

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Wednesday, 22 June 2022
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chair:

Mr E.J. Hughes

Members:

Mrs R.K. Pearce

Ms O.M. Savvas

Mr V.A. Tarzia

Mr J.B. Teague

Ms E.L. Thompson

Mr T.J. Whetstone

The committee met at 09:00

Estimates Vote

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$955,110,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$67,000

Minister:

Hon. J.K. Szakacs, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Stevens, Commissioner of Police, South Australia Police.

Mr S. Johnke, Director, Business Service, South Australia Police.

Mr B. Cagialis, Head of Finance and Procurement, South Australia Police.

Mr S. Watkins, Superintendent, Governance and Capability Service, South Australia Police.

The CHAIR: Welcome everybody to today's hearing for Estimates Committee B. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land upon which the committee meets today and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

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 timetable for today's proceedings previously distributed is accurate?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can, sir, thank you.

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, 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 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 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.

I will now proceed to open the following lines for examination. The portfolio is SAPOL. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister wishes, and to introduce his advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if he so wishes. I call on members for questions.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you, Chair, for your introduction, and I also thank members of both sides of the chamber for their attendance today. Can I first introduce those advisers attending with me today. I have to my right Commissioner Grant Stevens, Commissioner of South Australia Police. To his right is Steve Johninke, Director of Business Service at SAPOL. Behind me, I have Bill Cagialis, Head of Finance and Procurement at SAPOL, and with him is Superintendent Simon Watkins, Governance and Capability Service at SAPOL.

I will make a few short remarks in my opening statement today. SAPOL's outstanding performance over the last year, indeed over the last two years, is a credit to SAPOL staff, the dedicated Police Operations Centre and the organisational business continuity modelling that has been coordinating resources to critical areas at crucial times when urgently required to do so. From 22 March 2020, Commissioner Stevens, as State Coordinator, declared COVID-19 a major emergency under the Emergency Management Act and then provided continuous leadership for this state, working closely with SA Health as the control agency and the former and current Premiers.

In saying so, I do thank the former Premier and former police ministers for their service during that time as well. As State Coordinator, the commissioner has balanced the state's approach to the multiple requirements of the COVID-19 declaration restrictions, ensuring the maintenance of community confidence. That is an outstanding outcome in the last two years. SAPOL has a strong community licence with this state and I think amongst jurisdictions across the country has found itself in a very strong place with the conclusion of the emergency management declaration.

SAPOL delivered an ongoing commitment of significant policing resources, with 300 to 600 staff through this period dedicated to COVID-19 duties each day. Notwithstanding this, SAPOL was still able to fulfil its core functions as defined in the Police Act to respond to new challenges while continuing COVID-19 duties. The emergency management declaration was extended by the Governor 28 times for a total of 793 days. This is remarkable, as the longest emergency declaration previously made in the state had only been in place for a period of four days.

In late November 2021, SAPOL commenced a gradual scaling back of its COVID-19 operations in response to the opening of our domestic and international borders and the easing of activity restrictions in South Australia. SAPOL has worked collaboratively with SA Health as the control agency and the premier of the day to coordinate the state response, and as a result, in a balanced approach, SAPOL has not only played its part in keeping the community safe through the COVID-19 period but has also ensured our response to the pandemic has not unnecessarily affected South Australia's economy.

It is worth highlighting some of the more significant outcomes and challenges for SAPOL throughout the year. In 2022, it was not enough that we had a COVID pandemic to manage, but there was record rainfall—very close to your heart, I know, sir—associated with weather patterns related to ex-Tropical Cyclone Tiffany, which caused significant impacts in the northern, central and western parts of South Australia. Major damage was caused in 45 municipalities, the most extensive on Eyre Peninsula and in the north-west pastoral areas, including major disruptions to road and rail networks connecting the state to Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

This damage challenged the state in relation to food security, water security and fuel security, resulting in health consequences, stranded travellers and agricultural issues. The state emergency centre was activated as part of the state and national response to address the breadth of the challenges. The commissioner, acting as State Coordinator, on Friday 28 January 2022 declared a major emergency under the Emergency Management Act. The declaration was revoked on 8 February 2022 once the situation had stabilised. Notably, this was the second longest duration of an emergency declaration and the first time in the history of our state that two declarations were in effect at the same time.

Sir, another matter that is close to your heart is the standing up of the APY lands policing model. Providing policing resources to the APY lands has been an ongoing challenge over many years, primarily centred on the remoteness of communities. The new APY staffing model commenced on 2 May 2022 and is on target for full implementation by 1 July 2022.

The APY staffing model has reimagined the way that SAPOL provides policing services in the APY. For the first time, SAPOL has undertaken ongoing fly-in fly-out staffing to support normal policing operations. The APY staffing model has provided 10 permanent specialist positions within the APY that are supported by a larger, Adelaide-based workforce pool of 33 general duties members, utilising this FIFO structure.

I am pleased to report that the new Hindley Street Police Station was opened on 27 May 2022, after more than 17 years at the previous station. I know many members of this place will have attended the previous Hindley Street Police Station—hopefully for a tour rather than for other purposes—and I think we all can agree that the facilities there were well and truly outdated. I can certainly say, having toured on a number of occasions now the new Hindley Street Police Station, that the dramatic improvement in facilities there will serve the community and will also support frontline police.

Operation Meld, well known to many people in this room, was established on 1 July 2021 to address criminal offending by a group of known youths of African descent predominantly involving robberies, thefts and public disorders in the eastern district. A dedicated group of nine investigators and two intelligence officers has been assigned to investigate these offences. The criminal offending continued after the formation of the operation and, concerningly, extended to two offences well known and well publicised in the media. Operation Meld continues to investigate this serious offending, and Major Crime Investigation Branch is continuing to investigate the murder attached to the most serious of that offending.

On 23 December 2021, South Australia Police Task Force Southern, Crime Stoppers and the Commissioner for Victims Rights partnered to launch a new initiative to obtain information from the community in respect of the ongoing investigations into the murders of Robert Atkins, Trevor King and Jeff Mundy, which occurred in the southern suburbs in 2020 and 2021. Task Force Southern now comprises 36 investigators, supported by intelligence officers.

Another major operation is that of Operation Ironside. More than 460 SAPOL officers, along with AFP personnel, were utilised to undertake one of the largest single days of action against serious and organised crime in the state's history as part of the global investigation Operation Ironside, an undeniably significant achievement whilst still maintaining an effective COVID-19 response. More work has been done since then and will continue, including the complex prosecution phase, which I know the Attorney has spoken of and answered a series of questions about during the estimates process. Operation Ironside now comprises 48 investigators and is supported by intelligence officers.

Australia is currently experiencing some of the lowest unemployment rates seen since the early 1970s. Further to this, SAPOL is being impacted by a phenomenon known as the 'great

resignation', the unprecedented rise in the number of workers resigning from their jobs following the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 is one reason for this decline, but researchers are still trying to determine what other factors are contributing to this great resignation.

One of the concerning side effects of these two issues is the inability for Australian and New Zealand policing jurisdictions to recruit suitable police applicants. Never before has SAPOL been so challenged and tested in this area. This is not new. This has not happened in the last two days, but SAPOL is working to urgently address this issue, as is every Australian policing jurisdiction.

The coordination of our frontline services, including SAPOL and other services within my portfolio area, such as the emergency services, as well as the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, has been profound and remarkable during this pandemic. There has been significant coordination across the delivery of services, particularly in respect of the relationship that has been formed between SAPOL and the SES.

Cross-agency mobilisations of cohorts of SES volunteer members and Department for Infrastructure and Transport redeployees and the engagement of other civilian groups have supported during the pandemic SAPOL's border operations and its incredibly successful COVID-19 compliance operations.

With cessation on 3 June 2022, these compliance operations have resulted in approximately 600,000 checks being undertaken on individual persons, and a further 85,000 on business entities, to monitor and ensure compliance with prevailing requirements of the State Coordinator issued COVID-19 directions, including requirements to isolate, quarantine, submit to COVID-19 testing, limit patron numbers and implement social distancing and density.

As I remarked earlier, education and assistance, and not punitive action, was the guiding approach of these COVID-19 compliance operations which ultimately found that the South Australian community was overwhelmingly compliant with COVID-19 directions, despite SAPOL having also issued 5,094 cautions and 2,377 monetary fines and effecting the arrests of 398 persons and reports of a further 76 persons. These approaches and outcomes were critical to the maintenance of public confidence in SAPOL and the government in difficult, unprecedented and uncertain circumstances.

This state budget provides \$1.7 million in 2022-23 to be transferred from the Department for Health and Wellbeing for placing nurses in metropolitan custody facilities. This program continues with 24/7 nursing services to both detainees and prison officers in the City Watch House and Elizabeth cells, along with coverage on afternoon and night shift in the Port Adelaide and Christies Beach cells. It delivers an onsite treatment program, reducing the significant impact on police resources typically involved with transporting and guarding detainees who would otherwise be taken into an emergency department. The funds transfer commences on 1 January 2023 and ongoing funding of \$3.4 million indexed over the forward estimates has been provided.

The state budget also provides \$3.3 million in capital funding over two years to build two new police posts at Indulkana and Pipalyatjara and provide additional operating funding for the Fregon police post—sir, again, matters that I know are close to your heart.

During the 2021-22 financial year, SAPOL continued to focus on maintaining a safer work environment for working police officers, cadets and protective security officers performing frontline operations by rolling out multipurpose load-bearing vests. This state budget, our first in government, provides a further \$4.5 million in 2022-23 to purchase an additional 1,500 multipurpose load-bearing vests, and \$1 million on undershirts over four years.

The CHAIR: Can you look to wind up as there was 10 minutes allocated.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: With a further \$1 million to ensure that there is vest and storage facilities to ensure that all sworn officers have access to vests. In closing, as I may not have another opportunity this morning, can I sincerely thank SAPOL for its assistance in the incredible work provided more broadly but also in preparation for my first estimates, as well as the staff from my office in supporting me in the delivery of my responsibilities as minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Chaffey, do you have an opening statement or questions?

Mr WHETSTONE: I just have a quick opening statement. On behalf of the opposition I would like to thank SAPOL, the officers and the staff for their dedication and commitment to the task before them. I would also like to acknowledge the state commissioner, seconded to be the State Coordinator, for his gallant effort over the two years of COVID, and now back as commissioner—it is great to see. I think the former government and the police and corrections minister did an outstanding job, so I thank all of them for their dedication and concerted effort to keep South Australia safe.

I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 201. Can the minister explain the reason for the dramatic decrease of 195 public safety FTEs from the 2021-22 budget?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The workforce cap for 2022-23 is 5,881.9 FTEs, to be explicit. That is 182 less than the 2021-22 FTE cap of 6,063.9 FTEs. To give some information as to what reflects those numbers, the COVID-19 temporary measures regarding PSOs were not funded into the next financial year. Those considerations of ongoing funding for PSOs whose contracts continue until well into 2023—the calendar year that is, around April/May—is the subject of a very high-level commitment this government made in respect of a Premier's task force that will be constituted. As we speak, I as the minister and the government are consulting with stakeholders, including the Police Association as well as SAPOL, regarding membership of that task force.

That task force will have a number of key functions, the most important of which is to report to the Premier and make recommendations regarding future resourcing requirements of SAPOL. A very firm commitment that I have made since being the minister is to hear the multiple voices that are interested in this space. Everyone has a seat at the table. The voice of everyone from the police commissioner to police to PASA are critically important and will be represented on that task force.

That will make recommendations in quarter three of this calendar year. Those recommendations, as we have both committed as an election commitment and I have reinforced as the minister and as the Premier has reinforced as the Premier, are not to be focused on simply this term of government, are not to be focused on just next the financial year but also on the next 10 to 15 years of resourcing that is necessary for police.

