that \$13 million figure—and I will be corrected in a moment if I am wrong—is what we budgeted at the beginning of 2019 for new constructions. Many of them have been constructed since 2019, and I believe that some may still be in construction in those facilities. I am told that is correct.

Mr BOYER: So they are demountables that have been constructed since 2019. Are they currently in use somewhere or some are and some are not, or are we not sure of their location?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Some have been deployed, some are ready for deployment, noting that some are deployed in primary schools that will not necessarily need them next year either.

Mr BOYER: The same budget line, minister. Where are the ones that are not deployed stored? Where are we keeping those in readiness for being rolled out potentially next year or earlier, I suppose?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am advised that they are normally with the manufacturer as we need them.

Mr BOYER: The same budget line again, thanks, minister. Who is the manufacturer that we use? What was the process for choosing the manufacturer? Was there a tender process? What are we looking at per cost? Who were the companies involved in the tender? Sorry, I understand that is a number of questions, not one.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will ask the chief executive to comment.

Mr PERSSE: Thank you. There is a preferred panel of suppliers, but I do not have that detail with me so if I may I would like to bring that back for the committee.

Dr HARVEY: My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 177. Can the minister please outline to the committee how the government is supporting students with a disability in their education?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. The department's Inclusive Education Support Program funding model has helped us see greater investment in supporting students with a disability in South Australian public schools than ever before. To put some figures around that, in 2020 preschools and schools were allocated \$305 million for this work compared with \$241 million in 2018. That is a 26 per cent increase over two years.

If we look at the school component specifically of this expenditure, in 2017, in the final year of the previous government, we saw around \$200 million provided directly to schools to support students with a disability or complex behaviour. Over three years that has grown from \$200 million to \$292 million in 2020, a 42 per cent increase in funding going directly to schools to support these students over the life of this government. I note there has been a 2 per cent increase in the number of students in our schools over that same period.

The body of work that has enabled this is the Inclusive Education Support Program. The model of delivering services includes funding students on an individual basis, also funding students as part of a setting, for example, a class or a school. It includes provision of funding for groups of students at a school—for example, the recently announced complexity funding—and services delivered to students that are coordinated by the department, for example, speech pathologists, OTs or psychologists.

This program provides funding to meet the individually identified functional needs of each student rather than funding groups of children on the basis of a label or a diagnosis only. It has been underwritten by the government's commitment to the National Education Reform Agreement, which provides funding certainty for the department as funding is based on student numbers with loadings for their capacity.

That certainty is so important. Ever since we signed—and I was the first state minister along with Dan Tehan, the federal minister at the time, at the East Adelaide School to sign that agreement—that has been the agreement that has set in stone that the commonwealth Treasury and the state Treasury will provide funding to the education department to support those extra loadings for students with a disability rather than the department having to go cap in hand to Treasury after the fact. It gives confidence to the department and to schools in providing that support.

In addition to the increasing amount of money being provided directly to schools to support students with functional needs, the number of students with a disability being supported by disability funding has increased significantly since 2017. In 2017, the department reports to me that they provided support to 16,030 students with a disability, while in 2020 that number had grown to 21,116 students. It is a 31.7 per cent increase over the life of this government.

While the vast majority of students requiring additional resourcing have needs that are met at the lower levels of funding (categories 1 to 3) are between \$6,112 per annum to \$11,266 per annum, I am pleased to advise that the introduction of the Inclusive Education Support Program has also led to an increase in the support provided to those students with the highest levels of need.

Between 2019 and 2020, for example, for the number of students receiving support in the highest categories (categories 7 to 9) the funding in question is between around \$37,378 to \$64,970 per annum. The number of children in that category has grown from 731.6 FTE to 817.1 FTE. That is growth from 2019 to 2020, an 11.7 per cent year-on-year growth.

There has been changed funding methodologies with the IESP's introduction since this government has been in place. It is hard to have an apples with apples comparison with 2017, but I am advised that there were 317.7 FTEs receiving regularised funding at the categories of high level of support (H LoS) or very high levels of support (V LoS). H LoS and V LoS equates to categories 6 to 9 in today's IESP model. I note that in 2020 we have gone from 317 FTE to 1392.1 FTE receiving funding at that level of category 6 to category 9.

In fairness, there were a number of those students in addition to those H-LoS and V-LoS categories under the former government who were receiving what is known as RAAP funding, an individual allocation process. It is very clear that the introduction of the IESP has seen many times the number of students receiving very high levels of funding, with greater levels of certainty, transparency and reliability. Whether we are talking about the total number of students funded, the total funding going straight to schools or the total number of students funded at the highest levels, the increase in level of support to students with a disability has been very significant over the last three years.

Funding is only part of the puzzle, of course. I am pleased to see that the department's ongoing work in ensuring that schools are supported in the use of funding enables us to track outcomes from this investment. We also have a very significant body of work underway at the moment to respond to the Graham report, which is very much focused on ensuring that we can increase the inclusion in our schools, reduce the high levels of exclusion and suspension that have been noted for students with a disability. This is not a South Australia-unique situation. It is not a new situation. It is a challenge for everyone. The Department for Education is putting of a significant amount of work to a long-term project to support and improvement in that area.

Ms STINSON: Thank you for that information, minister. My question is in relation to these programs, RAAP and IESP. In my community I have had number of parents and school leaders complain to me about what they see as valid applications through those schemes being rejected, in particular they have previously made applications which had been successful and accepted, and they received funding, but now the newest applications they have made have been rejected.

I wonder if you could provide some information about how many applications in each of those funding streams have been made and rejected and, indeed, if you can offer any advice to my school community about why it would be the case that their previously approved applications are now not being approved and what they might do to ensure they are getting a fair hearing and correct result for their applications?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you for the question. As I have identified, obviously the overall level of support has gone up and the number of children with a disability receiving that support, including at the high levels, has gone up significantly, but it is a complex policy area. Obviously, there is a challenge for the system to balance accountability and support, and there is a challenge for schools, obviously, which have this work in supporting their families. Since 2019, more than 7,655 additional resourcing requests have been received from schools and preschools, and around 69 per cent of those have been allocated with additional resourcing.

Due to the diversity of disability, and the continuum of functional needs students with a disability may present with, the department has established a statewide centralised panel, which includes the teacher peers, principals and discipline-specific experts from within the department to moderate the provision of additional resourcing. This ensures consistency and equity in the determination of resourcing provided to implement the necessary and reasonable adjustments for improved student outcomes.

Teacher judgement certainly forms one part of the overall assessment. We are committed to working with our staff and associations to co-design improvements to the functioning of the system. We are always every day in the work we do wanting to improve the work that we do. It is important to remember that, under the inclusive education support program, more students are receiving more funding than ever before. There may well be a large number of students—there clearly are thousands of students—who were receiving no support previously who are now receiving support for the first time, and indeed clearly more at the higher levels are receiving support as well.

The accountability mechanisms built into the new funding application process have clearly been balanced by an increase in support and equity around the system. I always invite any particular case that feels that their own circumstances have not been dealt with appropriately to get in touch, but I have great confidence that the system that has been designed is leading to an increase in support for students.

Ms STINSON: I believe that I have sent correspondence to the minister about this—I will check on that—but is it possible that the minister could take on notice getting back to me about a relevant contact within the department so that I can assist those constituents?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Perhaps rather than going through the formal process of taking on notice in this chamber, I will commit to the member for Badcoe that I will write to her, if I haven't already, to ensure that she has the relevant contact details she asks for.

Ms STINSON: Thank you very much.

Mr BOYER: Back to the previous budget line and demountables; I think we were on Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 186. I think the chief executive mentioned that there is a panel of preferred suppliers. Are all the companies providing the demountable buildings manufacturing in South Australia, or are they manufactured in different countries?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am really pleased that the government's program and the way we have constructed the program has led to a dramatic increase in South Australian supply in this area—a very significant increase—so there are a lot of people working in South Australia on these projects. I will invite the chief executive to provide some details.

Mr PERSSE: I thank the honourable member for the question, and I will commit to coming back with broken-down detail of numbers, and so on. I did get a little bit of information sent through to me regarding the types of manufacturers. They are organisations like Fleetwood and Ausco, and so on, that we have partnered with in the past. All of those engagements are through a competitive process.

As I mentioned before, they are on a pre-qualified panel, so there is already some pretty good understanding regarding what those average costs are. Largely the cost for a double transportable, which the honourable member would be aware of—normally with a covered outdoor learning area in the middle—is about 500K. These things have just advanced in their technology and aesthetic as we have gone through it.

Back to the \$13 million, which I can confirm was all new money: several of those have been deployed because we are trying to map to some of the surge capacity issues that we are having as we are doing the other capital works. Basically we have students decanting out of an area we are working on and refurbishing and into some of these temporary transportables that we then redeploy around the system as we require. As I said, I will come back with that further detail regarding individual numbers, the organisations and the procurement method.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, minister and Mr Persse, for your answer. If I could stay on the same budget line but move to questions around the Building What Matters-branded bunting that has been erected at school sites. Were you personally involved at all in the selection of which sites would have the Building What Matters-branded bunting and fencing erected?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Not that I recall.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line, was any consultation undertaken with school principals whose schools received the Building What Matters-branded bunting before it was erected on their school premises?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have no doubt that there was discussion that there would be signage of some sort—going back to 2017, in fact, when some of these projects were announced. I doubt that the detail of what that signage would incorporate was raised with school principals at the time. I suspect it was certainly to be expected. I remember there already being signs on schools in relation to that before the 2018 election. Obviously, bunting or hoarding, or whatever it is called, has been up at some schools since then, but I think that is on the building site aspect of it rather than being a matter for the school principal.

Mr BOYER: I refer to the same budget line again. Was anyone in your office involved in personally selecting or in any way influencing which schools had the bunting erected and which schools did not?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am advised that the Building What Matters brand was developed by the state government to inform South Australians on the infrastructure projects planned and the resulting jobs to be created across the state over the next four years. The brand's purpose was to achieve consistent communications for all infrastructure projects across government.

In relation to the member's question about where branding was and was not to be applied, I am told that the branding has been applied to any signage developed from 7 October 2020 onwards and that existing signage has not been replaced. I am advised that, traditionally, signage is required to be installed by contracted builders in line with standard construction sign templates, which includes information such as the builder, the architect and project value.

A review of signage and existing school capital works projects was undertaken during December 2020. I am advised that it was agreed that any new signage would utilise the Building What Matters template for education projects. For 12 projects with a value of \$10 million and above with signs that were installed in October and November 2020, the signs would be supplemented with a Building What Matters sign.

For projects with a value of \$10 million or higher, fence screening would be used to promote the project and the Building What Matters branding. That has been installed at relevant sites over the course of 2021 by project builders. Each of the three new schools had existing fence screening that was not in the Building What Matters brand and it was not proposed to change this.

Mr BOYER: In relation to the final part of your answer about the schools that already had some kind of fencing that was not in the Building What Matters design, were there any cases where there was bunting already erected by the builders of a particular site that was removed and replaced with Building What Matters bunting instead?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Not that I am aware of, although I have noted that on some projects that bunting, hoarding or signage in some cases certainly gets damaged and can be replaced. I think at the end of my reply I was specifically referring to the Whyalla, Aldinga and Angle Vale projects.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 182. Minister, can you update the committee on the government's investment in literacy through the Literacy Guarantee package of measures, please?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for Chaffey for the question. It has been a really important part of the work that we have been undertaking since coming to government. The Literacy Guarantee was a package of measures developed in opposition to focus on the critical aspect of education that is getting the building blocks of language right for our youngest learners—to develop their literacy at a very high level and to use evidence-based techniques to ensure that they are learning to read and write well. That has been important.

There are a number of measures that have been implemented, and I note that one that I will probably start with is particularly useful in regional South Australia: a partnership with SPELD SA, which stands for Specific Learning Difficulties Association of South Australia, an organisation that all members would be very familiar with. The work they do is very important.

They have been running parent workshops for a number of years, and most of their parent workshops were in the city prior to the election of this government. We have given them funds to particularly support outreach into regional areas, often in conjunction with work that is being done at schools. There have been parent workshops across South Australia in regional areas since that has been in place since we came to government.

Most recently, this year workshops have been held in Clare, Port Broughton, Yankalilla, Mount Compass, Nuriootpa, Aldinga, Mount Barker, Kadina, Eudunda, Port Pirie and Tanunda, and further workshops are planned this year in Balaklava, Mount Gambier and Murray Bridge, as well as metropolitan Adelaide.

The statewide implementation of the phonic screening check for year 1 students in government schools—and we have made it available to non-government schools, some of which use it—has also helped teachers to identify students experiencing learning difficulties so that appropriate interventions can be applied as early as possible.

The Literacy Guarantee coaches deliver training and understanding in implementing the phonic screening check to all year 1 teachers and many leaders prior to the check. These are coaches that are part of the new Literacy Guarantee Unit that has been in place since 2018 and which has indeed been expanded over the life of the program.

Recently, another five full-time equivalents have been identified to commence—indeed, have commenced in January, and there are more on the way—which brings the total number to in excess of 20, I believe. Literacy Guarantee coaches have been helping in 168 sites across the public school system. Twelve new sites have been identified, with more to be identified once the results of the latest phonic screening check become available.

The establishment of the Literacy Guarantee Unit has also provided statewide services to schools, including intensive courses of professional learning to over 500 teachers annually to improve teaching practices for students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. They have a train the trainer professional learning model that will equip those trained teachers to develop the capacities of their colleagues, especially in the teaching of phonics, with the support of students with learning difficulties.

There is direct coaching support by literacy coaches for teachers who need that support, including, again, in the explicit teaching of phonics and—something we are really pleased about—the delivery of Literacy Guarantee conferences, which provide professional development opportunities for both department and non-department sector teachers. There have been eight of these conferences that have taken place since its establishment. They focus on a whole school approach to supporting students with learning difficulties.

Most recently, since the last budget, there have been three. The sixth conference was live-streamed on 29 September last year to more than 1,300 participants. The seventh statewide conference streamed on 14 January 2021 in the middle of school holidays over the Christmas break but still attracted 695 South Australian teachers during their holidays. The eighth one was on 21 April this year, with 400 face-to-face participants and 200 online.

This is a really important body of work, and it has contributed to the uptick in our year 1s' confidence by 20 per cent, from just over 40 per cent of our year 1 students getting the expected number of their questions right in the phonic screening check in 2018 to more than 50 per cent in 2019 and more than 60 per cent in 2020.

I note with enthusiasm that, while not every teacher in junior primary years was an enthusiastic adopter in 2018 of this program, I very rarely go to a primary school these days where the junior primary teachers are not enthusiastically looking to the term 3 phonic screening check this year, where they are looking forward to seeing those results continue to improve.

I think the number of whole-school approaches for the teaching of early literacy, where all of the teachers are using the same language and confidently able to engage with students learning difficulties compared to the situation we were in as recently as three years ago, has been a dramatic improvement.

I think that what we are also going to see in the years ahead is not just fewer students reaching those middle primary years with learning difficulties who have not been given some sort of appropriate intervention or indeed the key to being able to decode text, we are also going to see the advantage that once you get that early years' literacy right, it unlocks the richness of the broader curriculum and enables children to engage more effectively with the rest of their schooling. That has massive impacts on broader educational development and behaviour in our schools.

