

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****Monday, 20 June 2022****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chair:**

Mr E.J. Hughes

**Members:**

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner

Ms N.D. Clancy

Mr J. Fulbrook

Ms P. Pratt

Mr J.B. Teague

Ms E.L. Thompson

*The committee met at 09:00**Estimates Vote***DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, \$982,620,000****ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, \$231,162,000****Minister:**

Hon. N.F. Cook, Minister for Human Services.

**Departmental Advisers:**

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

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

Ms R. Ambler, Executive Director, Community Investment and Support, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Hawkins, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Reform, Department of Human Services.

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

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

Ms S. Charlton, Executive Director, People and Performance, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Biggins, Acting Executive Director, Community Investment and Support, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome everybody to this session. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. Can

the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition confirm that the time line for today's proceeding previously distributed is accurate?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I believe so. Just to clarify: the leader of the house's office suggested youth justice would be done in the youth section this afternoon. I just wanted to confirm that that is your understanding?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** That is correct, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk Assistant via the answer to questions mailbox no later than Friday 2 September 2022.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each, if they so wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions. A member who is not a committee member 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 an adviser for a response. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*. I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply in the 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 examination will be broadcast in the same manner as sittings of the house are broadcast, through the IPTV system within Parliament House via the webstream link to the internet and the Parliament of South Australia video-on-demand broadcast system.

The portfolio is the Department of Human Services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister so wishes, and to introduce advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if the member wishes. I call on the members for questions.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I would first like to introduce the department officers that are here with me today. To my left is Nick Ashley, the Chief Financial Officer. To my right is Lois Boswell, Chief Executive of the Department of Human Services, and to her right is Ruth Ambler, the Executive Director, Community, Investment and Support. Behind me I have, to my rear right, Kelly Biggins, the Director of the Office of the Chief Executive. Directly behind me is Katherine Hawkins, the Executive Director of Inclusion and Reform. I also have Joe Young, who is the Executive Director of Disability Services, and Alex Reid, the Executive Director of Community and Family Services. To the very rear of the train, I have in first class back there Sue-Ann Charlton, who is the Executive Director of People and Performance.

I would like to acknowledge that I am on stolen Kaurna land, and that is Kaurna land that has never been ceded. I pay my respects to all Kaurna elders, past, present and emerging, and indeed to all First Nations people who lead us through a process in this state and nationally of Truth, Treaty and Voice.

I am proud to be part of a government that is so deeply committed to working to ensure we deliver strong outcomes for Aboriginal people in South Australia. The cornerstone of this is delivering a state-based version of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This budget includes \$2.1 million over four years to commence the process of implementation for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including restarting the Treaty process, providing an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament.

My department is playing a key role in the national Closing the Gap as the state government lead in the justice policy partnership. This is focused on addressing over-representation in the justice system. I am pleased that the budget includes \$500,000 of funding for the government to establish an advisory commission to develop options to reduce the rate of Aboriginal people in custody, being led by the AGD.

I have had the great pleasure already as Minister for Human Services to launch both the department's new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, as well as the government's new Aboriginal Language Interpreting Service. These are just two ways my department is working to ensure we do all that we can to deliver strong outcomes. I look forward to many more.

As Minister for Human Services, I am also working hard to do all I can to ensure that no-one is left behind. People deserve to have a government that cares about them, a government that is compassionate and empathetic and that delivers services for our state's most marginalised people. Inclusion and collaboration with the community, especially with people with lived experience, is fundamental to our work. This will be at the heart of the important work that we do.

Human services is a broad portfolio and together with the department we will be working to deliver meaningful policy reform and services for carers, families dealing with complex challenges, people living with disability, people who are diverse in gender and sexuality, people who are in financial hardship, people who are isolated, people who are experiencing any number of challenges at any point in their life, volunteers and young people.

I want to thank the dedicated staff at the Department of Human Services and acknowledge the vital work that they do every day to support those in our community who need our assistance the most. I want to also thank all departmental staff who have supported today's process through preparing all of the briefing materials for estimates. It has certainly been a bit of a rush getting that and the budget together; they have done a fantastic job.

There really is no hiding that the cost of living has increased on a range of measures. We are seeing significant economic, environmental and geopolitical challenges. Interest rates and inflation are both rising, supply chains are impacted due to natural disasters and dreadful conflict abroad, which is being felt at home. We know that the price of petrol, food and other household items has gone up significantly. It has a great influence on people's capacity to afford just their weekly groceries and their general costs. The household pressures are enormous.

Rising cost of living is impacting us all, but it is disproportionately hurting those on low and fixed incomes. The cost of living continues to rise and no South Australian on a low or fixed income should be forced into poverty due to circumstances such as those we continue to live in today. This budget includes key reforms and provides for the ongoing delivery of vital services provided by the Department of Human Services. These will have a positive impact on the lives of many South Australians, and I am proud to speak to them today.

Doubling the Cost of Living Concession per household in 2022-23 at \$39.3 million will provide extra financial support for South Australians in need as they face challenges of rising prices on their essential goods and services. This will benefit up to an estimated 200,000 eligible South Australians. Home owners will receive \$449, up from \$224.50, and tenants will receive \$224, up from \$112.30. Those who already receive the Cost of Living Concession do not need to do anything to receive the extra payment. New households that want to apply are encouraged to apply by 31 December 2022. Work is underway to ensure that people can receive this important relief when we know so many people are struggling with growing cost-of-living pressures.

We are also conducting a review into the state's concession system. We want to make sure that the system is more equitable and consistent for people who need the support. Currently under development is the review of the scope and terms of reference—that is well underway. We are working closely with SACOSS and other government agencies that provide concessions in this initial scoping.

We have provided funding to Grandparents for Grandchildren. That is a \$200,000 commitment per annum to support the valued work of Grandparents for Grandchildren in supporting grandparent and kinship carers in our community. In relation to men's and women's sheds, there is

\$1 million set aside for 2022-23 and we have committed to deliver grant funding to support and grow South Australia's shed community. Women's and men's sheds play a valuable role in promoting mental health and wellbeing in the community. We will work directly with the shed community and relevant councils to deliver much-needed and promised funding and look forward to delivering a grant program also in the near future.

There will be three new advisory councils established to investigate and report on issues impacting South Australians: the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council, \$80,000 over four years; the minister's Youth Advisory Council, also \$80,000 over four years; and, since being elected as the minister, I have also committed to the same for a Disability Advisory Council, which has not been pre-announced in the election. I am committed to hearing directly from our communities about the challenges and opportunities that matter to them most. There has been a public expression of interest process, which has recently closed, and I look forward to making formal appointments as soon as possible.

My ambition is for all South Australians to have a good and fair life, and for my departments to make it much easier for you to achieve this. I want people to feel safe in their homes, with their families and in their communities. To the South Australian people, I want you to have equitable and inclusive access to life's opportunities. I want you to be respected, valued and welcomed into the world around you. I want you to be empowered to determine what your future looks like and in choosing what steps you take on the path along the way.

We need a society that has a greater concern for the most marginalised and worst off. We need values that are rooted deeply in compassion and inclusion. I am motivated and energised to deliver on the government's commitments across the human services portfolio and broader. I am committed to making a genuine and lasting change through our reforms and I have optimism for the future.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. An opening statement?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** No, straight to questions, thanks. In relation to Budget Paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, page 66, operating efficiencies are listed at \$4.9 million in 2022-23, \$5.4 million, \$5.7 million and \$8.5 million—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I cannot hear you, sorry.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Budget Paper 5, page 66, the operating efficiencies. Hansard can get the year-by-year figures—they are written down—but they total \$25 million in cuts to DHS funding over four years. What programs, grants or staff are being cut to fund that measure?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The savings measures allocated in previous budgets have been achieved in this department via operational efficiency measures, workforce restructuring and process improvements. The new savings measures were published for DHS in the 2022-23 Budget Measures Statement, 2022-23 budget savings operating efficiencies. These savings will be achieved through a combination of operational efficiency measures, workforce restructuring, process improvements and office consolidation. DHS is developing further strategies to achieve the required departmental savings targets in future years.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do you have a breakdown of what the department believes it is able to achieve through each of those four tasks? I think the tasks were operational efficiencies, workforce restructuring, office accommodation—and there was a fourth one you identified.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Office consolidation.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Got that one. Sorry, there was one other as well.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Process improvements.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is the one; yes, process improvements. Do you have a breakdown of what the department's expectation is that it can achieve through each of those four measures?

**Mr ASHLEY:** We do not have a final breakdown of those measures yet; they are still a work in progress. Part of it is linked to the fact that we are also having some internal TVSP rounds within

our department. Depending on where people express an interest in the right areas of the department, that will determine, to some extent, how the workforce efficiencies and process improvements are achieved.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is there a target for the number of TVSPs under this round that are currently up?

**Mr ASHLEY:** There is no specific target. We were given indicative ranges, but a lot of it depends on how we can achieve it within our own services.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** When you say you have been given indicative ranges, are you able to provide those ranges?

**Mr ASHLEY:** I suppose, based on the value of the savings, you can extrapolate an approximate number, which would be around 20 or 25.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are there any sections of the department that are quarantined from those TVSPs?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There is not an actual quarantine or a ring fence that is being placed around any particular ones, but the acknowledgement is that there are many services within Human Services that are frontline workers, and there will not be any cuts or any targeted savings to be made from the frontline. As described, the efficiencies will be made from more of an administrative point of view, but we are also carrying some savings that are carried over from previous restructuring in terms of some workers who are still in the department, for example, from disability reform.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I ask if there are any particular services that have been identified as part of the efficiencies that are being sought to be driven—any services that are potentially to be cut?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** That is a process that is now part of an ongoing piece of consultation with workers within a number of areas of the department. There has not been a final decision made, but DHS is extremely good at being able to reform itself and morph into levels of efficiency when they are identified. So I have great confidence that that will happen, but there have been no absolute decisions made it all. There will be further consultation with work groups.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Last week, the Treasurer in estimates identified that all departments would have to, by the Mid-Year Budget Review, identify some of these savings that would be specifically identified for efficiency dividends. But, at the same time, he said that that should not stop chief executives getting underway immediately if they had the opportunity to do so. Are there any cuts that have already been put in place ahead of the beginning of the financial year, or are all these efficiencies and restructures still in consideration?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** What we have done is put in recruitment controls so as to be able to forward plan. Also, we have a TVSP round that people are aware of but, as stated, we do not have a specific target. We will need to see who puts their hand up, who is interested.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are you able to describe further the recruitment controls? Are we talking about a freeze on hiring new people, a halt on replacing people, or can you be more nuanced?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will let the CE describe that but, to reiterate, this is not at all effective in a way that cuts frontline services.

**Ms BOSWELL:** At the moment, the recruitment controls are that if you are recruiting to a position or backfilling a position other than our very obvious frontline—such as the youth justice workers, our disability service operators or our therapists—you need to put in a short business case, and that will be jointly determined by the executive leadership team about whether or not that recruitment can go ahead.

We are trying to delay recruitments because obviously there are some financial savings that are made whilst you do that as well as giving us a chance to compare that to our TVSP expressions of interest and work out whether or not we have some positions where people are able to move within

the department so as to manage a reduction in workforce that has the least impact on individuals in a negative way.

That will allow us to determine whether or not a particular unit—for example, with the recruitment controls, we did not want to say a 'blanket freeze' because there may be an area that has high demand and just happens to have a number of vacancies. The executive leadership team will jointly decide how we spread that and who gets permission to fill in the interim whilst we are working through the savings process.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** With that in mind—and I am happy if this is taken on notice—the minister and chief executive have both talked about people who are 'obviously frontline'. They said there is no reduction in people who are obviously frontline, there is no freeze on people who are obviously frontline; I think that is the term that was used. Is there a list of those groups that are exempt from the recruitment controls?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I just want to make sure I am getting your question right. Are you interested in knowing where the frontline services are being delivered? That is how I take that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am interested in knowing who is defined by the department as a frontline service provider for the purposes of this recruitment control policy.

**Ms BOSWELL:** For the purpose of the recruitment control policy: disability services officers, the professional services officers within youth justice, therapists and safer families workers. In terms of recruitment controls, those directly customer-dealing client support workers would not be subject to the recruitment controls in the same way.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So not somebody dealing with volunteer screenings or something like that?

**Ms BOSWELL:** No. It is non-ASO. Non-administrative services officers streams are exempt. This affects the administrative services officers streams.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In relation to the process that the chief executive described on delayed recruitment controls—that could mean delaying a recruitment, I think is the example the chief executive said—presumably, it could mean denying a recruitment if a business case has to be made and the executive level does not see it as necessary. Are there any examples so far since this has been put in place of recruitments that have been delayed, denied or some other category?

**Ms BOSWELL:** It only happened last week, I believe, so we have not got that far yet.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** None yet.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Not as yet.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think it is again really important to make sure we are really clear that if, for example, there was a position that provided frontline customer-facing service, things would have to be taken on face value and looked at. We cannot let anyone who is providing frontline services or any area not be able to provide that service. I think that is the crux of it. It was only last week. There can be movement internally to fix that as well.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think the minister listed office accommodation, or office consolidation, as one of the savings areas. Are you able to identify what office consolidation is being considered, what offices or what spaces you are looking to vacate?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Just to provide some context with that as well, there have already been some plans in place to do that for some time. I think, to be fair and provide some better background, I will allow Mr Ashley to do that—this year not referred to as Rick Astley but referred to as Nick Ashley, much as I am fan of the 1980s. I will allow him to provide that, because he will be able to give you a more fulsome and very accurate response.

**Mr ASHLEY:** Office consolidation is something we have been working on for a little while now. In fact, this time last year a number of youth justice staff moved into the ground floor in Riverside, which is our main central office location. At the moment, we are working on the final group of staff who are currently based in the CBD but not in Riverside, which is actually the screening unit, which is based over on Grenfell Street.

They are currently in accommodation in Grenfell Street where the lease expires in June 2023, and the plan is we are moving them into Riverside within the existing footprint before the end of that lease, which will be achieved through a combination of looking at allocation of work desks and maximising the changes that have come from people working from home.

A lot of office spaces are not 100 per cent utilised at the moment, so effectively by each area within certain floors taking a bit of a squeeze to maximise that space, we think we will be able to make enough space for screening staff to move in, which is about 80 or 90 staff. That in itself will save the value of the lease over at Grenfell Street, which is equivalent to about \$600,000 a year. That will go towards our savings target for this year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The operation savings for 2025-26 are \$8.5 million. It is a significant jump from the previous three. This is out of a budget, once we exclude disability payments and state-run disability services, of about \$250 million, so it is reasonably substantial. What loss of FTEs is projected in that year and the out years?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Currently, as part of the forward projected, I think it is \$8.518 million or thereabouts, there has been a number of FTE count, which you would be aware might be a different headcount depending on part-time versus full-time employment, of around 40 FTEs across that, but as you would be well aware that is a best estimate given our current environment.

You may also be aware that there is a new federal government. The NDIS minister, the Hon. Bill Shorten, and the social services minister, Amanda Rishworth, are very committed to making sure that disability services are absolutely the best they can possibly be. We had a number of discussions about how this forward progress around service delivery could be best supported over the next few years, so there will be a moving feast. That is one example of service delivery.

You would be aware also that there are a number of different programs within DHS that are also evolving and developing. Children and family services, for example, is a very new model of service delivery out of DHS. There will be a range of changes over the next four years that might vary that, but the current absolute commitment is to achieve those savings targets and that is the approximate number of FTEs identified as 40.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Identifying also that there is a range of other programs that I do not think were captured when we were talking about frontline services before, are you able to provide any advice as to whether programs related to gambling supports are going to be protected? I understand that a number of those services have agreements due to expire on 30 June. Will they be re-procured and will that funding continue at the same level?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think in general what you are talking about are programs which are funded out of administered items. I could waffle on for ages but, to be clear, those programs, funded out of administered items, are not subject to savings at all. The Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund is legislated.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** And the Statewide Gambling Therapy Service and the targeted gambling help services?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, they are all the same, all out of GRF and not subject to savings. There are a number of grants programs. I think one of the other things is obviously the payments made to the federal government, as our share—as part of the bilateral agreement for the NDIS, for example—those funds are not subject to targeted savings. These are all administration items. The Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund, to be clear, provides funding for gambling help services.

There are two programs, Gambling Help Service and targeted gambling help services, and its budget in 2021-22 was \$8.621 million and in the next financial year it has indexed to \$8.633 million. While this is currently in the process of recommissioning—that is the term for getting these administered items out of the door, as you would well know—that is certainly not an area that is subject to it. Hopefully that explains that for you.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Financial counselling?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** This is a good opportunity to talk about a program which is absolutely vital in this environment. In my introductory statement I made it very clear that we are well aware of

the impact and the pressures of cost of living. People in the community are struggling and I am sure that as all of you have your own electorates you would be subject to visits from people who are really in a quite a lot of pain at the moment.

This program for financial wellbeing and resilience is underpinned by the incredible work of financial counsellors, many of whom I have met. I have visited programs and it is quite extraordinary to hear the stories that are told by people who participate in those programs. Like any grant program, we have an obligation to the South Australian public to make sure that everything is being delivered at a contemporary best practice level, and financial counselling is another one of those.

There is a recommissioning process that will happen over the next 12 months and there is some redesign of several of the components of financial wellbeing and resilience, and that is based on evidence and outcome. We want to make sure that people are accessing the best possible programs and, as part of that, the social impact framework will be used to guide that, ensuring that all programs are aligned to outcomes designed for best impact and also co-design in their process.

That includes the South Australian Financial Counsellors Association, which is part of the redesign process, so really the experts. It is not the tail wagging the dog, it is going to be absolutely the experts who are at the heart of this. The total value of the services, in terms of financial wellbeing and resilience, to be recommissioned is \$4.8 million in 2023-24. That particular program is a grant program, it is not subject to savings.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So \$4.8 million in 2023-24. What is the budget for that program that is being recommissioned in 2022-23 and 2021-22?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I have that for you. Interestingly, the number of clients that are serviced is in the thousands in respect of this. What year did you say, sorry?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** You gave us the figure for 2023-24.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Presumably, after that it will stay at that level because you said it was not subject to savings. I am asking what the figure is for 2022-23 (the coming financial year) and 2021-22 (the current one).

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, I have that here. I think it is fair to say that some of these programs have been particularly impacted by the pressures of COVID. People are having significant issues. I often pinch the Premier's terms about COVID being the earthquake, and the mental health tsunami is to come. I think that is fair in terms of cost of living as well. We are seeing massive pressures. The budget for 2021-22 was set at \$4,520,000. It went slightly over budget in terms of providing the services, which was \$4,766,000. The budget has been set for 2022-23 at \$4,885,000.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I go to page 89 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, explanation of significant movements. The decrease in income in the 2022-23 budget from the 2021-22 estimated result is primarily due to the timing of revenue received from the Department for Education for services rendered under the National Education Reform Agreement of \$9.9 million. That sounds to me like a timing decision.

I understand the Department for Education funds the Department of Human Services for a number of roles that are deemed as appropriate under the National Education Reform Agreement. There are staff working in DHS and presumably this is the funding for those staff that has been paid in a different financial year to the previous financial year—the timing a different date. Can you explain what the purpose of that timing shift is?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, I am really happy to let Nick explain the nuance of this. You will enjoy every minute, I am sure. It is complex.

**Mr ASHLEY:** As you say, Education funds DHS for a variety of services for approximately \$20 million a year. I think you were just a fraction off that. Normally, it makes two payments a year. In 2020-21, it was scheduled to make two payments of \$9.9 million. The second payment was made just after the end of the financial year.



Initially, we had planned to accrue that back into last year because that is when the services were provided, but due to a quirk of the wording within the agreement we had with the Department for Education—we have an MOAA which sets out the terms of the payment—there was something that the auditors picked up which meant that the payment was conditional on the final acquittal, so they said for this particular year we were not able to accrue it. So we ended up with only one payment in 2021 and effectively three payments in the current year.

We then put a subsequent budget adjustment through Treasury, which raised the revenue budget to match the extra payment we were getting. Since then, we have actually fixed up the MOAA with the Department for Education, which was signed quite recently, to remove that technicality. This means that should in the future the payment fall after the year end, which we hope it will not, we will not be in the same situation again.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The situation is normalised now, then.

**Mr ASHLEY:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That was easy.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87, regarding child and family support system. Minister, what is the role of the Department of Human Services in supporting families and ensuring children are safe?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you very much to the member for Davenport for the question. This is a little known area of incredible impact within the department. As the family support services arm of government has only existed since it was established by DHS a few years ago, I understand many people might not be familiar with the role and function.

Within DHS, we have a number of parts to the family support system, which was established on the recommendation of Justice Nyland in the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission. I will speak a little about the areas DHS has responsibility for, which are:

- delivering safer family services;
- commissioning NGO family services; and
- the research and strategy behind family services and early intervention for child safety.

In respect of delivering safer family services, DHS has a brilliant team of social workers and other professionals who spend their days working with families and parents who are often struggling with various pressures and past traumas. The focus of these teams is to improve overall family wellbeing, with a view to ensuring their children are safe and well cared for. These dedicated workers are spread right across the state doing frontline service delivery with families. They also play an educational and safeguarding role.

In commissioning these family services, a similar role needs to be played by our invaluable NGO sector, and DHS coordinates this. In some programs, where needed, NGO workers will spend hours of time inside a family home each week for several months to support parents with all sorts of areas of their life, and to ensure their children are being cared for appropriately. Importantly, DHS ensures a significant portion of funding goes specifically to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. We know that the best outcome for Aboriginal people is most often achieved through Aboriginal self-governance, and we support this.

The DHS's Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) is the research and data hub in this system. EIRD is instrumental in ensuring our system is evidenced based, outcome driven and best practice. The team has also been working on some groundbreaking cross-government data sharing that will totally change how we are able to recognise families in need of support before they are in full-blown crisis, and reach out to them. I am really excited about what this team is working on and I look forward to sharing more about their future activities.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, just following on from that, I refer to Agency Statement, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 90. In relation to the top line, the number of families referred to Safer Family Services pathways, I am interested in looking at the projection numbers. Given that 1,200 more

families than projected were referred to Safer Family Services pathways this financial year, why is your projection 200 less?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I just wanted to confirm because it is complicated; however, that is the number of referrals anticipated, not the number of services that will be provided. That is the expectation of the number of families to be referred, not the number of services to be provided.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you for the clarification. I really did mean referrals—it is a referral pathway. Either I need to rephrase the question or re-understand it myself, but I am looking at the figures that show us this financial year: where they were projected from 3,000 they were, in fact, 3,200. I have lost the page—they are not the right numbers. The government's budget stipulates a projection of 200 less where, in fact, this financial year it was 1,200 more than the previous government factored.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Sorry, what did you say just before that last little bit 'than the previous government factored'?

**Ms PRATT:** The financial year—I will go back to the page. I think it is best to be specific.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The projection was 2,000—

**Ms PRATT:** It was.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** —provided before.

**Ms PRATT:** The projection was wrong. Actually, the estimated result was 1,200 more—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**Ms PRATT:** —as I read it. For this financial year coming, your government is projecting 200 less than that, so there is a big jump from 1,200 more referrals than projected, and now you are predicting 200 less.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think it is, yes.