As long as I can remember, there have been various iterations of sworn numbers committed from both sides of politics. The most recent iteration was a contribution in a temporary way of support staff to manage and support the police commissioner in his duties as State Coordinator through the temporary employment of PSOs.

What is very promising is that the conversations and the consultation I have undertaken so far with both the police as well as the Police Association is that we—as a government and the police and the Police Association—are all on the same page when it comes to a flexible consideration of the deployment and utilisation of those PSOs in respect of their functions, in respect of their responsibilities, and how in the future, through recommendations that will be coming to me and to the Premier, we will support frontline policing operations.

Those PSOs are currently subject to a process agreed to in previous years with the Police Association and SAPOL, which was formed as part of the EBA, in respect of moving PSOs into the Police Act, giving them a recognition and a responsibility under the Police Act itself. That process is continuing and will certainly inform, as far as I am currently aware and as I look forward to, the recommendations that will be coming to me and to the Premier regarding future resourcing of SAPOL.

The final remark that I will make on FTEs over the coming 2022-23 financial year is to reflect on the 2021-22 financial year. As I made remarks in my opening statement, there has been a significant shortfall in recruitment targets for the last financial year. One of the things, if not the first thing, the police commissioner and I spoke about probably two hours after I was sworn in as a minister, and then certainly that evening when I met him face-to-face for the first time as minister, was the long-standing challenges that police had been facing, that he had been facing as the commissioner, throughout the last year in respect of recruiting police.

As I also said in my opening remarks, this is not something that has just magically appeared. This has been an issue that has been percolating now for months and years during the COVID

pandemic. There are various anecdotal reasons that have been put to me in my conversations with various people regarding what is challenging police recruiting. One thing that is not in any confusion, certainly in my mind, and as the advice that I have provided indicates, and as the Premier has provided to the police commissioner, is that any support he needs in recruiting is there and the government will respond accordingly.

But there is a definite lack of appropriate potential police cadets. The last two years of policing in this state, and this country, has looked dramatically different to what it did three years ago. If a potential applicant to SAPOL, a potential future police officer, was sitting back and remarking or contemplating what life as a police officer would look like, the last two years would have informed their views in a way that may not have been the case previously, with things such as border patrols and compliance checking in response to the lead role that SAPOL have taken during the pandemic.

As the police commissioner has privately and publicly remarked, thank goodness he can now return to his core and sole function as police commissioner at the conclusion of the emergency management declaration. Moving forward, policing will be returning to somewhat business as usual now that, but for a dozen or so FTEs, the police are largely not undertaking ongoing COVID duties. Certainly, the compliance responsibilities have now transferred back to SA Health.

The CHAIR: Can the minister wrap things up?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to, sir. Before I do, if I can remark on the fact that further advice I have received in my short 12 weeks or 11½ weeks as minister is that there has been a higher attrition in the last 12 months than had been expected. I did speak about the great retirement or the great resignation from many workforces, but the attrition in the last 12 months has been about 28. I am happy to correct that or provide some more details to the member specifically on that number, but there has been a higher than expected—39, thank you. Thirty-nine is the attrition, member for Chaffey.

There were resignations deferred during the COVID period as well where officers and staff from SAPOL deferred their resignation, and that has ultimately found us in the position that we find ourselves in at the end of this 2021-22 financial year, and moving into 2022-23 as a new government, where numbers are a challenge, but we are fully committed to addressing that in the most meaningful and constructive way that we can as a government.

Mr WHETSTONE: Did you try to answer all of my questions in the opening statement? Is that how it works?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If you are accusing me of being incredibly comprehensive, member for Chaffey, then I am happy to take your accusation.

The CHAIR: I am sure you have plenty of other questions.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, Chair. Minister, you talked about the future. The 2021-22 budget as opposed to the 2022-23 budget forecast: there are 195.4 less FTEs in that second round. What can you say to SAPOL officers and staff who are currently under the pump with a reduction in numbers of that quantity?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to share some of the not-so-private conversations I have had with police in my time as minister. There are multiple things: one is that I hear their concerns. As a minister and as a government that was elected in March of this year, we have taken heed of the concerns that police have put to us as a new government. We in fact were saying the same things in opposition, member for Chaffey, and that is why there was a comprehensive set of election commitments made by the then Malinauskas Labor opposition, and we are very pleased to be delivering those as a member of the cabinet of the Malinauskas government.

Those election commitments that we made demonstrate that we were listening and that we were identifying, as much as the response from the former government may not demonstrate that, and we were demonstrating in opposition that we knew and understood there was a recruiting issue, there was an issue with the shortfall of numbers and there was an issue with the approach the former government made in respect of only temporarily funding on a short-term basis 164 to 168 FTEs in respect of PSOs.

That is why, as I remarked earlier—and I will not go through the entire comprehensive answer again, member for Chaffey—we committed in opposition, and I reaffirmed that as the minister to the Police Association and to police when being sworn in as a minister, my absolute commitment and the Premier's commitment to the task force, and not just to the task force but to what the task force seeks to do, and that is quite different from what the last four years would show.

We have committed through this budget to no cuts, no efficiency dividends or savings—quite different from the hundreds of millions of dollars of savings that were imposed and cut from SAPOL's budget in the last term of government. I have said to police privately and publicly that I hear their concerns and that we are acting on those concerns.

Mr WHETSTONE: Will the savings measures introduced by the Weatherill government for the 2022-23 and the 2023-24 years of \$23.6 million be enforced by the Malinauskas government? In total, that makes it a \$47.2 million cut to the SAPOL budget.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Can you clarify which financial years you referred to, member for Chaffey?

Mr WHETSTONE: It was 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The year the decision was made in respect of forward estimates?

Mr WHETSTONE: They were savings measures introduced by the former Weatherill government—\$23.6 million through the forward estimates, 2022-23, 2023-24. Will those savings be enforced by the Malinauskas government—in total, \$47.2 million in cuts?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The answer is yes, I think it was the 2016-17 financial year you are referring to in respect of those savings measures, which were then maintained and built upon by your government—I think you were in cabinet at the time—and that was a savings measure that was borne out over the forward estimates up to and including 2022-23.

What I can unequivocally say, and as has been the firm commitment from the Premier in opposition as well as the Treasurer, and as we have proudly confirmed now, is there are no new efficiencies, no new savings, no cuts to supplement or build on those very significant cuts that we have seen over the last four years.

Mr WHETSTONE: With all due respect, minister, an efficiency, a saving and a cut are the same thing.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am not sure what the proposition to that was, but I am not necessarily arguing the contrary.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: have any SAPOL FTEs been laid off following the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: When you say 'laid off', can you just explain?

Mr WHETSTONE: Have any FTEs been laid off following easing of the COVID-19 restrictions?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Could I just ask for clarity: when you refer to 'laid off', do you mean TVSPs?

Mr WHETSTONE: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: You use the phrase 'laid off'. I would like some clarity, if you would be kind enough.

Mr WHETSTONE: Have been stood aside, have been seconded elsewhere. Has there been a reduction in FTEs due to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you for your clarification, member for Chaffey. There has been a reduction in FTEs, and I will provide to you on notice the specific breakdown of numbers if it assists. There have been a number of PSOs who have either had their duties reassigned or been absorbed into business as usual and that then of course is a reduction in that FTE but a supplement to what has been a backfill arrangement.

There were a significant number of contractors who were engaged to support and supplement the COVID operations. I am advised that they have ceased, but I will provide those specific numbers to you on notice.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. How many SAPOL FTEs are still dedicated to the COVID-19 response?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The current number is less than 10. I am advised that it does fluctuate somewhat day to day, but I think on average six FTEs are dedicated to COVID. I think I mentioned before it was a handful; it is less than two handfuls.

Mr WHETSTONE: Are any SAPOL officers still seconded to the Tom's Court quarantine facility?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: No, there are not. Tom's Court has ceased operations from a SAPOL perspective.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: minister, can you provide a breakdown of SAPOL's employment growth rate over the last five years?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to take that on notice, member for Chaffey, and provide some more detail that may not be available as I sit here.

Mr WHETSTONE: Okay, thank you. On the same reference point, can you advise when the next cadet course intake will occur?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am just getting you the specifics. I can provide that significant detail to you now. Specific detail on this is that we had a course begin last week and we have a further course commencing on the—

Mr WHETSTONE: How many were in that cadetship course last week?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, member for Chaffey, at this stage the next recruit course is scheduled to begin on 14 July 2022. That has been moved to slightly later in the month to achieve the full program, dependent upon the pipeline of recruits. As for the final number in that course, I will take it on notice and provide it to you.

Mr WHETSTONE: We have seen three cadet course intakes cancelled due to the lack of numbers. What proactive approach will you as the minister, or SAPOL, take to make corrections on the missed three intakes?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I might ask the police commissioner, who has of course been carrying this responsibility through the whole of 2021-22. What I can say in respect of the question regarding what I am doing is, starting from the very first conversation that I had with the police commissioner, I am ensuring that he knows that he has the full support of myself and this government in his dedicated and amplified approach to recruiting—it is necessary.

I have taken the opportunity, on multiple occasions in various forums since being the minister, to speak publicly about the need for more recruits and also the opportunity that SAPOL can provide to potential job applicants. I am sure that everybody in this room would agree that it is an extraordinary career and a fantastic job. It is secure work and well paid, which ticks whole bunch of boxes that we are seeking to achieve as a government.

I know that, to a large extent, that is supported by all sides government. On the remedial action and also on the challenges that have been faced in 2021-22, I might ask the commissioner to provide some more specific detail.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thank you, minister. It is certainly no secret that we have faced unique and, I would say, unprecedented challenges with recruiting. In order to address the shortfall in recruiting, which has seen three courses cancelled—we aim for an average of 24 participants per course, and we cannot identify or confirm the final numbers in each course until, in many cases, days before the commencement of that course.

We are happy to provide that information for the course that started on 16 June, as well as for future courses as they are filled. In order to address the shortfall, we have utilised some of our

savings from sworn salaries to invest in an intensive recruiting campaign and in marketing policing as a career option to a wide range of potential applicants.

We are also recontacting people who have previously applied for SAPOL in recent years and seeking their desire to reconsider policing as a career and to put them through the process. We are contacting recently resigned or retired SAPOL members to see if they are willing to consider re-entry into SAPOL.

We are also reconfiguring our recruiting and selection process to make sure that we are making it as easy as possible for applicants to navigate their way through the process. This includes the use of an online application form—which has only just been introduced, as a result of the current challenges—and the ability to engage with applicants during the application process to make sure we keep them on track and assist them in completing that process.

We have some aggressive targets, and a full review of our recruiting and application process is being undertaken to make sure there are no unnecessary barriers that impede people registering their interest and working their way through that process successfully.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, commissioner. Minister, if there are 24 cadets per course, what is the attrition rate? If 24 apply, how many get the gig?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to ask the commissioner if he has information available on that, otherwise we can provide it on notice.

Cmmr STEVENS: If it would be acceptable, I would like to take that on notice, but I can say that the attrition rate for cadets during the training program is very low, almost inconsequential. Clearly, we prefer people to stay the course, if you will forgive the pun, because we do invest significant resources in selecting them for the program, and we are very keen for all of them to graduate. It is a very low number—in single digits.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, when can we expect to see those cadets, from the introduction to the course then into operation and then onto the beat?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to clarify, is this the next course?

Mr WHETSTONE: The cadetship. If cadets start their course today, when can we expect to see them achieve the accreditation and then be in operation and on the beat?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: No matter what date or time the recruit course starts, assuming a course were to start today, it would be 9½ months, in response to your question; nine months and 2.1 weeks, I believe it is. I am further advised that the swearing is undertaken at six months, so the FTE number for sworn is adjusted at six months when they are sworn. At the conclusion of their 9½ months, they become probationary constables.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199. Will SAPOL consider recruiting from the United Kingdom, as they did in 2005 to 2007?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Obviously, that has taken place in the past. The commissioner has not asked me to make a consideration or, to the extent of that, advised me of his intention to undertake that change to recruiting practices at this point. But as I quite fairly said, and I think in a fair response to your question, if everything is on the table, then I would be considering any advice put to me by the police commissioner. If his advice were to pertain to recruiting from other jurisdictions, then I would take that advice and consider it in a reasonable way.