Mr BOYER: Minister, back to the previous budget line around the Building What Matters bunting. What was the total cost, if you have it, of the Building What Matters bunting being erected across all school sites?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sorry, I do not have that here. I will take it on notice.

Mr BOYER: Also, I appreciate you may need to take this on notice, but where did that funding come from? Did it come from existing resources from the agency, was it a new appropriation, or did come out of existing money there for the year 7 transition projects in some cases?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The cost of signage I think has always been part of the project cost.

Mr BOYER: Am I right then, minister, in saying the total pool of money available across those construction projects, some of which started off as Building Better Schools projects and morphed into the transition of year 7 into high school projects, came out of the money available for that construction work?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am just going to take issue with the construction of the question slightly because of course the Building What Matters project had a number of key criteria that informed what the projects would be, and capacity was always part of that. We have maintained those key priorities, but obviously in the high school projects capacity has been impacted by the fact that year 7s have been going into high school. In the primary school projects, correspondingly, capacity has been less of an intrusion so the net effect of course is that the money is a mix of building capacity and upgrading outdated facilities.

One of the impacts of the year 7 to high school project has been that we did an audit in 2018-2019 of the facilities in our schools to ensure that when year 7s came to high school they did not just have a classroom to be in but they also had adequate specialist learning areas, science labs or gyms as they may have needed. One of the things that we identified is that many of those high schools were actually coming up short even before the year 7s were in there. They did not have the adequate specialised learning facilities for the non-year 7 students as well.

It has also triggered a further investment of hundreds of millions of dollars extra in our school building programs. That is not just because of the year 7 move. We identified that the demographic modelling showed a significant amount extra capacity was required in our high schools. From memory, it was 20,000 extra high school places required across the public school system in South Australia, about half of which was as a result of year 7, and half of which was as demographic growth.

That is not in every high school. There are some parts of Adelaide where there is significant population growth and there are some parts of Adelaide where the composition of the population has included more high school aged children and indeed some where there are fewer and some where the choices people are making—I think that there are groups of migrants who came in certain areas of Adelaide in the fifties and sixties and seventies that had a high propensity for choosing non-government schooling, Catholic education or other Christian schools, and waves of migration in more recent times have been more favourable to public education for a whole range of reasons. It is great to see that confidence in all of our schools.

I do not want to call it the year 7 to high school building program. Certainly, some of the projects have been very significantly influenced by that, some of them are been influenced by it a little, but a \$1.4 billion investment in schooling is no small thing. In relation to your question about signage, there was always going to be signage envisaged in all of these projects I think in part of the project costs. The thing that changed in October last year I think could be categorised as what was going to be on those signs and we have now moved to having a consistent type of branding across government.

Mr BOYER: If I could take you back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178, Investing expenditure summary, and some specific questions about The Heights School. Do we have a final figure now on how much of the \$10 million—that was granted to The Heights School under the Building Better Schools program—the school has been able to keep for works on its site?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will take it on notice and endeavour to get the most useful information I can back to the member. If I could categorise it—and we sort of talked about this last year in estimates to some extent—when the projects are scoped there is an agreed scope with the school based on the best endeavours of the department to identify what the project needs for their capacity going forward.

I talked earlier about the audit of the appropriate learning facilities and so forth. Once there is an agreed scope of what we believe is the right value then those project scopes are developed in collaboration with the school based on advice from the appointed architect and independent cost managers. Then there is a pre-tender estimate prepared on the final proposed scope as contracts are awarded through a competitive tender process and, following a rigorous evaluation, there are sometimes favourable tender results.

Sometimes a school has a project that has, with best endeavours, been valued at \$10 million and may, indeed, after you get a good tender outcome, be \$9 million, for example, or \$8½ million or \$9½ million—some come in over. Of course, where there are some that come in over, we work with the school to identify if that scope needs to be value managed in any way. Some of those projects ultimately, whether it is because there is asbestos found—in certain regional areas sometimes there is an issue, sometimes in the metropolitan area there are issues and sometimes the tenders come in higher and sometimes a bit lower.

There is some scope for the system to support projects through the savings that come from a favourable tender outcome, but we also work with schools if there are things that were value managed to get the pre-tender estimate to a relatively appropriate level. Sometimes the department is able to put things back into their scope if they have come in under a very favourable outcome. I do not have the detail there because sometimes the cost may not be finalised until after the project is complete. There is always a risk of other contingencies coming in as well. In taking the question on notice I will get whatever further information could be useful for the particular school the member has asked about back to the member.

Mr BOYER: On that same budget line and still with reference to The Heights School, my understanding was that when the \$10 million was originally granted to the school under Building Better Schools, the school's intention was to build a double gymnasium because the existing one was dilapidated basically. Then, with the change of government, the direction from your agency was that they also needed to create a new classroom space to accommodate what new year 7s they would have due to the transition, and that with the remainder of the money after that they could build a single gymnasium.

As you mentioned in your previous answer there was a favourable tender outcome—and I do not have the exact figure but at least \$2 million left over from the \$10 million—which the school then sought to use to renovate the original gym, so they would have two gyms. However, that money instead has been clawed back into the agency. Is that correct? Is that your understanding of what has happened at The Heights?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: There are a couple of things. I think the member's description is in the ballpark of accurate but there are some things that I would correct. Firstly, before the change in government there were no agreed scopes with projects with any of these schools. The department, under the former minister, had produced these pre-criteria, of which capacity was one, and schools were invited to identify the projects that they would like to include. I think Julieann Riedstra described it to me as a wish list that schools might have of things they wanted to include.

I was advised on coming to government that there was never any commitment given by the department to any of the schools in relation to any of the specific projects on those wish lists. Some concept drawings were produced for the website of what some of those projects might look like, but there was no engagement beyond generating that list of things that the school saw as desirable.

We did not, as I say, change the criteria, but obviously year 7 had some impact on capacity needs in high schools and, obviously, a beneficial outcome in primary schools. What also, as I think I have stated previously, had a fairly dramatic impact on many high schools was the modelling that showed how many students they would be getting in years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. In many cases there were dramatic increases in the northern suburbs of Adelaide and the north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide, communities such as those served by The Heights.

Growing confidence in public education was a factor. Many migrant groups who might, in previous waves of migration, have gone to non-government schools were choosing public education as their first priority. I am sure that all the members in the chamber right now, with high levels of multicultural communities, would be familiar with the different choices that different communities

might be prone to making. That is having an impact on capacity. There are 20,000 extra places required in high schools, half of which are to do with the year 7 move and half of which are not.

In relation to the agreed scope that was worked through, there were certainly some impacts, but a priority was to ensure that we had enough spaces in our schools for the children and young people who were going to be coming to our schools. While I disagree that it is just about the year 7s—it is also about the year 8s, 9s, 10s, 11s and 12s—the characterisation of that is certainly right. Capacity is a very high priority, and then the other matters that seek to be supported are likely.

Once the agreed scope has gone to tender and it has come under—and I do not dispute the member's figures that are apparent at The Heights—then that funding is available to support projects that go over with the projects that have had their agreed scope to the identified value. That does not necessarily mean that we have the final figure, because of course the project is not necessarily finished until it is handed over, and there is always the risk that there are further contingencies that might need to be called on, as has happened at some schools. I will get the chief executive to add one final bit.

Mr PERSSE: We are certainly aware, through the principal at The Heights, Nigel Gill, that that was a challenge. I understand that the governing council was advocating very strongly to be able to retain the full amount and get the best benefit for their school. I would be worried if a governing council was not advocating strongly for their school. I do not have the details with me, but I do know that our capital team and our executive director of infrastructure were engaging with the school and the governing council. I am happy, through the minister, to come back and provide some more information to the honourable member.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, minister and Mr Persse. In relation to the answers that you both gave there, can I assume that the money that was left after the favourable tender outcome at The Heights has gone into another school project elsewhere?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think that there would be a notional allocation for the whole project. It would not go from one school to another specifically. There would be a pool of anticipated favourable tender amounts and that might be offset against a pool of understood unfavourable amounts at the end of the project. It would be great if the favourable tenders outweighed the unfavourable tenders, which may allow us to provide some funding back to individual schools that might have been on the edge with their outcomes. This is actually a process where, to the best of my ability and to ensure that political interference is not seen to be a consideration, it is managed by the department. I think they do so in an equitable fashion.

Dr HARVEY: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178. Can the minister please update the committee on how measures in this budget will support preschools and schools across South Australia and particularly in my electorate of Newland?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. It is a really exciting time to be an education minister when we have a record \$1.4 billion worth of capital works being supported through the public education system. Indeed, it is not just work in the public education system but also support for non-government schools as well. I know that the Torrens Valley Christian School in the member's electorate has benefited over the last three years from those modest infrastructure grants to support things like the refurbishment and upgrade of some of their capital infrastructure totalling about \$200,000 as well.

There is no doubt that the most significant support has been provided in public education. The member would be aware that at the Banksia Park International High School we are well underway to completing the significant upgrade there, which includes the construction of the new performing arts building, which is looking spectacular with a new commercial kitchen attached to it; the refurbishment of existing buildings to provide more contemporary and flexible learning spaces; a new covered outdoor learning area to cover existing courts; and of course the replacement of some ageing structure.

At Modbury High School, the \$7 million project is coming into sight with expected completion in September or October. There is a new year 7 building, which will welcome those students next year with additional music rooms. There is refurbishment of the wellbeing area and opening up of

buildings to the courtyard and the partial refurbishment of the technical studies building. That was work that the member and I were able to see underway and looking fantastic. They have also had some buildings that were so heritage, if you like, as to be remembered by grandparents of kids at the school now. They have been removed and that has been very much welcomed. The Ardtornish Primary School is also benefiting from significant upgrades.

Every school and preschool in South Australia has benefited from minor maintenance, minor works grants, in the last two budgets. We have seen \$50,000 cumulatively provided to every preschool to identify their projects. At Ardtornish, Banksia Park, Kathleen Mellor preschool, Modbury South, Redwood Park, Ridgehaven and St Agnes in the member's electorate, all of those preschools benefited from a \$20,000 grant and then a \$30,000 grant to do the work, whether it is painting, tiling, roofing or covered outdoor spaces that is appropriate for their site.

Every school has also benefited from grants of between \$20,000 and \$100,000, depending on their size and whether they had a capital works project. For example:

- Ardtornish Primary School, \$20,000;
- Banksia Park International High School, \$20,000;
- Modbury High School, \$20,000;
- Modbury West School, \$20,000;
- Banksia Park School R-7, \$70,000;
- Modbury South Primary School, \$60,000;
- Modbury Special School, \$100,000;
- Redwood Park Primary School, \$70,000;
- Ridgehaven Primary School, \$70,000;
- St Agnes Primary School, \$70,000;
- Tea Tree Gully Primary School, \$60,000.

There is obviously some variation in enrolments. Those, again, are grants that are enabled to be provided to whatever is a priority project. Some schools have been combining those grants with work that they have been saving up for, enabling projects to be undertaken more quickly. Some have been in addition to what is already on their track. Through schools' regular funding, there is a component of that that goes to maintenance and so some schools were able to put them towards projects that fell into the category of things they would like to do rather than just the things that were urgently needed.

We have also seen in the member's electorate significant grants to a range of schools to deal with maintenance work that had been reported to the department for some time but not able to be actioned through the school's regular maintenance budget. These are ones where the facilities manager had identified a requirement for that asset and which we have been able to undertake in the last year and half. At Modbury High School, \$300,000 went towards the replacement of firemain pipework. Also, \$220,000 went to fixing gutters, eaves and a fascia replacement.

Modbury Special School had \$350,000 to replace a bitumen driveway that was in need. Modbury West School had \$265,000 for a bitumen driveway and car park. St Agnes School had \$250,000 to replace the bitumen hard play. That was a site where I think that basketball court was actually at risk of being a danger to students and now it is a world-class facility. Tea Tree Gully Primary School had two projects totalling \$260,000 for bitumen car park replacement and repairs to windows.

These are all important bodies of work and they enable the teaching and learning going on in our classrooms, which is of course the most important thing, to be the priority for our principals. There is always more to do. There are always more schools that need more support. We as a government have shown our commitment over the last series of budgets to delivering that extra support to schools and will continue to do so.

Ms WORTLEY: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 178, 179, 185 and 186. Minister, why has the work on the demolition and rebuild of Hampstead Primary School buildings deemed uninhabitable as a result of a fire in December 2019, which is 18 months ago, not been given priority, particularly seeing that the children are faced with burnt out shells on a daily basis and that some of the programs previously delivered in the school have had to be put on hold?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. It is an utterly despicable disgrace that anyone would ever set fire to a school. I am sure all members would agree it is disgusting and really disappointing and very sad. On 27 December 2019, there was a deliberately lit fire at Hampstead Primary. It destroyed a building, it caused significant damage to interconnected buildings and the current damage estimate is around \$3.1 million.

The fire started in the major interconnected building complex in the centre of the school, which houses a preschool, classrooms, administration, music and amenities—toilets. Due to the interconnectivity of the building, there was extensive smoke damage and carbon deposits throughout the complex. The fire also destroyed the school's main power switchboard and there was significant water damage to ICT equipment.

I am advised that during January 2020 Spotless Facility Services arranged immediate fire remediation and repairs to enable the school to reopen for term 1 with temporary toilets in place, temporary administration areas and offices. This is obviously not satisfactory for long-term use but, within a month, wanting to get the school in a position where it could be habitable, the insurance assessor then determined that the building could be remediated within its existing shell.

Subsequent engineering reports received from Spotless and their contractors indicated that the building was not structurally sound and should be demolished and replaced rather than remediated. A second engineering report was therefore commissioned, given the recommendation did not align with the insurance assessment, which also confirmed the building was not structurally sound. So the second engineering report agreed with the subsequent engineering reports from Spotless but not with the initial insurance assessment.

So there have been some very unfortunate delays in commencing the replacement of the fire-damaged building but plans are now being finalised and a schedule will be completed once the works have been tendered. On the basis that more significant construction work would need to be undertaken, the department did provide a temporary dual classroom modular building from term 4 last year to alleviate space issues at the school.

In order to accelerate the project, a request for service was forwarded to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport on 30 September last year. Katanoo Pty Ltd was engaged as an architect. As a fire reinstatement project, the project will deliver new accommodation to replace the spaces destroyed by the fire, such as administration spaces, including a school reception, staff offices, staff and meeting rooms and other support spaces. It will include a flexible service learning area and covered walkways.

The lead architect has investigated the existing site conditions and, due to highly reactive soils in combination with the existing piled footings, the design is required to include a fully piled structural system. This has been estimated to add six weeks to the program, unfortunately. A preliminary cost estimate has been prepared against the proposed scope of works to assist in monitoring the costs of the project. The cost estimate is in the process of being reviewed.

The current program prepared by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport forecasts the practical completion of the whole project to occur in the first half of next year, by June next year. However, it is anticipated that this will potentially shift following detailed design and documentation and the submission of tenderer's construction programs. Obviously, we are eager for it to take place as soon as possible.

I am advised that the principal is being kept up to date. I think the member may have even brought to my attention a delay at some stage, in the middle of last year, from my recollection.

Ms WORTLEY: That is right.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The principal is now aware of the current forecast completion date but would understandably like the works completed as early as possible, as any principal would, as would we all. The department is endeavouring to work closely with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) to ensure that all project milestones are expedited to the extent possible. There are some replacement facilities on site at the moment, but we would very much like to get to the end of the full project, which will see the school with some fantastic new facilities.