**Ms PRATT:** What can we read into that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think what you are reading into that is this is very complicated and difficult to estimate because the last projection was 1,200 off. It was significantly inaccurate, so we have—

**Ms PRATT:** You are bringing it backwards? I am listening.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Do you have something else to ask?

**Ms PRATT:** No, I am interested in the answer.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Sorry, I was just distracted. I will just finish that little bit. The previous estimate was significantly off. There were 1,200 more referrals than projected, so we have significantly increased the anticipated referral number to 3,000. I think there is a whole range of sociological experts that might be able to help better in terms of statistical estimates, and where we hit the sweet spot, but I would expect that this year we are not having the same COVID restrictions and the same degree of isolation in our community as we have had in the previous 12 months.

The service referral, I would hope, is not as high, because of that partly, but it is a very tricky sweet spot to hit. I think that it is an important point you raise: how to anticipate services for the next 12 months? Again, that is the referral point, that is not the service delivery point, and we have to be agile. It is also quite a new service aspect of DHS, and you, I am sure, would be aware of the history or the evolution of this. I think what we are going to see is a different world in the next 12 months from what we had in the past, but we have significantly lifted our expectation.

I think what we are seeing as well is that COVID did change the world in terms of when kids were at school and when they were not, and how many families were living in isolation, so it has been quite a difficult area to now project for the next 12 months. We meet weekly and we talk about these programs as part of our meetings, and the executive team are absolutely directly in touch with their department officers who do this work, and we are agile and able to work in response.

**Ms PRATT:** Grants SA programs, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 110. Labor committed to funding \$1 million for men's and women's sheds and also \$75,000 per annum for the Gold Foundation. Which part of the DHS budget has this funding come from?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** My understanding is these were provided as additional election commitment pools.

**Ms PRATT:** In relation then to the men's and women's sheds, I understand that it appears to be a one-off payment. Is there any chance that will be ongoing?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** In my opening address I referred to that. The team is also developing pro forma, if you like, around a grant program for that, so there have been some initial investment commitments regarding men's and women's sheds based on advocacy from the community. Within that, we were allocated the \$1 million during this financial year to implement that.

As well, there is some additional money left over from that and conversations are already happening within our department as to being able to offer a competitive grant round in relation to that. The current offering is in acknowledgement that COVID again has created a whole range of isolation challenges within our community. I know myself I have heard very strongly the benefits of sheds in my area. I am sure you would have some—

**Ms PRATT:** They are very worthy.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** They are just really great, inviting, welcoming, adaptive pieces of infrastructure, so I am looking forward to working with the department to make sure we can offer more of them. The outcomes are certainly long lasting.

**Ms PRATT:** You are right, they are very worthy programs. You referenced election promises. In regard to these commitments then, as a minister do you have a discretionary fund, and how much has been set aside for that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** No, thankfully. I do not and there is not, and it is not something I would prefer to have. I think with the Grants SA program there is a responsibility to deliver dollars at a percentage point, and those competitive rounds are absolutely a great way to go moving forward.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I take us back to the line of questioning I was asking before in relation to savings. I might use Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 83, workforce summary. It says there are 2,642.9 people working in the Department of Human Services. There is a strategic chart on the department's website that identifies the executive directors and the different areas. It is dated late March, so I do not know if it is still current or if there have been some minor changes.

On the one that I am looking at, it has a Communications and Engagement Unit with a director under the people and performance executive directorate. I am wondering if that Communications and Engagement Unit has a budget for the coming years and whether it is going to be subject to some of those departmental efficiencies that Budget Paper 5 speaks about.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** While my director might like to come forward and perhaps offer me any other specific pieces of advice, to be clear: hypothecating, presuming, anticipating might not be wise. We have not made any direct decisions that are worthy of sharing or confirming. It is fair to say that we do not get our messages out without communicating, but also they certainly are not the front-facing community service provider that we would talk about as being a frontline worker. I reiterate: there have not been any decisions made.

Can I say that our comms team do a fantastic job in making sure that there are community engagement opportunities for all members in the community and it is not just an elite offering. I have been to some events with the department where the opportunity to engage with all levels of the community is outstanding. They involve a lot of the underpinning philosophy of inclusion around language, which has been just sensational. I think the Reconciliation Action Plan has been a great example of that. There will be work done across the department, but it would not be my preference at this stage to guess.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That is fine. Can the minister identify how many staff currently work in that team and what their budget was for the 2021-22 financial year then?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There are around 20, and the budget is approximately \$3 million. There has been a little bit of movement into that area in order to make sure we get some good, clear messaging out to achieve some of the objectives of the department in respect of its program delivery and service delivery. I would anticipate that might reduce again because that is one of those injections of once-off type funding for a specific purpose, particularly around disability reform, which has been so important.

**Ms CLANCY:** My question refers to Budget Paper 5, pages 64 to 66, regarding the Ministerial Advisory Council. How will the Malinauskas Labor government ensure that youth, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ people and other marginalised community members are heard?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I thank the member for Elder for the question. As one of the younger members of parliament, I know she is particularly interested in terms of our ability to engage with youth. All of our team are very keen on ensuring a voice for all members of our community. Anyone who knows me, knows I love to get out and meet people—talk to them, listen to them. They inform the work that I do; it is an absolute critical responsibility of being a minister and a member of parliament. We cannot represent our communities if we do not understand the issues that they face.

In the two to three months, nearly, that I have been a minister, it is remarkable how many people, from commissioners to chief executives, have said that it has been great to meet ministers, build relationships and actually be listened to. They do say that it was lacking over the previous four years, when we heard reports of former ministers actually not being so polite or not engaging with these particular people in the community. There have even been some—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Point of order, sir: relevance.

**The CHAIR:** Yes; minister, if you can get back to the question.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is about engagement and trust in our community and, in terms of regaining the trust of people in our community, being able to openly converse with ministers and members of parliament. This is what we are prioritising. Everyone should have an equal voice. I did make the commitment, as I described in my opening statement, to establish three ministerial advisory councils: one for young people, a second one for people with disability and a third for the LGBTIQ+ community.

The councils will provide direct advice on matters of legislation, community issues and policy and will also, I anticipate, place a lens of lived experience over legislation as it comes. We will meet with these groups several times every year, face-to-face, at a minimum. This will be informed by the groups of people themselves. Of course, with the various challenges that some of these groups will face, it may be that we will be doing some virtual meetings as well.

I will share advice of these groups as soon as the selection process comes to a head. Having closed off the EOIs across last week, I look forward to getting a diverse, complex range of sector and lived experience experts together, focusing on ensuring that the diversity of voices is heard. We will make sure that the regions are represented and that Aboriginal people and people of cultural diversity are represented, as well as people of various ages, identity and ability.

The groups are not tokenistic, they are actual working groups that will speak to me, and I will listen. I thank organisations that already represent a diverse range of people in the community, and I look forward to having an informative, involved and engaged advisory council in each of these three cohorts.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I go back to the savings task. In earlier answers in relation to office consolidation, I think there was a reference to having more people work in the Riverside building and also some people working from home. Does the department have a current policy in relation to what sorts of roles people can do from home? How many workers are currently working from home, and how many roles do you see there being capacity to have working from home rather than in offices as a result of meeting the savings task?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** This is a very operational topic. In essence, we are glad to be back in the office. I am sure there are many people who are. The CE is able to provide a little bit more context around that.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Our general approach is that we support flexible work as a concept anyway, particularly given the make-up of our workforce. Obviously, we operate 24/7 services as well. Some of our workforce must be present to do the roles that they do, such as disability service officers and youth justice officers in the Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre, but we also have quite a large number of office-based staff. We do thoroughly encourage staff being in the office at least some of the time so that they can have that connection to each other, but it is business based with the relevant manager about whether it works with the business for people to have other arrangements.

Flexible work can mean a range of things, as well. It does not only mean where you are based. It can also mean working different hours—compressed weeks, for example—or having additional purchased leave, those kinds of arrangements that help. We have a lot of people who have caring responsibilities in our workforce. We are a feminised workforce, and we try to provide a supportive system that allows people to fulfil those caring responsibilities as well.

We do not have a set number of people who are working from home or working in the office. There are very few people who are not working in the office at any given point in time, but a number of our workers may, for example, particularly those who travel to provide therapy services and intensive family services, start their day from their home, do various things out in the community, then return to an office or to their home to continue their work. It really is very much based on modern workforce practices.

**The CHAIR:** The time allotted having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of the Department of Human Services completed.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

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

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

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

Ms K. Biggins, Director, Office of Chief Executive and Governance, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Brandon, Director, Social Inclusion, Department of Human Services.

Ms. M. Kirkby, Director, Disability Services, Department of Human Services.

Ms T. Mai, Senior Authorising Officer, Restrictive Practices, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolio is disability services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister wishes, and to introduce advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if the member wishes. I call on members for questions.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I have had a couple of changes. Just quickly again, to my left is Nick Ashley, Chief Financial Officer; to my right is Lois Boswell, Chief Executive; and to my far right is Joe Young, who is Executive Director of Disability Services, now up to the front. Behind me, to my rear right, is Kelly Biggins, the Director of the Office of the CE and Governance, and we have had Ksharmra Brandon come in as the Director of Social Inclusion, as well as Muriel Kirkby, who is Director of Disability Services, and Trinh Mai, Senior Authorising Officer, Restrictive Practices.

The Department of Human Services delivers supported independent living and other complementary disability support services under the NDIS to approximately 530 people with disability in our community. This is the state's remaining specialist disability service, following the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We are in the process of undertaking significant reform of the service to operate commercially under the NDIS by 30 June 2023.

I am committed to ongoing advocacy and national policy development to ensure that the full benefits of the NDIS are realised for South Australians, in particular as it relates to market development to ensure participants are able to readily access all available supports required to meet their individual goals and needs, with robust quality and safeguarding measures to prevent abuse and neglect. In my short time in this role, I have seen firsthand some of the challenges that people with disability face in accessing the services that they need and are entitled to in order to lead active, fulfilling and ordinary lives.

I am committed to working with my commonwealth government colleagues to address key challenges in relation to the NDIS, including scheme sustainability, given the faster than expected escalation in costs across the NDIS; hospital discharge; developing long-term solutions to address the issue of people with disability in hospital continuing to experience delays where they are discharge ready but are awaiting disability supports or appropriate accommodation; and disability housing to address barriers to securing housing options for people with exceptional needs and circumstances.

Last week, the disability royal commission handed down its report on public hearing 14 that took place in Adelaide in June last year. I welcome the release of the royal commission's report and will take time to closely review and give full consideration to all of its findings. Significant reforms and improvements have been made to disability services in recent years, including a zero tolerance to abuse and neglect strategy as part of a new practice quality and safeguarding framework. As the report notes, the department has already responded to and acted on proposed recommendations following the public hearings. The department is also continuing to improve our investigation processes.

In terms of the Disability Inclusion Act, we have commissioned an independent review of the Disability Inclusion Act 2018, known as 'the act', by Mr Richard Dennis AM PSM. The review will provide opportunities to make amendments to the act to ensure the full inclusion of people with disability in the South Australian community, including in employment.

Restrictive practices have had close attention, rightly so, over recent times. The new legislation came into effect on 30 May 2022, aimed at providing strong safeguards around restrictive practices for people with disability. The scheme is administered by the restrictive practices unit in the Department of Human Services, and as at 15 June there were 58 restrictive practices authorised under this scheme; one was not authorised.

Regarding Transition to Home, we are delivering the T2H program to support people with disability to regain their independence and move out of hospital in a timely manner. The scheme provides people with disability who are medically able to be discharged from hospital with a home-like environment while they prepare and wait for home modifications or permanent supported community living. We have appointed an expert reviewer to evaluate T2H and its model for the NDIS clients to ensure that processes and staffing can ensure high quality care for people with disability. That report is due to be delivered on 30 June 2022.

The Community Visitor Scheme has an investment made of approximately \$1.9 million over four years to expand the important role because we want better outcomes and better lives for people with disability. Extending the Community Visitor Scheme will go to further ensuring safeguarding oversight in government-run homes, non-government disability support services and, where necessary, private homes. There will be an additional \$450,000 per year invested in the scheme to ensure the safety, wellbeing and quality of life for South Australians living with disability.

The options to deliver on this commitment are being considered over the current months in consultation with people with disability and their carers and, it is fair to say, the new commonwealth Labor government. What will be important to bring this commitment to life is the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the commonwealth government views in developing a national community visitor scheme.

We have committed to developing a state autism strategy, which is intended to make our schools, our communities, our economy and our society more inclusive towards people living with autism in order to best support them to thrive through positive and inclusive participation. This

strategy will operate with the State Disability Inclusion Plan and will require all government agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter.

We will develop this strategy in close consultation with autistic people, their families, their advocates, their supporters and our community. I am incredibly passionate about this sector. I look forward to working in such an important area to drive improved outcomes for South Australians living with disability.

**Ms PRATT:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 84, investing expenditure summary. Can the minister confirm whether the restrictive practices system is now operational, given that the end date for the project is noted as June 2022 and that this system is required as the authorisation framework for NDIS clients?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** As I pointed out some figures in the opening statement, you would be aware that it is in operation, but to give you some further information: restrictive practices are interventions that have the effect of restricting the rights and freedom of movement of a person with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm.

Legislation for the restrictive practices authorisation scheme commenced on 30 May 2022. The scheme is fully operational, with authorisation decisions on restrictive practices occurring. Sixty National Disability Insurance Scheme service providers and 36 authorised program officers are currently using the authorisation scheme. There have so far been, as I said before, 58 restrictive practices authorised, with an average time for authorisation decision by the senior authorising officer of five days as at 15 June, so that is quite up-to-date info. One restrictive practice, as stated, was not authorised.

The scheme provides safeguarding measures for people with disability, promoting accountability, transparency and visibility of restrictive practices to reduce their use. It is established under the Disability Inclusion (Restrictive Practices—NDIS) Amendment Act 2021 and also the Disability Inclusion (Restrictive Practices—NDIS) Regulations 2021. The framework is supported by the practice guidelines, which were gazetted on 6 January this year and placed before both houses of Parliament on 19 May. I think they were the first ones that I tabled, from memory.

The guidelines are published on the scheme's website. Under this scheme, NDIS providers must obtain authorisation for the use of regulated restrictive practices when delivering NDIS supports for NDIS participants. Authorisation must occur prior to the use of the practice. There is other information. I could go on, but I think you will find it is happening.

**Ms PRATT:** Yes, lots of references there. Continuing on with that line, minister, you just mentioned that there were 58 authorised and one unauthorised. Can you expand on what determines an unauthorised use of that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes. I will bring Trinh forward, who is in charge of ensuring that these things are correct. She will be able to provide some extra information for you.

**Ms MAI:** The decisions are made based on two thresholds. One is the legal thresholds that are established within the new legislation. The second layer of decision-making is about the practice thresholds, about whether or not the practices are consistent with best practice and research. In the matter that was not authorised, both the legal thresholds and the practice thresholds had not been reached.

**Ms PRATT:** I have one more question on this topic, but it is probably more budgetary. I note that in the last financial year budget papers reference is made to an investing allocation of \$500,000. Can the minister confirm the reason why the cost of the project has blown out to now \$850,000?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will let the chief financial officer give you a nice snippy answer on that one. He is very good.

**Mr ASHLEY:** As you noted, the ICT system ended up costing more than the original allocation, which is why there is a higher number showing in the capital investment statement. I can also confirm that that was funded from within the overall budget for restrictive practices and intends that some operating underspends from there were reallocated to the investing budget. The overall thing was within budget overall.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I know it is incredibly shocking that IT systems might cost more than they state. Incredibly shocking.

**Ms PRATT:** Who knew? Thank you, that does conclude restrictive practice questions. Moving on to Budget Measures Statement, Budget Paper 5, page 65, Gold Foundation autism commitment. Can the minister indicate how the funding of \$75,000 per annum to the Gold Foundation will be used to support young people on the autism spectrum?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you for your question. It is really important work that the Gold Foundation does. This \$300,000 over four years that they have been provided will be locked in with expected outcomes that align to the Gold Foundation's mission to connect young autistic people to the world around them and empower them through the discovery and uncovering of their individual strengths.

The Gold Foundation has a focus on young people's abilities versus their disabilities. For over 15 years, the Gold Foundation has provided a holistic service, offering social skills programs for six to 12 year olds, life skills programs and social groups for teenagers, and employment pathways as well for young adults. They also do some activities that engage the whole community.

I think as well it is important to note that this type of work, given that autism is the largest single diagnostic group within the provision of the NDIS—I think it is fair to say that the numbers absolutely outperformed in terms of our expectations of the number of people living in the community. So 39 per cent of our NDIS is towards people with autism, or autistic people.

I hope and wish that this forms part of that big picture strategy that we are also funding around autism teachers in schools and the autism state strategy. These strategies, under the umbrella of a new commonwealth government with a commitment of a national autism strategy, really help us to raise awareness and be more supportive around the challenges faced by autistic people in our community, to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you, minister. We should move then to the state autism strategy. I refer to Volume 3, page 95. Who will be responsible for delivering the state autism strategy and how will it be resourced?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** As it does, it operates within the State Disability Inclusion Plan (Inclusive SA). It will require cooperation amongst all government agencies to sign up to this Autism Friendly Charter. The development of this strategy will be led by the Department of Human Services. It will be absolutely a co-design consultation process with other key partner agencies, which obviously would include the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

We will make sure that South Australians with lived experience of autism, their families and supporters are part of that consultation and development of the strategy, in addition to the broader disability sector that works daily with people with autism. That would clearly include some large organisations, such as Autism SA. The Autism Friendly Charter has been designed to assist businesses, organisations and venues across Australia to create autism friendly places and services for people of all ages on the autism spectrum. I could unpack that further.

**Ms PRATT:** I would encourage you. Perhaps if I reframe or push the topic just a bit further then. You were kindly elaborating on that. You have touched on a few things around lived experience for people with autism and consultation, so more information, please, on when you might expect the strategy to be completed, how will the engagement take place and will individuals with personal experience with autism be involved?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Sure. The dates we are looking at—we are currently setting the time line. The consultation mechanism is currently being designed and worked through so that people with autism are able to engage maximally in that; it is not something that can be done easily. We are going to make sure the discussion paper is done in three months and then there will be a process.

As I said, the federal government has changed and they certainly have a commitment for a national strategy. While that is amazing, we have to make sure that we work together and there is not this duplication or any contradiction of the way that is being designed and worked out. Currently, the department is starting to look at ways that they can engage with the federal government to



maximise how we do this, so that we are not duplicating resources and coming up with two completely separate types of strategy or rollout. The discussion paper is the start.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, you mentioned that over a third of people living with a disability have autism. I am referring to the 39—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** On the NDIS.

**Ms PRATT:** —on the NDIS are recognised as having autism.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is 39 per cent.

**Ms PRATT:** Have you written to the new federal minister, Bill Shorten, in relation to the commonwealth intention to improve employment opportunities for people with autism? You were attending a meeting last Friday as well, so what communication have you already had with the minister?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I have written to Minister Bill Shorten. I have also met with the human rights commissioner, Ben Gauntlett, and we had quite a lengthy conversation regarding employment and the changes that might be necessary, or the awareness that needs to be created in workplaces, around ensuring that people with not just autism but many disability diagnostic groups, or lived experience groups, are given the optimal experience in employment.

One of the interesting things that I took from that is how positive an open workplace employment experience would be for somebody with disability of a particular type if they were not the only person in that workplace being mentored and supported. It made me think about how could we then generate a conversation in business, and to scale. The corner shop—not that there are many of those anymore—cannot take large numbers of people that require support within their employment figure, but large businesses and corporations could be encouraged to, on scale, provide opportunities for people with disability.

I have done more than write to Minister Shorten. I have spoken with him a number of times, met him face-to-face, spent the last two days of the last working week thereabouts in the main with him, and also with the social services minister, Amanda Rishworth, and disability ministers from across the country in attendance, talking about that and a range of issues that we can do much better.

**Ms PRATT:** In those ongoing conversations then, minister, with your federal counterparts, what discussions might you have had with them regarding helping people with disabilities exit hospital, from a discharge from hospital point of view?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It might not surprise you that it is a pet project, I guess, for me.

**Ms PRATT:** Straddling a few issues and pet projects there?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is absolutely a priority that we must make sure that people who are in hospital are those people who require the requisite acute levels of care. For example, give or take a couple of people, today in South Australia's hospitals we have approximately 250 individuals who are on the NDIS. That is across our acute beds, mental health and clinical. Out of those, I think just more than half do not require an acute level of care, so that is people who have gone into hospital, for any number of reasons, be it trauma, be it a medical or a clinical episode, or even an elective procedure or series of investigations.

These people have gone into the hospital to receive that care, and some of it might have been expected to be days or, for the very unwell or critically unwell, it could have been expected to be weeks, but, for one reason or another, this service that was supposed to be set up to improve their lives as a cohort, some 50 of them—I think 66 last week—had been ready for discharge for 100 days or more.

While we have Transition to Home beds optimised, we also have 66 people who are in hospital with disability who are ready for the NDIS or approved, or were already on it, who then because of their condition or their procedure have found themselves falling foul of a discharge process. That is in the main because they either need an upgrade to their house or a change to access of their home, or an access to a bathroom, a toilet, a piece of equipment that allows them to

get in and out of bed independently to live their best lives, or a plan to be put in place properly to provide them with the requisite supports that they need.

As you would be aware, if you are a person without disability stuck in bed for a week, you are deconditioned. It provides you with, physically and emotionally, a barrier in being able to participate in your life fully. I cannot imagine what it must be like for someone who goes into this situation, who already has a significant barrier to success because of disability, to then be stuck in hospital for weeks to months, unable to exit.

We had some robust conversations with other members of teams and I made a fairly, I think you would call it, direct address to the officers of the NDIA that covered some of what I have just said to you. In a nutshell, I said, 'I don't cop it. We are putting more money into disability than ever before, as we should, because what was happening before was a national disgrace.' I have also said, 'Enough is enough. We need to do a better job, and that is down to you.' So we will work together to fix that.

**Ms PRATT:** Given it is your pet topic, and I can hear the passion there—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** You bet.

**Ms PRATT:** —and we have 66 people ready last week, what targets have you set, will you set, do you plan to set and what funding might already exist in the budget to meet those targets?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** As soon as we have the information about direct targets, I am happy to provide that. I am happy to, if you like, partly answer you but partly take that on notice. There is some work to be done with all the states and the federal minister, Bill Shorten, in order to tighten up that expectation. We have been given homework, and part of that has been to get a list of the types of people, their condition or diagnostic group and their pathway and their time in hospital—obviously de-identified—to the minister and their department in order to have a look at what is happening across the nation, see if we can pull out any bits that are commonality and strategise together.

Rather than working in seven or eight varied hubs across the country, what we saw last week was an absolute determination to work in a multipartisan nature. There were Labor ministers, Liberal ministers and a Greens minister all at this DRMM, and we have absolutely committed to putting some structure into those goals. There is no point in making targets if you do not set some kind of firm aspiration there, so we will come back with that. I have kind of answered it for you. It is not good enough, absolutely. I am happy to provide that. It would be revealed as part of the communiqué.