Mr WHETSTONE: Is there a trigger? Through you, minister, to the commissioner, is there a trigger when you will enforce other recruiting marketing strategies like the Calling All campaign, that type of initiative, to fast-track recruiting numbers?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I appreciate where you are going with the question, but probably 'trigger' is not the right way to look at it. If there were a trigger, the trigger has certainly been pulled. All efforts are being put into additional recruiting. There has been a very significant spend undertaken by SAPOL in respect of Calling All, that recruitment campaign. I might ask the commissioner to provide some more detail on that for your benefit, but there is no KPI-based trigger that implements

or calls in new or other tactics. Commissioner, could I ask you to provide some more detail around Calling All?

Cmmr STEVENS: We have invested somewhere in the order of about \$500,000 in the intensive campaign referred to as the Calling All campaign. That campaign so far has generated somewhere in the order of about 350 additional applications, which are being processed at the moment. That is quite a refreshing result from that effort.

It is our preference in the first instance to recruit locally from South Australia to provide jobs to South Australians. We are canvassing other Australian jurisdictions, seeking currently employed police officers from other states and territories, because the ability to put them through the academy process is much more streamlined and we can put them onto patrols much more quickly. Other considerations, such as UK recruiting, are factors that will be taken into account when we work through the outcomes from the Calling All campaign.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I might add one additional matter in respect of the tactics or strategies on this matter. There is a very strong value proposition in the arguments or the recruiting tactics put in by SAPOL around attracting Australian jurisdictional existing police from other jurisdictions to Adelaide, to South Australia and to our regions. Our cost of living is lower and our housing is more affordable, notwithstanding challenges that we are all aware of in respect of housing affordability. They are matters that are being actively addressed.

I have said to the police commissioner that I have no reservations whatsoever in raiding the pots or the pool of other states because, frankly, other states are doing exactly that as we speak. There are significant advertising campaigns also being executed by other jurisdictions that are trying to seek recruits as well as to recruit existing police, and they are being actively targeted across state borders. The police commissioner is going to add one more thing as well.

Cmmr STEVENS: It is also worth pointing out, I think, that we have recognised the challenges for regional South Australians to pursue a career with policing, given the logistics of having to spend time in the academy, and we are making allowances to offset the cost-of-living impacts for those individuals during the recruit selection process and also during their time in the academy, to remove some of those burdens for regional South Australians.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, commissioner. Minister, what sort of incentives are you giving for regional applicants wanting to join the force?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the commissioner to respond.

Cmmr STEVENS: That is exactly what I was referring to. We have acknowledged that people who live in regional South Australia would face significant challenges, given the cost of living and having to relocate to metropolitan Adelaide to participate in a 9½ month training program. In acknowledgement of that, we are looking to offset those cost-of-living impacts to make it easier for regional South Australians. There are recruiting activities occurring in the regions, but our current training delivery is entirely centred around the Police Academy at Fort Largs, and that does create issues for regionally located South Australians.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, commissioner. What is the salary for a recruit under the cadetship program, the starting salary?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Would you mind repeating the question?

Mr WHETSTONE: What is the starting salary for a recruit under the cadetship program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will grab that for you.

Mr WHETSTONE: We might as well get that out there before we try to promote the program.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is not a secret, but I am getting that information and I will provide it to you. I can provide some more clarity to a previous question. I have been given some numbers. I think I took on notice the number of cadets on the current, or the most recently instituted, course. That is 24 individuals, 24 cadets, and that is constituted of 12 males and 12 females. I will continue, though, and refer to my previous on notice answer regarding 14 July, because those numbers are still being finalised.

With respect to the specifics regarding the salary breakdown for cadets, the cadet junior rate, which applies to under 21 year olds, so 20 or under, is \$31,192, and that is paid for the duration of their 9½ months of training. The wage or salary for the cadet, which excludes penalties and overtime, is \$47,753, and again that is for the duration of their 9½ months of training. Upon completion, notwithstanding the age of the cadet, the starting salary including overtime is, give or take some change based upon the current EBA movements, \$90,000.

Mr WHETSTONE: Would you consider upping the ante if you are looking to second more SAPOL officers? That starting salary, I guess, might be considered as an apprentice wage. I guess that is the way I started.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I think there would be a few apprentices who would be happy to earn \$31,000 or \$47,000.

Mr WHETSTONE: Horses for courses. The question is: would you consider upping the ante to try to entice more cadets into the program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The commissioner has already referred to some particular strategies that are in place to attract regional applicants. I think that is a very sound strategy. The wages of those cadets, be it the junior cadet rate or the cadet rate, are a matter for the enterprise bargaining agreement negotiated from time to time. Of course, the Attorney-General is responsible, and the Treasurer, as the holder of the Treasury accounts, has an involvement as well.

It would be insincere for me to say that there is a plan that is on the table now to increase the training wage of cadets in that 9½ months—there is not. That has not been advice that was put to me. Relativities are important here and as the member for Chaffey referred to in respect of an apprenticeship, I think this is more than an apprenticeship, hence the payment and the salary of these individuals is very much higher than what a first-year through to fourth-year apprentice could expect to make.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, I beg to differ. I am looking at supply and demand and while I look at the mining industry, while I look at agriculture and while there is a shortage of workforce and traineeships, wages have risen and training enticements have risen significantly to entice people from one sector to the other. That is why I asked whether there is any thinking around increasing wages. I thank the commissioner for the packages that could be put to those applicants, but if we look around the country, around South Australia, there is a shortage of trainees and apprentices and cadetships. To entice them, it is called money.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I welcome the member for Chaffey and I being on a unity ticket when it comes to doing all we can to improve the wages and conditions of working South Australians, and the Labor Party's long and firm commitment to doing so. We have seen great success recently—unfortunately, opposed in a very dramatic way—in improving the minimum wage across the country, which does have a very significant and demonstrable flow-on to wages across all jurisdictions. I am not sure, quite honestly, of the member for Chaffey's position on minimum wage for farm workers and for agricultural workers. There has been much litigation through the federal commission—

Mr WHETSTONE: Terrible outcome.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: 'Terrible outcome'—I think in confirming so the member for Chaffey and I are not on a unity ticket then when it comes to improving the wages and conditions of working South Australians. Notwithstanding the difference of opinion and policy that we have on this, all matters are on the table, and the strong advocacy of police when it comes to their wages and conditions always flows on to cadets. I think to give credit where credit is due, years of strong advocacy from the Police Association have seen the cadet wages of cadet police in South Australia at a very firm and sound level. I sincerely doubt—nor am I advised—that those wages have contributed to the shortfall that we currently see in recruiting.

Mr WHETSTONE: I have done what I can to try to get the cadets a better pay deal, but we will see how we go. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: how many SAPOL FTEs have been impacted by the vaccination mandates?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If I could ask for some clarity just to assist in the answer for the member for Chaffey: do you mean numbers that have been stood down from time to time as a result of the mandate?

Mr WHETSTONE: That is correct.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take the specifics of that on notice because that obviously was a number that changed from time to time. At various points, whilst there was a mandate in place, the numbers changed so there were various attempts to return those non-mandate compliant workers to the workforce. I will bring a specific number back to you, as it may have fluctuated from time to time.

Mr WHETSTONE: On the flip side of that—that you will take on notice how many SAPOL FTEs were impacted by the vaccination mandates—how many SAPOL FTEs returned to work after the mandate was lifted?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take some specific details and provide that to the member on notice, but the commissioner has advised me that he can provide some additional information to you now as well and is happy to provide that answer.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thank you, minister. The specific numbers in relation to the SAPOL employees affected by the vaccination mandate will be provided on notice, but I can say there were in the order of about 35 to 40 employees in total who were affected by their vaccination status and furloughed from work. Once the major emergency direction for police workers was lifted, it was replaced with a management direction that required people to be fully vaccinated or wear PPE whilst at work and to undertake rapid antigen tests, firstly on a daily basis and then every second day.

Since having revoked that emergency direction, approximately one-third of those people have returned to work on full duties, another third are still in the process of returning from leave—some on long service leave, some on sick leave and some on leave without pay—and there is another cohort who have, at this stage, indicated that they will no longer be returning to SAPOL.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you. Minister, can you give me an understanding of how many SAPOL FTEs are isolating on a weekly basis, currently?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Obviously, that does change, so I think the mapping of that we will provide, if we can, additional detail, but we are in a space of around 120 a week. At the most recent cut that I have on 17 June, so from a couple of days ago, we had 109 COVID-positive in isolation, but that does fluctuate. There is no doubt that the advice that I received as a member of the emergency management committee of cabinet also indicates that there is likely, over the next coming weeks, to be an increase in statewide numbers. I would expect, on a law of averages, that there will be an increase in the number of SAPOL staff affected.

There is advice provided from our health leaders that that curve up will impact everybody quite uniformly, and I certainly am mindful that SAPOL, education, health workers and even the good folk who work in this place are not at all immune from the societal impacts that COVID continues to make in our community.

Membership:

Mr Odenwalder substituted for Mrs Pearce.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, what percentage of SAPOL staff—officers and staff—are currently vaccinated?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take that on notice.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: given low police officer morale and increased pressure over workforce shortages, what actions are the government taking to protect staff in terms of the mental health and wellbeing of first responders and other SAPOL staff? What measures are you putting in place to protect and support them?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The Employee Assistance Section of South Australia Police provides a statewide professional psychological, medical and social work support service, with the aim of maintaining or improving the physical and mental health of employees. This incorporates collaborative work with employees and local managers to mitigate risk and encourage safe and healthy workplaces. The EAS also provides a consultancy, training and assessment service in the areas of physical and psychological mental health and wellbeing.

In specific detail, for the member's benefit, it is General Order 8540 that governs this. This general order applies to all SAPOL workplaces and workers and, amongst other things, aims to ensure that workers experiencing trauma are offered adequate and targeted resources and also that workers are aware of the processes to access such support. Further, it is very important to note that there was, I think within a week or so of being sworn in as a minister, the survey results of a significant body of work undertaken that looked at and reported on the mental wellbeing of officers.

I have spoken in the parliament on a number of occasions of my professional experience in supporting workers at work, particularly those who have been working in industries or workplaces that either experience vicarious trauma or themselves suffer trauma. The EAS and mental health response, mental health wellbeing focus of SAPOL, has been demonstrated to me to be a very firm commitment by the commissioner, as well as his senior managers and leadership group.

Further to the member's question in respect of the numbers and the response therein: to 31 March 2022, which is the last information that I have before me, a total of 465 psychological related incidents were reported compared to 473 for the same period last year. Of these, 88 were involved in an injury compared to 78 for the same period last year. Psychological related incidents account for 27 per cent of total incidents reported compared to 26 per cent for the same period last year.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. I will not presume anything, but how are you supporting SAPOL volunteers through mental health and their wellbeing?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I refer to my previous answer in respect of the details around that.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 200, the completion of the firearms control system project. It has been delayed for 12 months. What is the reason for that?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: To date, the firearms control system replace project has delivered implementation of a customer portal for firearms dealers and licensees, with the following digital forms:

- Record of incoming firearm;
- Record of outgoing firearm;
- Account creation request and change of details;
- Integration to and leveraging the SA government's mySAGOV platform for accessing SAFR customer portal, as well as to view their current firearms licence;
- Deployment of self-audit online form for firearm licence holders to assist with data cleansing work; and
- Development and commissioning the integration from current firearms control system to Australian Firearms Information Network.