Ms WORTLEY: Minister, I raised the issue with you eight months after the fire. Following that, two modules were delivered, but since that time—we are now at 18 months—there has been a number of start dates provided to the school, including the July school holidays that we just had, and now there is another scheduled for October.

Can the minister assure the Hampstead Primary School community that the demolition of the current buildings and the new buildings will begin during the next school holidays? Every day, when they go to school, the kids are faced with the burnt out shells. Some of the children who go to that school are in the intensive language program and they are on humanitarian visas, and being faced with these burnt out shells on a daily basis is just not good for their wellbeing.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will be very clear: I would very much like this project to be completed as soon as possible. I will check with my officers as to whether there is any further information I can provide in addition to what I provided in my earlier answer. The chief executive also joins with me in those comments, I think, and he has assured me that it will be an absolute priority for him to get this sorted as quickly as possible so that there are no further delays.

Ms WORTLEY: That would be appreciated, thank you.

Mr CREGAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 186. Can the minister update the committee on how the government's Learning+ online tutoring program is helping in our goal to improve maths education?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. I think all members would join with me in agreeing that, obviously alongside learning to read, numeracy and mastering mathematical concepts are absolutely critical for our children's success in learning in their education and in life. It is an absolute prerequisite for children to take the opportunities for jobs and work that are abundant in South Australia and only growing in fields that require a strong background in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

The unbelievable investment by the federal government in defence projects, the dramatic investment by the private sector in the cyber and space industries as a result of the government's curation of Lot Fourteen is dramatic. South Australia is the national capital of defence projects, and we are rapidly approaching becoming, I think, the Southern Hemisphere capital of cyber and space projects in the years ahead in South Australia. We want our young people to be able to take those opportunities, so they need a strong grounding in maths.

One of the prospects that we have undertaken to try to grasp that opportunity, to try to give our students the best possible start in their maths, is a new pilot program, which we are optimistic about and which we hope will go very well. That is called, as the member identified, Learning+. The Learning+ pilot program commenced in term 1. It provides one-on-one online mathematics tutoring to students in public schools, and those schools are across South Australia in metropolitan and regional areas.

The way it works is that students participate in two 30-minute sessions per week for up to 10 weeks. Sessions can take place outside school hours, including on weekdays after 4pm and on weekends. More than 100 schools expressed an interest in participating in this pilot program. Because it is a pilot program and we want to establish whether it works and for which cohorts it works most effectively, students selected for the program had varying mathematical abilities in order to evaluate the impact of the program across student cohorts.

More than 200 qualified teachers were on board as tutors and provided with a comprehensive induction into their new role. We wanted to make sure that this tuition was undertaken by teachers who did not just have competence but also had confidence in maths instruction. The University of Melbourne was engaged to design tutor professional learning and resources, including a diagnostic

interview tool that assists those tutors to determine the students' learning requirements, so that we are providing the tuition for the students at the level they need to help them get the growth they need.

Resource booklets for determining mathematical concepts, also from the University of Melbourne, provide tutors with activities that can be completed in an online environment. During terms 1 and 2 school holidays, professional learning days were held for all tutors to deepen their understanding of the mathematical concepts and to learn from each other, based on their experiences so far, and we are developing a collegiality between that group of teachers.

The program is being delivered online. The online-only approach means that students from across the state can access this program, and their participation is not dependent on the availability of a local tutor. It really did come about as one of the outcomes when we were looking for the upsides of COVID—the opportunities, the things that we learnt last year, particularly at the end of term 1, when we had those days of professional development, where our staff became increasingly familiarised with the online environment. Some were using it during term 2, even after students came back to school.

The fact that—and I think we saw it in the last week—so many people are now much more comfortable in that online environment, we saw this as an opportunity to provide something else to our students, something that was not dependent on where they are, something that ensures that every student in every classroom, in every school, in every town and suburb in South Australia will get that support.

That means that we have been able to provide support across regional and remote South Australia. Schools like Streaky Bay, Kadina, Keith, Penola and Kangaroo Island Community Education have all had students engaged in this pilot. In all, 491 year 6 students participated in the pilot over terms 1 and 2. We have had good feedback: 99 per cent of the post-session ratings indicating that students found the sessions helpful or very helpful—those are the two good categories, I am told.

Feedback from parents, whose children completed the program as part of the first year 6 group, has also been positive, with 98 per cent of parents reporting improvements in their child's mathematics confidence. That, by my year 6 mathematics, suggests that there were five parents who did not report improvement, although their children found it helpful or very helpful. I do not know what were the circumstances of those five children, but I am sure that they enjoyed the sessions.

The first group of year 8 students commenced tutoring sessions in week 6 of term 2, with the second group commencing as recently as last week. There will be a third group of year 8 students commencing in mid-term 3. That cohort of year 8 students spans 31 schools, so there are 431 year 8 students currently accessing Learning+, in addition to the 491 year 6 students who have completed their work, and there will be another 250 year 8 students starting next month.

The Telethon Kids Institute has been engaged to conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot program. Findings from this evaluation will determine whether the pilot program is associated with an increase in student self-efficacy in mathematics, and will assist in shaping the future development and implementation of the program. I am very pleased with the very positive feedback we have received, as I identified earlier, from the overwhelming majority of participants and their parents, and the anecdotal data that I have received from the tutors and teachers in schools has been useful.

To be clear, the future of this program will be very strongly informed by more than the anecdotal data. We are interested in the analysis of it being helpful. I am optimistic that it will be seen to be helpful. I certainly have no regrets about it. I do not think it was a bad use of money in any way. I think it was a really good pilot program and I am very hopeful that the analysis will show that it is worthwhile, and if it is I have no doubt that we will dramatically increase the scale in future years, enabling more students or cohorts to take part, and we will await that advice. I hope the year 8 students who are currently undertaking the program find it useful, and I hope they have a significant increase in confidence and agency in their maths skills in the months and years ahead.

This was a body of work undertaken by some outstanding people in the Department for Education, both with a background in maths and professional development, and I commend all the people involved with this program—the teachers, the administrators and the officers—for this body of work.

Mr BOYER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178. Will the zone for the proposed Rostrevor school, once it is announced, affect the shared CBD zone?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will indicate, as the school is a part of my electorate, that I will probably get the chief executive or one of the other departmental officers to answer most questions in relation to this. I have been very conscious of following the advice of the department where there might be any perception that my electorate might be an issue. However, in relation to this specific question, the answer is a very clear no.

Mr BOYER: Can you rule out any further suburbs or parts of suburbs being removed from the shared CBD zone?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The chief executive has advised that there are no plans to change the CBD zone being prepared by the Department for Education, and I am certainly not aware of any plans being developed by anyone else.

Mr BOYER: I refer to the same budget line. If, as your answer suggested, whatever the new Rostrevor school zone will be will not affect the shared CBD zone, what plans do you have to address the pretty obvious capacity issues in that shared CBD zone?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will try to get some specific information for the member. Obviously, we have had capacity challenges in those CBD zones for some time. Adelaide High School and Adelaide Botanic High School share a zone. The capacity issues led to the opposition—as we then were when I was first a candidate in 2008 and 2009—arguing for a second campus in the CBD. That was eventually delivered, and Adelaide Botanic High School started in 2019 after a series of elections that eventually saw that work put into place.

The zone reduction took place in 2020 as a result of the CBD schools exceeding their original forecasted demand for places, and the member is aware of that. Both CBD schools exceeded their enrolment ceilings again in 2021, resulting in the need to develop strategies to accommodate a double cohort in 2022, notwithstanding that there was very significant investment in increasing the size of Adelaide High School, which we announced in 2019, to meet the challenge of year 7s going into the school. Adelaide High School's significant increase in capacity will be in place from the beginning of next year as a result of that. Capacity management plans are in place for both schools at the moment, restricting enrolment eligibility for out-of-zone students.

As I say, additional capital works at Adelaide High School will establish additional general learning areas for the next years. Both schools are redeveloping their timetables to maximise utilisation of existing teaching spaces, including the timetabling of staggered start and finish times for specific year levels and areas of study, that is, practical teaching areas.

Places for international fee-paying students at Adelaide High School will remain capped at 75. Currently there are 40, and I do not anticipate that number growing any time soon. Consideration is currently being given to a number of options for meeting enrolment demand in the CBD and the inner north.

Ms STINSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 186. What is the current status of the \$5 million infrastructure project first promised back in 2017 for Black Forest Primary School?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Obviously, the allocation remains, and the school I believe is working with the department on the scope of that at the moment. The detail I will further take on notice, and I will bring back whatever further details are up to date.

Ms STINSON: The school had previously been informed of what the scope of the works was, and indeed you were talking about artists impressions earlier; there were artists impressions that were available to the school about what might be built there. Could you inform us as to what was in the original scope and whether that is still what is intended to be built or whether the project is

getting rescope? When I say 'scope' I am talking about: are there classrooms? Are there outdoor learning areas? What is actually going to be involved in that \$5 million build?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: If I can perhaps restate from the earlier answer to, I think, the member for Wright's question, there was no scope agreed between the department and the school prior to the election—is the very clear advice I have had from the department. I had it when I came into government as the minister. I am advised that effectively they put the drawings ahead of the scope. There was a wish list, as I understand it, where schools identified the projects they were interested in. I am not sure if somebody told the school that there were projects that they would specifically get.

Ms STINSON: It was on the education website.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Yes, I am advised that there was the wish list put on the website and the pictures that were drawn by the former government, but I am advised by the department that there was never an agreed scope with any school over what was going to be delivered within the budget. The wish lists—and this is the way it was described to me when I became the minister—were projects that were identified by the school that they would like to have in the project, but the costing had not yet been done.

So to the member for Badcoe's example—I think Black Forest Primary School—there was an allocation of \$5 million that was announced in 2017, then schools were asked to identify a wish list of what they wanted, and then the work on identifying how much those things would cost had not yet been done. After that it was proposed that they would work out which bits would be delivered—the priority areas that were within the \$5 million envelope. The drawings that were put on the website by the former government were not reflective of an agreed scope, as I understand it. They were reflective of something to put on the website and something to tell the school community about, as I understand it.

I have just received some information on Black Forest specifics. I am told it is in the concept phase, which should be completed in the next few weeks. I am not advised that there are any known scope issues. The department is working with the school on new classrooms and new multipurpose spaces, and obviously there will be more detail available in a few weeks in relation to that particular project.

Ms STINSON: Could you tell us if the budget of \$5 million remains the same and what the new delivery time frame is for the project?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The budget is the same at the moment. I will take the delivery time frame on notice in the hope that by the time the estimates answers are due to be supplied we will actually have that, because the delivery time frame depends on the final scope, which is, as I say, a few weeks away.

Ms STINSON: Does the expansion of South Road have any bearing on this particular project, that is, the \$5 million to be spent on additional infrastructure? If so, what impact does it have either on the end product or indeed the planning phases of this infrastructure project?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My understanding is that the Department for Infrastructure and Transport are finalising the reference designs still, so I do not have anything further to add other than that I understand the Department for Infrastructure and Transport has been working with the Department for Education to mitigate as much as practicable any impacts to the schools, which may be none, which is one of the possibilities there.

The Torrens to Darlington—which I believe the Department for Infrastructure and Transport refer to as the T2D—stakeholder engagement team is working closely with this department to ensure schools and their communities are as informed as possible and have the opportunity to provide feedback to the project team. Obviously, I imagine then if there is any impact the community will be advised as soon as that is determined. It may well be that there is not.

Ms STINSON: I realise you may need to take this next question on notice, given your previous answers, but the information that is in the public realm for my community is that the reference design is due in December this year and the information you have provided is that we will

have some sort of idea of what is happening with this \$5 million project at Black Forest in the coming weeks. What impact might that have if we do not have a reference design until after this initial planning work is done on Black Forest Primary School's project?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question and I understand the question. I am advised that the buildings that are proposed for Black Forest are away from South Road and so even if there was any impact of the South Road project on the school, it would not impact on the proposed building works. That is not to say that there will be an impact from the road on the school—there may well not be—but even if there was, my understanding is, I am advised, that the building project, we are absolutely confident, would not be impacted by that change with the road.

Mr CREGAN: Can I continue with Budget Paper 4, Volume 1 and take the minister to page 177. Can the minister please update the committee on developments of the government's music education strategy since it was launched?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. I am really pleased to have a moment to talk about the music education strategy. I think music in schools is something that is asked about at most estimates committees. Since 2018, when I launched the department's music education strategy, I have been really pleased at the way that it has been delivered by the department. Its aim is to ensure all children and young people in South Australia have access to high-quality music education.

We know that music in our schools is one of the things that helps to engage students, that music brings joy to classrooms, it brings joy to school yards when people hear it. I was told by some of the contractors when I visited the building works at Henley High not that long ago with the Chair of this committee that the builders at Henley High enjoyed hearing the instruments play from the students in the classroom next to the edge of the building site. I am not sure whether the students in the classroom enjoyed the building work sounds, but I think they were coping pretty well and holding their own in producing that level of music. I digress.

The strategy aims to enhance existing systems and build capacity to provide better support for general classroom music education. It aims to upskill non-specialist teachers and educators to improve the delivery of general classroom music education. It aims to provide curriculum resources with a strong focus on primary schools. A South Australian quality music education framework was launched in 2020, defining a set of characteristics for quality music education and providing guidance to a range of stakeholders involved in making decisions around music education.

Field officers have established music engagement networks, providing direct mentoring to 217 school and preschool educators and facilitating professional development to 845 participants since 2018. Three rounds of the Music Innovation Fund have been completed, with more than \$700,000 allocated to 75 schools, 22 preschools and seven external organisations.

These projects have varied from the small to the very large, from the purchase of musical instruments to professional development programs, to whole-school approaches to music, to the introduction of new trial ways of embedding music in the everyday life of the school. I really commend all of those teachers, both music teachers and general teachers around the system, who have taken the opportunity provided by this fund to introduce a new musical program in their school. It has seen some dramatic improvements and opportunities.

A Music Education Advisory Panel was established in 2019 convening once per term. This has some very high quality people who are giving their time to the Department for Education to support our students, and I thank those people for their work, in particular Vincent Ciccarello from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Graeme Koehne from Adelaide University. They were also deeply embedded and engaged in the development of the strategy in the first place and they have maintained that involvement in an ongoing way because they see its value to the state. That is a service to the community and I thank them for it.

In 2021, an online music education resource has been offered to all government schools with primary enrolment and 188 sites are registered. A scope and sequence for music education has now been completed with units of work currently in development for release in September this year, which

will give further guidance to teachers using the Australian curriculum in a way that will deliver more music in our schools.

Working in collaboration with three South Australian musical associations, three music education professional development packages were delivered in 2020 with 60 teachers and preschool educators participating. I thank all of them, and I commend the work done by all of these music educators and non-music educators who are embedding music in their practice for their work. I think it is adding a lot to our schooling system.

Ms STINSON: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 186: have you or your department proposed or investigated a proposal from the Forestville and Ashford communities for a new school on the old Le Cornu site at Forestville? I understand there has been some correspondence to your government from community members who would like to see a school on that site. I am just inquiring as to whether that is being considered and, if so, what action has been taken by your government on that front.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will take it on notice. I could provide you with some general information but I think to enable the specifics of engaging with that particular community group to be taken into account I will take it on notice and we can have some more questions now.