**Ms PRATT:** It sounds like there is a national plan, there is homework for all states—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** For the first time.

**Ms PRATT:** —and targets are on the agenda. We will wait to hear more. I refer to the Budget Measures Statement, Budget Paper 5, page 64, Disability Community Visitor Scheme. The government has committed \$450,000 each year until 2025-26 to extend the scheme, which you have referenced, to improve safeguarding and oversight for people who receive these services. Can the minister indicate how that funding will be applied to extend the scheme?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Again, as I stated in the opening statement, of course there is a bit of machinery moving in the background. It is good machinery, based on a conversation that has been pretty confronting and there are more confronting conversations to come out of the disability royal commission. Members are aware that there have been some shocking reports coming out of that. As also stated, there is a new federal government that may well have a more urgent priority around the establishment of a community visitor scheme nationally.

To answer the member's question as fulsomely as I can, in an environment where there are some things now changing, I will reiterate that this scheme, protecting the rights of people living with disability or mental illness and living across a range of facilities, is vital. The visitor currently is attending state government-funded accommodation sites, providing a safeguarding role, in conjunction with the Office of the Public Advocate, for people with disability who are under the guardianship of the Public Advocate. That was a system set in place under the previous government.

We have committed to investing an extra \$450,000 per annum to expand that system so it can operate in not just government-run homes but in non-government NDIS or disability support

services and, where necessary, in private homes. We are currently working with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to support this coordinated approach and to make sure we get this absolutely right, because we all know too well that the consequences can be devastating.

We need the relevant delegation to be established for South Australia to conduct welfare checks that are compliant with the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, and those options are now under consideration. So there will be more again. I am very happy to provide more detail; I am sure you will hear about it once we get the language absolutely right and ready to make the requisite changes to get this in place.

It is really important that we will be consulting with people with disability, and their carers and support workers as well, to make sure everybody understands why and how we are doing this. Important to bring this to life are the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the commonwealth government's views in developing a national CVS.

**Mr FULBROOK:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 95, disability inclusion. Minister, in your opening statement you mentioned the review into the operation and effectiveness of the Disability Inclusion Act 2018. Can you provide an update on where the review is at?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I can. Thank you for asking. The Malinauskas Labor government is committed to making South Australia a nation leader on disability inclusion. The primary act governing disability regarding this matter in South Australia is the Disability Inclusion Act. The act is designed to promote full inclusion within the South Australian community for people living with disability. The act established the state disability inclusion plan known as Inclusive SA. I have tabled the Inclusive SA report.

In July, the act will enter into its fourth year of operation, with section 32 requiring the operation and effectiveness of the act to be reviewed. Mr Richard Dennis AM PSM—whom many people here would remember—was appointed to conduct the independent review. As part of the review, statewide public consultation occurred from 15 March and concluded on 10 May. I am very pleased to report that dozens of submissions from sector providers, advocates and people with lived experience were received. I will table the completed review, not just because it is a requirement that I do so but because we, the Malinauskas Labor government, are absolutely committed to inclusiveness, capacity building, a strong voice and meaningful employment for South Australians with disability.

When we were last on the government side of the house, we signed up South Australia to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. One of the first states to do so, we proudly introduced the inclusion act before the 2018 election. We did not have stewardship of the bill as it passed through parliament but, in opposition, we worked extensively with the disability community to contribute to meaningful amendments in the bill. This included the establishment of an independent disability advocate to safeguard the rights of people with disability and to increase the number of people with disability working in the public sector.

Disappointingly, under the previous disability minister and her colleagues, those amendments were voted down. The Malinauskas Labor government has not shied away from the commitment to deliver for those living with disability, and we invested that additional money into the Community Visitor Scheme, as I have talked about extensively.

We want to make sure that people are able to exercise genuine choice and control over their lives, can access their communities and are being afforded the highest standard of support. In the last few years, the tragic death of Annie Smith showed South Australians that appropriate oversight and community involvement can and must make the difference between life and death for people receiving support, particularly in their own home.

We will not stop there. As discussed, we are committed to ensuring autistic people are living the best possible life of inclusion and equity in our community with our autism strategy and our Autism Friendly Charter. From my office's point of view, we have already begun consultation with dozens of

people living with autism of all ages, experience and talents to see what they want in terms of that strategy moving forward.

It is time we as a society understand and celebrate the fact that people who are neurodiverse or have any type of disability make our community stronger, kinder and more extraordinary. I will not prevaricate. I will not shirk the responsibility of being a state disability minister simply because there is now an NDIS. We will take all people in our community and make sure they are as included and as equal as they can be.

**Ms PRATT:** Returning to the Community Visitor Scheme, Budget Paper 5, page 64, has the minister received any legal advice in relation to extending the scheme and, if so, were there any legal challenges identified in that advice that would impact the ability to extend into private homes?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thanks for the question. There are some challenges in delivering on the Community Visitor Scheme, which I have talked about, but we are currently working with the national Quality and Safeguards Commission. I have not sought written additional advice, but we are now working in a cooperative and collaborative way to ensure that the scheme is delivered on as committed. The CE is able to unpack some of the current work that is happening.

**Ms BOSWELL:** In terms of an understanding that South Australia has spoken before the disability royal commission, etc., about some views associated with the constitutional ability to monitor NDIS services directly, we are working with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission regarding how we can have a delegated ability from the commission for a community visitor from South Australia to visit people and monitor their welfare. I have written to the commissioner. I am also meeting with the commissioner in person on Wednesday this week to further those discussions.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you. I understand it is a complicated space. Perhaps I can put this question to you, minister. Given that legal advice has been provided to previous governments, both Labor and Liberal, is that something that you will consider doing in future given the complications of extending the scheme?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** If it were necessary, that would be a step to take, but my understanding is that, as other jurisdictions have a variety of these models in place, this is the pathway that we are best to take in order to get this rolled out as quickly as possible. Again, honestly, it would be the preference that a federal scheme was in place and that we were all singing from the same songbook, that no matter which state you lived in, which state you worked in, you were subject to the same degree and standard of safeguarding and oversight. This is the preference.

Again, we raised this last week at the disability reform ministers' meeting and had some conversations with the group; in fact, Minister Shorten asked us directly about this particular model, and people shared a lot of commentary. In the main, everyone is very committed to having a standardised scheme where everybody gets the same no matter where you are, an equitable one.

**Ms PRATT:** Will additional volunteers be engaged to extend the scheme, and how will recruitment of those volunteers occur?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** That is already being investigated. The modelling is being done on that now. Clearly, square peg, round hole: if you are increasing the size of the scheme, you would need to have a commensurate increase. The recruitment will be rigorous, making sure that they are the appropriate people and, as they are now, doing a terrific job. That is being looked at now.

**Ms PRATT:** With that increase, how many visits will occur by volunteers to properties each month, and have you established a target to increase the number of visits that are occurring?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Obviously, as we look at the scheme, whether it is the federal versus just the state scheme, we will definitely do some modelling. Again, I would be really happy to share that. I can see you are really interested in it. It is so important. I think also I want to acknowledge that people who live in regional South Australia are subject to extraordinarily thin markets in a range of things under disability support. That is another item that was heavily discussed last week. Acknowledging your background, I am very happy to sit and chat with you about that.

**The CHAIR:** The time allotted having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of disability services completed.

*Sitting suspended from 10:45 to 11:00.*

**Membership:**

Hon. D.G. Pisoni substituted for Hon. J.A.W. Gardner.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M. Buchan, Chief Executive, SA Housing Authority.

Mr N. Symons, Chief Financial Officer, SA Housing Authority.

Ms B. Dodd, Executive Director, Customers and Services, SA Housing Authority.

Ms C. Burgess, Acting Executive Director, Strategy and Governance, SA Housing Authority.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolio is the SA Housing Authority and affordable housing. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister wishes, and to introduce advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if the member so wishes. I call on members for questions.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will start by introducing the people who are appearing here in support from the department. On my left is Mr Nick Symons, the Chief Financial Officer. On my right I have Michael Buchan, the Chief Executive Officer. On my far right is Ms Bronwyn Dodd, the Executive Director, Customers and Services, and driving first class behind us is Catherine Burgess, who is the Acting Executive Director, Strategy and Governance.

Given the change, I will, on behalf of the people in the chamber who have come in recently, acknowledge that we are on stolen Kaurna land and pay respects to Kaurna elders, past, present and emerging, and all other First Nations people.

Housing affordability and the availability of housing continues to be an issue for South Australians. The Malinauskas Labor government is committed to providing more public housing for low income vulnerable families who are struggling in the current housing market. The public housing improvement program invests \$177.5 million of new funding into public homes. This is not simply bringing forward money from forward estimates, it is new money.

We will be building 400 new homes and a further 350 long-term vacant properties will have major work undertaken on them so they can be used for rentals. Our investment means 750 households awaiting public housing will be offered a new or newly renovated home. We know many regions are doing it tough. That is why we are not just focusing on Adelaide, on the metropolitan area. We are investing in regional areas.

The recently announced 10 homes to be built in Mount Gambier are the first of many. A further six homes will soon follow. We anticipate around 150 of our new homes will be built across regional South Australia, and no doubt the Chair is waiting with baited breath. These new homes will provide job opportunities for local builders and trades.

Our maintenance blitz and renovation program is targeted to improve the condition, amenity and energy efficiencies of public housing. The renovation is part of the public housing improvement program and will upgrade those 350 public homes with the likes of new bathrooms, kitchens, water savings efficiencies and more, to help reduce the day-to-day cost of living.

Work undertaken as part of the maintenance blitz will improve the condition and appearance of 2,000, thereabouts, metropolitan homes and 1,000, approximately, regional homes. Upgrades will be dependent on the needs of individual homes, but may include the likes of installing insulation to help property thermal efficiencies, which are also important in keeping energy costs down. Again, this investment in maintenance is new money, invested by the state government. It is not bringing forward future budgets or reliant on property sales to fund it.

The government is committed to supporting those most at risk in our community. Fifty of the 400 new public homes will be for people experiencing homelessness and will be co-located with support services. The Holbrooks Road Housing for Health program, due to expire in September 2022, will be extended to provide a valuable housing first response for rough sleepers with complex needs, whilst we work through options for the new supported facility.

We have committed to fund Catherine House, Hutt Street and St Vincent de Paul to ensure these key inner city homelessness services continue to operate, provide beds and support people in need. We are investing in alternative housing options for those in crisis, to provide more suitable emergency accommodation solutions for women and children who are victims and survivors of domestic or family violence.

While these options are being reviewed, we are honouring our election commitment to ring-fence a proportion of public housing for women escaping domestic or family violence by extending the Adelaide Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Accommodation program which was due to expire on 30 June 2022. I am proud of what this government has already achieved since being elected and will continue to advocate for those who are unable to do so themselves, to ensure those most disadvantaged have access to safe and affordable homes.

**Ms PRATT:** I think we will kick off with FTEs, that sounds like a normal place to start in estimates. Page 80, Budget Paper 3. In referring to that page in relation to FTEs, I note that the number will be slashed from 867 to 819 in 2022, and by 130 over the forward estimates. Given the increased workload with your new commitments, what programs will be cut, what offices will be shut and, in short, what will be the impact of the operating efficiency savings target?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you for the question. These reductions are not cuts, they are grant funded and project funded roles, so they were not ongoing positions in the first place.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you, I appreciate that. Moving through a volume of questions: you say that they are grant funded and not ongoing, and you have not mentioned any reference to the Affordable Housing Unit. How many staff are working in that unit?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Can you clarify whether that is the Affordable Housing Strategy or project delivery unit?

**Ms PRATT:** I am referring to the affordable housing initiative and the unit—I cannot clarify, so I will have to come back to you.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Within this, that is the affordable housing delivery, and it is actually increasing over time, consistent with the project delivery as currently proposed.

**Ms PRATT:** Budget Paper 5, page 115, in relation to the SA Housing Authority, looking for some insight into—we are in the middle of winter, so when the department identifies a Code Blue what costs might be associated with that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Broadly, yes, it costs money every time a Code Blue is triggered, and that would depend on whether that Code Blue is specific to any given regional area or a metropolitan area. All the areas cost a different amount. I would be happy to take that part on notice and provide you with a more fulsome response in terms of giving you some specifics, but it is prudent to note that the Code Blue service is delivered based on the goodwill of many volunteers.

There are a range of service providers who are funded under the current service delivery model in each area of South Australia, be it regional or metro, by their alliance that is allocated to that particular area. Those people are funded to some degree to be able to help coordinate all of these services, but obviously having Code Blue 'places'—for want of a better word—open for shelter requires overtime and an amount to staff and resource in excess of what is usual. The government has a commitment to make sure that all the service providers are recompensed for their generosity in these times.

I think we have been extremely proactive and responsive to some significantly harsher weather conditions in this month than what has been in recent years. I have personally asked for and received a briefing on the weather conditions across the state over the past few years and how the trigger for Code Blue was activated in respect of all of these. I was provided with an excellent

summary that we are now working on together to look at whether there is a more consistent approach that we can use.

I will take on notice the specifics, because it is like down in the weeds to get you the money, but it is a very good question and something that should be acknowledged. I think it is worth mentioning that the Vinnies sleepout is this Thursday night. Without those public generosity events where people donate money and sponsor people—the Premier has acknowledged my sponsorship—these organisations could not participate like they are. We rely on that as well. It varies; it is difficult. I am happy to get you a more specific answer.

**Ms PRATT:** On the same page, 115, can the minister please inform the committee on the amount spent on hotel accommodation from 2018 to now?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Just give me a moment and I will get you the exact amount. There was a significant jump in this over recent years. I think there is absolutely an acknowledgment that COVID has played a part in the increase of that budget, and I can break that down a bit for you. In front of me, the numbers I have are from 2019 to 2020. I do recall being the shadow minister the year earlier than that and I think it was significantly less than this amount. I will round them all up to the nearest hundred thousand dollars.

In 2019-20, we had \$6.8 million of regular emergency accommodation and \$1.9 million—rounded down, sorry—attributed to COVID accommodation, which is a total of \$8.742 million. In 2020-21, for regular emergency accommodation—this is where it starts to get really worrying—\$9.3 million was spent on hotel accommodation for people who could not access housing, and \$1.25 million was spent on COVID accommodation for people who needed shelter during lockdowns or COVID crisis, to a total of \$10.559 million.

Then we have an amount so far this year, to the end of last week. Again, it is an increase: \$9.8 million on emergency accommodation in hotels. The accommodation to COVID has reduced to \$0.55 million, which is pleasing. However, the total this year—remember there are still a few weeks to go, so I expect it will surpass 2021—will probably hit \$10.7 million on the projection, but the actual is \$10.358 million. It is too much, way too much, and not good enough.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, in your opening statement you made reference a couple of times to finding alternative emergency housing solutions given that we expect in winter we will be facing more Code Blues. Have you lobbied the state health minister to release the vacant medi-hotel, Tom's Court, to SAHA in preparation for predictable Code Blues through the rest of the winter, given that it stands empty and it is contracted to the government at a cost?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It would be fair to say that Code Blue is part of the problem. I have spoken with the health minister regarding the current arrangements for Tom's Court, so you will be pleased to know that, yes, we have had a conversation regarding this—several, actually. We are currently working around the parameters on that contract and what the appropriate use might be moving forward.

**Ms PRATT:** Winter is passing: when might we hear more about that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We have just started winter, and the worst month is July.

**Ms PRATT:** So by July?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** No, I did not say that; do not verbal. The worst month is July, and this is one of the priorities. Emergency accommodation, Code Blue: I think the executive will all be nodding their heads in agreement that these were some of the first issues we have started to talk about, and we will get there as soon as we can in the best possible way and the most appropriate way for people.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, I refer to Budget paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, page 116, public housing improvement program. Are the 400 new homes additional to existing stock or are they replacements one for one?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** These are additional houses.

**Ms PRATT:** You are quite right, I am keen to learn more about the 150 houses in regional South Australia, so are you able to list a breakdown of those regional areas? Where will we see the 150 go?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** You want to take some punch out of my announcements. I could be convinced to be more specific.

**Ms PRATT:** Can you tease us with some RDA zones. Where can we expect—'At a town near you soon.'

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thanks for asking. It is a really important question, and some excellent work is being done by the authority on this, really rapid work, in terms of identifying where (a) there is land already available with houses not on it, so that we do not have to wait, but also then to identify which areas of the community have the need.

There were the 10 homes I announced in Mount Gambier, and my executive officer will correct me if my memory fails me. Five of those were announced as two bedrooms, two of those were announced as three bedrooms and three of those were announced as four-bedroom properties. Six more are to be announced later this year. Well, they are announced, but the tender will go out later this year specifically targeting local business, local trades and local jobs. So that is absolutely specified. Another 38 houses are already identified for construction. These areas will include Mount Gambier but also Port Augusta. The Chair is looking very interested right now.

**Ms PRATT:** She is all over it. I am just thinking with envy about the Limestone Coast—Mount Gambier and Port Augusta—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, Port Augusta, and Whyalla, Mount Barker and Murray Bridge. They are the current ones that already have a reserved spot amongst the 150. There are 112 mystery houses still to announce in regions.

**Ms PRATT:** Bated breath, minister.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thanks for asking.

**Ms PRATT:** I appreciate the answer. Just going back to the Limestone Coast then and Mount Gambier to unpack that: the first batch of 10 is expected to cost an average of \$300,000 per home, and the second tranche about \$420,000.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**Ms PRATT:** Can you give a difference—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It sounds like a shocking inflation rate over a few months, does it not?

**Ms PRATT:** What is the reason, please?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will take it on notice for you, but it would be fair to say that there may be some—the mix might be different. So the first bunch had five of them that were two-bedroom homes, which would be, obviously, smaller—

**Ms PRATT:** Yes.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** —and this mix of six we might expect to be larger, but I do not have that in front of me. Again, we will take that on notice for you.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you. How many of the 400 homes will be built through demolition and rebuild of existing properties? Just to clarify.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There is no intention to make this a replacement of home program where we would be knocking down homes to build. I think I said that at the start when you asked me. We will be using the broader Asset Renewal Program, so that we are accessing other land that is available that is not currently the tenant of a Housing Trust property.

**Ms PRATT:** Understood. Thank you for clarifying. Minister, how much then has the government budgeted for purchasing land to develop the 400 homes program?



**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** This project is not one where we anticipate purchasing land.

**Ms PRATT:** Okay.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We anticipate using land that is available in order to build the homes. This is not a project where we have factored in land purchase in order to achieve the result.

**Ms PRATT:** The government holds this land currently?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There are other renewal projects where traditionally there has been a sell-off of land to the private market as part of those projects, and your shadow minister would be able to probably give you more information on those because there is a number of those that were in the last term of government. This is not how we anticipate at all doing our project. We will be using land that is already available for use. That is basically it.

**Ms PRATT:** That is fine, thank you.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think that is fairly clear. That is not the plan. Land sales previously in the last four years were used to bump up value in a project, and fund existing, so that is not how this project is working. We have new money—\$177.5 million. This is building and restoring these homes.

**Ms PRATT:** Thank you for continuing to unpack this with me, minister. Has the government then modelled the cost per square metre for where it intends to build on that land?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is like how long is a piece of string, but the modelling happens in terms of the costing for these projects. From regional to metropolitan to units in high-rise, the square metreage, as you would be well aware, varies.

**Ms PRATT:** Returning to the Mount Gambier example and announcement, are the construction costs announced for the Mount Gambier property similar to what the cost would be for the entire program of the 400 homes?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There is a 15 per cent loading for Mount Gambier.

**Ms PRATT:** Just so I understand, that is distance, materials?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** All of that, yes. The Chair might be able to tell us what the Whyalla loading is for the gold-plated Whyalla homes.

**The CHAIR:** So variable.

**Ms PRATT:** We could swap stories.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, what will be the average cost per public house, if that is available to you?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The accounting average is a \$250,000 build cost. That is the accounting average, but there are so many variables and it would be give or take tens of thousands.

**Ms PRATT:** Finally, given the conversation we are having at the moment about varying costs and the program is about to commence, just to clarify, no land will be purchased, so this is not in competition with future prospective private home owners?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Correct. We were very determined to make sure that our project was one in which the focus was providing better outcomes for people who needed them. I think we know the consequences of announced projects that overheat the market, that amp up the prices, that choke the life out of another project. It was absolutely key in this announcement that this would not be controversial.

This would be something that just aims at outcomes, not stymieing the supply of any other—it is a bit like the HomeBuilder federal scheme. We are going to suffer for a long time because of that scheme putting upgraded bathrooms, kitchens and what have you into the homes of people who are already in a home and already have a roof over their head. This is about getting people off the waiting list, into homes and not having a negative impact on the market.

**Ms PRATT:** I understand. Minister, I know that I continue to seek clarification. I am just making sure I am getting the right information. These are additional homes, so you do not need to purchase land, but will there be any impact on tenants? Is there any relocation impact or consequence for tenants in this process, given that they are additional new builds?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There are many people living in public housing who are not in housing that is suitable. We have watched, via the federal RoGS, the terrible overcrowding that is happening in many public homes. If there is any relocation, I hope this is a very positive experience where suddenly, in Mount Gambier, instead of three children sharing a bedroom, we can say, 'You have a four-bedroom family home now available. We would like to offer it to you,' and then offer the smaller home to somebody with maybe one child or a couple. That is my expectation that I think has been fairly clearly prosecuted. I hope that any relocation is a positive thing.

I think there have been conversations over many years about some narrative that is really confabulatory and inflammatory in nature in terms of people living in inappropriate homes for the mix or what have you. From my point of view, I think we need a kinder community that understands there are needs for individuals, and we want to make sure we are offering a better mix.

**Ms THOMPSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 116, regarding the public housing improvement program. My question relates to the major works and maintenance element of this program. What is the South Australian Housing Trust maintenance backlog? How is that determined, and how will that funding address the backlog?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you for the question. This has been an interesting little piece that has been predicated publicly over a period of time. In fact, this matter was raised on radio last week, when the shadow minister claimed that there was a \$700 million backlog when they came to office in 2018. Then the same shadow minister on the same radio piece claimed that they halved the issue.

The estimate of a \$700 million maintenance liability for SA public housing was calculated on a desktop estimate, without anybody setting foot in a home, based on data from mid-2013 to mid-2017. The triennial review for that period stated, and I quote, 'The SAHT currently is developing a strategic asset management plan that will determine the extent of the maintenance backlog. It is estimated this will be in the order of \$700 million.' As stated, this was an estimate and a process was being undertaken to determine the actual number.

In 2017, the SA Labor government approved and funded a multimillion-dollar asset condition inspection report. This sent real people into real homes to assess maintenance needs and determine the backlog. The former minister regularly took credit for the asset survey, but I note it commenced on 26 March 2018. For the record, the election was on 17 March 2018, with the former minister being sworn in on 22 March.

The program that had been approved, planned, funded, tendered and awarded under Labor commenced four days after the minister was sworn in. It might surprise you to note that when the audit was completed it did not find \$700 million of maintenance liability. It found \$310.6 million—still nothing to be proud of, but less than half of the \$700 million that has been quoted a number of times publicly.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** Point of order, sir: the estimates process is in regard to budget papers for the 2022-23 year; 2018 does not appear in the budget statements.