The product selected for the enterprise portal was a modification of the licensing and registration application provided by the Western Australia Police Force. Following the detailed planning and design phase of this work, it was discovered that a significantly higher degree of modification than originally envisaged was necessary to meet SAPOL requirements, and this portion of the project has been paused whilst alternative solutions are being analysed by SAPOL.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. What evaluation process will the government be implementing to ensure that the goals of this program are met and that we do have this program rolled out after a 12-month delay?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I do note the importance of this matter for the member for Chaffey. As a rural member, firearms are a part of life. I know you have spoken about this in the chamber before, and I do note that. I also note that since being a minister I have met with various stakeholders and interest groups that represent firearms users, all of whom have demonstrated an incredible responsibility and support for strong and effective firearm licensing control. I am very pleased to see the very strong working relationship that many of these groups and key stakeholders have with the South Australia Police Firearms Branch.

With respect to the governance and delivery of this project, as well as the evaluation, a key body of work is being undertaken by SAPOL, and that will be delivered to me through the police commissioner for advice and recommendations in due course. I am assured that the balance is being pursued in respect of community needs and community concerns.

Mr WHETSTONE: Same reference point: the completion of stages 2 to 4 of the police records management system has been delayed by 12 months. Can you give me a comprehensive understanding of why there is another program delayed by 12 months?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will refer to the police commissioner, who can provide a bit more detail in respect of the complexity of the carryover of this project.

Cmmr STEVENS: That is probably the point I would like to highlight: this is a highly complex project. We are continuing to seek carryovers to ensure the project is delivered in accordance with what is required for successful implementation. Over the last two years, the project has been impacted by COVID, which would be no surprise to anyone, with the difficulty of being able to retain staff on the dedicated project—they have been redirected to COVID-19 emergency response and operational duties—along with the impact of staff isolation through COVID-positive cases. That is, I suppose, the brief summary as to the reason for the delay. We are committed to delivering the project, but it is complex. I am advised that we have a major release next week.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 200, the same reference point: the SAPOL communications centre upgrade was introduced under the former government and was due for completion in June 2023 at a project cost of nearly \$16.5 million. Why has this upgrade been cut from the budget?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The characterisation that this was introduced by the former government, the upgrade of the communications centre, I think is only part of the story here. There is no doubt that what was begun as a project with respect to the scope and anticipated works was rapidly changed. I am not sure what advice or otherwise the former minister may have received. It would be improper for me to ask him the questions as he sits here today, but I reiterate his tenure as the Minister for Police.

The \$16.5 million was provided in the 2019-20 budget, and that was to upgrade some facilities or functions within the building. The works were proposed to ensure that the seismic integrity of the building in the event of an earthquake would be sufficient. However, following due diligence, an in-depth investigation into the feasibility of this retrofit—that is, the feasibility of the retrofit provided as part of that \$16.5 million of funding—the Department for Infrastructure and Transport did provide written advice, in their capacity as SA government mandated capital project risk managers, to formally express their serious concerns in relation to pursuing an upgrade to Carrington Street, as the original funding commitment intended.

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport advised that the refurbishment would not be feasible due to a series of factors, including no operational continuity options during construction; the refurbishment scope would likely still not, despite the premise of this question, achieve the required critical infrastructure and importance of level 4 standards, given the building's original structural design; and further, the associated risk and unknown cost impacts with undertaking the refurbishment.

At this point, DIT recommended SAPOL pursue a new build solution as a preferred outcome. This information was not disclosed prior to the original funding commitment. Following DIT's recommendation that the best value for money option for government to also ensure operational continuity is for the state to pursue a new build strategy, SAPOL was provided additional funding from the business case fund to undertake a series of additional works.

This included undertaking a full business case for the future requirements and options for a replacement communications building to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose to meet future needs and can support the critical 24/7 operational capability in the event of a significant event. The ongoing work in respect of this business case continues; it is yet to be completed. Once it has been completed, it will be received, evaluated and considered in the usual processes.

Mr WHETSTONE: Of the \$16.474 million for this upgrade, how much had been spent before the cancellation of the program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will provide the exact amount and some specific details to you on notice, member for Chaffey. I am advised that the full expenditure in respect of the business case has been undertaken or will be anticipated to have been undertaken, but the capital funding has not been expended at all. As I explained in my previous answer, the progressing of the option that was funded at the time would have led to unacceptable operational risk and problems for SAPOL communications centre operations.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 201, public safety: minister, can you explain why the public safety net cost of services has been cut by more than \$12.5 million?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: While we are finding some information on that, member for Chaffey, I can provide a bit of information to you to clarify a previous answer that I gave in respect of your strong advocacy for wage increases. Maybe we are back on the unity ticket. I am advised that cadet recruits spend six months on the cadet salary and then, once sworn at six months, complete the remaining 3.5 months of their training on a probationary constable salary, which is approximately \$71,000. I think I advised you that there were nine months at \$31,000 and \$47,000; in fact, it is only six months at those levels and it then increases rapidly to \$71,000 per annum. It is not a bad salary for an attainment of a training apprenticeship.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can I take any credit for that wage bump within 15 minutes?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Immediately. Why not?

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is your prerogative.

Mr WHETSTONE: Back to the \$12.5 million cut to the public safety services.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Could you provide some clarity in respect of the figure that you referred to?

Mr WHETSTONE: On page 201, public safety net cost of services has been cut by more than \$12.5 million. In actual fact it is \$12.518 million.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Could you clarify what years you are referring to there?

Mr WHETSTONE: Comparing the 2021-22 budget with the 2022-23 budget, there is a difference of \$12.518 million—a reduction.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can provide some additional detail on the difference between the estimated result, which is probably more pertinent to where operations currently are in the future there. We will grab that now for you. I am advised that the decrease is primarily due to a number of factors:

- the higher expenditure for COVID-19 resources in 2021-22, which is \$54 million;
- the sales proceeds for the Academy and Stirling sites, paid into the consolidated account in 2021-22, which is \$5.5 million of the \$13.9 million total;
- lower expenditure for the multipurpose load-bearing vests initiative in 2022-23, which is \$1.5 million of the \$4.3 million total;
- increased operational saving measures in 2022-23;
- higher commonwealth government funding that has been recognised for projects in the APY lands;

- that list has been partially offset by higher enterprise agreement costs and indexation of expenses in 2022-23, which is a total of \$7 million of the \$18.8 million total;
- an increase of 0.5 per cent to the superannuation guarantee in 2022-23. As a firm advocate for better wages for working South Australians, I know the member for Chaffey would be very keen to know that working South Australians will receive that increase in SG in 2022-23;
- lower depreciation in 2021-22, which is a total of \$700,000 of the \$1.7 million total;
- the sale of surplus equipment in 2021-22, which is a total of \$0.2 million of the \$0.6 million total; and
- a one-off recognition of donated battery assets from the Department for Energy and Mining in 2021-22, which is a total of \$0.2 million of the \$0.6 million total.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 200. Minister, over the forward estimates, can you explain why the investment program has been cut by more than \$29 million?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take that on notice, member for Chaffey, and provide extensive details for you. I am very keen to keep doing this. I have another clarification to a previous point. Rather than clarification, I am very keen to provide the most detail I can. The communications centre capital, which the member for Chaffey asked a question in respect of before regarding funds expended, I am advised that \$74,000 was expended, which was for professional services.

Ms SAVVAS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 200, which I think was just referred to by the member for Chaffey. My question is: can the minister inform the committee about investments in the budget to support the community policing services in the APY lands?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is almost as if the Chair has asked the member to ask this question on his behalf.

The CHAIR: I am enjoying this.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It would be well excused if the Chair did. The government has committed \$4.242 million in 2022-23 in APY lands accommodation projects, which will enhance the capability of SAPOL to deliver policing services and improved community engagement to Aboriginal communities in the APY lands. Amongst the priorities for this funding is the delivery of two new police posts, with accommodation at Indulkana and Pipalyatjara, for which SAPOL has been provided with capital funding of \$3.262 million to enable the completion of both facilities. Construction of the remaining two police posts and accommodation at Indulkana and Pipalyatjara will increase police presence in these remote communities and will enable greater access to police services in those communities.

These facilities will be comprised of public waiting areas, office space for two to three staff, two interview rooms, toilet facilities, multiple-bedroom accommodation, lounge and kitchen facilities, interview rooms that can be utilised as additional workspace, and kitchen and breakout lounge facilities to enable staff to stay on the lands for extended periods at the site.

The funding for these new facilities that I have highlighted shows the commitment that this government has in engaging with and supporting Aboriginal communities, whether they be in metropolitan Adelaide, regional South Australia or remote communities, such as the APY lands.

The facilities will support the delivery of police services through a new staffing model designed to provide a consistent and sustainable police presence in the communities of the APY lands, where permanently stationed officers are joined by police officers from the newly formed state operations branch APY lands section, which will roster into the APY lands on an ongoing basis.

The new model and the new facilities aim to improve police engagement with the community by providing improved consistency of service delivery and extending operational capability and duration of deployment into more remote areas of the state. This will enable improved police services to be delivered as well as provide greater capacity for relationships to be built and nurtured between South Australia Police and our local communities.

Importantly, officers of the APY lands section will undergo training including a bespoke culture and language training package specific to the Anangu people, including their language, history, culture and traditions. The first course was delivered in April, with participants providing extremely positive feedback to the project team. The first deployment of the APY lands section occurred, as I previously remarked, on Monday 2 May, and the full rollout will take place, as I advised, in July 2022.

The funding provided by this government to the new policing facilities in the APY lands is a clear example of our commitment to delivering positive outcomes for Aboriginal South Australians. I look forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues of all persuasions to address some of these inequalities experienced by South Australian Aboriginal communities that we know too well.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, I think this is project No. 4 that has been delayed. Can you give me an understanding of why the APY accommodation project has been delayed by 24 months?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: As I advised somewhat in my previous answer to the member for Newland, the three posts with accommodation at Fregon, Indulkana and Pipalyatjara are being project managed through DIT. This is through the cross-government service division. Construction has commenced on the Umuwa multi-agency facility, with offsite fabrication being undertaken at Tailem Bend. This commenced in February 2022, and mobilisation on that site now is scheduled for August 2022. Completion is indicatively programmed for December 2022; however, unfortunately, with potential impacts of material supply and COVID this could, I foreshadow, stretch from December 2022 to March 2023.

I am advised that the approval for the construction at Fregon to commence was only provided in March 2022, noting amended design documentation is required due to a change of site required by the APY council right back in 2021. I am advised that completion of that Fregon build is currently estimated at June 2023. As I previously remarked, the additional funding for the construction was provided in the current state budget process. I look forward to the delivery of those projects on the lands as quickly as we possibly can.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199, the staffing model. Minister, can you update the committee on the consultation to date used in the APY lands staffing model?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the commissioner to provide the specific operational details around that.

Cmmr STEVENS: As with any reform or change that occurs within SAPOL, there is a formal consultation process that occurs once the project work is complete. That consultation involves engagement with affected elements of the South Australia Police workforce. It also involves extensive community consultation, and with the nature of the policing duties undertaken on the APY lands the engagement with the local community was of critical importance in ensuring that they understood our commitment to delivering effective services and consistent service delivery across the entire APY.

Mr WHETSTONE: Are there any ongoing disputes surrounding the agreements of that staffing model? Has the government received any feedback from the Police Association regarding the staffing model?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take on notice if there are any active disputes being managed by AGDs in respect of their capacity and responsibilities in respect of whole-of-government industrial relations. In respect of any that I am aware of, as the commissioner advises me, we are not aware of any ongoing disputes.

Mr WHETSTONE: Have you been to the APY lands?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I have not yet, unfortunately, not in the 11½ weeks that I have been a minister.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you not find a decent host?