Ms STINSON: Richmond Primary School, as you may be aware, has a shortage of staff parking which causes quite a lot of problems, and a number of staff get parking fines quite frequently. That has been a problem for a few years and I and others have made representations to the council and the government. What steps have been taken, if any, to accommodate staff parking at Richmond Primary School?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Again, I will take that one on notice so that we can deal with the specifics rather than just talking about the generalities. Obviously there is a significant level of car parking responsibility that is taken by council but, in acknowledging that there has been correspondence, I will take it on notice and deal with the specifics and will get back.

Ms STINSON: Thank you very much. In relation to Edwardstown Primary School, the school has been raising issues with road safety on the roads that surround the school. I believe it has had some action from the council in relation to some plans for a pedestrian crossing or road safety infrastructure on one road; however, there is still concern about the other surrounding roads. Are you and the department aware of that and are any steps being taken by the department to address road safety issues for parents, teachers and students at that school?

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

Ms STINSON: Plympton International College at Plympton has been named publicly in the media a few times for having one of the most unsafe pick-up and drop-off areas for that school, including an RAA study I think about two years ago. What steps have been taken to look at safe drop-off and pick-up at Plympton International College, particularly as that school is a growing school and I understand will reach capacity next year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Again, I will take that one on notice.

Ms STINSON: Still on the same budget line and returning to the issue of South Road, have you been advised of any compulsory acquisition of land at the Black Forest Primary School, Richmond Primary School or Warriappendi in relation to the Torrens to Darlington project?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am advised that we have not been advised of that, no.

Ms STINSON: Have you been provided with any time line as to when you might be advised of that?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That will depend on the work that is being done on that project. It does not presume that there will be but there has certainly been no advice at this stage that I am aware of.

Ms STINSON: In relation to that \$5 million infrastructure project at Black Forest that we were discussing earlier, can you give any reason for the delay in that project going ahead? Obviously it was announced by the previous Labor government in 2017 and I have been told that work has been going on under this government to plan for that for some time. It is now 2021 and that seems like

quite a long time for the school community to be waiting. I just wondered if there was any specific reason why that project was either deprioritised or why it is facing a delay.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The former government announced a six-year body of work and we remain within that six years.

Sitting suspended from 12:45 to 13:45.

The CHAIR: Welcome back, everybody. We continue examination of payments in regard to the portfolio of school education. The minister is, of course, still the Minister for Education, and the estimate of payments is as referred to earlier. We will continue with questions.

Mr BOYER: Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178, and back on to school zoning. Can you guarantee that all students who will or who do reside in the shared CBD zone will be able to access a place at either Adelaide High School or Adelaide Botanic High School next year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. There is a year 7 to 8 transition process, which this year is being supplemented by a year 6 to 7 transition process, so we have the two cohorts going in to the high school. Obviously, those students who are eligible in that process under the school's capacity management plan will be able to get a place. Under the capacity management plan, there is a longstanding arrangement that relates to students who are seeking to enter the school during other periods.

Obviously, not all students have been able to enter it historically through those times as opposed to the capacity management plan. This tends to be, for example, when a student moves into the area when they are in year 9 or year 10, or seeks to leave another school and come in later in their schooling journey. It has been many years since the Adelaide High School's capacity management plan was put in place, and it was put in place because it is a very high demand school.

The commitment we make to families is that if they are in the zone and they enter through the year 6-7 transition process, as it will become, or the year 7-8 transition process, as there still has been one this year, then we will make sure that there is room for them. I understand that is certainly the case, as we are now in that process. Offers are being finalised at the moment.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line, in reference to the new proposed school at Rostrevor, what work has been done so far on what that zone will look like? What can you tell us about what the zone of that new school will be?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: As indicated earlier, I will refer questions on this matter to the departmental officers and the chief executive. The chief executive may like to ask Ben to come up. Otherwise, I am happy for him to handle it.

Mr PERSSE: I am happy to be corrected by Ben on the fly, if that is alright. Our team is doing the modelling now in terms of that demographic analysis, historical arrangements, sibling rights and that sort of stuff, but we have not finalised it yet to put it to the minister or to the government. As the minister said, the modelling does not impact the shared CBD zone, but it would impact the historical zones of Norwood Morialta and also Charles Campbell. We are just trying to work through that at the moment. Is it far off, Ben?

Mr TEMPERLY: No, it should not be too far, just another month or so.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line, are there any business cases which have been undertaken or are currently underway for any other new government schools in South Australia?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will invite Rick to answer.

Mr PERSSE: In the strict definition of a business case, no, but there certainly is preparatory work. The evidence I gave at the Budget and Finance Committee remains true. We are doing all of the analysis, demographic analysis and historical analysis and sibling rights modelling for that. As was reported in the paper, we were experiencing a lot of demand for our shared CBD zones. Some of that was coming out of that inner north-east area, which was reported in *The Advertiser*, but at this stage we are still gathering all of those data points before we propose back through the minister to undertake a business case.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, Mr Persse. Just to clarify that, if I recall the evidence you gave at the Budget and Finance Committee meeting, you might have discussed the inner north or the Prospect area and preparatory work being done there. I think you might have just mentioned the north-east as well. I am happy to be corrected on that. Are there other areas?

Mr PERSSE: It is the same reference point. Because of the urban infill that is underway through Prospect right round through to Bowden and other areas, that is why we are really trying to get this modelling right using data from other sources, including other government agencies. Certainly, Prospect was one of the suburbs that was driving a fair bit of demand. It is largely due to the changing nature of the historic big blocks being subdivided, with two-storey, four-bedroom houses moving in and more kids.

Mr BOYER: In reference to that answer, minister or Mr Persse, when do you anticipate the preparatory works for that location or those locations to be complete and the public being made aware of any plans to expand existing schools or build new schools in those pressure points, as you refer to them?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The information about pressure points is constantly being updated by the Department for Education. One of the key points at which information comes in, of course, is through the year 6-7 and year 7-8 transition process that is underway at the moment, which will help provide us with up-to-date information. Obviously, enrolments in primary schools in the public system around Adelaide in particular but also in some regional areas are informative.

It is not just in relation to the CBD or inner north where this is an issue. There are areas of capacity pressure elsewhere in the city, elsewhere in the state, and the department is constantly updating advice. When they provide that advice to me and the government, we will obviously endeavour to respond to that in a suitable way, as we have done since we have been in government, and keep the public informed along the way.

Mr BOYER: Are there any preparatory works underway or business cases, or whatever you would like to call them, in country areas for new schools?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I would refer to my immediate last answer. There are obviously particular pressure spots in the city, but that is not to say that there are not some regional areas that are experiencing population growth. We are also underway currently in significant new works in Whyalla. We have significant development underway at the Glossop High School site at Berri. Indeed, there are expansions currently underway at Murray Bridge and Mount Barker.

There are improvements going on from the APY lands in the north-west of the state to Mount Gambier in the South-East. We have a new public school opening in Goolwa next year and new public schools opening in Whyalla and Angle Vale next year. While it is on the metropolitan area edge, there is a new school in Aldinga as well. We will continue to keep an eye on those capacity pressures in different parts of the metropolitan area, different parts of the country and indeed on the city fringe where we have new schools being built right now.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget reference but a slightly different topic. In terms of the transition of year 7 into high school and the need to have teachers in those high school settings teaching year 7 classes, how many of the positions that needed to be filled have been filled for next year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: You have asked me a question that I believe I have some information on right at the very back of my folder. Mr Persse has retrieved it first. The department updated me as at yesterday with the status of the recruitment process. This is obviously work that is ongoing because some of the people winning permanent positions that have been advertised are contract teachers at the moment, so their contract position may potentially also need to be advertised in the coming months. So it is updated every week depending on who wins positions.

I am able to advise that we are on track to have at least 800 additional teaching positions in high schools and we are filling more than 1,000 teaching positions in high schools, noting of course that some of these are impacted by retirements in the existing workforce as well. So far, for 2022, I am advised that the schools have declared 829 ongoing high school vacancies, of which 734 have

been filled through teacher placement, recruitment of permanent primary teachers into secondary roles and an open recruitment process.

I am advised that sites are continuing to finalise appointments through phase 2 recruitment ahead of phase 3 recruitment. I understand that schools will update their workforce profiles in the coming weeks as student enrolments and subject preferences for 2022 are confirmed. Following this, the next phase of recruitment to ongoing roles will start from next Monday—that is week 3 of term 3—and will include vacancies related to updated workforce profiles and replacements where teachers have won roles in phase 2. That is that cohort of teachers I was describing before. There are also of course a number of primary teachers moving to secondary sites by their choice.

I am also advised that schools will have contract positions to fill and this will occur in term 4. In addition to year 7 to high school related recruitment, and indeed the growth in capacity in schools that we described earlier because of the growing population in some areas, the usual filling of vacancies due to staff movements will continue as the need arises. This occurs for reasons such as backfilling teachers on maternity leave, temporary changes in time and to accommodate student subject selections and to replace teachers who win leadership positions.

The department has advised that through these recruitment processes it received more than 14,500 applications from more than 2,400 individuals. This provided a strong candidate field from which sites could appoint teachers. As I said earlier, I am advised that the 733 vacancies have been filled to date. Those include 109 primary teachers who were appointed in phase 1 recruitment, which was the group last year. They are permanent primary teachers moving to become permanent secondary teachers.

It includes 156 secondary teachers appointed via industrial placement processes. The member may recall that we have discussed this before. These are teachers who have placement rights. They are experienced teachers in many cases, sometimes absolutely excellent, outstanding teachers, who may have become surplus in the school where they have been placed, or they may have done their time in the country and come back with that placement right to get placed in a city school, as is their industrial entitlement.

Those teachers historically have often been placed during term 4 or the summer holidays or even the week before school starts in the school that they are going to go to. This year, they have known in term 2, 2021 where they are going to be in term 1, 2022, which is an absolutely outstanding outcome for those teachers and for the schools. It gives a high level of confidence that they are going to be placed in schools that will be very excited to have them because they have been chosen on their merits, based on what they have put forward. So that is good news.

There are also the 469 secondary teachers appointed through phase 2 recruitment so far. They include teachers who are secondary teachers currently employed by the department in existing permanent or temporary roles but going to new permanent roles. It includes primary teachers employed by the department in both permanent and temporary roles. It includes SSOs employed by the department who hold teaching qualifications, so it is a very exciting opportunity for those SSOs to become teachers and indeed, obviously, in some cases their SSO role may need to be filled. It includes teachers moving to the public system from the private sector, and it includes new graduates.

I have inquired with the department about any vacancies which did not receive applications. I was informed that, of the 550-odd roles (I think there were), there were six roles in this category. The department expected, as always, that there will be a number of harder to fill roles. These are often with a very specific subset for a teaching field, which were sought, and I think all but one of them may be in remote locations. The department will deploy its normal strategies to support these sites.

Five of these roles have been referred to the pilot for the Teach for Australia program, which is focused on specialist teaching in country locations that have not been able to attract applicants for a number of years. We already have the first group of those pilot teachers operating in Roxby Downs and Whyalla: two STEM teachers in Roxby Downs and a music teacher in Whyalla. I can tell you, the feedback from those schools, the feedback from those sites, is that those Teach for Australia associates are doing a fantastic job, and those principals are very excited about them. I am sure that,

should we be able to utilise that project to fill those five roles, we will similarly do very well, but the department has other strategies if necessary.

Ms WORTLEY: What is the expected flow-on impact to primary school programs and class sizes as a result of that transition?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Class sizes are not necessarily to be impacted. There is a set of rules in relation to class sizes that do not change. As I think I have reported to previous estimate hearings and elsewhere, the initial planning suggested that we needed 800 extra secondary teachers and 500 fewer primary teachers as a system.

As at Tuesday this week, the reduction of public teachers required has been managed by, so far already, 109 primary teachers being appointed to high schools through that phase 1 recruitment. These are permanent primary school teachers becoming permanent secondary teachers. Another 73 primary teachers have been appointed through phase 2 recruitment, and that included high schools and also vacancies in new schools. Then there is also a very significant level of natural attrition. We are talking about a staff cohort of 30,000 across the Department for Education.

There is always a very limited need to move permanent teachers between metropolitan sites as populations grow and populations diminish, and there will be a limited need for that. There will be a reduction in the number of contract teaching roles in primary settings needed in 2022 compared with 2021. The department advises me that that is anticipated to be limited. Indeed, we are getting a lot of contract primary teachers interested in moving to secondary settings.

There are hundreds and hundreds of primary teachers that have already expressed an interest in moving to secondary schools. There have been nearly 200 already appointed. Natural attrition will get us a long way there to the others, but that does not mean there will not be further primary vacancies still to be advertised that are available for new graduates or for contract primary teachers to move to ongoing roles.

Some primary vacancies are being advertised next Monday, week three of term 3. Classroom teaching positions will be advertised for country locations as well as a small number of specialist areas in metropolitan schools, like language teachers. At this stage, the department is expecting fewer than 50 primary vacancies.

Ms WORTLEY: That was not my question. My question was on the impact to primary schools as a result of this transition, so to the primary school programs and so on. I am happy for you to take that on notice because I know we have to get through a lot of questions.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I suggest that if the member reads the *Hansard* she will find that I answered that question directly. There is no change in class sizes. There are 500 fewer primary teachers. That is the impact of what we are talking about.

Ms WORTLEY: Programs in schools specifically.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The answer to the question is that our schools will offer excellent programs. They will no longer be offering those programs to year 7s.

Dr HARVEY: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 177 and it follows on from my earlier question about support for students with a disability. Can the minister please advise whether the government is looking to increase the provision of special options for students who need them?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the honourable member. This is an important area of work, and the government has announced significant funding over the last 3½ years to increase special options in our schools and in a number of our sites that have special classes or disability units—a number of those have already taken place. With the transition of year 7 into high school next year, more have already been announced and planned. I am pleased to advise the member, the house and the community that we are adding six further additional special options classes in six government schools for the 2022 school year to ensure we can best support students with a disability in the setting that is most appropriate to support their needs.

These are in addition to the 15 new classes announced at 11 schools in 2020 as part of our \$10.3 million capital works commitment to deliver 180 special options places by 2022 for the transition of year 7 to high school. In addition to those 15 new classes already announced, this is a further six new special classes. In Adelaide's north and south, the schools were identified based on where there is most demand to ensure that students are offered a place closest to home. The schools are Golden Grove High School, Hamilton Secondary College, Para Hills High School, Reynella East College, Riverbanks College B-12, and Salisbury High School. The modification to facilities will commence promptly in line with the statewide move of year 7 to high school in term 1 next year.

The special options class at the new Riverbanks College B-12 is in addition to the 100 inclusive places for students with a disability that have previously been announced at that site. As we prepare for year 7 to move into high school, we will continue to meet the demands for students with a disability to be enrolled in a special class, if that is what is suited to their learning needs. We will spend the money to do what it takes to support students in the environment that best fits their needs.

These additional places mean students will have the right support where they need it most, so that they get the most out of their schooling, so they get a year's growth in their education every year, so we are able to best support them to fulfil their potential in their education and in life. We aim to provide an inclusive education environment for as many students as possible, and our investment in targeted support will improve learning outcomes for every student in every classroom.

Members may be aware that special options provide an alternative learning environment to a mainstream classroom. It could mean a special class that is pretty well integrated into a mainstream school. It could mean a disability unit, which is a special unit within a mainstream school for students who need a higher level of adjustment to the curriculum, and often potentially may have physical needs as well. We have special schools that are separate from mainstream schools, but they cater to a similar cohort of students in those disability units.