**The CHAIR:** I think the minister is getting to that; she is just providing a bit of context, a bit of background. But if the minister moves on, it would be appreciated.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will read faster, perhaps. Any impact on the numbers by the former government was tiny. This has all led to our anticipated work, the commitments that we have made, so it definitely links with the budget lines, because it is about us saying what we will be doing in terms of maintenance and the maintenance stimulus.

After the original estimate was determined, but before the 2018 election and before the asset survey, 5,000 homes were transferred to community housing providers. At this time, the community housing providers took responsibility for the maintenance of homes, under 20-year leases. A key part

of this transfer process is to use higher revenue from community housing providers to address maintenance.

Then the Housing Trust inspected the more than 30,000 individual dwellings under its management and found that figure of \$310 million. So the desktop estimate that was completed many years before by a person who did not go out and set foot into homes, not on a single property, was very wrong. The number was much lower before the asset survey began, and it was well before the 2018 election.

Maintenance spending is not a magic pudding. There are three ways you can make a backlog disappear: spend money to fix it, bulldoze a house to make the backlog go away or sell homes to make the backlog someone else's problem. I will give some credit where it is due: the former minister did spend some extra money on maintenance, but it was money brought forward from future years, which means benefits would be temporary because then that money could not be spent later on. Any additional reduction in backlog came from selling or bulldozing homes.

We have taken a very different approach. We have committed \$177.5 million in new money, which will build 400 new homes, possibly even on the vacant dirt that was left when the Liberals bulldozed them. This will have a significant impact on the maintenance backlog but, unlike the former government, we will make sure that people have the opportunity for a safe and secure home at the end of it.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** Point of order, sir: you have allowed the minister to move back a number of years beyond the budget. Could the minister then also provide the committee with how many houses were sold under the previous Labor government for 2002 to 2018?

**The CHAIR:** I think the minister was providing some context to the current budget lines. We are not going to trawl into the distant past. It was directly related to the budget line that appears here and some context was provided, but I would also say to the minister I think it is important that we focus on this budget and the future.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you for your wise counsel.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 116. The \$250,000 per home average that the minister has identified just now I think, on my arithmetic, gives us \$100 million. There is a narrative at page 116 in relation to the application of the overall initiative. Can the minister identify with some particularity the application of the remaining \$77.5 million?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** To keep it short, the balance relates to the maintenance upgrades.

**Mr TEAGUE:** In relation to those maintenance upgrades, to what extent is there anticipated to be disruption to tenants and relocation and so on?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The 350 homes are currently vacant. Many are significantly damaged. Quite a number were empty for the entirety of the previous government, and these homes need to be tenanted. They will not provide any disruption except perhaps to people who should want to use them for purposes other than living in them—I will leave that bit to you.

In terms of the 3,000 targeted smaller amenity upgrades, the Housing Authority tenancy team will make sure that they communicate in a way so that people in the homes have plenty of notice about any maintenance going on or any works going on. If there is any time where there is disruption to plumbing, gas or electricity, we are obligated to make sure that there is a safe, decent place for these people.

Some members here are probably aware of significant public discourse that happened around some maintenance involving ceiling replacement—I do not mean to traumatise the team. Communication has not been ideal in some regards, and we are absolutely determined to make sure that people who are getting some changes made to their home get a good experience.

Renovating is a nightmare for everybody, but if you do not have the capacity to fund any additional accommodation and what have you it can be very worrying. We will work through that and make sure that there is not a negative experience for the people who are tenants in place while renovations occur. Thanks for asking that; it is important.

**Mr TEAGUE:** On the same page and same budget item, can the minister confirm that the last previous asset report was done in 2003 and, in any event, can the minister indicate whether there is a plan to undertake an asset report at any time in the near future?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Sorry, can you quote the name of the report that you are talking about?

**Mr TEAGUE:** No, I am advised it was a report that was undertaken in 2003 on the last occasion.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There was a full asset report that I have just spoken to. I just spoke at length in that response regarding the commissioned report for 2017 that actually sent people out to look at the homes and do a proper inspection, and that is now informing the work of the Housing Authority moving forward. I think that is probably the report that you might not be connecting. That was a full asset report that was done in the last few years.

**Mr TEAGUE:** It is a 2017 report that is guiding the work going forward now, is it?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, that is my advice. Just to add, it was completed in 2021.

**Ms PRATT:** I refer to page 72, still SAHA. What will the selection process be for SAHA tenants to receive a new dwelling?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** That is an interesting one. There is a waiting list. I will refer to Bronwyn.

**Ms DODD:** How will they be chosen?

**Ms PRATT:** Yes.

**Ms DODD:** We will look at the asset and the conditions that they are living in and then decide which and where they fall. There is certainly an identification of what the houses need to work on, which is what the minister has already referenced, and then we will look at the family needs, their future needs or their current needs, and then see where they best fit.

**Ms PRATT:** So there is no difference in process between the brand-new build of the 400 and other assets that are being upgraded and repaired?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** No, there is no star tenant award or anything like that.

**Ms PRATT:** Tenants would probably like that.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think if you look at people's families, families are quite dynamic but also some have significant challenges in terms of transport to get children to school, people living with disability, people who are ageing. The areas in which the homes are built might match somebody on the waiting list or might really match a priority person who is down for a move from one area to another, which then gets backfilled. I tried to explain that, probably very clunkily, but there is within the authority a priority setting that will happen. It already does happen in terms of allocations. There is a process. It is not down to anything more complicated than that, I think.

**Ms PRATT:** How many housing outcomes will be achieved with the construction of new dwellings?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** New dwellings is 400. Yes, there are 400 new.

**Ms PRATT:** Will that be 400 housing outcomes?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** For this particular building of the new homes, if there are 400 new homes there are 400 new housing outcomes for that particular project, but there are many projects underway. These are not the only homes being built. There are neighbourhood renewal programs going on already. You would be aware, perhaps, that there is a whole range of projects in Seaton, Woodville and Blair Athol, and they currently have other housing outcomes attached to that.

In total, over the next four years, \$557 million will be spent building 1,750 new homes across a range of programs and there is refurbishment commitment to 6,250 others. Regarding the question of how many housing outcomes, if you build 400, there are 400, but there are other programs

underway that will lead to other outcomes, and that is not to say that there might not be some other programs that come to light.

I hope members are well versed and ready to join me as we lobby the federal government as it embarks on its \$10 billion Housing Future Fund with commitments to build 30,000 homes as a consequence of this project. I will try not to get it the wrong way around. I understand 20,000 are social housing, which could be a combination of public community, in my mind. Again, we have written to get some clarification. I think there is still a letter in the pipeline that we are waiting to have a conversation about. The 10,000 more will be, I think it is easier to say, worker housing, as a priority, and in the last couple of weeks, Limestone Coast—here she goes!

**Ms PRATT:** I care about all regional South Australia.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I know but the first cab off the rank happened to be the Limestone Coast. We had some incredibly deep and thought-provoking conversations around the challenges of providing not just the public and community housing offering to people who are living on the margins, but for local communities to be able to attract the requisite workers and skills, they do not have houses.

The rental rate here, the vacancy rate is like 0.2 per cent in Adelaide, but it is no better in the regions, in fact in some it is worse. There is just a hint of optimism that the federal government has a commitment—the first one in a long time—to inject money into the market in an innovative way. We look forward to working with them and look forward to hearing you guys beat the drum on it as well.

**Ms PRATT:** Of these new dwellings, can you give a breakdown as to whether there will be a mix of standalone housing and units?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is a mix. I think that is the simple response.

**Ms PRATT:** Yes, that is what I asked, and that is the answer. Just so there is no confusion, still on Budget Paper 3, pages 72 and 73, SAHA: what planning tools within SAHA does it use to select planning decisions?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** This might surprise you, but I am going to hand this one to the CEO because he has great knowledge in this area.

**Mr BUCHAN:** The Housing Authority has an asset strategy that we utilise to think about what the need for housing in particular areas is. That need for housing takes into consideration the demographics of the area and the customer cohorts that are presenting within that particular area, to essentially create and move our portfolio, as best as we practically can within the expenditure envelope, to stock that is more adaptable that can meet a broader need of customer requirements.

As many members would be aware, the vast majority of the stock is old stock—three-bedroom stock that was constructed during the sixties and the seventies. That stock is no longer fit for purpose. The opportunity at the moment is for us, through all of the new build, to build more adaptable housing that provides the opportunity for both disability and for people to age in place.

As a result, we worked through that asset plan to work out what needs to be built, and we are also working within the planning system, thinking about the differing development codes, the development overlays, etc., which support the nature of development within each of the communities. Ultimately, we will come up and engage planning consultants who are experts and also work with the planning department to ensure that the product that is built within a particular area not only best meets the needs of our customers but also meets within the intention of the development plans that exist.

**Ms PRATT:** Minister, a supplementary: what software does the maintenance system use, and does it require any substantial upgrades?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think there has been one recently. There has been significant work put into this over recent years. Do you want us to bring that one back?

**Ms PRATT:** I am happy for you to take that on notice.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We can get you some information on it. There has been significant work put into this already. I have heard reasonably positive reports around the capacity to be able to keep on top of the massive amount of work that goes through the department. Are you happy for us to bring it back?

**Ms PRATT:** Yes, that is fine. One last SAHA question: we know cost-of-living pressures are up, we have new dwellings coming online, we have loadings in regional areas. What was the level of copper theft from SAHA properties in the last financial year?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Good question. Too high, is the answer.

**Ms PRATT:** Can you expand on that?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Again, we will come back to you with something more specific. It is a problem in many housing developments. Would you like a proper answer in response to that?

**Ms PRATT:** Yes, it is a proper question.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will check and see whether we have a strategy around this.

**Ms PRATT:** That would be the supplementary: if it is too high, what is the plan?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, we will come back to you with that, no problem.

**Ms PRATT:** I move to Budget Paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, page 115, homeless support services. Looking at the budget papers, where it states that this was an election commitment, what commitments did the Labor Party make to service providers like Catherine House, St Vincent de Paul and Hutt St Centre?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We made three very clear commitments. They were made very publicly. We made a \$2 million commitment to each of those three iconic, vital providers that are based in Adelaide, because they lost their funding as part of the reforms under the previous government. In speaking with a range of people—people with lived experience, people in the sector—what this did was it severely impacted the capacity of the homelessness providers to be able to flow people through the system, provide that frontline crisis support and also work with people to move them through the system as quickly as possible.

Our department has worked really quickly to make sure all of those providers have been able to eloquently define three service model deliveries with targets that are going to ensure that people who are suffering, experiencing, living with, devastated by homelessness who come to Adelaide, to the CBD—and they come from all over the state—are able to access these services as quickly as possible and get the best outcomes.

All of those organisations suffered significant losses of skilled workers and capacity to be able to provide support. As a consequence, because there was a really poor transition plan from one model of homelessness service provision to another, there were serious gaps. It took months and months to get a street outreach program up and running. This has left people languishing in tents, at best, in the Parklands and all across the Adelaide CBD without a place to reach out to.

I visited Hutt St a couple of weeks ago. They are just starting to turn the wheels again. They lost people who had worked there for years. I am really proud to say that we now are striking agreements with those three providers that do not just help there, they provide support in an ongoing way. They will work with the alliances. In fact, it is a bit *Back to the Future*, but some of these are becoming partners in the alliance anyway. Sadly, the way it was done, it knocked them out and took away capacity and lost a lot of goodwill, I would have to say. Now we are seeing that build up again. This will be an excellent result and it is something I am very proud of.

**Ms PRATT:** Following on from the end of that statement then, your media release from 1 July last year refers to those other service providers that were also part of the unsuccessful alliance tender. For services like SYC, AFSS, KWY, Junction Australia, Uniting Care and Neami, what commitments have been made to them?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We made no particular election commitments in relation to that. I have spent every waking working hour reading, talking with, meeting with, and visiting service providers to see where they are at, including on weekends and after hours to fit it all in. I continue to

do so, and getting the best possible advice from many of these providers. Some of them, as stated, have rolled back into the alliance, some of them are part of other alliances and some of them have changed their service delivery model.

The street outreach program that I mentioned before, Street to Home, was Neami. It is an incredibly efficient, effective and caring organisation, which actually, in the period of time, have been building up their after-hours urgent mental health service in the CBD and doing a great job with that. I look forward to continuing to work with them to help connect all the services together in this framework. That is seamless. There has not been a particular commitment of any type made with any of these, but I have met with most of them and continue to work with them.

**Ms PRATT:** In meeting with them—and many members would be aware of these service providers; I think they are all very worthy—is there any future intention to look at funding? Have they asked for funding? Did they make budget submissions?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I have not made specific commitments, but I have absolutely told them that I continue to be committed to working with them. I have met with some who have some great ideas, and if they have presented ideas—it is not just them, it is many other housing and homelessness providers that have offered options or ideas for innovative approaches. There has been a number of them, and we have said that we need to see something: 'If you would like to look at partnering with SAHA on any project which gets people off the streets into homes on a pathway to success, bring it on. We are ready to have a conversation.'

But there has not been anything else. I will not go so far as to call our Treasurer the 'benevolent Treasurer'—I think that was Rob Lucas's nickname—but he is very astute when it comes to these matters, having been a minister in the previous Labor government in this area. I look forward to working with them on innovative housing outcomes.

**Ms PRATT:** Can the minister provide any data from the changeover of the alliance to show that homelessness went up or down?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The Zero Project has been operating and, I am not sure if the member is aware, publishes monthly data on the dashboard on the Don Dunstan Foundation's Zero Project website. Is it still hosted by the Don Dunstan Foundation? I think it might have moved out. That was where the original partnership was. I think they got knocked out of the group. I do not have the last month's data, but there have been significant delays in the capture, significant barriers to the recording and publishing of this data. Again, I am happy to provide a more fulsome response to you, but I know that it took some months for data to be published on that website.

**Ms PRATT:** Could the minister take that on notice?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms PRATT:** That is, a report back on data regarding levels of homelessness at the changeover of the alliance and explanations of the significant delays.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes. I can advise in relation to that, from organisations which have spoken to me regarding this, is the absolute desperation they felt because they did not have the outreach services in place. They were unable to actually get out on the ground and find people and form those relationships. It has taken some time.

I have been out now with the street outreach team. Now they are really getting in the swing of it and I cannot commend them more; they are doing an incredibly good job. They know people by name, they know exactly where people sleep, they know exactly the barriers to people in terms of Code Blue and are actually even accessing other shelters. So they are doing a great job. We will get you some numbers, but there have been some problems with the data.

**Ms PRATT:** I refer to page 116, the public housing improvement program, where 50 new homes will be built. I found a reference to Common Ground. Is there an estimated completion date for that project, and where will that location be? Finally, is that going to be higher density or standalone?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thanks for asking. It is currently now a conversation that we are having. We will seek some information from the sector which is providing services. It is more accurate to say it is a Common Ground type facility where there will be co-located supports, and there is an absolute commitment to build that in this term of government. There is no specific place that has been decided, scoped or looked at. I am sure we will be receiving a whole range of unsolicited advice from many people, and it is an extremely effective way of supporting people.

**Ms PRATT:** Just finally, Mr Chair, 'in the style of'.

**The CHAIR:** Okay, yes.

**Ms PRATT:** In the style of Common Ground, it is more likely to be higher density than standalone?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Higher density, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you all for your contribution. The time allotted having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolios of the SA Housing Authority and affordable housing completed.

*Sitting suspended from 12:00 13:00.*

#### **Membership:**

Ms Savvas substituted for Mr Fulbrook.

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner substituted for Hon. D.G. Pisoni.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

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

Mr N. Ashley, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Human Services.

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

Ms K. Hawkins, Executive Director, Inclusion and Reform, Department of Human Services.

Ms R. Ambler, Executive Director, Community Investment and Support, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Biggins, Director, Office of the Chief Executive and Governance, Department of Human Services.

Ms F. Curnow, Director, Communities and Justice, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolio is youth services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister wishes, and to introduce her advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if the member so wishes. I call on members for questions.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will introduce the officers that are here with me. I welcome back Nick Ashley, the Chief Financial Officer, to my left, and CEO Lois Boswell to my right, and to my far right is Alex Reid, who is the Executive Director of Community and Family Services. Welcome back, Kelly Biggins, to my rear right, who is the Director of the Office of the Chief Executive and Governance. Also Katherine Hawkins behind me, who is the Executive Director of Inclusion and Reform. Then Ruth Ambler, who was here previously as well, is the Executive Director of Community Investment and Support, who is to the far rear, first-class seat, in the right there, and directly behind me in first class is Fiona Curnow, Director of Communities and Justice.

I acknowledge country, stolen Kurna land, and pay my respects to Kurna elders past, present and emerging, and all other Aboriginal people in our nation. I am passionate about issues that affect young people. It would be fair to say that I am possibly here as a consequence of my



commitment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people in our community. What we do know is that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted young people's employment, with other key issues facing young people including housing uncertainty and instability, pressure in the rental market, the environment and mental health.

Addressing all these wide and varied issues that impact on a young person's life will be a central focus of the new plan that we will introduce later this year. I am proud to be the minister of a department that is committed to improving the wellbeing and life opportunities of South Australia's young people, particularly those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. We will continue to fund and deliver a range of programs and initiatives aimed at making a valuable difference to the lives of many.

I am proud to say the youth grants funding for 2022-23 totals \$4,103,457, which is an increase from the \$3,950,018 in 2021-22. This funding will cover sector support and advocacy, supports for social and economic participation, early intervention for at-risk young people to access services and strengthen cultural and community connections, supports for the LGBTIQ+ youth and supports for young carers, as well as youth parliament. It is also important that we celebrate the contributions and achievements of our young South Australians, and I was very pleased to attend the opening of SA Youth Week on 13 May with the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia.

My department plays an important role in overseeing youth justice services. We will continue to implement a modern therapeutic approach at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre to improve responses to children and young people. Custodial facilities at Kurlana Tapa are being consolidated, and new infrastructure is to be built by June 2023. This build will provide the centre with much more suitable accommodation, a separate short stay unit and improved education facilities.

I have already spoken about the measures we are putting in place to alleviate cost-of-living pressures generally for South Australians, but importantly I will also be establishing the new minister's Youth Advisory Council, funded at \$80,000 over four years, which will investigate and report on issues impacting young South Australians as well as communicate directly to me regarding matters of policy and legislation.

This is just one of the three advisory councils I asked for that will allow me to hear directly from our communities about the challenges and opportunities that matter most to them. There has been a public expression of interest process which I have talked about extensively, which has recently closed. I look forward to making formal appointments to all of those advisory councils but especially to the Youth Advisory Council. I am excited about working with this council to increase the voice of young people in leading future planning and investment to better meet the needs of young people.

The South Australian government has made several election commitments to improve responses to youth mental health that fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, and I am watching them very closely. These include \$7.8 million for more child psychiatrists and psychologists, \$50 million for 100 child mental health specialists in schools and \$20 million for 10 new mental health beds at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

This is not even to discuss the massive investment that we are making into awareness and supports for people living with autism in our community—a significant issue facing many. We came into government promising generational change and, with the advice of the new ministerial Youth Advisory Council, I look forward to establishing a new youth plan that will help to make that a reality.

**The CHAIR:** Opening statement or just questions?

**Mr TEAGUE:** Thank you, Chair, straight to questions. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 92. Can the minister update the committee in relation to the Child Diversion Program? It was a highlight of 2021-22 and is set out as a target in 2022-23 to expand.

**The CHAIR:** You might want to speak up a bit or move closer to the microphone. I think some people might have some difficulty hearing.

**Mr TEAGUE:** The Child Diversion Program that is described on page 92 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3 is a highlight of 2021-22 and a target for 2022-23 is to expand the program. As the

minister remembers and the committee might be aware, it is an alternative to custody for children and young people aged 10 to 13 and commenced in the 2021-22 year.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is so important that we acknowledge a couple of things: firstly, the over-representation of Aboriginal young people within our custodial system. This must be addressed as a priority and we acknowledge that and will be doing that, but there is also the simple fact that the earlier a young person goes into custody, the more likely they are to have a recidivist pathway to adult incarceration. I will do everything I can to ensure that young people are supported in the best possible ways to avoid that.

The two-year Child Diversion Program pilot, as I understand it, commenced late last year with the funding allocation of the \$1.3 million over two years. There is a further \$160,000 per annum into the program by DHS to fund on-call allowances for people who are required to come in and provide support.

In January 2022, the department committed an extra \$0.2 million for frontline service delivery. Funding was used to create two full-time AHP1 roles to undertake timely and rapid family engagement and support until 31 December 2022. It responds to the known issue that on some occasions police bail authorities refuse to release a child on bail on the grounds that no suitable bail address can be identified under section 12 of the Bail Act, which I am sure the member is well familiar with.

These children are detained in police custody for the purpose of appearing before the court. Aboriginal children are prioritised for this response due to the high rates of Aboriginal incarceration. This pilot provides a safe non-custodial accommodation alternative to police custody for the children at a residential property for a very short term of accommodation, across Friday to Monday. It also provides intensive and rapid family engagement and supports prior to the child's scheduled court appearance—a very traumatic time for children. This includes family scoping, Aboriginal family-led decision-making, courts and police advocacy and brokerage for immediate support and programs to meet the needs of the child and their family.

Scope for inclusion for year 1 of the pilot is for Aboriginal children who are aged 10 to 13 years, have been refused police bail on the grounds that they do not have a safe or appropriate bail address, have not committed a serious offence or are not considered a serious risk to the community, have not previously been detained at Kurlana Tapa Youth Training Centre and have been arrested in the metropolitan area. There is a brokerage model of up to \$10,000, which has been costed per child, to support services that might be required.

The department intends the scope of the pilot child diversion program to be a 24/7 model. The focus for the child diversion program in 2022-23 will be to explore a multi-agency response model that includes a family care panel that ensures a joined-up service response to each child and their family. The multi-agency response model will aim to divert the child towards family and community support services. A key point is that 10 children have received family engagement and support, including one child who has accessed the accommodation component of the program. Does that help?

**Mr TEAGUE:** Is 10 children the number of children who have been through the program? What has been the outcome for those 10, if that is the number?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, that is the number of children who have been through that program at this point. You wanted outcomes—I will see what I can provide. I will invite Fiona Curnow, who is an expert in this area.

**Ms CURNOW:** Thank you, minister. Thank you for the question. We have had 10 children go through this program. One child, as recently as over the weekend, accessed the accommodation model with a view to her going back to be with her mum after today. The mum was not able to provide care for her child because she was in hospital herself. It was a really great opportunity for us to connect that child up. The other nine children did not access the accommodation component but received the family engagement and support. We are continuing to work with those children and their families. As my chief executive just reminded me, some of those children will return to the APY lands and other remote communities as a result of the program.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I think you might have overheard my colleague indicating that you might confirm that the result therefore for the 10 of them was that they were diverted away from Kurlana Tapa.

**Ms CURNOW:** Not all of them; nine of them still were in—

**Mr TEAGUE:** Nine of them.

**Ms CURNOW:** We were in phase 1 of the—sorry, minister, I apologise.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** You are alright; that is okay. Permission granted.