The CHAIR: I am more than happy to take you to the APY lands any time.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It would not surprise you that conversations are active, but no, unfortunately, in the short time that I have been a minister, minus a couple of weeks with COVID, I have yet to be able to get up there.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 201. Given the dramatic rise in crime rates and the ongoing staffing issues that SAPOL is currently experiencing, will the government introduce any legislative changes regarding crime statistics?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The premise of your question is not accepted. There has not been a dramatic rise in crime statistics. It is certainly a matter of convenient cherrypicking that the member has been, I believe, referring to there. As for legislative change that may or may not be considered, there has been no advice provided to me from SAPOL in respect of any proposed or sought legislative change. If there was, I would consider that as ministerial and we would undertake the usual cabinet processes.

Mr WHETSTONE: Why were the crime statistics withheld from public eyes for the month of April?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: In absolute defence of the police commissioner, the member's question is mischievous at best. There was nothing withheld. Considering that the police commissioner is sitting next to me, I will ask him to perhaps respond in a more meaningful way to that absurd proposition.

Cmmr STEVENS: Prior to 2012, the accepted practice was that crime statistics were released at the conclusion of the financial year, after the cleansing process had occurred. That meant that the previous financial year's statistics were available sometime in September. In 2012, a change was initiated by SAPOL that saw crime statistics being released and uploaded at the conclusion of each month, but with a four to eight-week delay in those monthly results being uploaded to ensure that the data being uploaded was verified.

In the instance of March 2022, what occurred was no more than an administrative error, and that meant that the March statistics were not uploaded in the manner in which we have been doing it since 2012. I can confirm that the April statistics were uploaded some days ago, in accordance with that practice. It was simply an oversight.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, commissioner. I acknowledge that it was an administrative error, but I guess I would challenge the minister on trying to sabotage any goodwill that we have.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Was that a question?

Mr WHETSTONE: Well, you have to be ready to take it and give it. Minister, can you provide a breakdown on the number of petrol drive-off offences that have occurred within the last financial year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can provide that on notice, member for Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you advise the committee a percentage of petrol drive-off offenders who have been caught?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Likewise, I can provide a suite of information to you, perhaps as comprehensive as my opening address, in respect of petrol drive-offs and the offences and the apprehension of offenders.

Mr WHETSTONE: I guess the underlying issue with petrol drive-offs is that we have always had the issue but we now have a significant issue with the cost of fuel and the impact that it is having on those businesses. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 201. Can the minister provide a breakdown of the number of firearms that have gone missing in the last financial year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The specific number the member asks for I will need to take on notice. I have some other information should there be some further questions regarding firearms and particular statistics around those, but on the number that have gone missing I will have to take that on notice and provide it to the member.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you also take on notice the breakdown of private firearms that have gone missing and SAPOL firearms that have gone missing or been misplaced?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If that information is operationally available and not protected then I will provide that, yes, on notice.

Mr WHETSTONE: With that question taken on notice, I guess the question would be: does the government hold any intention of omitting either petrol drive-off offences or missing firearms from crime statistics?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, admitting?

Mr WHETSTONE: Missing firearms.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, did you say omitting or admitting?

Mr WHETSTONE: Does the government hold any intention of omitting either petrol drive-off offences or missing firearms from crime statistics?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I have received no advice to suggest that.

Mr WHETSTONE: Does the government hold any intention of changing the criminal age of responsibility in South Australia?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That is a matter for the Attorney-General. I think the Attorney appeared before estimates yesterday and I am not sure if the member was able to ask the Attorney that, but it is a matter that is both the responsibility of and administered by the Attorney-General. I receive reports from the Attorney-General, as other members of cabinet do, on that matter. I know it is a matter that is well ventilated publicly with strong views and strong advocacy from various stakeholders in the community. I think, in fact, the former Attorney-General, the now former member for—

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 201—

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I got out of that quickly. I was about to say something nice about Vickie.

The CHAIR: Member for Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you for your protection. Given the dramatic cuts to rehabilitation services outlined in the correctional services portfolio, what measures are you and the government going to put in place to prepare for the spike in reoffenders, considering the extra pressure that will put on SAPOL?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can answer that twofold: one, is that I invite the member—if there was a correctional services question that he had, as much as I dispute the premise of the question—to ask that in the next session, which is fast approaching. As for any advice that I may receive from SAPOL in respect of their strong and ongoing work on a multi-agency level with corrections, I will advise in accordance with the usual practices.

Mr WHETSTONE: Back on the APY lands—and I am hoping you will get there soon—Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: SAPOL has not recruited community constables to work in the APY lands for a number of years. How many vacancies exist in the APY lands for community constables? Maybe you can intertwine what efforts the government are putting in place to encourage and recruit community constables.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The commissioner advises me that there have been, and continue to be, and have been for a number of years, some well-known challenges with recruiting traditional community constables on the lands. There are vacancies and there have been vacancies historically. The specific number of vacancies as we currently sit today we will provide on notice to the member.

Mr WHETSTONE: Moving on to regional areas, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 119, how many SAPOL FTE allocated positions exist in regional locations? If I may, minister, can you please give me a definitive line of what you consider a regional location as opposed to a metropolitan location.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I think in respect of that question it is far more important for the police commissioner to define the operational response. I am not sure that what I think is country or what I think is metropolitan is of any measure to the police commissioner. I will ask him to answer the second part.

I can advise the member that as of 30 April 2022 there are 915 sworn police positions in country areas and 3,781 positions in the metropolitan area. I will ask the police commissioner to provide some operational information regarding where and how that will be defined, for the member's benefit. The establishment in regional areas has slightly decreased in the last financial year, and country positions represent 19.5 per cent of the total of sworn positions.

Cmmr STEVENS: The distinction between regional and metropolitan is based on our current policing model, which has four metropolitan districts: east, north, south and western districts. That encapsulates the wider metropolitan area. The country local service areas comprise the remainder of the state and include those inner country areas, including Mount Barker and the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, commissioner. Minister, with the pressure on workforce vacancies in regional South Australia, what does the government offer standing SAPOL staff being located in a regional centre?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to clarify, is this in respect of entitlements or attraction measures and those—

Mr WHETSTONE: What incentives do the government have in place to entice SAPOL staff officers into regional centres?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There is a series of measures and a series of entitlements and a series of attraction measures which are provided, and provided in various ways and various methods. Of note is the whole-of-government salary sacrifice arrangements. These are coordinated by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. There are new remote area benefits that are able to be salary packaged by eligible SAPOL members, with claims being able to be backdated to 2 September 2019 when the submission was approved by then cabinet.

Some of the additional benefits that now exist that eligible members are able to claim, in respect of these salary sacrificing arrangements, include:

- The remote area housing, and it is employer-provided;
- Remote area rental assistance;
- Remote area mortgage interest; and
- Remote area purchase of house or land to build.

SAPOL have addressed vacancy rates in the country areas by offering additional attractions, which include the following:

- A guaranteed return to a district or local service area of the member's choice within three months of the expiration of their country tenure, and this applies to positions in Ceduna, Coober Pedy, Marla and Roxby Downs; and
- A further reduction of tenure to one year instead of two, and this applies to Ceduna general duties members and to Ceduna CIB members.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. How many officers are not at work in regional areas come June 30 2022 owing to WorkCover and leave without pay absentees?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Considering that is as of 30 June a projection, I will get the member a specific answer as quickly as I can after 30 June.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you. When will SAPOL implement the regional policing model—we have touched on it in some of your answers—outlined in a consultation paper on April 21? As a result of this consultation paper, what changes will be made in regional policing?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That is a matter that I have asked to be considered by the Premier's task force.

Mr WHETSTONE: Okay. What is the projected funding required to achieve regional policing models?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That will be advised through the Premier's task force.

Mr WHETSTONE: Would you like some input? That is okay. Minister, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: could you please provide a breakdown of the number of police stations in regional South Australia that are currently closed or unmanned, or set to close due to staffing and other issues?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: SAPOL currently has 128 police stations in total across a statewide portfolio. Some 121 police stations are occupied and active. Seven regional stations are vacant and/or inactive, and I can provide the member specifics in relation to where those stations are currently located. They are satellite police stations that have been closed for a considerable period of time: Coffin Bay, Cockburn, Kalangadoo, Mannahill, Minnipa, Andamooka and Wirrulla. These vacancies have been used to offset positions in other regional locations.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. With note, there are a number of police stations around the state regionally that have unattended signs on the door. What category are they put into?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: My answer to the previous question was those that are permanently or by direction closed or not open. The member's question, in respect of a sign on the door that it is unattended, I am advised is about operational matters occurring right there and then. It could be that an officer is in the community, is attending to a call or doing something else, it does not indicate a station is closed. I have provided the answer and the advice, which is the number of seven, including the locations. If there is any information that the member has where a sign may be located at a location other than those seven specific locations, it is due to an acute or contemporary operational response or duties that are being undertaken.

Mr WHETSTONE: As an example, Renmark in the Riverland has a population nearing 12,000, yet the unattended sign has been at that police station door for a number of months now, raising concern for public safety in that community.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take that question on notice. Two points in reply to that question: I am advised that police do work from Renmark and there are no concerns from SAPOL or me regarding operational safety as a result of any matters occurring in Renmark. I do note the member's advocacy for his community and, if there is further information I can provide him as the local member, I would be more than pleased to do so.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199: I am aware that there is a dispute with SAPOL and PASA currently being heard in the South Australian tribunal regarding staffing on Kangaroo Island. Minister, can you advise how much that will cost taxpayers to defend the litigation?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take that on notice insofar as my portfolio can advise, otherwise I will liaise with the Attorney-General as the Minister for Industrial Relations and provide that advice if I am able to at the conclusion of those proceedings.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you minister. Can you also advise of the cost to maintain the four officers on the island and provide a two-person on-call function in a single financial year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Any further information I can provide I will do so on notice, yes.

Mr WHETSTONE: Same reference point: following the highly publicised fifty-fifty recruiting strategy, how many extra officers have been recruited to cover for officers on parental leave?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The advice I have received, member for Chaffey, is that recruiting is done to 4,696, and that accommodates officers who are on various types of leave. Any suggestion that recruiting targets to have the more diverse genders in our workforce somehow negatively impacts SAPOL operations, because women take maternity leave, would be most troubling.

Mr WHETSTONE: Same reference point: of the total number of sworn FTEs available allocated to substantive positions in the general duties response function in the districts, what percentage is currently at work performing the response function in each metropolitan district?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will take that on notice, member for Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, the issue around my personal conversations—my conversations with the Police Association and regional officers—is that there is a morale crisis within SAPOL. Obviously, the pressure on staff with the lack of incoming numbers is going to be addressed via the Premier's task force, but what is your view of the current state of staffing and morale in the police department?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, Chair, I did not catch the budget reference number.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 199.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to be clear, the member is asking for my personal observations, loosely connected to a—

Mr WHETSTONE: You cannot take 20 minutes to answer this question because there are only six minutes to go.

The CHAIR: I think the minister has some latitude. It is a very broad question.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is an interesting question.

Mr WHETSTONE: I thought you might have referred it to the task force and we would get on with it.

The CHAIR: It is, I guess, loosely tethered to a budget line.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I could take 20 minutes to answer that question but I will not.

The CHAIR: I might stop you from doing that.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you, sir. Thank you for your protection. The member's private conversations that he referred to would be running parallel with the conversations I have been having with the workforce as well, that I have been having with the police commissioner in meetings as well, as well as the one-on-one conversations I have been having with many police.