So the announcement that I am making in answer to the member's question is specifically in relation to that group of special classes in mainstream schools. They provide adjustment to curriculum as is necessary for students with a diagnosed disability, global developmental delay or other neurodevelopmental or physical disability associated with a developmental delay. Eligibility and suitability for a special option is, as always, determined by a Department for Education psychologist.

Mr BOYER: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 185, highlights. How many times have sniffer dogs been used in public schools in the last financial year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I would have to check on when was the first time it was used. Certainly this year there has been one occasion. The total number has been two.

Mr BOYER: Of those two sites, how many requests came from the individual schools—was it in both cases or was the request or direction made from elsewhere?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: To be clear, the election commitment identified that we would establish protocols within which school visits that were not part of a police operation could take place. Those protocols have been followed on both occasions. Those protocols involve the school being the instigator of the request, and the discussion then happens with the relevant officers in the department, and through the chief executive would get progressed to SA Police.

Mr BOYER: Same budget line: were any requests made by schools that were not granted in the last financial year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Rather than saying 'weren't granted', I would say 'weren't yet granted'.

Mr BOYER: How many schools have either not been granted or not yet been granted their request to have sniffer dogs in their schools?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I would say that there are several that are under active consideration. It does not mean that there are not a number that are at an early stage in the development. In terms of the active consideration, there are a number of things that I am sure the chief executive would want to be assured of before a request would go to the police. I know that there

was one circumstance last year where there was an operation that was I think ready to take place, but there were some COVID-related issues at the school that meant it had to be deferred.

Indeed, while we are limiting the number of adults on school sites, while we are preventing parents from being able to enter their own school site on many occasions right now in order to enable us to open schools in line with the SA Health requirements, there is obviously a priority that gets considered in relation to whether this is the right time to run what is in effect a part of a drug education program. There are other aspects of our drug education program, including work that is done in the classrooms, that are able to be unimpeded without even raising the question of whether visitors come on site.

This is an important body of work. It is a body of work that will continue. I anticipate that it is going to be received positively by schools who integrate one of these visits into their drug education program. As I understand, it has so far been received positively by the schools that have taken the opportunity.

Mr BOYER: When you say 'several', are we talking about more than five or fewer than five?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think I have about four on the list in front of me that would be ready for the CE to give consideration to when the time is right.

Mr BOYER: Were any of the requests made by the schools in that group of four made in the last calendar year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I do not have that level of detail. I will take it on notice on the off-chance that there is information that is usefully able to be supplied.

Mr BOYER: Just to check: you will take on notice whether any of the four schools that have not yet had their request granted made that request in the 2020 calendar year, as opposed to the 2021 calendar year.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have already taken that on notice. I would make the point that the circumstances we have right now, where parents are not allowed onto most campuses for most children, certainly were in place for much of last year as well. We were discouraging visitors from being on site in order to best meet our opportunities to provide as COVID-safe an environment as possible, and that has impacted on the opportunity for this program to be delivered. As I think the chief executive has said, the situation has impacted on his willingness to put forward an operation to SA Police while we are in an environment in which we are not allowing visitors on school sites.

We look forward to when the many programs that run as usual in our schools can resume. This is obviously an important program that will be easier to conduct when we are more encouraging of people coming onto our school sites than the current COVID conditions allow.

Mr BOYER: I move on to page 106 of the same budget paper, in regard to vocational education training. Since the change in flexible industry pathways, are there any VET facilities in any of the government schools—for instance, it might be cooking or commercial baking or any of that kind of stuff—that they no longer use because they may not fit within flexible industry pathways?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will see what information I have. I note that the full extent of the changes in flexible industry pathways actually does not occur until next year. I note that there are some vocational education facilities that have been developed over the years that, long before we came to power, ceased being used for their original intended purpose because, of course, some vocational pathways ceased to be as important, or there might not be as much industry engagement as was initially hoped for when they were envisaged. I am sure I have been to schools where people have described that it is several years prior to the election since some of those facilities have been used, in certain examples.

However, in relation to the impact of the flexible industry pathways, the information I have is that we have 26 flexible industry pathways. They map out a student's journey through secondary school to employment. They articulate the qualifications, training and skills required. They prepare students for the workforce. They have been endorsed by the Training and Skills Commission's industry skills councils as the qualification suitable for school students leading to real entry job outcomes.

The courses are funded through the Department for Innovation and Skills. FIPs may include qualifications at certificate II or certificate III level, depending on the needs of employers. They are delivered by an RTO. They include enterprise and employability skills through SACE, and specific industry requirements linked to the pathway, whether that is white cards or working with children checks. They include compulsory SACE subjects and contextualised delivery of other school subjects so that students can complete both a VET qualification and their SACE concurrently.

Most government secondary schools are proposing to offer at least one flexible industry pathway in 2022, some more. Indeed, it is worth noting that flexible industry pathways are not the only way in which schools and government schools are offering vocational education and training. It is what we call stackable VET or VET clusters, which may involve portions of training that deliver many courses that people will be interested in doing and that will also count towards SACE credits.

I think the SACE Board is currently finalising or has recently finalised the application of how many credits each of those proposed clusters will attain. If schools do not have that information this week for their course planning for next year, I think they will have it in the next week or so.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178. Could you update the committee on how measures in the budget will support preschools across the state, in particular in my electorate of Chaffey?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will just clarify: so we are moving on to early childhood education? Is that the timing? Because I have a change in advisers.

The CHAIR: Yes, we are right on time, so I think that is probably appropriate, to be completely honest.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is a question that could be asked in either, but it feels like it is a good segue.

The CHAIR: Yes. Perhaps, member for Chaffey, you can bring that up at another point in time. Given that the time has expired for examination of the portfolio of school education there are therefore no further questions. I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio of school education complete. Minister, if you facilitate the rearrangement?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank Mr Persse, who will be stepping out and replaced at the front desk by Dr Caroline Croser-Barlow, who is the education department's executive director for early years and child development. The officers behind me remain Ben Temperly, Chris Bernardi and Dr Peta Smith. Julieann Riedstra remains not here in person, but I am pleased to inform the committee that she has advised me by SMS that she is watching. So to Julieann and all of the other many people watching through the parliament's webstreaming service, we thank you for your interest. Julieann tells me she is going to be printing out the *Hansard* that I and the member for Wright offered earlier today.

The CHAIR: I am sure we can organise a signed copy. We are shifting to a new portfolio area, that being early years and childhood development. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education. The estimate of payments is as referred to earlier. I advise that given these proposed payments remain open, there are no opening statements in that regard. Member for Chaffey, despite the quality of your question, I will give the first question to the opposition, the member for Wright.

Mr BOYER: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 184. Have the new arrangements for family day care come into effect now?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: No.

Mr BOYER: Same budget line. When will they come into effect?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will just see what detail I have. This was a project where industry consultation was undertaken in October 2019, but was paused due to COVID during 2020. There was some work done after—I do not know whether it was before or after our discussion in estimates last year, but it was at some stage after the pause, at any rate, where PricewaterhouseCoopers retested the market to identify if COVID-19 had had an adverse impact that would compromise the successful transfer of services. They have advised that there is still some level of interest within the market that we could proceed. The department has reviewed the project's

delivery time lines and requirements and if it is to proceed it would be expected that that would happen towards the end of 2022.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line—and if I missed this in your answer, my apologies—has a new manager or operator of the family day care and respite care services been chosen yet? I understand that the policy is not underway, but has that—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: No.

Mr BOYER: On that topic again, minister, despite the pause that we have had that you spoke about for COVID, is it still planned that these changes will go ahead at some point? How permanent or impermanent is the pause?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: As I described last year, the purpose of the proposal is to ensure that we have high-quality outcomes for children and young people and so the determining factor ultimately in whether it goes ahead is if the government is convinced that the potential service to be offered by a non-government provider is actually going to enable innovation and the opportunity for these taxpayer dollars to be spent—and family dollars; obviously, they make a contribution—in a way that will improve services. So we are not there yet.

Mr BOYER: Am I right in taking from your answer, minister, that there is a chance that this will not proceed? There is a chance it will, but it is not a certainty that it will go ahead.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We are still in the same parameters that we have been in since the start of the project, it is just that there has been a significant delay in the time frame, which has been precipitated by COVID as much as anything else.

Mr BOYER: On the Early Learning Strategy, which came out of this budget, how much funding in total makes up that strategy? What was the total bucket that was announced along with the strategy?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is a \$50.1 million strategy over the forward estimates and then I think there is ongoing funding of new funding beyond that of \$16.7 million a year indexed in terms of new funding to the department, but obviously there was already some funding available to the department within which we have been able to provide some of the work. I would not want to limit the amount that will be spent on the projects within the Early Learning Strategy to just that \$16.7 million a year ongoing. It is a significant investment and it is an investment that I am very excited about.

The CHAIR: Member for Wright, I know you are very keen to hear the answer to the question from the member for Chaffey, so I may quickly ask him to repeat his question for the minister.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you. I am well versed in it now. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 178. Minister, would you please update the committee on how measures in the budget will support preschools across the state as well as in my electorate of Chaffey?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think that preschools and other learning providers will benefit across the state. They will benefit in the member for Chaffey's electorate. We will see benefits to our preschools and our children's early learning outcomes significantly. We want, in all communities, early years providers to work together to engage and support families seamlessly so that every child has the best start in life.

To support this, part of the project is that there will be a new office for the early years within the Department for Education to be established. It would lead a universal early years system. The office will provide strategic direction to a range of agencies across the state government and non-government sectors and where appropriate it will also commission new services. The Early Learning Strategy will enable responsive local programs and services that support community priorities.

The government will be supporting communities to access Australian Early Development Census data, which provides population level data, to enable local communities to undertake more informed and targeted support for children and their developmental needs and will be providing tools and resources to support those responses. We are also looking at opportunities to work with the

Child Development Council, local government and other partners to deliver and design local-based services. There are opportunities for us to work with the LGA in helping to provide grants for some of those services.

We are also looking to provide grants to Raising Literacy Australia and Playgroup SA because one thing that we are very keen on ensuring as part of this strategy is that playgroups are a very important part of the outcome. We know that in some areas we have an excellent provision of playgroups, many of them through preschools such as those in the member for Chaffey's electorate. However, there are also some areas that are not sufficiently served by the opportunity for playgroups.

Playgroups have a massive impact in the opportunity for parents to build confidence as well as developing the socialisation of their children. I am very confident that when we see the diminishment in wellbeing according to vulnerability checks as part of the AEDC data in South Australian young children that we have seen from 2009 to 2018—against the national trend, I should say—part of that diminution I have no doubt is because we actually have, we believe, fewer playgroups now than we did 15 years ago. That is something that this government is eager to turn around, and we will provide some extra resources to Playgroup SA to help establish a map of that, and understand where we can support new playgroups to be established.

In relation to the preschools in particular, we are committed to delivering a world-class early learning system that is tailored to the needs of South Australian children and their families. We know that our preschools are already at a very high level in South Australia and 77 per cent of South Australian preschools exceed the national quality standards for education and care. We would like it to be 100 per cent, but I can promise you that these rigorous standards have 77 per cent achieving that. It is at a very high level by any comparison with any other jurisdiction or sector.

As part of the consultation during the Early Learning Strategy, we heard that preschool leaders and teachers are looking for consistent evidence-informed leadership and support specifically for early childhood as a distinct specialisation within education. The strategy will build on this with a focus on key areas of education program and practice, relationships with children and leadership. Research shows that the highest indicator of outcomes in early childhood is the quality of educator interactions and in terms of the ways that we can have those interactions in preschool. We will provide more support for this with the additional resources and guidance.

We will be developing a position statement on preschool in South Australia and practice evaluation tools will be implemented to support shared understanding of practice. There are a couple of specific measures also in relation to preschool. As a result of feedback received during the development of the strategy, we are making significant new investments in the early years, in preschools particularly, including a dedicated leadership position in the department for early childhood education, to provide system level oversight and support for preschool professional practice through the department, including corporate local education teams and sites.

There is also a new team to codesign and develop prior to schooling teaching and learning resources, focusing on the how and what is taught in preschool education programs. Also, the Preschool Directors Association was obviously very pleased to hear that we are providing increased funding to that association to enable the employment of a full-time president. I am very confident that this will contribute to South Australia continuing to be recognised as a leader in child development and early education, but in a way that will see even better outcomes for our children and young people.

Mr BOYER: If I could go to page 184 of Budget Paper 4, and I think this is a topic that we discussed in last year's estimates as well, about the need for a new early learning centre in Kingston. I know they have been very keen to see some kind of an announcement and investment from government there. I did not see anything in the budget. Is there anything planned to help provide more places there?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In relation to Kingston, I want to thank the member for MacKillop, who recently brought the working group from Kingston to Parliament House to meet with me. That included staff from council as well as educators and a number of parents. That Kingston working group has been collaborating with the local council with the aim of establishing a childcare

facility on the Kingston Community School site. I understand the council has applied for capital works funding from the Australian government, and the department will be providing a grant to the council—which they were very pleased to hear about, and the working group was very pleased to hear about—to assist with the engagement of a specialist childcare consultant to develop a business case.

Funding for childcare centres tends to come from a combination of commonwealth government funding and family resources. Indeed, whether we are talking about a community childcare centre or a private provider, as long as there is a sufficient number of children seeking to access it there is no question. I think the number of children at Kingston is definitely a sustainable business model, which we believe could be delivered.

The capital for these is usually provided by a private provider or a community or a council, and sometimes supplemented by the federal government, and that is certainly the pathway that is being undertaken by the group in Kingston. It mirrors very much what happened in Parndana in recent times, where the Marshall government provided a grant to a consultant, who was able to work with that community to develop a business case.

That community developed that business case, was satisfied with it, applied to the federal government for funding to build the infrastructure that would be required, and that project was successful in attracting federal government funding, I think \$1.8 million from the commonwealth's bushfire recovery package. The Parndana childcare management committee is now working closely with the local recovery coordinator and the department on what the next steps required are to establish a service.

The department's role there is that we are providing the land on which the centre can be developed. It is going to be developed on the school site, and hopefully that is something that can be replicated to positive effect at Kingston. There is an existing rural care service at Kingston that is being provided. It has the highest level of support that we provide in any of those rural care services, with a three-worker model at the moment, but there is still significant demand in that community.

Mr BOYER: Staying on page 184, I see that after some growth in preschool enrolments and attendance between 2019-20 and 2020-21 we are forecasting a decrease in both enrolments and attendance there of about 500. What do we put that down to? Has any work been done to work out why we have seen that drop?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am advised that that is a function of population drop for the cohort in that year. Some years have higher birth rates, some have lower, and this happens to be a year that had a lower birth rate, as I understand it.

Mr BOYER: Keeping on the same topic of preschool, there is obviously a lot of talk nationally now about a move to include three year olds in preschool. What work are you and the agency doing to look at that or consider it?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think that in relation to three year olds in preschool, I have spoken about this previously, and I do not think that it is right to say that it is getting as much interest nationally as it did a few years ago, when it was a very hot topic of conversation. I think that it has been understood that there is a cohort of three-year-old children for whom preschool is extremely beneficial and really adds to their development.