**Ms CURNOW:** Because of the scope, we had narrowed it quite tightly, but we still worked with those nine children. Only one child has been diverted formally—COVID created some problems. What I can say is that those nine children received a family engagement and support package that they would not have received if we did not have this program in place.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We still increased the wraparound extra supports, so it is very worthwhile.

**Mr TEAGUE:** The program is operating in metro areas. I understand there is some interest in implementing it in the regions. Is that under contemplation?

**Ms CURNOW:** Absolutely. We will look at phase 2 now expanding. Originally, the first part of the pilot was just to focus on the northern suburbs, because that is where the data told us we had a lot of children of that age. We have now opened it up to the broader metro. We will now have a look at the success of that to see what we can access elsewhere.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3 again, the bottom of page 93. This is a line item that is not there. I am interested in the number of children aged 10 to 12 that are in custody. I note that the 2021-22 budget paper, at page 92 of the same section, indicated the number of 10 to 12-year-olds admitted to a secure youth training centre. The estimated result and the projection for 2021-22 was that that number was 23, reducing from an actual of 25 in 2019-20. It is indicated there as the final line item in that section that is otherwise replicated at page 93 of this year's budget papers. Why has that line item been omitted but, as a matter of substance, what is the data in relation to 10 to 12 year olds?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I am not sure I can break it down for young people aged 12 and under. What I will do is provide you with some information about young children under the age of 14 admitted to police custody at Kurlana Tapa. We talked before about the 10 children who received the family engagement and support. Within this trial number—I did not catch whether you were asking for the full year or just for this trial—there were 20 Aboriginal and 10 non-Aboriginal children under the age of 14 who went into police custody. They were outside the accommodation scope of the program at the time of their arrest.

In general, are you trying to generate some information and a conversation around young people under the age of 12 or under the age of 14 who are in custody and what those numbers are? I take a really keen interest in numbers on a daily basis in Kurlana Tapa. Really, it is very, very small, the number of children who are under the age of 14, thankfully, who are in there subject to orders. If my memory serves me correctly, it was some 40-something for the year; it was 44 under 14.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Shall I repeat the questions?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes. I am not sure whether I understand what you are asking for.

**Mr TEAGUE:** The first question is: why is the line item omitted from this year's budget papers? The second question is: what is the data that would otherwise have been included at the line item 'Number of 10 to 12 year olds admitted to a secure youth training centre'?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We will get the numbers during the rest of the session for you just to be more specific. I do not think there is anything controversial in it but, like I said to you, I watch the daily numbers. I am sure the members here will say that I ask questions sometimes or even, in fact, say thank you for their hard work in terms of that work. I get a daily report on numbers.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Perhaps I will move on to some questions in relation to the consolidation of Kurlana Tapa training centre. I understand that \$18.7 million was allocated in 2020-21. This is in Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 84. The amount that we see there is somewhat in excess of \$18.7 million over the course of the relevant two years, I think a total of \$21.75 million. Has that been reassessed and, if so, in what way?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** This project that DIT are leading had its construction contract awarded in March, with the program scheduled, confirmed and commenced in April 2022, so it is underway. It is expected to achieve practical completion by 30 June next year. It will consolidate the provision of custodial services to the Goldsbrough Road Campus and allow for the decommission and sale of the Jonal Drive Campus.

The total estimated cost for consolidating site works is \$21.75 million, and that is to be spent in line with the practical completion date. The initial approved budget for the project was \$18.7 million, with tenders received over the approved budget. Advice from DIT and the cost manager indicates that it is likely due to the increased construction activity following stimulus investment by both the state and federal governments and the delayed impacts of border restrictions, resulting in pressures on availability of both labour and material supply, which I think we are all hearing constantly.

A rise in the price of key construction materials has been identified also. The team has undertaken a process of value management to identify savings focused on items that did not impact delivery of the project scope, the integrity of security requirements for a custodial facility or the ability to achieve operational efficiencies and estimated recurrent savings.

To address the remaining budget shortfall without significant changes to scope, additional funding was secured, mainly through approval to retain funds from the sale of DHS property. The revised approved budget is \$21.75 million. The anticipated sale of Jonal Drive, the prime real estate, is expected to occur in the forward estimates period.

**Mr TEAGUE:** So the sale of Jonal Drive is contributing to that additional budget allocation, is it?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Has Jonal Drive been decommissioned? If not, when is that going to happen?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The site is secure and maintained, but it is decommissioned for use at the moment. COVID, as you know, required strategies to be in place and it was maintained at a point where it could be used if needed, but it has not been and we do not anticipate it being used. It is decommissioned for use but secure.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I understand—and you will correct me, minister—that the consolidation is anticipated to yield savings of \$651,000 in the first year, rising to around \$1.3 million in 2023-24. That was not, as I heard it, one of the categories of operating efficiency that you indicated earlier. It is separate from any contribution to operating efficiencies identified earlier?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, it was already in the budget, so it was not anticipated as part of the next tranche. It was already there. Did you want the answer to the earlier question? We have the answer now.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Over the last year, up until yesterday, we have had 19 children aged 10 to 12 years who have been detained in Kurlana Tapa, but it is important to say that the reason for this is partly to do with them being out of scope, some of them, for the child diversion program. The scope for the child diversion program is that they have been refused police bail on the grounds they do not have a safe or appropriate bail address, they have not committed a serious offence and are not considered a serious risk to the community, they have not previously been detained at Kurlana Tapa and they have been arrested in the metropolitan area.

Some of those children, obviously, did not fit the scope of the program and quite a lot of the reason the accommodation model was not used as early as we would have liked it to be was due to COVID. Once Omicron hit, any accommodation setting had to be managed as a high-risk setting and we essentially needed to deploy all of our staff into Kurlana Tapa, where we were trying to manage some very complex cohort separations.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I am at Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 92. In relation to, again, Kurlana Tapa and perhaps post consolidation, among the targets for 2022-23 is to progress the implementation of the enhanced support team, to improve responses to children and young people, including those with a disability. Minister, can you provide an update to the committee on changes to the service model that have either commenced or are to follow at Kurlana Tapa? I recall the former minister made reference to moving towards a therapeutic model of care, so how is that progressing?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will see if I can get you any absolute details. I know that is a commitment that is continuing and ongoing for this government. I know significant amounts of work have been done as well to identify children and young people who enter the centre who might qualify for things like the NDIS or other health inputs. I know that is one of the priorities of people admitting young people to Kurlana Tapa.

I welcome Fiona Curnow back to the front to unpack any additional input. I know the team offers a professional consultation service and make sure that young people and youth workers work together in terms of all the protective responses that are required to support children with complex needs and significant behaviours of concern, which is an area of great sensitivity for young people in youth justice.

**Ms CURNOW:** I think what I will add are some updates around what we call the enhanced support team. We did some work over the last 12 months to two years to recognise, through our disability screening tool, that a significant proportion of children who come into custody have an undiagnosed disability or a sensory processing disorder. We also know that a high proportion of children in custody have experienced more than two adverse childhood experiences. That has told us a lot about how we need to shift our service model.

We do have the enhanced support team operating. Unfortunately, we have had difficulty, as most allied health areas have had, in recruiting psychologists, and so we have a psychologist in the position and we are now looking to expand to use occupational therapists and speech pathologists and other disciplines to help us build up the capacity of our youth workers.

It is very much in preparation for the new build. We are establishing a new accommodation unit as well as the six-bed police custody unit. In that we are very much taking into account principles around sensory requirements for a range of children, biophilic design, so that it is a much more calming therapeutic-like environment. The enhanced support team is a critical part of that, to work with our youth workers alongside our behaviour support officers to better roll out more responsive ways of working with children, not just in that particular unit but in the whole centre, but very much focused on utilising that in that unit.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have a question on an earlier line. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 88. The minister in her opening remarks talked about grants and I think it was \$4.45 million announced for the 2022-23 financial year. Minister, I might just run a couple of questions in together and if you need to take them on notice then that is fine, or you may have the information.

Can the minister give us the breakdown of how that money will be distributed? To be clear, I think the minister, in her opening statement, said these were grants particularly focused on young people, not the general grants pool for the whole of the department. If the minister can give us a breakdown of how the money will be distributed, who the recipients are, how much will they receive if it has been identified, or if they have not yet been identified will it be a competitive grants funding or a direct allocation to select organisations or through core funding to existing organisations? It may be a combination of all three, of course.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think it is a combination. Would you like us to get back to you with specific information in regard to that?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think the more detail would be the more useful.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, I think to be fair—is that what we are thinking?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am happy for that to be taken on notice, if that is easier.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** We can do it in more detail, but from what I can see on the surface there seems to be a combination of grant money.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How many youth organisations has the minister met with since her appointment, and can she provide a list of those stakeholders?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Honestly, I do not have a number in my head. You all look at my socials—I get out and about a lot. I have met with plenty of organisations, not just—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I did not want to assume the minister only met with the organisations she put on her socials.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I do more than what is on the socials. There are a lot of organisations that do not just deal with youth issues, so there is a cross-section across homelessness, youth-specific mentoring, employment-based organisations. I am really happy to provide a list but, honestly, loads is the answer.

**Mr TEAGUE:** This is back on the Kurlana Tapa consolidation. I understand that as a result of consolidation there will be a reduction in available places from 96 to 80 and that it is averaging about 36. What is regarded as the ideal number in terms of a maximum for effective use of the facility? I am presuming that is not the full 80.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Zero. Honestly, like I said to you, I look at the numbers every day and I think over the last few months it is fair to say it has been sitting between 25 and 35—a few spikes above that and I am not sure that we got well below there. You are right in asking. There is a sweet spot for staffing, budgets and cohort management. In terms of the budgeted nightly count, we will get that for you as well. There would be an amount that the budget is based on. That is a good question about the sweet spot, but from my point of view, and I am sure yours: absolute zero.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Thank you, I appreciate it. Given the time, I would have sought that answer, so I appreciate it. I gather that the relatively high cost per person might be regarded as a sign of success in the sense that there is a fixed capital overhead.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Correct.

**The CHAIR:** The time allotted having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of youth services completed.

#### **Membership:**

Mr Patterson substituted for Mr Teague.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

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

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

Ms R. Ambler, Executive Director, Community Investment and Support, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Hawkins, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Reform, Department of Human Services.

Ms K. Biggins, Acting Executive Director, Community Investment and Support, Department of Human Services.

**The CHAIR:** In this session we will be examining the portfolio of volunteer services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Human Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister wishes, and to introduce advisors. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if the member so wishes. I call on members for questions.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I think we do not have any new people to the committee. We have just had a rearrangement of the seats. I welcome to the front bench Katherine Hawkins, who is the Executive Director of Inclusion and Reform. This is a very short committee, so I just want to absolutely thank all of our volunteers and our volunteer organisations who, through an extraordinarily challenging time, have done their very best to maintain service provision in a climate where there has been such change with COVID. It has been significantly challenging.

I will not suck up any of your time with a statement, other than to say I am sure you in the opposition team also acknowledge that that has been a very hard time. I thank everyone for everything they have done.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Although I do not usually make a statement at the beginning of these things, the minister's invitation is irresistible. Clearly, at all times our volunteers are critical to the work that we do. As Minister for Education over two years of the pandemic, I am certainly very firm in my gratitude to those volunteers who actually overcame significant challenges and often had to provide their volunteering support despite the fact that we were stopping them from attending at sites to provide that support in many cases.

They still found a way and our entire state and everything that we do is much better for their work, so the opposition certainly joins the government and agrees with the minister in that. Given this is the last session, minister, with your leave and that of the committee, I will read the omnibus questions.

**The CHAIR:** That is a very good idea.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** You can settle back and see if you can beat my time.

**The CHAIR:** You can read it slowly, if you like.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will take a leisurely stroll. I am still recovering my breath after a COVID period a little while ago, so I cannot do the race call that I have in years gone by. The ominous questions are:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total cost of machinery of government changes incurred between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022?
2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, which administrative units were created, abolished or transferred to another department or agency between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022 and what was the cost or saving in each case?
3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been made since 22 March 2022 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?
4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive positions have been abolished since 22 March 2022 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?
5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 22 March 2022?
6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 engaged between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the estimated total cost of the work?
7. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide an estimate of the total cost to be incurred in 2022-23 for consultants and contractors, and for each case in which a consultant or contractor has already been engaged at a total estimated cost above \$10,000, the name of the consultant or contractor, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the total estimated cost?

8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise whether it will be subject to the 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend for 2022-23 to which the government has committed and, if so, the budgeted dollar amount to be contributed in each case and how the saving will be achieved?

9. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees were there at 30 June 2022, and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the number of executive staff to be cut to meet the government's commitment to reduce spending on the employment of executive staff by \$41.5 million over four years and, for each position to be cut, its classification, total remuneration cost and the date by which the position will be cut?

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

- What savings targets have been set for 2022-23 and each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise what share it will receive of the \$1.5 billion the government proposes to use over four years of uncommitted capital reserves held in the budget at the time it took office and the purpose for which this funding will be used in each case?

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

- What was the actual FTE count at 30 June 2022 and what is the projected actual FTE account for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and
- How many targeted voluntary separation packages are estimated to be required to meet budget targets over the forward estimates and what is their estimated cost ?

14. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2022-23 and for each year of the forward estimates?

15. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2022-23 and each year of the forward estimates and what is their estimated employment cost?

16. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2022-23?

17. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide for each individual investing expenditure project administered, the name, total estimated expenditure, actual expenditure incurred to 30 June 2022 and budgeted expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

18. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for, please provide the following information for the 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Budgeted payments into the program or fund;
- Budgeted expenditure from the program or fund; and
- Details, including the value and beneficiary, or any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.



**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Good job.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** On notice?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I will take that on notice, no problem.

**The CHAIR:** That is a bit weak.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I was just talking there to my financial officer who is very excited about these questions—very excited.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think they all are. There was an increase in the number about three or four years ago, and I think it has been sustained.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Good work.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87. I suspect that a reasonable number of the questions fall within. Can I ask about grants? Which grants specifically support an increase in volunteering and/or support volunteering involving organisations to build capacity, and engage and train volunteers?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** A broad statement that I would like to make in respect of grants to community organisations is, in general, most will build participation in volunteering, and most community organisations have that at their heart, as you would be aware. In this upcoming year, there is \$647,700 to fund a range of grants through three volunteer resource centres including for sector support and advocacy, community capacity programs, and volunteering support.

During the last financial year, funding was allocated to the three volunteer resource centres to assist with ongoing operational costs and projects: Volunteering SA&NT, \$400,500, which includes \$42,000 in funding for the corporate volunteering program; and Northern Volunteering and Southern Volunteering both received \$192,600. The variance between that financial year and this financial year is due to an increased allocation last year to both Northern and Southern Volunteering to implement a youth into volunteering connector pilot program over two years, which was a total of \$300,000 this financial year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I just ask directly following that: it was a pilot program for the Northern and Southern volunteering programs. What learnings have there been from that pilot program?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I might invite Katherine Hawkins to provide you with some detail on that.

**Ms HAWKINS:** Thank you for the question. The pilot program was a fantastic opportunity for us to get a really good glimpse into what more we can do to support young people both in southern metropolitan Adelaide and also in northern metropolitan Adelaide in terms of ways that we can support them to get more engaged in volunteering.

We know that our young people in South Australia are going to be one of our biggest future pipelines in terms of getting more young people engaged, and it also supports the department's priorities, obviously, and the state's priorities around supporting young people to have more things they can put on their CV.

In particular, we have heard some fantastic feedback on young people being introduced to more opportunities through these two pilot programs, whether it be more formal volunteering opportunities such as helping out with nature trails or getting involved in school opportunities, or even just promoting informal volunteering opportunities like helping feed your neighbour's budgie. All of those sorts of things add value and build a sense of community for our young people.

Both Southern and Northern had some differing experiences in terms of their particular regional needs, so they will be working with us and Volunteering SA&NT over the next 12 months to look not just at what we know locally but also what we can apply from a state-based perspective to continue to improve from that grant funding that will now pay for services for them to continue to expand over the next 12 months.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you for that. Is the minister or officers through her able to provide an update on the funding arrangements for Northern Volunteering (SA) and Southern Volunteering (SA)? I think you referenced the coming year. If so, what is the sum for the coming year and what arrangements have been put in place for following years?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** That is contained within what we have already been speaking about to continue the work over the next financial year as well. It is \$150,000 each and it was only recently granted, so that will continue. I have met with both Northern Volunteering and Southern Volunteering as well as Volunteering SA&NT and other associated groups to discuss the best use of our resources and how we best help them to leverage more opportunity out of the way the federal funding packages stand.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the minister for that and appreciate her engagement. To be clear, there is \$150,000 in each of 2021-22 and 2022-23; is that correct?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** No. There is \$75,000 each year for each of them.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Right, so \$75,000 to Northern and \$75,000 to Southern—

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Each financial year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** —for 2021-22?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It came in the same financial year, but it is work that is happening over two years. Is that where the confusion is?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Maybe I can ask a different question.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The CEO can explain it. It is a bit new. I have asked the same questions myself.

**Ms BOSWELL:** Mr Gardner, there was \$75,000 given to them at the beginning of the financial year for each one of them and then they have recently, just in the last few weeks, got another \$75,000 each, but it is to be spent next year. So overall, it is \$300,000 over two years.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So the government has just given a second lot of \$75,000 each to go towards work in the 2022-23 financial year.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Correct.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Presumably, at some stage in the next 12 months, the government will give consideration as to what funding may be in place after 30 June 2023.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Correct. I am sure you are aware that there was a major change in the way that funding buckets were allocated from the federal government, so now money is moved directly through Volunteering SA&NT rather than out to these smaller resource centres. As part of that, sadly, the Limestone Coast—I know the member for Frome will be very interested in this, given her keen interest in this and regional matters—had to close. They could not navigate the restructured federal funding mechanism, the volunteering management activity (VMA). I have already as well, if you are interested, spoken to the federal minister, but I do not yet have an understanding of where the current federal government is going with this.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Earlier, the minister described I think \$647,700 across the three volunteer resource centres. We talked about Volunteering SA&NT and the Northern and Southern programs. Across any of those or elsewhere through this program line, are there any translated services for culturally and linguistically diverse community volunteers? Are any programs directed at those groups?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Again, just to clarify, the federal government, when it restructured, made some particular strategies a priority of their funding. In order to utilise the funding there were certain priorities that had to be demonstrated, and one of those was culturally and linguistically diverse, or new-arrival, volunteer programs, in my understanding. I am not sure whether there is other information, but they already do have a priority section under the VMA from the federal government. My view at this point, in the absence of any further direction from the sector, is that that

would be duplicating. There is already a priority through that area. The other ones were Aboriginal people and people living with disability. Those are the priority areas from the federal government.

In the other work that we are funding—and continuing from your government, on that particular project—we are trying to make sure that areas that have not been prioritised and that we, as a state, see as a priority, such as youth, are provided with additional opportunity.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I go to page 88, highlights 2021-22, Volunteering Strategy Action Plan 2021-23 and also the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021-27. Is the new government continuing the work under that strategy and under that action plan?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I could unpack that for five minutes, if you wish, but I do not think we need to. Yes, is the answer.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** What is the total FTE in the department in the area that is working on the strategy and the action plan?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The way the department has been structured, there are approximately 20 FTE in a broader social inclusion unit, and they have an agenda that cuts across volunteering and a whole range of other activities. You would recall that—how long ago was there an office for volunteers; five, six or seven years ago?—there was a particular office. It feels like *Groundhog Day*. I think I asked these questions from that very seat.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I think I might have asked them previously as well.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes, I think so. It is like *Lamb Chop's Play-Along!—The Song that Never Ends*.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This is why you have to unpack it in estimates, because there was a clear, discrete office, and then those funds all went into the department. They are hypothecated to an extent, but it is nice to know how much of them is still there.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** There is an office that has an excellent executive director heading it up, and they do really excellent work around youth and social inclusion, including LGBTQIA+ agendas—a whole range of things that I know are close to your heart, John.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Going to Budget Paper 5, page 66, operating efficiencies, we established this morning that there are \$20-something million in operating efficiencies to come to the department in new efficiencies. I am wondering whether the area of social inclusion that the minister just identified, particularly in volunteering, is considered frontline or if it is part of the group that is under consideration?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I could try to get slippery around this, but I am not going to. It is not front facing. It is part of a big chunk of FTE that we must consider as part of this, but we will do this with a complete vision around maintaining as many of our really excellent skilled and dedicated staff as we can. We have been through a range of the mechanisms in the other session. It is not a front-facing unit; it certainly is more administrative and back of house in its operations, involving policy and strategy. We will do the best we can to keep all the excellent minds we have in the room. Also, we have a RoGS answer from before.

**Ms BOSWELL:** If I may, for the committee's information, the cost per average day per young person in detention-based services in 2020-21 was \$3,828, which was up from \$3,081 in 2019-20, which we would say was associated with the significant reduction in the number of young people in detention.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Excellent, thank you. In relation to the savings task that the department has, are those grant resources we described before also part of that question, or is that separate?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Grants are not included in savings targets, as far as I am aware, and administrative items are not either. We would prioritise the quarantining of grant funding, grant moneys, so that we can make sure we continue to build capacity.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Within that, I note that the \$150,000 this financial year and next financial year to Southern and Northern volunteering is not an ongoing funding stream. Is there a contingency for that, either within the human services budget or that you are aware of more broadly, were it to be established as an ongoing funding line?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I have to say these are things that cross your mind, but times change so rapidly, the evolution of such. I am not sure that is the case. Time will tell, to be honest.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Going back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 87—it is a general question; I am sure the minister will not need the detail of the paper in front of her—in relation to free volunteer screening, is that initiative of the previous government continuing under the new government?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Most welcome and yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How much funding has been allocated to fund that free volunteer screening in 2022-23 and in each of the years of the forward estimates?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I reckon my chief financial officer has got this.

**Mr ASHLEY:** I think I will let you down on this one. We are unable to identify specifically what—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Sorry, I did not catch that. I have bad hearing.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** It is difficult to identify exactly the volunteer component out of the entirety of the screening.

**Mr ASHLEY:** The screening budget is not split into volunteers or not. We have an overall budget for staffing and screening revenue. We do not have a split in terms of how much the cost of volunteers is versus our normal screenings.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The whole of screening costs and budget is varying as we transition some of the screenings from a three to a five-year screening time as well. It is actually quite fluid. This will change from year to year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are we able to report in retrospect what the cost of providing those volunteers their checks for free has been?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think there is a line about how much it has saved the volunteering sector which, if my memory serves me right, was some \$8 million or so that volunteers have not had to pay for their tests. Someone will get the number for me anytime now, but that is my understanding. It is described more as money that volunteers have not had to spend.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Earlier in the day, we talked about corporate support provided through the department and communications and engagement. I assume the communications group has some level of responsibility for engaging with different areas of the department to promote its work. What engagement does it have with the volunteering section?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** The executive team meets together very regularly. We meet as a group once a week and then, outside of that, they also meet. The communications team is available to provide opportunities to celebrate, promote and engage with volunteering organisations. Recently, we had the Volunteer Awards, which I am sure you have attended yourself previously, where we celebrate volunteers.