There is no doubt that there has been a significant toll that COVID operations and COVID more generally has taken on the SAPOL workforce. I said earlier, and I believe this wholeheartedly, that SAPOL is not immune from the challenges and the wellbeing challenges that COVID has posed to other frontline workers. Just how incredibly excruciatingly hard the last number of years have been has been well ventilated by all frontline workers. I am dedicated as a minister to addressing matters as they are raised with me, ensuring a workforce who are proud to be sworn officers and a workforce who are resourced and healthy.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, I would like to ask about your understanding of the newly announced multipurpose load-bearing vests. I watched an interview with you on commercial TV. You described these vests as stab-proof, bulletproof and slash-proof. On reflection, do you think you would be misleading SAPOL officers, because they are stab-resistant, bullet-resistant and slash-resistant, not proof?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I appreciate the member for Chaffey's following of the good news story that was the announcement, in opposition, of the then Labor opposition to extend multipurpose load-bearing vests to all officers. I also note the very good news that we are getting on with delivering that commitment. What I can, without any equivocation, advise the member for Chaffey is that SAPOL members do not take advice on their vests from me, they take it from the police commissioner.

Mr WHETSTONE: So will you be getting your briefings from the commissioner next time you do a TV interview? That is a yes. Regarding mobile phone cameras, can you please provide an update on the progress of the camera program and why the program has been delayed?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am very pleased to, but I will ask the member to redirect those questions to the road safety section that we have agreed to.

Mr WHETSTONE: Certainly.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thanks.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, can you please provide an update on the progress of the police aircraft services contract?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There is a whole-of-government procurement that will be proceeding through usual and established cabinet processes in this financial year. I can provide advice to the member and to the house as they become decided and available.

Mr WHETSTONE: Does the government intend to continue those aircraft services contracts?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I refer to my previous answer.

The CHAIR: We have reached the allotted time, so I declare the examination of the portfolio of SAPOL and the estimate of payments for South Australia Police and Administered Items for South Australia Police completed. I would like to thank SAPOL for their work leading up to the estimates committee but also for the work that they do on behalf of the South Australian community. It is deeply appreciated.

Sitting suspended from 11:00 to 11:16.

DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, \$370,762,000

Membership:

Mr McBride substituted for Mr Tarzia.

Ms Wortley substituted for Ms Savvas.

Mr Brown substituted for Mr Odenwalder.

Minister:

Hon. J.K. Szakacs, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Brown, Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services.

Mr C. Sexton, Executive Director, People and Business Services, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms M. Deer, Manager, Executive Services, Department for Correctional Services

The CHAIR: Welcome to Estimates Committee B. The portfolio is the Department for Correctional Services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if he so wishes, and to introduce his advisers. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if he so wishes. I call on members for questions.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you, Chair. I welcome members to this session. I also welcome the advisers here with me: David Brown, Chief Executive of DCS; Chris Sexton, Executive Director, People and Business Services; and behind me is Megan Deer, Manager of Executive Services. I thank them for their exceptional work in preparation for today's estimates committee for the benefit of members here.

A pivotal responsibility of government is the protection and safety of its citizens. I have no doubt that those in this place appreciate the role and the critical responsibility that the Department for Correctional Services has in delivering that goal.

My observation of the work being done by DCS in the 11½ weeks that I have been minister—in that period I have spent a very considerable amount of time both in custodial facilities and community corrections facilities, as well as meeting with individual staff—is that the key strategic focus of the agency is the 10by20 strategy, which is having a significant and profoundly positive impact. I am incredibly proud that the 10by20 initiative was commenced by Labor back in 2016. To reduce offending, as we all know, leads to a better community outcome, less crime and fewer victims.

10by20 is focused on improving rehabilitation and reintegration and has already led to significant success. This is seen in South Australia's return to corrective services with a new correctional sanction rate, which was the lowest in the country at 39.3 per cent, well below the national average of 53.1 per cent. South Australia also has the lowest rate, nationally, of return to prison with a new sentence, which is 33.2 per cent, well below the national average of 45.2 per cent.

I know how proud DCS employees are of their work in 10by20. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise over the last four years, in the face of very significant cuts to budget within DCS, the bipartisan support that the then Marshall government showed to the continuation of 10by20 strategies. I think the member for Hartley was previously in the room, and I thank him and note his interest as a former minister in this area.

I can give my assurance that this government will leverage off 10by20's success when mapping the future direction of our agency because one key element of 10by20, and a critical focus area for our government, is Closing the Gap and improving the opportunities and services available for our Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is a major social issue and it is one that this government is deeply committed to.

The policies and practices of the past have contributed to the disadvantage and the intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal people today, who are, as a result, more likely to experience family and domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, inadequate housing, chronic health conditions, poor school attendance and high levels of unemployment. This cannot continue, and it is demonstrated by this government's whole-of-government approach to Closing the Gap. Several strategic priorities across DCS are focused on Closing the Gap, and the department is dedicated to ongoing action and multi-agency collaboration.

New Closing the Gap targets to be delivered by DCS as part of this new budget include increasing opportunities for meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations; developing a correctional treatment unit at Yatala Labour Prison, inclusive of Aboriginal-specific service models; developing a culturally responsive women's safety program for Aboriginal women and children who have been impacted by family and domestic violence, in partnership with Kornar Winmil Yunti; creating new Aboriginal-identified community corrections positions that will acknowledge cultural training and expertise; and increasing alcohol and other drugs reintegration support for regional and remote communities. I am confident these initiatives will lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people.

We have had two years of COVID, and I want to make a very strong and proud acknowledgement of the extraordinary work that DCS staff, leaders and management have undertaken through that time. The impact as a high-risk setting could have been very different from what it was. To this day, not a single prisoner who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been hospitalised due to that diagnosis. That is a very significant outcome and a testament to the work that all DCS staff have undertaken.

I am also advised that, as at 21 June 2022, 75.6 per cent of prisoners were fully vaccinated and 1,768 eligible prisoners had received a booster dose. This is important to note because many prisoners, in fact the majority of prisoners, find themselves entering a correctional facility not having received even one vaccination. The public health outcomes that DCS have implemented in respect of the uptake of vaccinations of prisoners in correctional facilities have been important and are a very important legacy in respect of the approach they have taken from a public health perspective. I thank all the allied health staff who have been involved in that from SA Health as well.

Workforce planning is a continued focus of the department. In the past 12 months, over 90 new staff have been recruited, including 20 correctional officers who are due to graduate imminently. Three further schools are planned for 2022, and I look forward to congratulating these new staff at their graduation. I am also advised that there will be around 25 new recruits commencing in each of those schools.

The Malinauskas government is absolutely committed to working closely together to ensure our correctional system is well equipped to meet the rehabilitation and safety objectives the South Australian community expects. I am trusting, and in fact incredibly confident, that those objectives will be met and delivered by DCS management, leadership and the staff, who are so diligently committed to this state.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister, and welcome to your team. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107. The completion of the Adelaide Women's Prison has been delayed by three months. Can you please give me an understanding of the reason for the delay to this project?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that the completion date for the Adelaide Women's Prison, which is a project that includes within scope 40 beds, reception and, very importantly, a visitor centre to better equip and establish family-friendly, child-friendly visiting rooms and visiting facilities, has been delayed. An adjusted completion date is financial year 2022-23, and a carryover of capital will be facilitated to ensure that that is delivered.

Mr WHETSTONE: What evaluation process is the government implementing to ensure that all of the goals of this program are met?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that pre and post occupancy audits are undertaken. These are extensive but also well established processes within DCS in the commissioning of their capital upgrades, whether new or established upgrades. I have every confidence that that will be done diligently, ensuring that the full scope of delivery is realised.

Mr WHETSTONE: Of course. I refer to the same reference point. The completion of the iSAFE offender management system has been delayed by 18 months. What are the reasons for the significant delay to this project?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It might be worthwhile if I ask the chief executive, Mr Brown, to give you an update on that one. There has been some reclassification of operating within the life of that project as well.

Mr BROWN: The iSAFE project was a commitment made in 2019 by the government, providing \$15 million to replace our existing offender management legacy systems that have been in operation for over 30 years. Following an open procurement process, Fujitsu Australia was selected as the preferred supplier and that contract was executed on 7 December 2021. It is a contract that runs through until 7 December 2036.

The execution of the contract represents a \$12.8 million contribution to the SA economy and some opportunities to provide training and development opportunities for staff, including a traineeship committed to an Aboriginal South Australian. The total contract value for the delivery of tranche 1 is \$34.6 million, and that combines a planning phase of \$8.1 million and then the ongoing operating costs.

Initially, the budget allocated to the project was in the form of investing or capital. The nature of the contract is now better described as software as a service and therefore we sought permission and gained approval to reprofile that expenditure over the course of the planning phase. We expect that we will be implementing the project in accordance with the current schedule, which is early 2024.

In answer to the question more specifically, it was about seeking approval to reprofile capital to operating, given the outcome of the procurement process, rather than a delay in the delivery of the project.

Mr WHETSTONE: Obviously, the evaluation of the project or the process has been from a privately-funded operation to now government support to the program.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the chief executive to respond further.

Mr BROWN: It was always intended that the likely market outcome would be a specialist vendor providing an offender management system. The successful procurement was won by Fujitsu in partnership with a Canadian specialist firm called Syscon. The ongoing operation of the information management system we envisage will continue to be managed by DCS staff and other justice agency partners. It is more about the delivery of the new iSAFE platform that we went to market for.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, you are confident that the delay will now be met on time, on budget—the delayed forecast time of implementation of the iSAFE offender management system?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If your question is whether I am confident about time lines, yes, I am.

Mr WHETSTONE: Another project delay is the completion of the digital upgrade for electronic monitoring that has been delayed by 12 months. Can you give me a better understanding of why there is that 12-month delay to the project?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that there have been two considerations in respect of that project: the first is the transition from analog to digital delivery of electronic monitoring, and the second is that this has been a project which has been running parallel with the capital construct at Yatala, so the complexities around prison management and safety management have led to where the projected time line and completion currently is.

But again, if I can maybe add that, in anticipation, I am confident of the delivery of this. This has been a project which has had multiple moving parts, the least of which is operating at a time when there is still a fully operational prison. The delivery of this has been a project which is to be admired from DCS and I think they have done an excellent job, and it will be delivered for the benefit of the community shortly.

Mr WHETSTONE: Yet another delay is the completion of the Yatala Labour Prison's expansion, and that has been delayed by 12 months. Can you please give me a reason and an understanding of why we are seeing another delay of 12 months?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that potentially the member's informed view around this is influenced by the underspend in the Agency Statement, and that is a matter of acquittals. The project is being risk managed by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. All the advice I have received and the projections that DCS are working to is that that project will be delivered as per the initial schedule.

Mr WHETSTONE: I guess I am noticing a trend of delay with programs under your government. Is there a stretched friendship with either the Treasurer or the Premier, with these continued delays?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will not seek to provide commentary on what you may or may not note, but if I can just refer to my previous answer which I suggested may have genuinely informed your observations around delay, whereas in fact it is not. It is around capital acquittals. Quite to the contrary, I think the Treasurer and the Premier are doing, and have done, an extraordinary job in delivering a budget within 9½ to 10 weeks within being sworn into government, a budget which is very firmly focused on the future of South Australia.

I am, of course, biased, being the joint neighbour of the member for Lee and the member for Croydon as well. I think they are fantastic local members and I think their communities believe the same, as I am sure yours does about you.

Mr WHETSTONE: I am just wondering what they might be like at milking cows, and that leads me on to my next question.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I cannot even hypothesise.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107 and, speaking of milking cows, the Cadell Training Centre dairy: how many FTEs are expected to be required to deliver the project and what is the time line for the planning and the completion of that project?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: As the member would know, as a former member of the Public Works Committee—I am not sure if he is still currently—

Mr WHETSTONE: Former.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: We shared some time on that.

Mr WHETSTONE: I have milked a lot of cows at that dairy too, by the way.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I would not comment on your milking.

The CHAIR: Even I have done that.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That is right. Even I have.