We are talking largely about vulnerable children. Those three year olds who are Aboriginal children, and children under the guardianship in South Australia are already eligible for preschool at the age of three. The department is exploring whether there are other cohorts that would benefit, in addition to those two significant cohorts who are already able to access preschool at the age of three.

Certainly, it was one of the factors that was considered as the department was undertaking research and consultation in relation to the Early Learning Strategy, when we were confident that there was the opportunity to provide extra resources to support children prior to the year before they go into school, so prior to four years old. We were looking at what would be effective, and we are very confident that the \$50 million worth of measures that we have identified will have a better outcome for our children's wellbeing and for children and young people entering school than moving to a three-year-old preschool. I think we have a very high quality program that will have a very significant impact on outcomes for children and young people.

There is a range of estimates of the costs of what universal three-year-old preschool would be in South Australia depending on the delivery model and the hours funded—for example, whether you fund 12 or 15 hours per week—but the department has given me a working assumption that the costs would be about \$100 million per year to have universal access for three-year-olds in preschool, not to mention the very significant capital cost required to build the extra places and an enormous number of places that three year olds might need to then have access to a specified preschool program.

It is also worth saying that the National Quality Framework requirements on long day-care services, where most three year olds are currently spending their time who are not captured by the current provision of a preschool service for Aboriginal children or guardianship children, are also meaning that over the last decade those early childhood services and long day-care services now have teachers on site and much higher levels of people with diploma qualifications.

The work that is done in our long day-care settings by our early childhood educators, who do so much more than care, is very substantial. In regard to some of the arguments that I have heard used in the past to justify a potential expenditure of three-year-old preschool, I think also you need to take into account the significant work that is done in the education development of children by those early childhood educators in long day-care services.

Obviously, for those particularly vulnerable cohorts—and they are often cohorts in guardianship or Aboriginal children who might not be accessing those high-quality long day-care services—there is a real benefit to them getting access to preschool at the age of three, and they have that under the current settings. They were settings put in place some years ago, and we have warmly embraced them and continue with them. As I say, we are exploring the cost benefit of whether there are other cohorts that would similarly benefit from it in terms of their outcomes.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, minister. On the same budget line and the same topic, in your answer you said it is your or the government's estimate that it would cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$100 million per year for three-year-old preschools. You mentioned that there would be a capital cost on top of that, which I completely accept. Has any modelling been done by the agency on what kind of capital cost there might be in addition to the ongoing \$100 million per year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am advised that it has not taken place recently. I recall a conversation with Julieann Riedstra, who will send me an SMS, I am sure, to correct me if I am wrong, but I think that she and her former executive director did some more informal modelling that put it into a very, very high number indeed. I remember a discussion about it a couple of years ago, but I would not want to put a number into their mouths when they are not here to correct me.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, Chair. I was going to hand over to the member for Badcoe to read the omnibus questions for this session, if that is alright.

The CHAIR: Certainly.

Ms STINSON: It is a true privilege again, sir. The questions are:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
 - What is the actual FTE count at 30 June 2021 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; and
 - 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 2021-22, and for each of the years of the forward estimates period;
 - The top 10 providers of goods and services by value to each agency reporting to the minister for 2020-21;
 - A description of the goods and/or services provided by each of these top 10 providers, and the cost to the agency for these goods and/or services; and
 - The value of the goods and services that was supplied to the agency by South Australian suppliers?
3. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 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 (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 2020 and 30 June 2021 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 2020-21 and what was their employment expense;
 - How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and what is their estimated employment expense;
 - The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2020-21 and budgeted cost for 2021-22?
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 contractors between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.
7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2021, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices?
8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you detail:
- How much was spent on targeted voluntary separation packages in 2020-21;
 - What department funded these TVSPs (except for DTF estimates);
 - What number of TVSPs were funded;
 - 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; and
 - 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 2020 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 2020, 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 2020-21 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 2021-22?

13. In the 2020-21 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 2021-22? How was much sought and how much was approved?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Balance of the grant program or fund;
- Budgeted (or actual) expenditure from the program or fund;
- Budgeted (or actual) payments into the program or fund;
- Carryovers into or from the program or fund; and
- 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 2020 to 30 June 2021, 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 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 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 2020 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 2020 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; and
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

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

Dr HARVEY: I refer to Budget Paper 1, page 14. Can the minister please update the committee on how the early years strategy announced in this year's budget will support families in understanding their children's development needs?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for Newland for this question. It really gets to the heart of this significant new investment the government has put into the early years through our Early Learning Strategy, encouraging all children to learn and to thrive. I am so excited about the work that is now underway as a result of the Marshall Liberal government's investment in the earliest years of our littlest learners.

We recognise that the most critical time for a child's health development and learning is in the first five years of their life, and during the three years prior to a child entering their formal education system they experience the most rapid growth in terms of brain development, physical development, language development, social and emotional development and cognitive development. The government recognises that early childhood development is critical in giving every child the best start in life and high-quality early childhood education can positively contribute to the development of those foundational skills and abilities, ensuring children are ready to learn from the first time they get to school.

The initial four-year investment of \$50.1 million in the Early Learning Strategy will deliver support for child development, parenting engagement in learning, responsive local services and increased participation in early childhood settings. A key part of this investment focuses on the expansion of the child development screening system. The proactive monitoring of all children's developmental milestones from birth to school age is absolutely critical in reducing the number of children entering the education system with unidentified disabilities and/or developmental delays.

The Child Development Council, led by Anne Glover, has identified an increasing number of developmentally vulnerable children starting school in South Australia as an area of significant concern. Australia has on average approximately 22 per cent of children starting school considered developmentally vulnerable. In this state we are seeing approximately 24 per cent, nearly one in four South Australian children, being considered developmentally vulnerable in at least one or more areas of development.

It was not always like that. We were down closer to 20 per cent in 2009, but we have seen a steady decline across all socio-economic quintiles since 2009. It is not a decline that is seen in many other states. I think the ACT is the only other jurisdiction that is going backwards in this area. Other states are improving dramatically. Western Australia and Victoria are under 20 per cent. Queensland is above us but has been declining sharply in a positive way.

Developmental vulnerability does not discriminate. It is spread across all communities. It is spread across all socio-economic conditions and early intervention is critical in reducing vulnerability. We know that to improve a family's and a child's school experience to support them to thrive in their learning environment we need to improve our screening and identification of developmental delays. We know that if we can identify issues early enough, we can positively affect the cognitive and social emotional abilities as well as the overall health of our children.

At the moment, every child and every family is offered a universal home visit for their baby from the Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) soon after birth, with milestone checks offered at six to nine months, 18 to 24 months and at preschool. Unfortunately, many parents are not aware of or do not take the opportunity to utilise these checks. Fewer than one in three take the second and third checks and about half take the preschool level check.

Under this new initiative, in partnership with CaFHS and other non-government providers, we will be increasing the reach of screening and enhancing its effectiveness. The schedule will also be widened to include additional checks at 12 months and three years, and increased monitoring of children's developmental milestones from birth to school age. It will reduce undiagnosed developmental delays in children entering the education system and early identification of any issues will help ensure that appropriate early interventions can be put in place.

Whether that means giving parents a helping hand to address a potential vulnerability before it becomes an issue, or helping parents find the nearest playgroup to help their child develop some of their skills, something as low-level as that can make a big difference, or it could be more significant intervention for a health or a disability issue. In any of those cases, we know that early intervention can make an enormous difference to outcomes for individuals. I think it will have an enormous impact on outcomes for young individuals, our littlest learners across South Australia.

The CHAIR: Given that time has expired for examination of payments in regard to the portfolio early years and childhood development, there are no further questions. I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the portfolio early years and childhood development completed.

Sitting suspended from 14:49 to 15:00.

Departmental Advisers:

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, South Australian Certificate of Education Board.

Mr B. Temperly, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

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

Dr P. Smith, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education.

The CHAIR: Welcome back to Estimates Committee B for the first of our afternoon sessions. The portfolio that is to be examined this afternoon first up is Administered Items for the Department for Education. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education. The estimate of payments is relevant to the Department for Education and Administered Items for the Department for Education, as previously listed. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. Minister, did you wish to make an opening statement with regard to the portfolio of administered items?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I do not propose to. I will just indicate that we have had a personnel change. I am joined at the table by Professor Martin Westwell, Chief Executive, SACE Board. SACE is usually the dominant part but not the only part of administered items, so I think we will deal with SACE questions first, if that is acceptable. For other administered items, I will be supported by Dr Peta Smith, executive director of strategic policy and external relations; Chris Bernardi, chief financial officer; and Ben Temperly, chief operating officer. I got an SMS during the break from the former chief operating officer, Julieann Riedstra, who said that the words I put into her mouth were correct.

The CHAIR: Member for Wright, did you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr BOYER: No.

The CHAIR: Member for Wright, would you like to open with some questions?

Mr BOYER: Welcome, professor. I refer to page 177 and the workforce summary. Perhaps you could use this opportunity, minister or professor, to talk about what the effect of COVID has been on the SACE Board over the last 12 months in its operations and what challenges that has presented to you.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. I think I will give Professor Westwell the opportunity to reflect; I think that is what the question was seeking.

Prof. WESTWELL: I think it is fair to say that schools have had lots of challenges over the last 12 months in dealing with the disruptions due to COVID. I would say that the SACE Board, the sectors and the schools have worked really well together to use the flexibility within the SACE. The SACE Board pivoted and our staff engaged with teachers in every subject last year to ask the teachers what flexibility would they need to be able to continue the learning for students without compromising on the standard.

Schools changed their programs around, became a little bit more flexible, used a lot of the flexibility that already existed in the SACE, but where it was required we reduced some of the assessment items and changed some of the assessment requirements so that schools could continue their programs and be successful. This year, that has not been necessary so far, but of course we are absolutely ready to do that same kind of pivot and to add extra flexibility should schools need it throughout the rest of the year.

Mr BOYER: Thank you for that answer, professor. Minister, through you, have the restrictions that have been put in place around the world, due to the spread of COVID, restricted your efforts and the SACE Board's ongoing efforts for many years to encourage other jurisdictions overseas to adopt our SACE? How has progress on that front gone, given the challenges you have faced?

Prof. WESTWELL: There are similar sorts of challenges; in fact, probably some of our schools that do the SACE in Malaysia, Vietnam, the Pacific Islands and China have seen lockdowns for longer, with more profound restrictions to the way in which they can do their programs. Again, we have offered them the same sorts of flexibilities we would for our domestic students.

In terms of the SACE International program and the recruitment of students, and the development of the program in some of those jurisdictions, it has certainly been quite challenging. In terms of the number of students we would have hoped to have had in the program, they have reduced.

The program is still really vibrant. We have just appointed a new director of SACE International, and so looking at some of the diversification of that program and moving into other markets, we think we have a really strong platform upon which to build. Schools have had that disruption, but we have been supportive and students have still managed to be successful through the SACE and enrolling still in universities in Australia and South Australia and being taught remotely.

Mr BOYER: Page 177, workforce summary, and in particular for the SACE Board, I see an FTE reduction there. Through you, minister, could Professor Westwell explain to us the reason for that reduction? I think it is 120.5 down to 110.5, if I read it correctly.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I understand there was a realignment of ICT agency staff, but there has been an update since the budget papers were identified. They will be reclassified as employees, so effectively rather than there being a drop from 120 to 110, as I understand it that 120 will remain at 120.

Mr BOYER: We spoke earlier in school education about what is happening in New South Wales with their preparedness to get year 12s vaccinated so that it does not affect the final year of their studies. Is the SACE Board doing any early preparation work around how that could be facilitated among SACE students in South Australia, if the need arose?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is not something the SACE Board has been involved with.

Mr BOYER: Given that we have just gone into a lockdown, and now thankfully come out of that—but the spectre of a lockdown is always around the corner somewhat—what work is the SACE Board doing or has done to have contingencies in place should face-to-face examinations not be possible this year or next?

Prof. WESTWELL: This last year our focus has been on working with schools to continue the learning, which is what students really need to be able to move on and be successful in their future. We are prepared, should the situation require it, to be flexible in terms of some of our requirements. Of course, it depends on when the disruption occurs. Different times of the year have a different impact on the program.

At the moment, should there be a broader, deeper disruption, then we can add more flexibility, so that might be about reducing some of the assessment task requirements, changing the nature of some of the assessments—some of the assessments that might need to be done in a laboratory or on camp, outdoor education or something like that—changing the requirements of those so that schools can still do them as fully as they possibly can.

We are staying really connected with the community, finding out what their needs are and seeing how we might be flexible. There is lots of flexibility already in the SACE. We found last year that, for lots of schools, they might use the SACE in a particular way, but even within the requirements of the SACE they could change their program and still carry on and students be successful. Of course, as we get closer to the end of the year, if it were during exams or something like that, we would have to have a different way of responding. But we have a number of different contingencies in place to be able to respond exactly as the moment requires and as our schools require.

Mr BOYER: I would like to go back a step to my earlier question to Professor Westwell through you, minister, about the impact that not being able to travel overseas has had on the SACE Board's efforts to encourage other jurisdictions to adopt our wonderful SACE. Perhaps separate to the question of how COVID has affected those efforts, have we made any gains in terms of convincing other jurisdictions to adopt SACE?

Prof. WESTWELL: We are still operating within the countries, within the markets, that we were operating in. As I said, we had hoped to have diversified that a little bit more. At the moment, we have not been able to do the work to enter into other markets during COVID and the restrictions that have been there, but we are planning for that right now.

The number of schools that we have been engaged in has grown from seven to 28 schools over the last five years. We have 26 schools in five different countries delivering the SACE, and there were two scheduled to start delivery in 2022-23. We had hoped that those schools would have started earlier, but they have not been able to recruit students so there is a delay associated with that.

Certainly, COVID has had an impact on some of our schools in China. We are not sure if they are going to renew some of their contracts, and that is a little bit about the political situation and the advice that those schools are getting. As I said before, SACE's international program I think is still really vibrant although we have some of those challenges. What we are seeing is a pause; I do not think it is a fundamental change in the SACE International structure.

In fact, one of the things we have seen is that it is a new business model for some of our local schools that are delivering internationally and remotely, and so that is kind of a new business model for the SACE Board as well. How do we provide our intellectual property to some of those business arrangements being done remotely from Australia into some of those countries? In fact, I think what we have seen is some new opportunities as well as some restrictions on the existing opportunities.

Mr BOYER: I refer to pages 24 and 25 of Budget Paper 5. How are we tracking in terms of the assessments that are made of our services and the work that the Education Standards Board does?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Perhaps if I start, rather than me spending five minutes finding the exact detail, and hopefully we will capture what you are after. I am sure you will ask a supplementary if I have missed something, and I can take it on notice at that time.

The board is supported by a secretariat comprising of 40 employees, both ongoing public service employees and a number employed on contracts, to undertake its functions. Recurrent funding from the South Australian government is approximately \$3.9 million to fulfil its obligations, and the Department for Education provides supplementary funding of approximately \$1.1 million, with CPI increases to compensate for the withdrawal from the national partnership agreement funding by the commonwealth in 2018.

We also funded \$450,000 carried over the 2021 financial year for costs associated with the office accommodation fit-out at Grenfell Street. The board regulates 1,346 early childhood education and care services in South Australia across metropolitan, rural and remote locations. As at 4 June this year, there were 431 approved providers, with 369 operating a single service. There were 1,226 services approved to provide education and care under the national law. There were 120 residual services, comprised of in-home care, rural and remote mobile care and occasional care services. These services are regulated under a modified version of the national law.