It is not a very correct analysis to call it a comms group. The group provides background support and organisational capacity to do public engagement and corporate connections. At nearly every event, there are volunteer organisations, but they do host some specific volunteer functions, such as Volunteer Week, Volunteer Awards, the Premier's Volunteer Awards and Youth Week, a whole range of those sorts of things which are predominantly volunteers as well.

Just to add to a statement I made earlier, a cut to grants was made by the previous government and that was specifically volunteer training grants. That program was cut. That is not part of savings targets, but it has an effect in this year. You may see this nuance about the volunteer

training grants being cut. The previous minister cut them, but it will start appearing on my budget sheet.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am told I have one question left.

**The CHAIR:** I am demonstrating my humour and flexibility here, so you have that one question.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** A sage and wise Chair, and I am grateful for that. I will wrap something into one question, perhaps. In relation to the communications unit, I am assuming that they have responsibility for the Facebook page and internal communications within the department.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am eager to understand whether there has been any engagement between the minister's office and that communications unit in the selection of photographs being used on the Department of Human Services Facebook page or general comms, particularly where not just this minister but any minister of the government is appearing in such photographs or indeed, and perhaps following on from questions in the house last week, whether that comms team had anything to do with the distribution of the email from the minister to the department, which was subsequently retracted, I think, later that day or the following day.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I can bundle that altogether in a quick little thing for you. There is very little communication between my office and the comms team in relation to social media. They do their thing, I do my thing. We have occasionally swapped photographs because, as you know, photographs are such that they can be taken at inopportune moments, when eyes are closed, mouths are open and you can look like some sort of spouting, spruiking device. So we have occasionally, very rarely, swapped a photograph for use.

Sometimes, as well, I think we have asked to make sure that we are truly representing the flavour of an event, to make sure that our wording is appropriate, but I do my own and comms do theirs. The short version of the email issue from last week is that my electorate office prepared an email which was to be sent out to my electorate in order to provide them with some feedback about the work that I had been doing as the Minister for Human Services, which I am only able to do because of being elected by my electorate.

That was prepared for and written by my electorate staff and the idea was that there was to be a reworded, non-political, non-partisan summary of the work that has been undertaken provided to and distributed by the comms team, to let the sector know, and the people in Human Services know, all of the things that we had been doing for the last few months.

Accidentally, the incorrect email was sent by my electorate office for distribution. It was realised, a follow-up email was sent saying that we apologised for that particular piece and provided them with what was to be the email that was sent, and that was resent. That was the non-political, non-partisan, non-electorate version, but sadly the inappropriate one went from my electorate office, not my ministerial team.

**The CHAIR:** With that question, we have come to the allotted time. I declare the examination of the portfolio of volunteer service completed. The examination of the proposed payments for the Department of Human Services is adjourned until Tuesday 21 June. The examination of proposed payments for the Administered Items for the Department of Human Services is adjourned until Tuesday 21 June.

*Sitting suspended from 14:04 to 15:00.*

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, \$5,926,000**  
**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, \$8,260,000**  
**JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES, \$13,157,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES, \$3,550,000**  
**STATE GOVERNOR'S ESTABLISHMENT, \$4,476,000**  
**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT, \$18,518,000**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET, \$377,085,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET,**  
**\$20,505,000**

**Membership:**

Mr Tarzia substituted for Hon. J.A.W. Gardner.

Hon. D.J. Speirs substituted for Ms Pratt.

Mr Odenwalder substituted for Ms Clancy.

**Minister:**

Hon. P.B. Malinauskas, Premier.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Crump, Clerk, House of Assembly.

Mr D. Walker, Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr J. Gorvett, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr S. Woolhouse, Executive Director, Communities and Corporate, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr A. Richardson, Auditor-General, Auditor-General's Department.

Mr I. McGlen, Deputy Auditor-General, Auditor-General's Department.

Ms M. Stint, Finance Manager, Auditor-General's Department.

Mr M. Warren, Chief Executive, SA Motorsport Board.

Mr S. Whetton, Chief Executive, Office of the South Australian Productivity Commission.

Ms C. Jamieson, Principal Policy Officer, Infrastructure SA.

Mr R. Morris, Chief Executive, Premier's Delivery Unit.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome, everybody. Welcome to the Premier and welcome to the opposition leader. It is not Siberia, but it is estimates. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand the Premier and the opposition leader have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. Can the Premier and the opposition leader confirm that the timetable for today's proceedings previously distributed is accurate? All good.

Changes to the membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the Premier undertakes to supply

information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk Assistant via the answer to questions mailbox no later than Friday, 2 September 2022.

I propose to allow both the Premier and the opposition leader to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each, if they so 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 Premier, not the Premier's advisers. The Premier may refer questions to advisers for a response. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced.

Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*. I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply in the 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.

I will now proceed to open the following lines for examination, the portfolios of: Legislative Council, House of Assembly, Joint Parliamentary Services, State Governor's Establishment, Auditor-General's Department, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Infrastructure SA and Productivity Commission. The minister appearing is the Premier.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I call on the Premier to make a statement, if he so wishes, and to introduce his advisers. I also call on the Leader of the Opposition to make a statement, if the member so wishes. I call on members for questions.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, and thank you for presiding over today's proceedings. I will start by introducing my colleagues who are with me. Obviously, as everyone knows, on my right is Rick Crump, who of course is Clerk of Parliament House. Behind me to my left is Mr Damien Walker, Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and to his right is Steven Woolhouse, Executive Director for Communities and Corporate within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

In terms of an opening statement, I have only a very brief one just to make some basic points. Firstly, I just want to pass on my gratitude in this forum to all of the public servants who have worked so incredibly hard to be able to facilitate me having the appropriate information to be able to answer the opposition's and others' questions to the best of our ability. That of course has occurred in the context of a budget being put together in very quick time. Normally, the budget process for government runs in the order of about eight months. We put together a budget in the space of approximately eight weeks. That has been a very significant undertaking.

Changing governments naturally causes a degree of disruption within the Public Service, but I want to thank all those public servants who have helped facilitate the change of government in as orderly and as smooth a fashion as possible. That is important not just for the new government but important for the running of the state. To then layer on top of that having to put together a budget in quick time has been a significant undertaking.

I could not possibly overstate how much midnight oil has been burned in recent weeks to do that and then, of course, leading into estimates. I just want to put on the record my gratitude for that transition and then also the exercise following. It is the government's very firm determination to deliver on our election commitments, and we see the budget that was handed down only a couple of weeks ago as being very much consistent with our election commitments.

The final thing I thought I would make reference to is that there was a change of time in terms of when this estimates was originally going to be scheduled. I think it was going to be last Friday; it

was moved to today because of the national cabinet proceedings that were not originally known when we contemplated the original timetable. I just want to thank the Leader of the Opposition and his team for accommodating that request for the move. That being said, I very much look forward to this process. It is often a dry one, but it is a fundamentally important one and I do not want to take up any more of the opposition's time accordingly.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Just to reiterate the Premier's gratefulness to the public servants who have been involved in what is often a labour-intensive process and one in which lots of information is compiled that may not necessarily be called on today. I am grateful for their contribution to what is an important part of the scrutiny and accountability of the government of the day. So thank you to them.

**The CHAIR:** If we could now move to questions.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Okay, I will begin, thank you, Mr Chair. My first question is from Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 18, the Premier and Cabinet program summary, income, expenses and FTEs. I have a large number of questions from this part of the budget. My first question is in relation to the appointment of the new Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. My question is to the Premier: what is the duration of the contract of the newly appointed CEO of DPC?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am more than happy to jump straight into that, but does that mean we are skipping over Government House and Parliament House in terms of questions? Because if we are, we can bring—

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I do have questions later on in that area; it is whether we get to them or not. I am not putting significant priority on those—no offence to Mr Crump.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Normally, we would go through them in their respective order, but do you want to go straight into the DPC part?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Yes, go straight to DPC, if that is okay.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, sure. Similarly for the Auditor-General?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** There will be questions for the Auditor-General later as well but they are in the second half of my priority. Again, no offence to the Auditor-General's team.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In that context, what was the question again?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the duration of the contract for the newly appointed CEO of DPC?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Five years.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Was there any selection committee or selection process for appointing Mr Walker?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, I turned my mind to who I thought would be the best person to be able to lead the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I had contemplated a number of candidates and spoke to more than one, and ultimately formed the view that Mr Walker was the best person equipped to serve the state in this important capacity.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Was any external recruitment agency used for the appointment process?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the Premier consider any other candidates for the position? Well, you have already provided an answer to that, Premier.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the Premier consult the Queensland Premier about the appointment?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.



**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Were any other referees consulted?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** How does the Premier justify a remuneration package for his selected appointee of \$697,000 per annum, when it represents an 11.5 per cent increase in the package of the previous incumbent at a time of significant wage restraint?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Very simply, because that is what it costs to be able to get who I believe to be the best person to be able to serve this state in this important capacity. The Leader of the Opposition would well appreciate that chief executives of departments are, by their nature, expensive. That is consistent with most leadership positions of a significant nature in the public sector.

This is just one of a number of considerations that forms my judgement when it comes to remuneration packages. The first thing is breadth of experience; the second thing is the existing salary that people are on; thirdly, you have to acknowledge that when people are moving across jurisdictions that brings with it its own expenses; and, fourthly, what chief executives are paid for those respective roles around the commonwealth.

On that score, all those things combined, it allowed me to form the view that that is an appropriate level of remuneration. Naturally, to any member of the South Australian public, numbers that have hundreds of thousands involved capture people's attention. That is utterly appropriate, particularly when it comes to the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars. But I would simply point out that when it comes to the chief executive officer of the department of the premier and cabinet in other jurisdictions, the sum being paid in South Australia is actually quite modest in comparison to some other jurisdictions.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** This next question you may wish to take part of it on notice, if not all of it. Can the Premier provide the following information about other executive employment in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, including the number of executives employed in 2021-22 and the number of executive positions budgeted for in 2022-23 in the following classifications: EXECEO, EXECOF, commissioner, SAES2 and SAES1?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am happy to go away and have a look at that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the ratio of executive to non-executive officers across the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Again, I am happy to take that on notice for you.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the ratio of executive to non-executive officers in the Cabinet Office?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** If you are looking for specific ratios, I am advised that we are best taking that on notice and getting that for you.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** That is fair enough. How many of the 50 executive officer positions across government to be cut will come from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Obviously, as the leader is aware, there is a substantial savings requirement that has been imposed upon DPC that is in excess of \$60 million across the forward estimates. Naturally, the government also has its target of cuts to executive positions to the tune of \$50 million. It is within the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to determine how that \$60-plus million savings obligation will be realised. Naturally, salaries will form a component of that, but, as it currently stands, there is no specific number of executives that have been sighted to be removed from within DPC.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Does the Premier expect any executives within DPC to go as part of this process as it is worked through?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I think the short answer to that question is yes, but the precise number is to be determined.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the role of the newly appointed customer experience officer Mike Diakomichalis?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice is that he is currently the executive director of the customer experience section. I have been advised that a piece of work is currently being undertaken within the department to scrutinise the work that that individual is responsible for, and will be responsible for into the future, and the function within that particular section. I should also add that that particular unit within the DPC is not Robinson Crusoe in that regard. What will not surprise the leader, or anyone else who is familiar with the \$60 million saving coming DPC's way, is that that will necessarily mean that a lot of functions within DPC are being closely examined, and that is all but one of them.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. Are you able to advise the committee what the salary of Mr Diakomichalis is?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice that I have received is that the long-held practice that has been in place across governments, of both political persuasions, is that at that level of the public sector the specific salary for each individual is not disclosed. Clearly, when it comes to the salaries of chief executive officers that is publicly disclosed, and all appropriate scrutiny applied, but at that level within the public sector the individual's salary is not disclosed, rather the general bandwidth, and that remains the case in regard to the gentleman to which you refer.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you able to disclose the classification—SAES1, SAES2?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice that I have received is that it is likely to be SAES2, but I have to double-check that, for the purposes of accuracy, and come back to you on that.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We are not aware, which probably will not surprise you given that appointment was made under the former government, under the former chief executive. We could potentially go back and look at historical records if you wanted us to do that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** No, I am fine with that one. Moving on from the customer experience area to the efficiency dividend, how will the operations of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet be affected by the imposition of the government's 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In as small a way as possible. As I alluded to earlier, there is an important piece of work being undertaken, as you would reasonably expect, given the savings obligation upon DPC, and the job the new chief executive officer now has before them is to deliver those savings in such a way that does not do much inconvenience to those people who are performing those tasks but, just as importantly, the people of South Australia.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Does the Premier intend to conduct annual performance reviews with each of his ministers?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I intend to conduct performance reviews in a traditional format with chief executives. Obviously, since being elected, I have been determined to meet with each and every one of the chief executives who are ultimately appointed by me, whether or not they are new appointments or old appointments. I think I have now been able to do that for almost all of them bar a couple of exceptions.

In terms of ministers, ministers enjoy permanent scrutiny, as the leader well understands. One of the reasons why I did not take on any specific portfolios when we established the new government was so that I could perform the important task of monitoring the performance of not just the government and respective agencies but also ministers as well.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** As the Premier is responsible for approving all chief executive appointments, I want to ask: what is the duration of the contract of the CEO of the Office of Hydrogen Power South Australia, Mr Sam Crafter?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Five years.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Was there any selection committee or selection process for appointing Mr Crafter and, if there was, could the Premier outline it?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, it was largely the same process that was applied to the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer of DPC. To be more specific, having established the need for such an office, I and other members of the cabinet were particularly keen on the candidacy of Mr Sam Crafter, and we approached him to apply for that role.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the Premier consider any other candidates for that position?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Mr Crafter was the primary candidate for that position.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Given the importance that the Premier obviously—appropriately, given the scale of the election commitment—attributes to this hydrogen project, why did the government not initiate a national and international recruitment process for this position?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Because we were satisfied that here in South Australia we had an outstanding candidate in Mr Sam Crafter, who understands the complexity of the task but, more importantly, the complexity and the nuance associated toward South Australia's role within the National Electricity Market. Ultimately, Hydrogen Power South Australia intends to obviously produce energy in the form of electricity, albeit from a particularly important and unique source, and having that background knowledge is critical.

The other thing of course about Mr Crafter's candidacy that stood out to me and the government was his track record of delivery in short time frames. One of the principal considerations that informed the judgement around Mr Crafter's candidacy was not just his record but also the ability to get him started very quickly. I put high value on that in the context of the fact that we have a massive job to do between now and the election to realise our ambitions for the hydrogen production facility and power plant to be online by the next election.

It is a tight time line. This is a complex project and it is sophisticated in terms of its engineering ambition. We are absolutely convinced in everything that has occurred since the election, and all the briefings and meetings I have had since the election have only given me more confidence, that this is an ambition that can be realised, but one of the challenges that we confront is time.

As the leader well understands, four years goes very quickly and it is very easy to tread water in government; it is very easy to wrap yourself in process at the expense of an outcome. Clearly, process is important and needs to be adhered to, but in respect of the appointments of chief executive officers, that falls within my purview and my responsibility. I have to accept that responsibility and execute judgement accordingly, with a view to achieving our ambitions.

To be frank, the size of this challenge is acute. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition and to any South Australian that they can rest assured that when I think through appointments of that nature I do so thoroughly. It is not a decision you make lightly, given the importance of it to the future of the state.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** You mentioned Mr Crafter's track record that led you to believe that he had the capacity to do the job well. Would you be able to outline what that track record is, specific to the appointment?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The best illustration of that would be the delivering of the big battery. Of course, that undertaking was done in a very short time. During the course of 2017, when the then state government committed itself to building the big battery at Hornsdale, lots of people ridiculed it and said it could not be done. It received all the criticism and the scrutiny that our hydrogen election policy did when we announced it, and all the same criticism that was coming our way for that went the same way to the former government for the big battery proposition. Yet it occurred and was proven to be a massive success.

Mr Crafter, within government, played a very substantial leading role, if not the leading role, in the procurement of that. It was that exercise that probably informed the judgement that he is best placed to be able to deliver this project. It is not just that, though; Mr Crafter has done a few other things that stood out to me. He had a very senior role at Santos, a company that every South Australian knows. He has significant private sector experience. He went on to work for the former Marshall government as well, working under the leadership of then Deputy Premier Van Holst Pellekaan.

He then went on to subsequently establish his own consultancy in the engineering space, including doing a lot of work around renewables and the electricity market and providing high-level strategic advice, and also policy advice and delivery advice, to the private sector. He did very well to the extent that it was difficult to persuade him to take on this task. He had to leave a successful business, which I do not imagine was easy for him to do. Nonetheless, he took this challenge up, and I am grateful for it.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did Mr Crafter make any contribution to Labor's hydrogen election commitment?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In terms of the policy development, he provided advice to us in opposition in terms of the crafting of the policy, but so did a lot of other people.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Moving on to another topic, what is the total remuneration package for the Chair of the South Australian Motorsport Board, Mr Andrew Daniels, whose appointment the Premier announced on 27 March 2022? I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 18, Premier and Cabinet program summary, income, expenses and FTEs. I understand that the motorsport component, which formerly sat with tourism, is now administered by the Premier.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am very grateful for this. Very quickly, after the election I was in contact with Andrew Daniels to ask him whether or not he would be willing to take up this responsibility, and he obliged. He is currently doing so without being remunerated, which is incredibly generous of him. The size of that generosity is best understood if people were conscious of just how many hours he has put into the task thus far.

My advice is that we have not yet determined what the remuneration for that will be. Naturally, it would be presumptuous to do so given the legislation is still going through the parliament. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for indicating support for that legislation. It certainly passed the other house recently. I thank the opposition for their support for that, and hopefully that is maintained through the bill's passage in this house.

So he has been doing that work. Although he is the government's nominee for the position of chair and he has been doing that role in a non-official sense since then, his service to the state has been really quite exceptional because we have a massive task there in terms of time line. We have certainly been very ambitious about trying to have that race on in the first weekend of December. It is a big task, and he has been working huge hours.

That task has become a little bit easier for him since he has officially now resigned as the CEO of the SMA, but even when he was the CEO of the SMA he was doing a lot of work out of hours coordinating things to make sure we are on track to deliver the commitment for the first weekend of December. Naturally, when that remuneration question is resolved, I think all board chairs and positions are publicly known, so that will be publicly known in due course.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Premier, will that be subject to back pay, or is Mr Daniels' generosity going to be—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That is a good question. I have not actually discussed that with him, and he has not raised it with me.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the total remuneration package of the Chief Executive Officer of the South Australian Motorsport Board, Mr Mark Warren, whose appointment the Premier announced on 2 May 2022?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** This falls in the same category as the other gentleman who you were asking about earlier, in that Mr Warren is not employed as a chief executive per se. Again, his salary is in the category of not being disclosed publicly.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** As with my previous question, would the Premier disclose or be able to disclose the band or classification of the executive position?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I will take that on notice, and I can come back to you regarding the other gentleman earlier. I am saying 'the other gentleman' because I cannot say his last name properly—Mike D.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I just blame my accent when I cannot say something.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That indeed is a SAES2 position. I am now in a position to confirm that. Mark Warren is also a SAES2.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Given that Mr Warren occupies what is at least titled a chief executive officer of a discrete business unit, would the Premier consider changing the policy to disclose the remuneration of such roles, given it is quite distinct, in my assessment, from the other gentleman, who is very much embedded within a department?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I would not have thought so, no.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** A change of topic again but on the same reference, Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 18, DPC program summary, income, expenses and FTEs, focusing on government advertising and communications. Since its election, has your government made any changes to Premier's Circular 048, which establishes the process for the management of government communications and advertising?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that there has not been a change to the circular as things currently stand.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Who are the current members of the Government Communications Advisory Committee, more commonly known internally as GCAC?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that there is an interim communications advisory committee group that serves that purpose, made up of Mr Jehad Ali, Rachel Walsh—who is Director, Place and Marketing, Lot Fourteen, Renewal SA—as Deputy Chair, Ryan Shepherd and Mr Andrew Ockenden.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** There has been in recent weeks an ad campaign outlining the outcomes of the state government's fresh budget.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Can the Premier advise how much is being spent on this advertising campaign?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I believe we do have those. I am advised in respect of the size of the budget for this campaign that it is actually being funded by the Department of Treasury and Finance. That is a question best addressed to the Treasurer.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** My next question is in relation to government advertising as well. How much is budgeted for all government advertising in 2022-23?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Which year?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The current financial year, the one that this budget projects, 2022-23.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that ultimately government media advertising is published publicly. The expenditure for the 2021 financial year in terms of government advertising was \$39.1 million, excluding GST. That was the number that was published earlier. Just to give that a comparison, in the 2021 financial year it was \$39.1 million, in the financial year prior it was \$29.3 million and in the financial year prior to that it was \$31.1 million. The figure so far this financial year, as at 8 June, is \$36.9 million, so it looks as though, all things being equal, this financial year will end up being the same amount as last financial year and both those amounts were in excess of the 2017-18 financial year.

In terms of the budget going forward, again I am advised that that sits within the responsibility of Department of Treasury and Finance, and DPC is responsible for publishing the actuals, so in terms of the budget from here you are best going to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier. Are you able to outline the process that led to the appointment of Simple winning the tender for the COVID-19 vaccination and state budget marketing campaigns?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am afraid I am going to have to take that on notice. I do not know because I do not know, but I assume that all appropriate government procurement processes were undertaken. That would be my expectation.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier. Given that Labor engaged Simple in the lead-up to the election, can the Premier advise who made the decision to appoint Simple to run government campaigns?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice that I have received is that the government advertising campaigns that are run are done so by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, having gone through an appropriate process. The advice that I have received is that there is a panel that the government will use from time to time. I do not understand there has been any departure from that process.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** You may have to take this one on notice, Premier, but are you able to advise when Simple was placed on that panel?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. Premier, are you concerned about any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between those responsible for appointing Simple to run these campaigns and those who appointed them to run government campaigns?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** What was your question again? Am I concerned about a—

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you concerned about any potential or perceived conflict of interest between those responsible for appointing Simple?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I would simply say that my expectations are that any person or agency or body or company providing a service to govern should do so through appropriate processes. I have not received any information or am not aware of any suggestion that that has not been the case.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier. Are you able to advise how much Simple has been paid in state government advertising work since your party has come to government?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I do not have the answer to that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you happy to take that on notice?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am happy to go and have a look at that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. Same budget line again but changing topic—so Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 18—how many country cabinet meetings will be held in 2022-23 and in which locations will they be held?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We had our first country cabinet the week before last down in Mount Gambier. Given its success, I would certainly hope to be able to continue with the program. It is our intention to do them approximately once a quarter. I know it was a program that was cancelled under the former government. Obviously, we have reinstated it. It does have an expense associated with it because they are a significant undertaking, clearly, but one that does procure, I think, a lot of value for South Australians generally, particularly people in our regions, who do not get to see ministers in cabinet in a forum like that as frequently as people in metropolitan Adelaide.