Mr WHETSTONE: Jack of all trades.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Jack of all trades. My mum's family were dairy farmers, believe it or not. My mum is probably the most city girl that I have ever met in my life, but she is from a family full of dairy farmers. They all run the farm still, so there you go. I will compare notes on udders one day.

The project will need to go to PWC. That has not gone to PWC yet. The project will imminently—well, shortly, subject to our usual process of cabinet—be going to PWC. I would not want to foreshadow assuming, or subject to, the deliberations of PWC on matters. The authority of PWC in this house is well established.

The Cadell Training Centre dairy upgrade is a very important project. It is one that is funded internally by DCS but well supported, I must say, by the former government. It is a very important project that will support prisoners as they rehabilitate and also support local industry and local jobs, which I know the member is very passionate about.

The projected cost of this project as provided by DIT—at the moment I believe this is the amount of projected costs that will be going to PWC—is \$8.7 million. The architects on this project have undertaken concepts and have undertaken the work already. The expression of interest to build from suppliers will be forthcoming. Meanwhile, whilst those procurement processes and EOIs are progressing, DCS are working very closely with TAFE to ensure that prisoner training can be incorporated into the tender to hardwire and bed in the outcomes that we want to see in this project.

I can also provide some information in respect of where the capital will be distributed over the forward estimates for the member: in 2021-22, \$2.8 million; in 2022-23, \$2.4 million; in 2023-24, \$1.5 million; and in 2024-25, \$2 million.

Mr WHETSTONE: Please convey the importance of the dairy to the Cadell Training Centre. There is a high level of commitment and I think that it is a worthy initiative in a corrections centre—and it is in the great electorate of Chaffey. Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 107: as an expenditure summary, there have been a number of projects introduced under the former government that have not been allocated funding for 2022-23, resulting in a \$92.4 million cut. What are the reasons for the significant cuts to a number of these programs?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am not sure. Your question referred to \$94 million?

Mr WHETSTONE: Total funding cuts resulting in a \$92.4 million cut. That is over the forwards 2021-22, 2022-23. There is a \$92.4 million cut.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Rather than getting in a tit for tat because that is not—

Mr WHETSTONE: I can run through some of the programs if that would help?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sure.

Mr WHETSTONE: The total budget cost for the iSAFE offender management system has been cut by over \$10.2 million. Can you give me a reason for that?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sure. I will take them one by one. Member for Chaffey, as Mr Brown advised before, that is the move of capital to operating, so this has been a reclassification, a reprofiling of costs, so these are now individuals who are working on the project. There has

unequivocally been no cut to the budget. It is a reprofiling that is expending the same amount of money, but what we see in the Agency Statements is a movement of that from capital into operating.

Mr WHETSTONE: The net cost of providing services for the rehabilitation and repatriation has also been cut by \$3.856 million. Can you give me a reason for those cuts in the forward estimates?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am sorry, Chair, is this still on page 107?

Mr WHETSTONE: Same reference point. I beg your pardon. It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 110.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can advise the member in respect of that question, and I am happy to provide this detail although it is in the Agency Statements, that there is a decrease in commonwealth revenue in the 2022-23 budget from the 2021-22 estimated result, and this is due to the completion of the cross-borders remote areas program agreement in 2021-22. I can further advise that there has been a decrease in grants and subsidies expenditure in the 2022-23 budget, the 2021-22 estimated result, and 2020-21 actual compared with the 2021-22 budget, and that is due to the removal of non-industries related payments to offenders, which is now part of—so it has been moved over into program 2—custodial services.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 114: can you please explain the 120 daily average prisoner population increase?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There have been a number of factors over the last period of time. What have actually been very well ventilated in the Attorney-General's estimates, as well as I think when the Courts Administration Authority was before estimates, are the delays in court hearings and the completion of proceedings for various matters before the District Court. That is a mix of civil and criminal, and the criminal list and the 'delays' in that have of course impacted those prisoners who are retained on sentence but also significantly impacts the number of individuals in custodial facilities who are on remand.

There have also been, and continue to be from all governments, various methods, contemplation and strategies put in place to determine whether offending penalties are commensurate with community expectations and commensurate with goals that government has around prevention of offending. Over time that has effected, in a way, an upward trend in individuals subject to a custodial sentence.

Mr WHETSTONE: The cut to the rehabilitation directly and reparation of nearly \$4 million will contribute to higher rates of reoffending. What effect of rehabilitation cuts will be projected on prisoner population numbers?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: As I answered earlier and reconfirm now, there has been no cut to rehabilitation services—that is very firm, and advice that I have just received from my advisers. It is a reprofiling across programs in the Agency Statements.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 109, same reference point: the former government introduced funding towards a correctional rehabilitation facility business case. Where in the budget is the business case reflected?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The strategic business case (SBC) historically undertaken identified a new rehabilitation prison as the best option to increase prison capacity and improve rehabilitation outcomes and apply downward pressure on prisoner growth. The final business case presents a critical opportunity for consideration and review. The budget implications and the budget considerations, more specifically to the member's question, were that \$500,000 was received in the 2021 budget for the development of an SBC for a new rehabilitation prison, and in the 2021-22 budget DCS received \$1.5 million for the development of the FBC. So those matters for the business cases are contained within the 2021-22 budget.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, can you shed more light on the preparedness? We understand that building prisons is a major piece of infrastructure, and the reflection on increased prisoner numbers sadly is something we will deal with in the future. Can you tell me if any considered work

has been done on the build of a rehab prison site selection, any of the measures that would be put in place on a study process, particularly with the build of that prison?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can refer very specifically to my previous answer, but to give the member more detail, the SBC and the FBC—the strategic business case and the final business case—have and are being undertaken, so in direct response to the member's questions that is a work that is afoot, it is being undertaken and I can give the member the confidence that that is fully funded and is being undertaken.

Mr WHETSTONE: The concern South Australians should have is that we only see two major infrastructure projects from this current government: the north-south corridor and the Women's and Children's Hospital. The shortcomings of corrections beds will be apparent by the 2024-25 year—56 beds. In the 2029-30 year, there is a forecast shortfall of over 800 beds and yet we are not seeing a commitment by this government to implement a major piece of infrastructure for corrections facilities.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: In respect of the north-south corridor and other observations the member has regarding infrastructure projects, I have no doubt that he has directed those to the relevant ministers.

Mr WHETSTONE: No, I am not looking for any reference to the project.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to go on, member for Chaffey. The observation that there are only two major infrastructure projects delivered in this budget more broadly, seeing that you invited the question, is just false. This is a budget that is delivering very firmly on the election commitments that this government made in opposition. We are doing a novel thing that I think the former government failed to do, and that is getting on with delivering a very firm program of delivery of the commitments that we made to the community of South Australia.

Regarding the specific advice and the specific work that is being undertaken in respect of prison capacity, and the business case regarding a rehabilitation prison, I can only restate my answers. That work is literally being done and any concerns the member for Chaffey would have, I would suggest, would be alleviated by my answer: that is work being undertaken by DCS through \$2 million worth of specific funding to deliver business cases.

I think the development of a business case is the sound thing to do. I am not suggesting that the member for Chaffey is advocating that we proceed without a business case, but those business cases are critically important in informing future decision-making of the government, and I look forward to receiving those in due course.

Mr WHETSTONE: Do you have a forecast projection of what a rehabilitation prison could cost South Australian taxpayers?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I refer to my previous five answers.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 109. What measures are the government taking to ensure that the 10by20 goal is still going to be achieved?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Before I give some more specifics, as I referred to in my opening statement, I want to make a note that, notwithstanding significant cuts that were imposed by the former government, there was a continuation and success and a commonsense approach to addressing reoffending by DCS. I note that the former government were party to that.

Repeat offenders are responsible for a large portion of the crime in South Australia. By focusing on reducing reoffending and improving rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes, our community will be safer, there will be fewer victims and there will be less crime. In 2016, seven years ago now, the then Labor government set a target to reduce the rate of reoffending by 10 per cent by 2020. From that time, 10by20 has served as the primary focus for DCS and has demonstrated significant outcomes for offenders and community safety.

Seventy per cent of people in prisons have been in custody before, with most admissions involving multiple offences. Reoffending rates are impacted by factors across the criminal justice and

social services systems, including policing response, court models and the availability of supports and services in the community.

The response to reoffending and to reducing recidivism starts in the early years. Whilst it is not a part of my portfolio responsibilities, this government's commitment to early years reform—age three preschool and education reforms, including the rolling out of five technical colleges, including two across regional South Australia—is a very strong whole-of-government commitment, and empowering people to make better decisions and improving their educational and job outcomes are right at the front and centre of that goal.

Several strategic priorities across DCS have been initiated to support 10by20, including targeted programs and increased opportunities to partner with the NGO sector. These strategies have included iSAFE and End2End Case Management; Aboriginal Strategic Framework; Work Ready, Release Ready; The Arches Bail Accommodation Support Program; Home Detention Integrated Support Services Program; and home detention evaluation by the University of New South Wales. In addition, DCS currently delivers a range of rehabilitation and criminogenic programs in line with the 10by20 strategy, including the following recent highlights:

- a revised version of the Domestic and Family Violence Intervention Program;
- an evaluation of the Our Way My Choice program for Aboriginal men;
- a new adaptation of the Violence Prevention Program for Aboriginal men;
- delivery of a high-intensity treatment pilot program for the complex case management of offenders on extended supervision orders; and
- a pilot of the Stepping Stones program, a gender responsive criminogenic program for female offenders.

To leverage off the success of 10by20, boost strategies include the intensive housing program pilot and the NDIS support program pilot, which I must say has been a resounding success in ensuring that the significant number of prisoners who are eligible for NDIS funding, once they are released from custody, are on the pathway to tapping into significant commonwealth support. There is also a remand to bail pilot and the Closing the Gap budget for 2021-22 for a suite of strategies targeting Aboriginal offenders.

I am very pleased to advise that the most recent RoGS report, released in January 2022, reflected that the 2022 rate of return for corrective services in South Australia decreased from the 2021 RoGS measurement. In line with previous remarks I have made about the challenges that COVID has caused in this space, that is a very considerable achievement. In that report, South Australia's return to corrective services with a new correctional sanction rate was the lowest in the nation.

South Australia's recidivism rate is in line with 10by20 targets. It represents a 15 per cent reduction in recidivism against the baseline. This will be a matter that is in significant elaboration, built upon in the forward estimates. Something I can say in addition to this is that the Premier continues to advocate strongly for 10by20. In fact, he was the corrections minister when the program was formed, when the iteration was first considered. I think it is a very strong statement of intent and a very strong and firm commitment that the Premier of South Australia is so heavily invested in the rehabilitation outcomes and programs that are involved in reducing recidivism in South Australia.

Mr WHETSTONE: On the same reference, minister, can you provide an update on the Violence Prevention Program for Aboriginal men?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the chief executive to provide some specifics for the member in respect of that program.

Mr BROWN: Thank you, minister. We have been rolling out the Violence Prevention Program for Aboriginal men, and the Aboriginal men who participate in that program also complete the preparatory program Our Way My Choice, which we have increased delivery of across the agency. We have seen very positive completion rates for Aboriginal men participating in the Violence

Prevention Program for Aboriginal men, which is quite an intensive program, running on average for nine months of engagement with the facilitators.

In the financial year that will end at 30 June this year, we have delivered a violence prevention program at Mobilong, a Violence Prevention Program for Aboriginal men at Port Augusta and a Violence Prevention Program for Aboriginal men at Mount Gambier. We continue to see positive engagement in that program and positive results in terms of completion rates. We continue to evaluate the impact of that program, as we do with other programs.

Mr WHETSTONE: Has any funding been extended for the Aboriginal men's family violence program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can confirm that that funding is committed through forward estimates and the program will continue. As the chief executive remarked, it is a very successful program and is a very strong part of the future rollout of programs.