I think this is probably the most important part of what the member was getting at: as at 4 June 2021, 96 per cent of eligible services in South Australia had been assessed and rated. I will

let the member do his own maths on what 96 per cent of 1,346 is, and I am sure he will get about the right answer.

The board is responsible also for the registration and review of registration of all government and non-government schools. As at 7 June, there were 726 schools registered in South Australia, being 513 government schools, 109 independent and 104 Catholic schools. The board is also responsible for the endorsement of schools for registration on CRICOS, the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.

As at 7 June, 176 schools offered education to overseas full fee paying students, they being 141 government schools, managed through the approved provider International Education Services, and 35 non-government schools. Given the amount of attention I have given Julieann Riedstra I should also wish cheerio to Marilyn Sleath, the former director in that area, who served governments, of both persuasions, very well for many years in providing an incredibly effective international education service which well and truly punches above its weight for all government systems around Australia. Marilyn has also retired, and Julieann and Marilyn had retirement functions in recent times which multiple ministers were at.

Endorsement on CRICOS is for a seven-year period. That probably covers what the member was after.

Mr BOYER: On the same reference—Budget Paper 5, pages 24 to 25—and some questions around the non-government schools grants, either the grants for capital projects or upgrades: I would like to ask how many applications were received under this grant line in the past financial year and, if possible, which schools were successful and any that applied that were not successful.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. There is \$11 million a year for infrastructure upgrades within non-government schools divided equally across the independent and the Catholic sectors. That funding has been supplemented in this year's budget and last year's budget as well as a result of a decision the government has made to effectively double that grant pool given the impact of COVID, so the Catholic sector and the independent sector have both received \$11.8 million or thereabouts—there is a CPI that takes place.

It is two programs effectively, because the Catholic sector receives the amount and then determines the funding. There is still an application process, and I think that there is an approval, but effectively Catholic Education SA determines the allocation of funds for its half of the program and then each of the independent schools in the independent sector, which is roughly the same size, gets an allocation effectively dependent on size.

The Association of Independent Schools of SA, in relation to the independent sector, along with the department manage the distribution of capital funding to independent schools. Funding is based on a scale determined by enrolments and school SES scores. An assessment panel recommended 2021 grants totalling \$5.78 million exclusive of GST to 89 independent schools. All 89 of those schools received 2020 funding payments following execution of agreements.

The year 2020-21 has seen, I think, 104 independent non-government schools participating, and those grants have been contracted and paid. Obviously we are now in the process of the 2021-22 year, and I would anticipate all of those schools being able to receive grants, with the unfortunate exception of Eynesbury, which has ceased its operations. Indeed, having been paid their last grant but not having spent it, they have either returned or have indicated that they will return that grant to the department, and that grant, that was going to Eynesbury—from memory it was about \$60,000 or \$70,000—will be available to be part of the pool for the next round.

In relation to Catholic Education SA, for the Catholic sector, there were six grants to Catholic schools approved for the 2021 capital projects, but those are all administered by the one agreement. It is Catholic Education that effectively determines it.

Apart from the Eynesbury example, if there are any schools that applied for grants under this program that were not able to be paid—I do not recall there being any. Dr Smith does not recall any. Obviously, if there is further information we have missed we will bring it back, but I do not think I need to take it on notice; I think that answers the question.

Mr BOYER: On the same budget line again, have there been any changes made to the assessment criteria for these loans in the last financial year?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The loans or grants?

Mr BOYER: Sorry, the grants.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It may help the member if I answer loans and grants because there have been some changes to the loans criteria in relation to priority being given to infrastructure projects for the SAFA loans. These are the non-government school loans that were, under the previous government, low interest loans and as of last year's budget are now no interest loans for the first period with the pool increased.

Priority will be given to infrastructure projects that support increased enrolment capacity in geographic areas where there is demand, student retention and the refurbishment of existing facilities to provide contemporary learning experiences. Round 1 of the revised scheme closed a few months ago. There were 15 applications and the assessment process for those applications is currently underway. In relation to the grants program, all independent schools can participate and I do not believe we have made any change to the criteria in relation to what they can apply for.

Mr BOYER: Is there any chance you have the 15 schools which have applied in the SAFA loans, and, if not, could you perhaps take that on notice?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will take that on notice only because I just want to double-check whether or not it is appropriate to provide information about the schools that have applied in case it is unreasonable for those that might potentially be unsuccessful. Certainly, in relation to any that are successful, we will be keen to advise the school and advise the community as soon as humanly possible, once that SAFA process is complete. For the casual viewers of estimates, apart from Julieann Riedstra who would know this, SAFA is the South Australian Financing Authority. It comes under the Treasurer and obviously they do not report to me, but we have an input into their process.

Mr BOYER: Have you received individual approaches from any members of parliament regarding individual applications under either the SAFA loans program or the grants program?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My answer is I do not think so, and I do not think that any have jumped to Dr Smith's mind either. I do not recall so, but I would hesitate. It is not impossible that someone has included a reference to something in a letter somewhere, but it is certainly not something I am aware of. Certainly, in relation to the loans, I would reiterate that they are assessed by relevant officers within SAFA. I think a couple of people from Dr Smith's team may potentially be involved from the education department, but I certainly take the view of personally having a hands-off approach to it; I think that is the right approach.

Mr BOYER: My earlier question was around whether or not the assessment criteria for either of these programs has changed and I accept your answer on that. Have any representations been made to you by either of the Association of Independent Schools or Catholic Education South Australia about their desire for any other changes criteria-wise on either of these grant lines.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I would hesitate to say that there have not been any changes over the period. I think there were some that I referred to last year and I do not think they were significant. There were a handful of schools that were not eligible previously. All schools are now eligible, effectively.

In terms of Catholic Education, it is a bit easier, also, to be clear. They may well have changed criteria that they have internally applied but I am not aware of that, but given that we provide them with effectively an allocation and leave it to them to determine how that allocation is spent, I suspect they have an application process within Catholic Education where schools indicate if they are interested in having some support through this grant. It is possible Catholic Education have changed the way they assess that, but is not something that has come up or been brought to my attention. I am satisfied for Catholic Education to make those determinations under their own steam.

Mr BOYER: Thank you for your answer, minister. I think your earlier answer suggested that there probably have not been too many unsuccessful applications necessarily—I understand that I

am generalising there—but in terms of whatever unsuccessful applications in any of the grant lines there have been, are there any consistent reasons for them being knocked back? Are we seeing something that might suggest that there needs to be some tinkering with the criteria to allow what might be genuine and valuable projects to be approved under the grant lines?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will focus on the independent schools because I think I have explained what the situation is with the Catholic schools. In relation to the independent schools there is a formula effectively that works out what the notional allocation is for each school. Effectively, each of those schools in the independent sector is entitled to a grant, and that grant size depends on the factors that were described earlier: effectively, the size of the school has an impact, and the SES of the school has an impact on the size of the grant. I think the special schools potentially also receive a larger grant. There are two special schools in the independent sector at Suneden and Aspect Treetop, as the member would recall. I think they get a larger grant than they would get if they were in the mainstream.

That notional allocation of a certain amount of money for each school having been identified, the school then is required to submit to ACER and the department—the partnership that determines whether the grants are approved—a project for which they propose to spend that money. I imagine that ACER probably provides some support to those schools to understand what would be eligible to spend that money on.

As I think I answered the member's question before, I do not think there were any that were knocked back in the last year that we are aware of. If there are any systemic issues that have come up that would suggest that a tinkering with the criteria would be beneficial beyond what has been done in the past, then I will provide that answer separately to the member but, again, I do not think I need to take it on notice. I think that has probably provided the information the member requires.

Membership:

Dr Close substituted for Ms Stinson.

The CHAIR: There is a change of composition. I have a request to be discharged from the member for Badcoe and a request to join the committee from the member for Port Adelaide. Now that that is formally done, member for Port Adelaide.

Dr CLOSE: I apologise if you have given this answer during that very hasty handover, but what is the extent to which the SES of the different schools is taken into account? Do you have a formula that you can share either now or perhaps take on notice to explain what impact the variability of SES has on the likelihood of getting a loan?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is described to me as quite a complicated tiered structure and rather than try to unpack the analysis that goes into that spreadsheet—which I am sure the member would recall fondly that Chris Bernardi is able to do at the drop of a hat—I will take it on notice and see if we can describe it in a written form.

Dr CLOSE: You have talked about ACER, and I may have missed something again, but are the Catholic sector schools engaged in this loan program at present?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We were talking about the grants program up to now. I referenced the loans program earlier. My understanding is that Catholic diocesan schools are encouraged strongly, shall I say, to borrow from within the Catholic Church's financial sector, and so they have not accessed either versions of the program.

There are some Catholic non-diocesan schools that have either previously or are currently in the process, so there is some level there to which the Catholic sector has been engaged and continues to be engaged in the loans program. The feedback I have had is that the Catholic sector has benefited from the loans program since its introduction through encouraging more competitive rates from their other lenders or, should I say, lender.

The CHAIR: Time has expired for the examination of payments in relation to the portfolio of administered items, therefore there are no further questions and I declare the examination of the portfolio of administered items completed.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Coltman, Chief Executive, Technical and Further Education South Australia.

Ms M. Welby, Chief Financial Officer, Technical and Further Education South Australia.

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

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

The CHAIR: We move on to our final session for Estimates Committee B for today. The portfolios to be examined during this session are TAFE SA and higher education. The minister appearing before the committee is the Minister for Education. The estimate of payments relates to the Department for Education and Administered Items for the Department for Education. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination and I call on the minister to make an opening statement, if he wishes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank you for the opportunity. I will introduce the changes to officers who are present. Joining me at the table is David Coltman, Chief Executive, TAFE SA. Behind David is Michaela Welby, Chief Financial Officer, TAFE SA. Behind me remains Chris Bernardi, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education, and behind Michaela and David is Clare Feszczak, Director, Further Education and Pathways, Department for Education.

The only opening statement I would like to make beyond that is to extend the recognition that I gave to school, preschool and early childhood educators earlier in the session today for the extraordinary way in which they adapted to COVID and supported learning by our students and our littlest learners over the last 18 months, particularly through a period of lockdown

I would like to extend that to David and his team in TAFE SA, along with the other non-government RTOs, and our universities in South Australia, which have had significant levels of disruption but which have attended to that disruption with, I think, a response that has been outstanding in supporting continued learning and continuing to build the skills in the higher education and further education pathways that our South Australian students need.

The CHAIR: I call on the members of the opposition to make an opening statement, if they wish.

Mr BOYER: No opening statement, Chair.

The CHAIR: There being no opening statement, I call on questions from members.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, minister, and welcome, Mr Coltman. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, pages 80 and 81. Minister, can you rule out any further cuts to TAFE courses or campuses?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I invite Mr Coltman to respond.

Mr COLTMAN: TAFE SA has a five-year training profile that is being developed and aligns to the government's priorities, a board-approved training profile that will see some changes to program delivery. Changes occur as a result of changes to training packages, which are national changes, changes in demand and changes to industry requirements.

We anticipate growing our regional delivery, growing foundation programs, seeing increased numbers of apprentices and trainees, and also supporting VET in school delivery, so that may necessitate some changes of courses in coming years. At this stage, there are no plans around campus changes.

Mr CREGAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, and take the minister to page 83. Further to the question asked, can the minister advise the committee how the government's new investment in TAFE SA will enable the organisation to deliver for our state?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Absolutely; it is an excellent question. The government is committed to developing a viable skilled workforce that is ready for the jobs we know exist today and that our businesses and industries need, as well as those in the future. There has been a significant investment in TAFE SA in this budget. It is a \$215.5 million investment in TAFE SA over the forward estimates to deliver a contemporary, sector-leading public provider of vocational education.

This funding is in addition to the \$173 million this government has invested in TAFE SA over the last three years over and above the budget left to TAFE SA by the former government. All up, it is an investment of nearly \$400 million by this government—new money that TAFE SA did not have before as a result of budget cuts and the budget settings left in place by our predecessors.

Importantly, our investment will contribute to the economic future of South Australia by training the skilled workforce that employers and industry need. Our investment will establish TAFE SA as a cornerstone of excellence in vocational education training delivery nationally and deliver a sector-leading, contemporary, efficient and adequately resourced public provider of vocational education. This funding will ensure that TAFE SA continues to innovate and modernise its services to meet the future needs of our community, our industries, our employers and our students who are looking to upskill or get skills to have jobs.

What you see in this investment is a stronger focus on students. It provides more access to sites, technology, lecturers, high-quality learning opportunities no matter where you live or what you are studying. Some of the key outcomes we are expecting TAFE SA to deliver are the introduction of sector-leading learning approaches, building on technology investments. Specifically, TAFE SA will be looking to transform its trades delivery program, bringing flexibility and agility to employers, apprentices, trainees and students. We recognise the importance of building the number of skilled and qualified apprentices and trainees right across South Australia.

Also, there is greater investment into our TAFE SA lecturers to support lecturers to do what they do best in education and training. TAFE SA will invest in advanced scheduling solutions, digital course delivery solutions and appropriate academic support systems. This will allow lecturers to reduce administrative work and improve the overall student experience at TAFE SA, optimising student completion rates.

There is a new network of student facilities across regional locations. TAFE SA will be developing student engagement hubs to provide spaces that allow students to access computers, the internet, learning tools and learning support facilities to help them succeed. There will be a technology uplift in course delivery. This will support a broader range of people across the state to learn, no matter where they live. Students across the regions will be provided with greater learning opportunities through this groundbreaking innovation in the VET sector. This upgrade to course delivery will make it easier for people from the regions to stay in the regions to do their study and work and to stay connected to regional communities.

A clear path for improvement has now been implemented addressing the underperformance of the past, providing a clear vision to meet our high expectations of the future. The government invested \$170 million in A Fresh Start for TAFE SA. We now have another \$200 million plus towards a bolder and brighter future for TAFE SA.

TAFE SA has worked so hard over the last three or four years to regain the confidence of industry. It has reviewed the programs it has offered and established itself as a benchmark for quality by meeting all national training quality requirements. Transitioning from a situation where 16 out of 16 courses were unsuccessful in their audit to, two years later, a seven-year reaccreditation by ASQA has been nothing short of breathtaking.

The focus has been on quality. We now have a focus, and we appreciate the work TAFE has done to improve its operational accountability and sustainability. TAFE SA has significantly increased the learning opportunities for apprentices and trainees across the state. I commend TAFE SA for that work. We are working very hard in TAFE SA to ensure that all South Australian students have access

to the training they need, and all South Australian businesses and industries have access to the workforce they need.

Mr BOYER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 80, and the 73 job cuts from TAFE that I believe have been foreshadowed in this budget. Do we know where they all come from or which staff will be cut?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: To be clear, the 73 number that the member refers to are the same jobs that were cut in 2017 by the former government's budget allocation then; 73 in fact represents a dramatic reduction in the job cuts that would have been required if the budget settings were left unattended. An investment of an extra \$200 million plus has significantly reduced the stress on TAFE SA in terms of what its savings need to be.

I just do not think it is possible to underestimate the dramatic challenge, the dramatic unreasonable and fanciful challenge that was imposed on TAFE SA by the budget settings from decisions in 2015 and 2017. Certainly, the TAFE SA board identified to me that they felt the revenue projections were utterly unrealistic and fanciful and that the savings provisions were inappropriate. The TAFE SA organisation worked with us to identify what was necessary going forward.