As it currently stands—in fact, we were only discussing this in a staff meeting this morning—I think the next one is due to be in the Upper Spencer Gulf. I am not sure if we have established the exact dates of that, but I would not expect it to be too far away if we want to maintain a commitment to try to do them quarterly. But in terms of a long-running program into the years and with specific dates and locations, that has not yet been established. Not surprisingly, I think it would be obvious to do so, the next one is in the Upper Spencer Gulf, given that is where our second-biggest cities are after Mount Gambier.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you able to advise—and again, you may have to take this on notice—the budgeted cost of the Mount Gambier country cabinet meeting held on 8 and 9 June?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am happy to go away and do more work, but Mr Woolhouse has been able to provide an indicative cost of what we have thus far. We are still waiting for bills to come through and accounts to come through, so this is not a fully reconciled number, but at the moment ex-GST it looks as though it is about 21½ thousand dollars. In fact, the number here on this piece of paper is \$21,541.42. I suspect that number may yet go up as more bills come in. But just to give a sense, this includes flights; car hire and fuel; we put on a community barbecue; there are catering expenses; audio, light and vision expenses; there is a venue hire expense—that was \$318.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you for these specifics.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There was a Welcome to Country cost, \$90 was spent on tablecloth hire—so it is the usual things.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. I do not want these questions to be seen as criticism of the program by any means. I am just trying to understand the extent of it.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Of course.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** How many public servants travelled from Adelaide down to Mount Gambier to attend that meeting?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I do not have that number off the top of my head, but what I would say is my expectation is that the chief executive officers are all in attendance.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** And beyond that?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That would be up to individual chief executives, clearly. I would have thought that, on occasions, chief executive officers might take other people down with them, depending on the nature of the location. For instance, I know PIRSA had people down there, particularly from their forestry section, as you would expect—we were there in the South-East.

I would expect a similar undertaking if we were going to the Upper Spencer Gulf: there might be other industries that have specific executive directors from departments in attendance. But the firm expectation from me is that all chief executive officers are in attendance and then it will be up to CEs to determine who else comes. I would have thought that departments have their own internal travel budgets and so forth and we would expect them to be deployed accordingly.

I should also mention that, as far as DPC is concerned, there are Cabinet Office staff who were in attendance because it was a cabinet meeting, an actual cabinet meeting, but also Protocol within DPC have been given responsibility to do a lot of this work and so a lot of those Protocol staff were in attendance as well.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. I have a related question: how many ministerial staff travelled from Adelaide to attend the meeting?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Again, that is up to individual ministers to account for. I do not know, but it would be my expectation that most ministers were probably taking at least a couple of staff. For something of this nature you would think they would take a senior ministerial adviser, if not their own chief of staff, and potentially a media adviser as well, but I do not have that specific number.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Premier, do you intend to continue the practice that the former government took to invite Aboriginal leaders to address cabinet every six months?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We certainly have a policy of engaging with Aboriginal leaders in a range of different forms. I must confess I was not aware that it was a policy of the former government—that may have been because it was a cabinet process, I am not sure. But certainly, there is a very serious commitment from the government to actively engage with Aboriginal leaders in every form at the highest levels. That is something that I am very comfortable in trusting the Hon. Kyam Maher to provide us guidance on.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Every six months we had the SA Aboriginal Advisory Committee (SAAAC) attend and it was very valuable. That might be something to look into for completely apolitical reasons.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I appreciate that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** It was just useful, and challenging. Premier, without infringing on what happens behind the doors of cabinet, you said just after your election that you would regularly invite senior business people to talk to state cabinet. How many business people have received this invitation, and do you feel comfortable saying who they are?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, we have had our first presentation and that came from Business SA. I chose Business SA to be first cab off the rank—given they are the peak chamber of commerce for the state—and I want to thank Martin Haese and his team for giving an insightful presentation. In terms of the next one, there is a schedule. I think it is being done on a monthly basis is the plan, or thereabouts. My advice is that the next cab off the rank is the Master Builders Association, who are coming on Monday, and then the one after that is the Australian Hotels Association.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I refer to the same budget item, but changing topic: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 18, talking about Lot Fourteen. Has the government directed any major changes to the following Adelaide City Deal projects currently underway at Lot Fourteen, or planned to be underway Lot Fourteen: the First Nations Entrepreneur Hub, the Adelaide Art and Cultures Centre (Tarrkarri) and the Entrepreneur and Innovation Centre?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There are three different components there. The short answer is that there are no established changes that we seek to make as things currently stand. I have enjoyed the opportunity in my role as Premier, who is responsible for Lot Fourteen, to go down and spend some time at Lot Fourteen itself and have a good look around. I met with Di Dixon, who is responsible for the delivering of the program there. She is clearly a very talented public servant doing very good work.

I said before the election that Lot Fourteen was a program that enjoys bipartisan support. That is not to say that there will not be changes in a couple of elements. In terms of the Entrepreneur and Innovation Centre, I had the opportunity to meet with the proponent of that project. There is still work to be done, clearly, to be able to fully realise the ambition of that. That is something that I am keen to pursue, notwithstanding that there are challenges that are there.

In respect of the First Nations Entrepreneur Hub, that is a great program, and I very much enjoyed my time there and to meet South Australians, including young Aboriginal South Australians, who are really doing very good things. I was genuinely impressed by that. The third element was Tarrkarri. Again, early works have already started on the Tarrkarri program. As you would reasonably expect, I am making lots of inquiries about all major investments of that scale.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is Tarrkarri on schedule for completion in 2025?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There were a number of projects that had various schedules associated with them under the former government that are clearly not going to be realised, if they ever were. I would have to go away and take advice about how precisely timed that project is.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** If you could take that one on notice, that would be great.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** What I can say is that I have been advised that the early works have commenced and that they remain ongoing.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** When is construction scheduled to commence on the Entrepreneur and Innovation Centre, and when will the centre be completed?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Just a bit of context for the committee here, which is important given the question: there was an expression of interest in July 2020 by the state government. Following that, the then state government entered into a development agreement with the developer Quintessential Equity to deliver the Entrepreneur and Innovation Centre.



Quintessential Equity (QE) are working with potential tenants for lease space in what is a 40,000 square metre entrepreneur building. Once Quintessential Equity reach the agreed precommitment level then building construction can commence. As I understand it, that has not yet occurred but there is plenty of interest, and that work remains ongoing. Sorry, the specific question that you were looking for was?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** When is construction scheduled to commence, but you have answered the process around that.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** And when will the centre will be completed, but I guess that is hard to know—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That depends.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** —until it can commence.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That is right. I think there was an ambition for it to be completed by the end of 2025, but whether or not that ambition is realised is very much a function of whether or not the tenants will be found. I have met with the developer. I have met with Quintessential Equity. It was a brief meeting, given the nature of timing when I was down there, but it was an important meeting

I certainly see the value in the project and I think we would all like to see it go ahead, but it is naturally a project that is fundamentally privately funded, so as you would appreciate the government does not have all of its hands on the levers to be able to deliver that. To the extent that government can reasonably help that along that is something I am committed to doing, and it is something that—and I know the former Premier of state has an interest in and he has spoken to me about it, and I appreciate his interest in the project—I would like to see it happen.

To the extent that myself or my office can assist in that—when I say my office, the Office of the Premier—we are committed to doing so, but ultimately it will be a decision that will be informed by interest coming from the market.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Moving topics again—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Just one other thing I want to say is that there may yet be government tenancies in that building, particularly from the commonwealth, and that is something that if that can be realised that is a good thing, and I am certainly open-minded to advocating for that accordingly, but the commonwealth will have its own needs and requirements and interests. I see this as being a potentially good project and if there is any way I can advocate in such a way that will see it go ahead then I am happy to assist where I can when it is appropriate to do so.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I guess would-be tenants would have to meet some sort of suitability matrix to be able to get in there.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Correct, that is correct. That is what makes it a unique proposition. It is also a building that I understand is on a 99-year lease, from memory—yes, that is right—and looking to attract that sort of high-end technical type of tenant. The building, as I understand, is being built with a number of security requirements to attract particular tenants, which is obviously a good thing, but really the ambition is for the building to house high-level tech and cyber-type functions, so we create an addition to the ecosystem that is already there.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. A slightly different budget reference this time: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 25, program 5, which is the Premier's Delivery Unit. Premier, the description for this unit on page 25 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, states that the unit is an independent office. Are you able to advise what that means and from what it is independent?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Can I just invite the head of the Premier's Delivery Unit to come and maybe sub in with the deputy CE? So just say that again; where are you reading from?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Budget paper 4, Volume 4, page 25 was the program and in the description of the Premier's Delivery Unit it is described as an independent office. My question was: what does that mean and from what is this unit independent?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The Premier's Delivery Unit is an attached office of DPC, but the unit has been structured in such a way that it answers directly to me. So although the Premier's Delivery Unit is an attached office within DPC and works closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and indeed the CEO of the Premier's Delivery Unit works in close collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer of DPC, it is ultimately independent in regard to the fact that it reports directly to me.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** So you class it as independent from the Public Service in terms of its delivery, in terms of its functions? I guess it is the use of the word 'independent' that I was wrestling with.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I would not characterise it in the way you just put it. I would say that the Chief Executive Officer of the Premier's Delivery Unit is independent of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** And that is why it has been described as independent in the budget papers?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Sure.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The description/objective also states that the unit will 'oversee the delivery of identified Government priorities, including all election commitments'. Will the Premier arrange for the unit's website, if there is a website or a future website, to maintain a public listing of all the priorities that the unit is overseeing?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The government obviously has a lot of election commitments—we are unapologetic about that. In fact, the advice I have received is there are 591 that have been tracked. What I am very conscious of, and I think all politicians who have been elected to this place would be conscious of, is that often there are accusations towards governments of all colours and persuasions that they do not meet election commitments or they break promises. I guess, as a new government, we are very determined to avoid that at all costs.

I personally am of the view that governments of both political persuasions in various jurisdictions across the commonwealth have found themselves in situations where they stand accused of breaking election commitments simply because the function and the day-to-day running of government often, along with events, overtakes proceedings in a way that, when you are in government, appears to be rational but to an outside observer or a constituent is not. That is why there is value in having a discrete effort within government that is solely focused on this and nothing else.

In terms of public accountability of the government, clearly we stand to be held to account on our election commitments. They are well known. I know they are well known to the opposition, as they are to the media and, to a larger extent, a significant number of them are well known to the people of South Australia. That is a good thing. We will be held to account for them and all of that is on the public record.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Premier, we have already covered this to an extent, but noting the organisational structure of DPC and the Premier's Delivery Unit not being responsible to the Chief Executive Officer of DPC, does this mean that the unit in all senses is directly answerable to the Premier and has no accountability to the CEO of DPC, or are there aspects where there would be accountability to the CEO of DPC?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that there is a service level agreement for the Premier's Delivery Unit with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet for a range of corporate functions that are provided. We have looked to interstate and international experience to inform the governance model that sits around the Premier's Delivery Unit. As the Leader of the Opposition probably is well aware, this is not the first time that a subnational or national jurisdiction has established units such as this.

There are both conservative and progressive governments globally that have undertaken similar efforts. I think the first, most identifiable, example of where such an agency was set up was the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in the United Kingdom under Tony Blair. Since then, there have been other iterations across the world in many democracies. I think the best example on the conservative side of politics in the Australian domestic context would be what Premier Baird established in the State of New South Wales.

All the research that was put into the consideration of establishing such a unit here in South Australia was very much informed by the experience that these programs only work to the extent that there is genuine collaboration between the unit, whether it is a prime minister's unit or a premier's unit, and the key agencies within the public sector.

So although it is true that the Premier's Delivery Unit by design answers to me, it is also true that that is not sought to be characterised strictly as a stick, in general language; it is actually really designed to be answerable to me so that it is clear to everyone in every agency that this is something that I am personally paying attention to. However, in practice it only works to the extent that there is genuine collaboration between the unit and other agencies, and that is particularly true with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Referring to the service agreement between DPC and the Premier's Delivery Unit that you mentioned a moment ago in response to my previous question, will you make it public?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Let me take that on notice, but the advice that I have received is that it is about corporate services, ICT, HR, finance facilities and so forth. In terms of the agreement, I would have to go back and contemplate whether we can release it publicly, but rest assured that I do not think it is particularly controversial—

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Or exciting.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —or exciting in nature.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The budget papers show that it is estimated that, in the first 10 weeks of its existence, the unit is spending \$750,000, well over one-third of its total annual budget. Why is the unit already spending well above its budget, in terms of the profile of the expenditure?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice is that the figure you refer to, which presumably is the \$750,000 figure, is a number that was put in by Treasury. By all accounts, it is not going to get anywhere close to that level of expenditure.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The budget papers also show that the unit will have its full budgeted complement of 10 full-time equivalent staff by 30 June. How many of these positions have been recruited through normal public sector recruitment procedures in the eight weeks since the unit's creation was announced?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that five FTEs have been appointed thus far.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did they follow normal merit-selection processes?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that a couple were secondments from DPC and the other two are open calls through the normal application process.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are all staff in the unit public sector employees?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What is the ratio of executive to non-executive officers in the Premier's Delivery Unit?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Seven non-executives and three executives are what is currently planned.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Yes, when it is at its 10 FTE complement. What are each of the position titles and what is the total remuneration package in each case? Obviously, I expect those to

be presented as classifications rather than sums. You could take that on notice, but if you can provide it now, even better.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I had probably best take that on notice.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Obviously, the unit leader is Mr Rik Morris, who is with you today, Premier. He was your director of strategy during your four years as opposition leader and, before that, an ALP candidate at the 2018 election and ministerial staffer to former Labor premiers and ministers over more than a decade while a member of the Premier's right faction. His whole biography is here. One senior Labor MP has called him a 'ruthless bastard with a velvet touch'.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Who said that? I want to know!

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I am not sure if that was on Wikipedia or not. Why was normal public sector recruitment process not followed for the appointment of this position?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am not too sure it was not. Again, it was a chief executive officer position. As the leader well understands, those judgements sit strictly with me. As was the case under the former government, chief executive officer positions are often appointed by the judgement of the premier of the day. That is a process that is maintained under my government.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the Premier personally give a direction that Mr Morris be appointed to this position without going through normal public sector recruitment processes?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am not sure it could be characterised that way.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Was it a personal pick by you in terms of identifying Mr Morris for the role?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Every chief executive is picked by me.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Yes, in an administrative sense, but did you personally identify Mr Morris as being the appropriate and best person for this role?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I personally appointed Mr Morris, yes. That is the case for every chief executive.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** But did you identify him as the person you wanted for this role? Did you encourage him to apply for the role?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I wanted him to do the job, yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Will the Premier provide the estimates committee with any written direction that you gave in relation to the creation of this position and the Premier's Delivery Unit?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** It was done through a cabinet process. As the leader would well understand, cabinet documents are subject to cabinet in confidence.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the Premier consult with the chief executive officer of his department before deciding to set up the Premier's Delivery Unit?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The short answer is absolutely. Maybe if I just provide a bit of colour around that, the reason for that is that I do not see this office fulfilling its function or realising its intention unless there is that collaboration between the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, its CE in particular, and the Premier's Delivery Unit. I cannot stress that enough, and I am pretty sure the leader would appreciate this.

You can put all the structures in the world in place, you can put all the org charts with various reporting lines in place, but ultimately in leadership people need to be able to work together in order to be able to deliver outcomes. I think that is probably just as true in the public sector, if not more true in the public sector, as in other cases. That was something that was actively discussed between the Chief Executive of the DPC and myself as well as the CE of the Premier's Delivery Unit and remains my expectation.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Has the Premier established a set of key performance indicators to understand whether Mr Morris is being effective in his role?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, delivering election commitments.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I was going to ask if the Premier would provide those to the committee, but I guess if they are the election commitments they are public already.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Correct. I think you have arranged a website.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** It is quite good.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** It is, actually.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** You are surprised that the Liberal Party would be so active so quickly. Different, new leadership now, Premier. We are not falling in a hole for 10 years like we would traditionally do.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** It is good, and I have found on a couple of occasions more than one government ministerial adviser using it as a source of important information.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** We are here to help. It is the Westminster system in action.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Correct.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Premier, I understand Mr Peter Hanlon is strategic adviser to the unit. What is Mr Hanlon's total remuneration package and what KPIs does he have?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised there is a contract in place for Mr Hanlon's services. That contract has a cost associated with it. I just have to take advice as to whether or not we can publicly disclose that. What I could say with a high degree of confidence is that the volume of money that we are talking about is not particularly huge. I will just take advice as to whether or not we can publicly disclose that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The second part of that question was what key performance indicators does Mr Hanlon have? Are those also the election commitments?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I will give some context there. I do not know how familiar the leader is with Peter Hanlon, but Peter Hanlon is an extraordinary South Australian who has worked in the highest levels of the corporate sector in Australia. He is a South Australian who has spent most of his working life in Sydney, working within Westpac, in the highest possible levels of Westpac, and doing work around corporate governance and the like. Mr Hanlon's expertise is around strategic delivery and corporate governance and he provides advice to the Premier's Delivery Unit in that context.

He is one of those people who strikes me as a person with extraordinary experience it would be crazy not to use. I understand that he was on the board of the South Australian Film Corporation, including under the former government. He has a pretty up and down, impressive track record. He is just one of those people we are crazy not to use if we can get access to them. I am grateful that he agreed to help out the Premier's Delivery Unit.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** How does the Premier's Delivery Unit interface with the Cabinet Office? Is it able to give direction to the Cabinet Office? Does it interface with the Cabinet Office at all?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, there are regular meetings, I understand.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The Premier was quoted in *The Advertiser* on 14 April as saying the unit 'would have the capacity to intervene and make recommendations to me directly if projects are lagging or if results are not forthcoming'. Will the unit have the Premier's authority to direct agency chief executives and to require agencies to furnish information to the unit?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The only people who have the capacity to strictly direct chief executives are the Premier or, indeed, in some instances, ministers, I would have thought, but there is no strict power that has been invested in the Premier's Delivery Unit to be able to instruct a chief executive. Only I can do that, or a minister under certain circumstances.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The Premier told parliament last week that the Treasurer, along with the Premier's Delivery Unit, has been working diligently to make sure that each and every one

of those commitments that have been made is being delivered upon. That quote or statement was made in relation to the local sports grants. When did the delivery unit become involved in the process of administering the local sports grants?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There are a couple of things. When you say sports grants, they are election commitments. When did the Premier's Delivery Unit start being engaged in the delivery of election commitments? The day it was established.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Did the delivery unit prepare the cabinet submission recommending approval of these grants?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Which grants?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The local sports grants.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There is not a grant program, there are just election commitments being delivered.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What ongoing role does the delivery unit have in the administration of these grants?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Which grants?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The sports grants.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** These are not sports grants, just election commitments being delivered.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In relation to the sporting election commitments—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** —or the grants as I will refer to them, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport told his estimates committee last Friday that all requirements for the Ministerial Code of Conduct or requirements on the basis of probity had been met and that the cabinet process had been completed. Will the Premier advise whether any minister declared a conflict of interest in relation to these grants as election commitments—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I have been asked this question—

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** —and, if so, which minister or ministers?

**The CHAIR:** Is that actually going to a budget line?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** It does, it is through the—

**The CHAIR:** It cascaded down.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Notwithstanding the fact, I am more than happy to answer the question. As I stated last week and as you would reasonably expect, I have very firm expectations of each of my cabinet ministers to be declaring any relevant conflicts where they are required to do so, and I have no reason to believe that they have not been, or anyone has not been. I have no reason to believe that appropriate processes are not being followed.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I will ask specifically again in relation to the sports funding: did any of your ministers declare a conflict of interest?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** And I am more than happy to repeat my answer. My expectation is that ministers adhere to all elements of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, including making appropriate declarations where it is appropriate to do so. There has been no suggestion to the contrary, and I have received no advice that anyone has not.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The opposition's first question on this matter in the house last week was to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing, asking what role her office had taken in the administration of the sports commitments. The Premier took the question instead and referred to the involvement of Treasury and the Premier's Delivery Unit but not to the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing.

The Treasurer, in answer to another question in the house last Tuesday, also referred to the role of the Premier's Delivery Unit but said nothing about the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing. *ABC News* last Wednesday reported on the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing, stating it had no involvement with these grants; however, the story changed in the Treasurer's estimates committee on Friday. He said the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing was contacting the recipients of the grants to get grant agreements in place.

In light of this confusion, can the Premier now explain the process that has been followed within government to establish these grants and pay them to the approved recipients?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes. We made election commitments. The government is delivering the election commitments and the budget process, as approved by the cabinet, is ensuring that those election commitments are being delivered. It is utterly appropriate and reasonable that there be scrutiny over that, and I welcome it.

The reason I welcome it is because it is an opportunity for us to remind each of the recipients of our election commitments, community organisations and otherwise, that we are indeed honouring our election commitments. I appreciate the interest in this because a cynic might argue that it is unusual for a government to be so quickly delivering on its election commitments, but we are determined to do that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Which agency is ensuring compliance with Treasurer's Instruction 15 relating to grant funding and in particular ensuring fulfilment of the condition that each grant is justified by the particular circumstances and is in the public interest?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Sorry, now I am struggling to follow which budget line you are referring to.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 25, program 5, which details the Premier's Delivery Unit.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Premier's Delivery Unit, right.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is DPC or the Premier's Delivery Unit ensuring compliance with Treasurer's Instruction 15 relating to grant funding?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The Premier's Delivery Unit is doing what it is designed to do, and that is ensuring that we are meeting our election commitments. I am very glad that we are.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** How many local sporting grants have been approved to date?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Only election commitments. How many election commitments have been approved? Well, in terms of delivering of the election commitments, all of them are required to go through the budgetary process and I expect are approved.

**Mr TARZIA:** Premier, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 141 talks about local sporting club facility grants being \$97.7 million. They are clearly referred to as grants.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am just trying to get the page number.

**Mr TARZIA:** Page 141. Agency Statement, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 141. The grants we are talking about are clearly referred to as grants. You can call them election commitments as you like, but they are clearly referred to in your own budget paper as local sporting facility grants. Why do you keep calling them election commitments instead of grants?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am sorry, we intend to honour the election commitments that we have made. Which agency are you referring to here?

**The CHAIR:** I think you may have moved to a totally different agency. I think you are drawing an incredibly long bow here. If you want to ask these questions, there is another minister that you can ask the questions of.

**Mr TARZIA:** We will, sir. Tomorrow, as well, we will. I think it is a reasonable question.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, and it is a reasonable question to the relevant minister. If the Premier is comfortable answering it that is fine, but it does come under another agency and it is not the agency that is being scrutinised here.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** One final question on this matter, and I will refer to them as grants, as the budget paper that the shadow minister referred to did. When did the government—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Which budget paper and which line number?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Premier's Delivery Unit again, given the involvement: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 25, program 5. When did the government begin paying the grants and how many have been approved?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The Premier's Delivery Unit is responsible for making sure that our election commitments are adhered to and we are adhering to those election commitments in the appropriate time lines. If there were specific time lines that were committed to it is my expectation that those election commitments are being honoured.

As I said earlier, I certainly do welcome questions whenever we see the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars. It is important that the appropriate level of scrutiny is provided for. Naturally, I am conscious of the media attention that these election commitments are receiving. I simply make this point: we are all, ultimately, democrats; we place a value on the democratic process, the election process. I do not think there is anything more transparent than an opposition formulating policy, committing to that policy, costing the policy and delivering that policy consistent with costing of the policy while in government in a first budget. It is utterly appropriate.