In relation to where those targets may fall, whilst efforts will be made to reduce FTE and obviously in improving efficiencies in some ways there are some roles which will cease to be required as certain administrative processes are able to be automated, for example, TAFE SA is also looking at utilising other means to meet these targets, such as potentially increasing revenue or overachieving revenue, or containing costs through reduced expenditure to meet those targets.

Dr CLOSE: It may be that you suggest that I speak to the Minister for Innovation and Skills, but given the order of questions I will start here. My question relates to the management of the former TAFE site in Port Adelaide and the contract that exists between the government and Naval Group and whether that covers the area that is currently taken up by the Maritime and Fisheries Academy. Is that in your area of responsibility? If so, has that area already been leased to Naval Group or not?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: For the area that is currently occupied by the maritime academy, the lease is with them. There are three tenants at the Port Adelaide TAFE SA campus. One of them is the Australian Maritime and Fisheries Academy, one of them is Workskil Australia and the third is Naval Group. For the area that is currently occupied by AMFA the lease is with them but, as the member is aware, there are some negotiations in relation to its future use.

The CHAIR: Although he is not formally a member of the committee, I use my discretion to recognise the member for Frome. Member for Frome.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair. Just getting back to your previous answer, minister, about TAFE reduction numbers and the 73. Can you give an indication or a commitment that there will be no reductions in the TAFE numbers in regional South Australia, particularly in Port Pirie, Clare and Port Augusta?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question, and I am sure that the member any minute will be saying thank you to the government for this significant investment in new funding to TAFE SA, because the government of which he was in the cabinet in 2015 and 2017 provided such dramatic cuts to the funding in TAFE's forward estimates that it was an absolutely extraordinarily devastating situation facing the state of South Australia if the settings of the government of which he was a part had been allowed to continue. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs were proposed to be cut under the settings left by the former government, of which the member was a member.

In relation to those 70 positions, we are certainly not looking to make any cuts in the areas the member has identified. As I said previously, the board is also looking at other ways that deal with the revenue or the savings aspects in question.

Ms WORTLEY: Minister, what plans are there for the future of the Gillies Plains TAFE?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Business as usual, effectively, is the plan at Gillies Plains. There is some great work being done there, and I am sure there will continue to be.

Mr BOYER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 80. In your time as minister have any TAFE courses that were revenue positive been cut either in metro, regional or both?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am not meaning to be cute, but there is a body of work that has been underway for some time in terms of identifying the cost of programs. I am not aware of any programs that would be described accurately as 'revenue positive'. The work that TAFE SA does requires a government investment. There is some fee-for-service work, but even in that case there is often significant costs associated with that, and fee-for-service work does not necessarily generate a profit as such.

The work that is underway in the costings piece of work is going to be very useful to TAFE SA in its work going forward. I think that it is something that has been incredibly complex but it is work worth noting. In terms of revenue positive, the chief executive has not identified to me that there are any, certainly not that have been cut.

Mr BOYER: I refer to same budget line. Perhaps I can give some specific examples: early childhood education and care, individual support, disability, individual support, and ageing. They were not courses from which TAFE derived any income or any revenue?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: There is a difference between what was described before as 'revenue positive'. I assumed you meant that it costs less to deliver than the money that was supplied to TAFE to deliver it.

Mr BOYER: Sorry; let's say 'income', then.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Every course has some level of income. Somebody is contributing to it, even if only the government is paying TAFE to do it. I am not sure whether the member is trying to get at whether there is money that is coming into TAFE for every single course. There is money coming in from someone; it is either coming from the government, from business or from the student. The point that I was making earlier, and the point that was made to me by the chief executive, is that pretty much every course requires investment by the government to make it viable.

The courses that the member specifically refers to—and I stand to be corrected—I think comprise some of the areas where there is metropolitan delivery going forward. If they are part of the subsidised training list, then the courses that are subsidised by the Department for Innovation and Skills will be delivered by non-government providers in the future.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 83. Minister, would you please advise the committee how TAFE SA is supporting our regions to ensure skills training is aligned with their regional needs?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I thank the member for the question. This is very important because inasmuch as the training profile in the metropolitan area is adapting slightly, we are very eager for TAFE SA to increase and expand its offerings in regional South Australia on top of the already strong presence that it has, particularly working with local businesses and communities to address skills requirements.

Regional engagement is proactively taken in alignment with relevant industry sectors. From 1 July 2020 to 17 June 2021, 249 courses were delivered to approximately 13,974 students across South Australia's regions. The three qualifications with the greatest number of enrolments in regional locations in that financial year were the Diploma of Nursing, Certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology and Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing).

TAFE SA's educational staff travel across regions and between campuses and learning sites, including workplaces and community venues, to deliver VET to regionally based students in regional communities. As at 18 June 2021, approximately 19 per cent of all TAFE staff, excluding hourly paid instructors, casual and weekly paid staff, were based in regional South Australia.

TAFE SA's property portfolio comprises 26 campuses and 16 training locations in regional communities. Three major infrastructure upgrades occurred in regional campuses, including the Mount Barker campus student hub and community library and its learning resource centre, which I know the member for Kavel will be familiar with; in Murray Bridge the learning and innovation hub; and in Mount Gambier the judicial efficiency program.

In addition to these projects, TAFE SA was successful in attracting \$4.48 million of federal government funding under the Revitalising TAFE Campuses Across Australia initiative to undertake the following projects to support regional delivery: a program to improve quality teaching and learning through improved digital technology in regional South Australia and expanding digital campus initiatives across regional hubs in Berri, which I am sure the member for Chaffey would be pleased to hear, Mount Gambier and Whyalla.

TAFE SA is also working on establishing regional study hubs that will enable digital infrastructure, to allow students in the state's regions to have a wider range of training opportunities and education providers at their fingertips, and it is hoped that this investment will also improve campus facilities and bring some of TAFE SA's digital infrastructure to a modern standard expected by students and industry. In addition to that, David Coltman, as the CE, and TAFE have been working on a regional strategy. I might ask for 30 seconds to a minute from David on expanding where that is up to.

Mr COLTMAN: TAFE SA is committed to improving the quality education it delivers to rural, remote and regional communities. As the minister mentioned, 19 per cent of our staff are based in regional areas—36 per cent of our students. The training profile we have developed for the next five years focuses on a growth in regional delivery, including apprenticeships and trainees, foundation skills and VET in school provision. That regional delivery growth sets a target of a 27 per cent growth over the next five years from 2021, where we have forecast 1,681,000 contact hours, to 2,132,000 contact hours in 2024-25.

The TAFE SA regional plan 2021-22 identifies the strategic areas of focus and the indicative tactical initiatives that we will focus on, and the measures of success. The plan was developed collaboratively with senior leadership representing all TAFE business units, and then informed by extensive public consultations, as well as input gain from ongoing engagement with regional stakeholders. The plan aligns with our strategic plan of 2019-22, as well as the government objectives for the state.

External stakeholders will be able to access a copy of the draft regional plan via the TAFE SA website in the coming weeks. TAFE SA will then be engaging with external stakeholders via an online feedback form, which will be promoted using our dedicated regional stakeholder lists. TAFE SA staff will be encouraged to provide feedback on the draft plan via internal communication mechanisms also. TAFE SA students will be encouraged also to provide feedback on the draft plan via student-specific communication channels, and all feedback received will be considered and used to inform and finalise the TAFE SA regional plan 2021-22 and its implementation.

Mr BOYER: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 80. Is there equipment that was purchased by or for TAFE for use in automotive courses that is now being kept in storage?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will invite the chief executive to respond.

Mr COLTMAN: The automotive equipment largely is stored at our Regency campus and the facilities there.

Mr BOYER: Mr Coltman, are you or your agency in negotiations with any private providers about having access to that equipment?

Mr COLTMAN: A request has been made to see whether unutilised equipment could be utilised by a private training provider.

Mr BOYER: Who is the private provider who has asked for access to that?

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

Mr BOYER: Same budget line again. What is the value of assets given free by TAFE to private providers?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We are not aware of any.

Mr BOYER: I thought in previous answers, possibly in this committee itself, that we spoke about the use of TAFE facilities elsewhere with private providers. Surely they have some kind of monetary value.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Yes, and by and large we endeavour to seek some monetary reimbursement for that. I am thinking of the member for Port Adelaide's questions earlier. I know that there is some dispute over the quantum of that monetary consideration. I know that that provider, for example, was given access to TAFE facilities for many years at almost a peppercorn or certainly very low rate, and that is something that TAFE SA is in negotiations with at the moment, but even if it is a low rate there is always some sort of engagement between the providers, is the understanding I have from Mr Coltman.

Mr BOYER: The same budget line as before: regarding what was a \$275 million funding shortfall, which I understand is less than that now because the government has paid down some of that or has contributed towards that funding shortfall, was any of that amount attributable to the cessation of courses, like the ones I mentioned before, which were high volume? I guess the minister disagrees with my characterisation of 'revenue positive', but I am sure there are courses that must have been profitable in some way, at least for the agency, that are no longer running, like the three I mentioned before.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The broad answer is no, and I will ask Mr Coltman to explain why.

Mr COLTMAN: Our funding is allocation funding, which is for delivery of a range of courses that we are able to deliver from. Where a high-volume or high-cost course is delivered it comes from the allocation, rather than there being a specific funding level for a specific course. Ceasing one course, as long as there is not a relative reduction in the funding, which there has not been at this point for those course withdrawals, results in no direct loss for the agency. Does that make sense?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I think that the source of the funding shortfall that you may be looking for sits in the chair of the member for West Torrens, when he was Treasurer.

Mr BOYER: Referring to the answer you gave, is there not a loss, though? Those changes and the cessation of those courses are a reduction in training hours, and does that not have an effect on the size of the funding shortfall that is in some way attributable to the number of courses and training hours that have been cut?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Training hours go down in some areas and go up in others. TAFE SA, as was previously stated in the answer before the last one, is particularly refocusing its delivery in the regions.

Mr BOYER: In reference to that answer, are training hours up or down overall, taking into consideration the areas that TAFE has withdrawn from, particularly in metropolitan Adelaide?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will take that on notice, but bear in mind there has also been some impact from the pandemic, both this week and also for substantial sections of last year.

Mr BOYER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 80. I have a question about the hairdressing course that had been offered in Whyalla. I wonder whether you or perhaps Mr Coltman could share with us the justification for ceasing that course and, as the case is now, in some cases asking people to travel to Adelaide to do what I understand was a successful and quite in-demand course previously?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In relation to hairdressing at Whyalla, it is fair to say that there were issues in relation to the numbers of students being interested. There was a decline in the number of interested students, and therefore staff were being retained in Whyalla for a relatively low number of work hours, over the course of the year, to be done in Whyalla. That said, we are very committed to seeing the opportunity to continue to deliver the hair and beauty program in Whyalla.

Enrolments in hairdressing programs for students, apprentices and trainees in Whyalla will remain open in 2022, as I understand, and effort is being expended by TAFE to ensure that the form that the course will take in 2022 and beyond in Whyalla works for students, teachers and all stakeholders. The board will provide an essential oversight, governance and risk management role through this process, but the course might not necessarily be delivered by the same people who were previously based full time in Whyalla.

Mr BOYER: Staying on the subject, what is the future of what I understand is a purpose-built hairdressing facility at the Whyalla TAFE?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We will be teaching hairdressing in it.

Mr BOYER: Will it be used to the same capacity as before? If so, how is that the case, given your changes?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The issue that started with the changes there was because there was a decline in demand. The number of students seeking to do hairdressing was reducing. Indeed, we have been working to attract extra numbers. To this point, that has not been successful, but if we can attract a larger number of people to do hairdressing I am confident that TAFE would be utterly delighted to deliver the course to the same capacity.

The CHAIR: I will give you one more question, member for Wright.

Mr BOYER: Thank you, Chair. Minister, same budget line. What do you have to say to TAFE staff who are no doubt worried and very keen to find out whether or not their jobs are at risk in terms of the positions that will be axed or cut, however you would like to refer to it? Do you have a message for them?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Yes, I do. I think it is really important that TAFE is and continues to be the outstanding public provider. It is a hallmark for quality in South Australia. It is known for its quality and indeed is the first choice in many areas for businesses and students to go to if they are seeking to upskill their workforce, if they are seeking to engage with our public training provider to encourage more people into a skilled workforce or, if they are students, where they are seeking to get their training.

TAFE is not the only quality provider in South Australia—there are a number of great providers of training in South Australia, non-government providers who make a great contribution—but South Australia has an incredible story to tell right now, where we are the number one state in Australia, the number one jurisdiction for increases in traineeship commencements and apprenticeship commencements.

We have had issues in the numbers of completions, because it starts four years ago and the numbers were not so good in 2016 and 2017, so that is washing its way through the system. In the years ahead that is only going to increase, and that has been because this government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars both in the TAFE SA organisation and in the training sector as a whole. It needed to. The training sector was being denuded by the former government.

It was not just about the 2017 crisis in confidence in the capability of TAFE SA, which led to the capability review from Moran and Bannikoff, which led to the Nous review into the TAFE SA structure, which led to the chair of the board being released of his responsibilities by the Governor and the Chief Executive of TAFE SA at the time having to fall on his sword and resign.

It was not just to do with that. The budget decisions that were made in 2015 and 2017—the 2017 Mid-Year Budget Review—placed absolutely implausible impositions on TAFE going forward. These were long-term decisions that were made that were really starting to cut into TAFE in the last couple of years as a result of the budget settings.

In the first three years of the Marshall Liberal government we invested a further \$170 million into supporting TAFE to deliver on its fresh start, and in this budget we have invested more than \$200 million over the course of the forward estimates—over the next four years—in both bringing a more realistic appraisal of the revenue assumptions and, critically, relieving TAFE of some of the extraordinary cuts that were imposed by the former government in its last series of budgets that would have, if not relieved by this government, seen hundreds and hundreds of people lose their jobs and TAFE SA be less able to respond to the training needs of South Australia.

I am so proud to be part of a government that has invested nearly \$400 million extra in TAFE SA to support training delivery in South Australia. I am proud also to be part of a government that has seen commencements of apprenticeships and traineeships rise at a time when around Australia they have been falling and to be part of a government that sees TAFE SA, out of all of the

TAFEs around Australia, as the number one provider in terms of increases in commencements for traineeships and apprenticeships.

So to those people working at TAFE SA, I would like to thank you all so much for the opportunities you give the students that you serve and for the work that you do to ensure that our businesses and industries in South Australia have the quality of the trained workforce they need. To those TAFE SA workforce members, the work you are doing is tremendous and we are investing in the work that you do. The supports we are giving to the work that lecturers do I outlined in some detail earlier on in the session, but I would encourage them all to go back and view that *Hansard* as well.

I thank them for that work. I am sure they are glad that this government has invested \$200 million in this budget alone into the TAFE SA organisation so that they do not face some of the dramatic cuts they might have faced if left to the budget settings of the previous government.

The CHAIR: The time has expired for examination of payments in relation to the portfolios of TAFE SA and higher education. Therefore, there are no further questions and I declare the examination of portfolios TAFE SA and higher education completed and the estimate of payments for the Department for Education and Administered Items for the Department for Education closed.

At 16:04 the committee adjourned to Friday 30 July 2021 at 09:00.