As I think I alluded to in question time last week both to the member for Hartley and the member for Black, there are election commitments that we made in your electorates. Your constituents in both your instances obviously elected you to your respective positions, and I congratulate you both on the attainment of those important offices. You represent fine people. But notwithstanding the fact that your constituents ultimately elected a non-government member still does not mean that we are not delivering on those commitments. We are delivering on them everywhere—everywhere.

We are very excited about that. I know that your relative constituents are very excited about that. The Hounds are excited. The Cove club is very excited. It might be that even you are excited. The only thing that might be unorthodox about this is the fact that we are actually doing it. We are doing exactly what we said we were going to do in opposition, and I think a lot of South Australians might find that refreshing.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Think you, Premier. I will move on now to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 17, Program 1: Premier and Cabinet Policy and Support. That does bring to an end my questions on the Premier's Delivery Unit, so you may wish to change officers. The next couple of questions are about the population growth strategy.

Funding of \$12.3 million was allocated in the Mid-Year Budget Review for a population growth strategy to be led by DPC. This included implementation of a Magnet State program to increase awareness of South Australia in the Eastern States through marketing in key demographics. What progress is being made in the implementation of the Magnet State program?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice I have received is as follows: there is a population strategy that remains ongoing within DPC. It is important. It is focused on increasing the proportion of young people in South Australia and ensuring that we are retaining and attracting young talent from interstate and overseas to provide the skilled workforce our industries need to grow and expand.

A number of programs aim to achieve this, including increasing the understanding and appeal of South Australia's careers and lifestyle opportunities through a campaign; targeting interstate talent in our key growing sectors through industry events and conferences; connecting South Australian graduates with our small and medium enterprises; and also ensuring that, when people arrive in South Australia, they make the right connections to find work and enjoy everything that we have to offer here in South Australia by providing direct information in language, in particular to overseas migrants.



There is a focus on attracting and retaining young people to grow our population in a sustainable and strategic way. We are addressing immediate skills shortages in fast-growing emerging industries. Supporting economic growth by increasing the size of the economy obviously is fundamental to this. Naturally, there are budget lines associated with these endeavours.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The population growth strategy also involves development of a business case to address key supply and demand constraints on regional workforce availability. Are you aware of whether or not this business case has been completed and, if so, what further action will now flow from it?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I refer to a different topic but the same budget reference: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 17, program 1. Has the Premier retained the Economic Advisory Council established by his predecessor, given that the Premier once said he acknowledged the work done by the council on unremunerated business was worthy, and that there are some good people on the council?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I think any South Australian who assists their government in an unremunerated fashion—sorry, the specific question you asked was?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Whether you are retaining the Economic Advisory Council in some form.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** This is something that is under active review. To put that into a bit of context, we want to make sure that any advisory body to government, remunerated or unremunerated, is structured in such a way to make sure we are delivering strategic outcomes in the state's interest, so this is something that is under active review.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I refer to the same budget reference but a different topic again: the Emergency Management Act. A target for this program in 2022-23 is to implement a review of the Emergency Management Act. Who will undertake this review, what will the terms of reference be and when does the Premier hope it will be completed by?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I have actually sought advice on this question, and I understand that the department is preparing a piece of advice for me that I expect to receive shortly.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What would your ambition for a completion date be, for this piece of work?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I think that will be informed by the advice I receive from the department about how long it will take. As you would appreciate, reviews vary in nature in terms of their depth, and their breadth. Obviously, we have gone through some significant events, and the act has been tested quite substantially in recent years, but in terms of the length of that review, I think that will be informed by the advice, and the time lines that we establish as a government will be informed by the advice we receive from the department.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier. Moving on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 19, program 2, which is information, data analytics and communication technology services. Since the change of government, have there been any ransomware cyber attacks affecting data held by the South Australian government?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice on this—because it will not surprise you that I have asked this question. In fact I received as much information I could about this pretty soon after coming to government. The policy of government, again across government, has been you do not publicly disclose cyber attacks, for reasons that I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will understand, so I am not in a position to answer that question today.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In the Mid-Year Budget Review the Marshall Liberal government provided \$53.2 million over four years to accelerate government investment in digitising and streamlining public sector activities. Is the current government maintaining this funding?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That will be subject to the work that has been undertaken by the CEO of DPC in examining options for savings to be realised following the budget.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is that \$53.2 million subject to potential savings or potential reductions?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** All work within DPC is being scrutinised to find opportunities for savings, and that is not exempt from that process.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 22, program 3, the South Australian Productivity Commission. Since becoming Premier, have you met with the Chair of the Productivity Commission, Adrian Tembel?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In the first dot point at page 15 of Budget Paper 4, a key agency output of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is described as follows:

- through the South Australian Productivity Commission, provide independent recommendations to improve the rate of economic growth and productivity of the South Australian economy through extensive inquiry processes.

In view of this statement, why is the government making such significant cuts to the commission in this budget by halving its staff, and cutting its spending by almost 25 per cent at a time when it is vital that we lift productivity in South Australia?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Given that we are jumping to the Productivity Commission questions, I will just introduce Mr Steve Whetton, who is the Chief Executive of the Productivity Commission. I do not know if you have met Steve before?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** No.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** You may not have. Yes, there are savings to the Productivity Commission as there is across the government. The budget for the Productivity Commission is outlined in the budget papers, as the leader is well aware. In respect of the FTEs, the advice that I have received is that we do not necessarily anticipate that those reductions in the FTEs were necessarily realised. The figure that you see here is one that Treasury put in the budget.

I am advised that there are other savings opportunities that exist within the functions of the Productivity Commission that can be realised that are non-staff costs, so that may mean that that FTE reduction is not nearly as substantial as represented within the Budget Papers, which of course is a matter that I am happy to sit with the Productivity Commission itself. Was there another part of your question?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** No, that was the main thrust of the question I suppose, but I have some others. Since your election, Premier, has the government referred any matters to the Productivity Commission for a review or an inquiry?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Not yet, but that is under active consideration by me.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, states on page 22 that one target for the commission in the 2022-23 financial year is to commence new inquiries. Can the Premier give an indication of any of the areas being considered for these inquiries?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No, because it has not been finalised, but naturally the inquiries align themselves to economic opportunity, particularly through productivity growth. The Productivity Commission was something that was established by the former government. It enjoyed bipartisan support and that is why it has been retained by our government.

Naturally there is a savings task being imposed upon the Productivity Commission. Savings tasks are difficult, as the former minister, the leader, well understands. One of the things that informs an ambition for savings is about reallocating resources towards our government's priorities and our election commitments of which, as I outlined earlier, there are a very large number. So we are looking to other functions within government to increase productivity and active consideration was given to whether we would impose those savings tasks on the Productivity Commission.

Is there additional productivity to be found in the Productivity Commission? I figured that if we cannot find productivity in the Productivity Commission then probably nowhere. They are getting

on with the job of realising those savings, but that is in no way to understate the value that we think the Productivity Commission can provide. Obviously, Mr Whetton's and Mr Tembel's appointments were made by the former government, but I am satisfied that both gentlemen are good South Australians who bring with them a lot of capacity.

I think the Productivity Commission can serve the state well, but I guess I am really keen to make sure that any work we get the Productivity Commission to undertake might actually help inform a decision on government policy. There are risks with such agencies that reports are developed, and they sit there and then nothing happens. That is not a criticism of the former government; that is just the nature of government.

I would rather spend a bit of time getting clear in my head the questions we are going to ask the Productivity Commission to look at so that those questions help a piece of work be undertaken that actually informs a judgement to be made or not to be made. I guess that is what is under active consideration from my perspective in how to best deploy the resource.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier. You have previously debated in estimates committees the desirability of having the Productivity Commission examine the outsourcing of train and tram services. Accordingly, are you planning to ask the commission to inquire into this matter before you seek to reverse the current arrangements for the provision of these services?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No. Just to explain why not, we went to the election with a commitment to establish a commission of inquiry in regard to undoing the privatisation that was a broken election commitment from the former government. We are delivering on our commitment to bring back the trains and trams into the operation of state government, so undoing that privatisation. Obviously, that is a significant undertaking. Undoing a privatisation is rare. It does not happen very often generally. There are examples of it happening in Australia but not lots of them.

So we went to the election committing to a commission of inquiry to do that undertaking. There are meetings with the private operator, Keolis Downer, that have already happened and more that are scheduled in the not-too-distant future. I am very happy to put on the record my thanks to Keolis Downer in terms of the engagement we have had with them thus far. They acknowledge the election commitment, and they have made it clear to me and the government that they are very keen to work with us in delivering that election commitment. So we see a willing partner in Keolis Downer to transfer those services back to the government.

Naturally, they would prefer that we did not go ahead with the election commitment, and that is reasonable, but thus far they have been very professional in engaging with the government, and I thank them for that. Those efforts will remain ongoing and will inform the timing of a commission of inquiry accordingly. Given the status of that effort and the commitment to a commission of inquiry, we would not see the deployment of the Productivity Commission being a good use of their time.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Premier, that brings my questions about the Productivity Commission to an end. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 23, Program 4: Infrastructure SA.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I thank Steve Whetton and introduce Catherine Jamieson, who is the Principal Policy Officer for Infrastructure South Australia. Unfortunately, Jeremy Conway has COVID, so he is unable to join us today and Catherine is stepping up to the plate.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thanks for joining us. In the 2021-22 budget, the previous government established the Business Case Fund, providing almost \$27 million of funding over four years to support the preparation of business cases on potential key infrastructure projects. Projects funded for the preparation of business cases included a new Northern Water Supply, future requirements of the Police Communications Centre, the Augusta Highway duplication between Port Pirie and Crystal Brook and the Eyre Highway widening and upgrade, to name a handful. Some of these business cases were also being supported by federal funding. Can the Premier advise if his government has so far initiated any further business cases for major projects?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Not that I am aware of at this stage. I have certainly had plenty of discussions with Infrastructure South Australia about the business cases that are currently underway. I am taking an interest in a number of them, particularly those ones that I think, in a big picture sense, can be strategically very significant for the state. Naturally, Northern Water is one that

is at the top of my mind. I think it is a project that could potentially have a lot of economic uplift for our state more broadly. But the short answer to your question is no, not at this stage.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** It is a project likely to receive bipartisan support.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Hear, hear!

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Will the Premier identify the proposed initiatives currently being supported by the Business Case Fund?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Northern Water would be the best example of that, I assume. I am advised that Treasury and Finance advised the Business Case Fund.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** When is Infrastructure SA's 2022 Capital Intentions Statement due for release?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My understanding is that it is sometime around September.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Does the government intend to retain Infrastructure SA as part of government administration for the longer term?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The last dot point on page 23 advises that a target for Infrastructure SA in 2022-23 is to maintain oversight of planning, delivery and performance of state government funded major infrastructure projects. Is this work being second-guessed, for want of a better term, by the Premier's Delivery Unit? Is there duplication here?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I do not believe so. I do not believe there is duplication there.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Since becoming Premier, has the Premier had a meeting with the Chair of Infrastructure SA, Mr Tony Shepherd?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you. That brings my questions for Infrastructure SA to a conclusion. I move on to the Auditor-General now; the reference is Budget Paper 3, page 154, Appendix C, table C.2, line 3.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Can I introduce Mr Andrew Richardson, who is the Auditor-General, and Mr Ian McGlen on my left, who is the Deputy Auditor-General.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I believe normal practice is that, because the Auditor-General reports to parliament, questions can be directed directly to the Auditor-General in estimates committees.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Okay. That was the advice that I received, but I am not worried either way. Premier, since your election, has your government had any engagement with the office of the Auditor-General or the Auditor-General himself regarding access to cabinet submissions?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Not to me or my office, no.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Or to Cabinet Office or any unit within DPC?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that, a couple of weeks ago, the Auditor-General wrote to the CE of DPC to discuss this thing. I understand that a meeting intends to be arranged to discuss this subject.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is it possible to make that subject of the inquiry public here today or highlight what the—

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice I have received is that the Auditor-General has sought a meeting or a discussion with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to discuss what the arrangements will be about access to various documents.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In terms of administrative arrangements, not the topic?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Correct.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Sorry, Premier, I misunderstood.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I probably did not explain it very clearly.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The Auditor-General reported to parliament last year on the processes for the heavy rail service contract. Despite allegations to the contrary by the then opposition, the Auditor-General concluded that the Department for Infrastructure and Transport had designed and applied processes throughout the procurement that were consistent with sound probity principles for a transaction of this size and nature.

The Auditor-General also advised that he would not identify evidence of any specific probity matters that would suggest the procurement was compromised. Since your election, has the government sought any discussions with the Auditor-General's office about your intention to reverse current arrangements for the operation of train and tram services?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Do you plan to?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Unless there was a particular need to, I would not have thought so. I do not want to misinterpret the nature of your question, but we have an election commitment and we are going to deliver upon it.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I guess my question is framed or motivated by the idea that the reversal of this policy, regardless of ideological feelings towards it, has a high level of complexity around it. Would you be intending to seek the Auditor-General's advice and insight as to how that could be administered effectively?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** If we thought there was a need to do so, then we would not have any hesitation in doing that.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Do you think there will be a need?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** It is hard to say at this stage.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Your government has also committed to examining the feasibility of returning metropolitan bus services to government control.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Has the government sought any advice from the Auditor-General's office about this proposal, and would you foresee doing so?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We have not up to this point. In terms of what happens from here on in, that would be governed by various deliberations that have to be made or the advice that we receive. The policy is that the commission of inquiry examines that question about whether or not that would actually be in the state's interest.

If in the event the commission of inquiry goes ahead and advises us that it would be in the state's interest and that in turn necessitated questions that might be best suited to be answered by the Auditor-General, then there would be no reason why we would not actively explore that, I would have thought, but that is a long way down the track so it is not something that has been considered up until you asking it, really.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is the Auditor-General currently conducting any audits, reviews or examinations pursuant to section 32(1b) of the Public Finance and Audit Act?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice to that question is no.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Given the discretionary mandate that the Auditor-General has to be involved in local government, is the Auditor-General currently undertaking any specific examinations in this area?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice is that there is one investigation currently being undertaken into local government.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you able to provide any more detail on that or is that inappropriate to do so?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The advice is that there is an investigation underway within the context of local government but at this stage of the investigation it is best not to go into a description of it.

**The CHAIR:** There is a little bit of drift from specific budget lines. I think I have been very flexible, but at least loosely take it.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I do not remember your predecessor, when it was the other way around, being nearly as flexible as you, Mr Chair.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** I appreciate the flexibility. I think that was fair, the local government one, really. That is a key function, is it not? How will the work of the Auditor-General's office be affected by the imposition of the government's 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend, if in fact it is impacted by that dividend?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The Auditor-General is impacted by the efficiency dividend. It has not been exempted, so like all other government agencies it is subject to an efficiency dividend or to a savings task. The Auditor-General has advised me that they are currently undertaking a piece of work to establish how that will be undertaken. In terms of the size of the savings task, I presume that is already in the budget papers. I was talking to the Auditor-General about this in advance of today, obviously. The savings task in this upcoming financial year is \$300,000 out of a budget of \$18.6 million.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Will this affect the Auditor-General's ability to undertake its roles and responsibilities effectively?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** The Auditor-General has an incredibly important function within the state, as does every element of the Public Service. There is no element of the Public Service that is not important, but that does not mean that de facto every element of the Public Service is immune from savings tasks, although some have been exempted, as the leader would be well aware. It is my hope that agencies, including the Auditor-General, will go about realising those savings ambitions as effectively as they possibly can so as to mitigate any impact on service delivery.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** That brings to a conclusion my questions for the Auditor-General and I am happy to move on now to the payments for the House of Assembly and Joint Parliamentary Services, Budget Paper 3, page 154, Appendix C, table C.2 at lines 31 to 33.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Rick Crump is back.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** He needs no introduction, but feel free to introduce him.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In your hands.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** This is in relation to Parliament House staff.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Just so I know, which budget paper?

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** The Parliament House payments are on page 154, Appendix C, table C2, lines 31 to 33.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, got it.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** On a full-time equivalent basis, how many staff in total were employed by the parliament in 2021-22 and how many are budgeted for in 2022-23?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There is no change in the established fully funded FTE numbers on the 2021-22 year. The advice I have for the average number of FTEs across the various functions of the parliament for the 2021-22 financial year is 100.1. In terms of how that is broken down, I am advised that the average for catering was 14, reporting averages 22½, joint services is 12.1, library is 11.7, House of Assembly is 23, and the Legislative Council is 16.8.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Was that for the 2021-22 year?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That is right, yes.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Are you able to give that figure for 2022-23?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** My advice is that it will be the same; there is no change.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** What was the total expenditure on wages for staff employed by the parliament in 2021-22, and what is the budgeted expenditure for the forthcoming financial year 2022-23?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We can take that on notice.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** How will the operations of Parliament House be affected by the imposition of the government's 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend, and has Parliament House anticipated areas that might be cut due to this dividend?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that parliament is not subject to an efficiency dividend.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** That is good news for everyone.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I am advised that, in actual fact, there might be growth by two staff because of the People and Culture unit that is set to be established.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Okay, thank you. I am going to ask Mr Tarzia to read in the omnibus questions now and see how we are going for time after that. We might slot another couple of questions in.

**Mr TARZIA:** Thank you. The omnibus questions for this committee, Premier:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total cost of machinery of government changes incurred between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022?

2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, which administrative units were created, abolished or transferred to another department or agency between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022 and what was the cost or saving in each case?

3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been made since 22 March 2022 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive positions have been abolished since 22 March 2022 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 22 March 2022?

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 engaged between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the estimated total cost of the work?

7. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide an estimate of the total cost to be incurred in 2022-23 for consultants and contractors, and for each case in which a consultant or contractor has already been engaged at a total estimated cost above \$10,000, the name of the consultant or contractor, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the total estimated cost?

8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise whether it will be subject to the 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend for 2022-23 to which the government has committed and, if so, the budgeted dollar amount to be contributed in each case and how the saving will be achieved?

9. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees were there at 30 June 2022, and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the number of executive staff to be cut to meet the government's commitment to reduce spending on the employment of executive staff by \$41.5 million over four years and, for each position to be cut, its classification, total remuneration cost and the date by which the position will be cut?

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

- What savings targets have been set for 2022-23 and each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise what share it will receive of the \$1.5 billion the government proposes to use over four years of uncommitted capital reserves held in the budget at the time it took office and the purpose for which this funding will be used in each case?

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

- What was the actual FTE count at 30 June 2022 and what is the projected actual FTE account for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and
- How many targeted voluntary separation packages are estimated to be required to meet budget targets over the forward estimates and what is their estimated cost?

14. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2022-23 and for each year of the forward estimates?

15. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2022-23 and each year of the forward estimates and what is their estimated employment cost?

16. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2022-23?

17. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide for each individual investing expenditure project administered, the name, total estimated expenditure, actual expenditure incurred to 30 June 2022 and budgeted expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

18. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for, please provide the following information for the 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Budgeted payments into the program or fund;
- Budgeted expenditure from the program or fund; and
- Details, including the value and beneficiary, or any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent questions.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** We have a few minutes left. My next set of questions, Premier, are in relation to the Major Events Fund. I am not sure if you want to change officers. The budget reference is Budget Paper 5, Budget Measures Statement, page 98, with the heading Major Events



Fund, as I mentioned. My first question is: can the Premier explain why the new Major Events Fund is administered under him and is not under the tourism portfolio?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We place a high value on what major events can contribute to the state's economy. That is something that I take an interest in, as you would reasonably expect. Obviously, the Adelaide 500 is an important event that, as you identified earlier, sits associated with DPC, so we saw this as a reasonably appropriate place for it to sit accordingly.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Why was this additional funding of \$10 million each year for the Major Events Fund not simply added to the Leisure Events Bid Fund under the Minister for Tourism?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We are happy for it to be discrete and have a degree of oversight from me.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Who makes the final determination for projects applying for funding under the Major Events Fund?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Ultimately, it would come to cabinet I would have thought.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Is there a body or advisory panel that makes recommendations to the final decision-makers, whether that is yourself or Premier and Cabinet?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We have established a major events attraction committee to be able to provide advice to the government in this regard. I have asked Leon Bignell, who is the member for Mawson, to chair that committee. Leon, the member for Mawson, has a bit of experience in this area and a lot of contacts, and I think he is a good appointment to provide a degree of stewardship and to tap into his skills and his knowledge base.

Naturally, Mr Bignell is working closely with the Minister for Tourism. I have written to the chair of the South Australian Tourism Commission to advise that Mr Damien Walker, who is the CEO of DPC, will be an ex officio member of the committee and will work closely with the SATC on this matter. We do not see the major events attraction committee necessarily being the only source of advice but the principal source of advice to the government on what we want to do in terms of achieving with the major events.

It is not just about sporting events; it is also about other events as well. It could be music or art or cultural or even, potentially, if it was a particular major event in the context of conventions, there are things that we would be open-minded to. It is an important undertaking. I understand that work is being actively pursued by DPC to look at who else will sit on that advisory committee. We may have some news about that in due course, once those appointments are made, but as yet we have not made any other appointments.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Will Mr Bignell be paid for that role?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Or expenses reimbursed or anything like that?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** If there were expenses that were worthy of reimbursement those considerations would have to be made at the time, but he is not being paid anything extra for the role. He is doing it as a parliamentarian with an active interest in the area of policy.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Obviously the Premier has taken a component of what was previously the Minister for Tourism's portfolio. Why did the Premier not make himself the Minister for Tourism rather than splitting the portfolio in this way? Was any consideration given to that?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** No, Minister Bettison is obviously responsible for the tourism portfolio, and I think she is doing an outstanding job. The minister had that portfolio in opposition, has a lot of interest in it, and I know has a lot of support within the tourism sector, including from key stakeholders.

I am very grateful for the fact that key stakeholders have gone out of their way to thank the government for having a minister who is discretely responsible for the portfolio. I understand the judgement that was made by the former government, and by the former Premier, to take those

responsibilities on himself. I can see the arguments in favour of the Premier taking on some of those responsibilities, and I can see the arguments against it.

Different premiers have different models but, for mine, I think the industry, particularly given its unique set of circumstances coming on the back of the pandemic, needs a minister that is devoted to it specifically and not caught up with the running of government, which of course brings with it substantial responsibilities and challenges. So it was never in my contemplation to take that portfolio on myself, and I thank the minister for doing her work very diligently.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** The time allotted having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolios of Legislative Council, House of Assembly, Joint Parliamentary Services, Administered Items for Joint Parliamentary Services, State Governor's Establishment and the Auditor-General's Department completed. The examination of the proposed payments for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is adjourned until Tuesday 21 June 2022. The examination of the proposed payments for the Administered Items for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is adjourned until Tuesday 21 June 2022.

I would like to thank everyone for their contribution, especially the public servants who put in such an effort to prepare for estimates. I thank the Premier for his comprehensive answers and the leader, and once again thank the opposition for the measured approach to these proceedings. I also thank the long-suffering backbenchers who have sat there in silence and, of course, the parliamentary staff who provide their support in so many different ways.

At 17:18 the committee adjourned to Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 9:00.