Mr WHETSTONE: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 18. Minister, can you provide an overview of the COVID-19 restrictions that are still in place in correctional facilities?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I could. Because it is such a quick moving feast and the Department for Correctional Services have been and continue to engage so closely with SA Health, I will ask the chief executive to provide you with the most recent information on that. In an overview, though, I want to reiterate my appreciation for the work that has been undertaken within our custodial facilities. To have no prisoner find themselves in hospital due to COVID-19 is a very strong outcome.

Not that I suggest we do, but we must not lose sight of the fact that correctional facilities have and continue to be categorised or classed as high-risk settings, no different from hospitals. The task at hand has been significant. The cost implications for the department have been significant, particularly with PPE. Their success has been extraordinary. I will ask the chief executive to give more specifics.

Mr BROWN: I would say that the department's highest priority remains the health of all our staff and the prisoners under our supervision and the safe operation of the correctional system. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, I think we have been quite successful in our response. We have progressed a significant amount of work since March 2020 in a range of areas aimed at preventing COVID-19 entering our system in the first place, preparing for the eventuality of it entering our system and responding to any outbreaks.

Key to our response has been a range of measures including strong governance, with the establishment of a trigger assessment panel that looks at any risk, works closely with myself and our incident command centre and works closely with the Communicable Disease Control Branch and the Chief Public Health Officer. We have also developed and deployed quite significantly in the first three months of this calendar year our own contact tracing capability in response to the pandemic. As the minister mentioned earlier, we have invested heavily with the Department for Health to drive vaccination programs for prisoners and for staff working in our facilities.

Mr WHETSTONE: I would assume that incoming prisoners are tested for COVID?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That is correct, and there is a period of mandatory isolation for all new prisoners, be it those who are post-sentence or those who are on remand. They serve out a seven-day isolation to ensure—

Mr WHETSTONE: Where do they isolate?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: In cell.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, can you give me an understanding of the number of prison guards isolating on a weekly basis while awaiting COVID tests or returning a positive?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can provide it at this point in time. I can also give you some remarks in regard to the curve as it has been coming through. At present, on the information that I have today, there are 30 who are isolating or unable to attend work due to COVID. That has been higher, particularly as COVID has entered South Australia and as we saw significant numbers across our community in a sustained way in the last six to seven months. As I remarked in an earlier

estimates session, we have received health advice that there is likely, on balance, to be an increase in COVID numbers in coming weeks, and I have no reason to not believe that that will see a rise in the 30 I have before me today.

Mr WHETSTONE: I guess that leads me on to, obviously, following the riot at Yatala in April we saw that actions were taken by inmates due to staff shortages.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I do not want to pick apart the member's words, but I will not sit here and accept the premise of a question, if it is given in that way that accounts for illegal prisoner behaviour, that it is as a result of any reasonable management action. The behaviour, the actions that we saw by a small number of prisoners at Yatala was unacceptable. It was a criminal tantrum, and those prisoners are being dealt with accordingly.

A number of notices have been served against them, and they will be brought before visiting tribunals, and I expect, as the community expects, that the most significant of available penalties will be applied against them. Prisoners do not stuff and trash a cell. Two cells were damaged in this incident, and they are both now, thankfully, back online, and were back online very quickly. The behaviour of those prisoners was unacceptable and nothing explains their actions.

Mr WHETSTONE: Would it be correct to assume that the lockdown contributed to the tantrum, as you described it?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I did describe it as a tantrum. It was a criminal tantrum. It was criminal behaviour that is now being pursued. I do not preface or account for any reasonable actions, common actions, that were taken by DCS that would account for that behaviour—not at all.

Mr WHETSTONE: What actions or what preparedness are you putting in place should we see a spike in COVID and should we see further lockdown within Yatala?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There are a number of schools that are just about to come online, and there has been a very strong and very dedicated effort by Mr Brown as the chief executive to bring those recruits through. There are 31 coming. I will get the specific numbers in respect of those mitigation strategies that the member asked for.

I can confirm that in the last 12 months there has been a school of 14 staff who commenced, further to an additional 24 staff who commenced in September. These are schools, recruiting schools, that take a not insignificant amount of time to train up and become fully operational. In February 2022, a further 23 commenced. Twenty commenced in April 2022. As I reflected and remarked and advised in my opening statement, there are, I think, a further 75 planned to come online this year.

Mr WHETSTONE: Are you expecting a report regarding the specifics of the 'criminal tantrum'—what did you call it?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Would you share those remarks with me, member for Chaffey?

Mr WHETSTONE: We do.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I trust that you are not excusing the behaviour?

Mr WHETSTONE: No.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I have reported to you, I think, a considerable amount of information that those prisoners—I think there are three who have been served with notices—have not appeared before a visiting tribunal yet, but they have been served with breach notices and will be appearing before a visiting tribunal.

Mr WHETSTONE: It might be the final question, with omnibus on its way. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 106, workplace bullying. Since the release of ICAC's assessment against DCS, what measures have been taken to decrease bullying and harassment against staff as well as other issues raised in that report?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the chief executive to provide a brief overview for the member's benefit.

Mr BROWN: We worked very closely with ICAC in their evaluation of the agencies and our policies and procedures, and accepted all of the recommendations that came directly from that report—24 recommendations, if I recall correctly. We have a number of strategies in place that have come about as a result of the insight provided from the ICAC evaluation, and we continue to implement those actions.

We have an executive oversight committee that is chaired by an independent correctional administrator with extensive experience in the Australian correctional environment. We also have the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment on that oversight committee, and the equal opportunity commissioner as well, along with myself and the deputy chief executive. We continue to invest in our responses to those actions and provide updates to the ICAC commissioner from time to time.

Mr WHETSTONE: Chair, I will commence the longwinded omnibus questions:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
 - (a) Which administrative units were created, abolished or transferred to another department or agency between 22 March 2022 and 20 June 2022 and what was the cost or saving in each case;
 - (b) 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; and
 - (c) 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?
2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been:
 - (a) Made since 22 March 2022 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position;
 - (b) Abolished since 22 March 2022 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position; and
 - (c) What has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 22 March 2022?
3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
 - (a) What savings targets have been set for 2022-23 and each year of the forward estimates; and
 - (b) What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?
4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is:
 - (a) The total number of FTEs in that department or agency;
 - (b) The number of FTEs by division and/or business unit within the department or agency;
 - (c) The number of FTEs by classification in each division and/or business unit within the department or agency;
 - (d) What was the actual FTE count at 20 June 2022 and what is the projected actual FTE count for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
 - (e) What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and

- (f) What is the notional FTE job reduction target that has been agreed to with Treasury for each of the forward estimates?
5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, could you provide:
- (a) 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; and
- (b) How much is allocated to be spent on targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years included in the forward estimates (by year), and how are these packages to be funded?
6. 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:
- (a) Name of the program or fund;
- (b) The purpose of the program or fund;
- (c) Budgeted payments into the program or fund;
- (d) Budgeted expenditure from the program or fund; and
- (e) Details, including the value and beneficiary, or any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.
7. For the period of 22 March 2022 and 20 June 2022, provide a breakdown of all grants paid by the department/agency that report to the minister, including when the payment was made to the recipient, and when the grant agreement was signed by both parties.
8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, provide for each individual investing expenditure project administered, the name, total estimated expenditure, actual expenditure incurred to 20 June 2022 and budgeted expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.
9. Can the minister list for each department and agency reporting to her and programs or initiatives that have been funded or budgeted for but not publicly announced or disclosed in the budget papers?
10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
- (a) What is the total cost of machinery of government changes incurred between 22 March 2022 and 30 June 2022; and
- (b) How much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2022-23 and for each year of the forward estimates?
11. For each department or agency reporting to the minister in 2022-23 provide the number of public servants broken down into headcount and FTEs that are (1) tenured and (2) on contract and, for each category, provide a breakdown of the number of (1) executives and (2) non-executives.
12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
- (a) 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;
- (b) What is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2022-23;
- (c) 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 20 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;

- (d) 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;
- (e) 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; and
- (f) How many surplus employees were there at 20 June 2022 and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

The CHAIR: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the portfolio of the Department for Correctional Services and the estimate of payments for the Department for Correctional Services completed. I would like to thank the department's staff for all the work that you do leading up to estimates but, more importantly, for all the work that you do throughout the year to keep our communities safe, so a sincere thank you.

Sitting suspended from 12:17 to 13:15.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE, \$750,000
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE, \$3,750,000
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE, \$1,000,000

Membership:

Mr Tarzia substituted for Mr Teague.

Mr Pederick substituted for Mr Whetstone.

Ms Hutchesson substituted for Mr Brown.

Ms Savvas substituted for Ms Wortley.

Minister:

Hon. J.K. Szakacs, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms J. Waddington-Powell, Chief Executive, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Ms. J. Best, Manager, Financial Services, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Mr. M. Morgan, Chief Officer, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr G. Swan, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr M. Fernando, Business Manager, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr. C. Beattie, Chief Officer, South Australian State Emergency Service.

Ms. G. Cornish, Acting Chief Officer, South Australian Country Fire Service.

The CHAIR: Welcome everybody to the examination of the portfolios of SAFECOM, Country Fire Service, SA Metropolitan Fire Service and State Emergency Service. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I advise that the proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if the minister so wishes, and to introduce advisors. I call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if he so wishes. I call on members for questions.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: With me today I have, to my left, the Chief Executive of SAFECOM, Julia Waddington-Powell; to my right I have the Acting Chief Officer of the CFS, Georgie Cornish; and to my further right I have the Chief Officer of the MFS, Michael Morgan. Behind me I have Chris Beattie, Chief Officer of the SES, and then further advisers Julie Best, Mahen Fernando and Geoff Swan. As discussed briefly with the member for Hammond, we will try to work through the best we can to cover off the questions and shuffle advisors around, but we are in the members' hands as to the way we do that.

I have a couple of brief opening remarks. I think it is important to note where we have come from in the last two years in respect of COVID and also to acknowledge and thank the extraordinary work that has been undertaken in that time from volunteers and from paid staff across our emergency services sector. I have done so this morning across my other portfolio areas, but this has particular and special recognition because so many of the men and women who serve our state from the emergency services sector are volunteers and they do so out of a calling for service to the community and they do so because of a dedication to their fellow South Australians.

In doing that, I note the member for Hammond, a CFS volunteer himself, and thank him for the work that he does both as local member and also as a volunteer. I have spoken a bit about your service and particularly about your farm firefighting units, and I am sure we will get to that a bit later.

The extraordinary cooperation between the agencies through this pandemic period has been quite extraordinary. I think we are in a place in South Australia now where we can remark that we are in a better place for the pandemic response with the coordination, cooperation and co-resourcing in a number of areas: our emergency services, SAPOL, SA Health and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

There are a number of matters that have been led particularly by this sector and particularly by SAFECOM and the SES in respect of their coordination of RAT distribution as well as a mobile and adaptable workforce that was geared up and scaled up by the SES in support of SAPOL operations. I know from my conversations and briefings with the police commissioner that he is extraordinarily grateful for the service of the SES volunteers who stepped up in those paid roles to support COVID operations across our state.

I also note, as I flagged, the role the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) have played within the management of the pandemic. The State Emergency Information Call Centre was maintained by SAFECOM. It was activated and ready at various times through the management of the pandemic. The surge capacity that SAFECOM was able to mobilise in that period, particularly in 2020 to 2022, greatly assisted the statewide support and operations that were undertaken.

SAFECOM has also been the lead agency in the close contact program RAT distribution that our state continues to roll out, and will be rolling out through 2022-23. It is a program which continues to be funded and continues to be led by SAFECOM. To date, there are 55 sites across metropolitan and regional South Australia that have been distributing free RAT tests to close contacts. We know how important our testing and close contact regime has been with managing the spread of COVID in our community.

I do note that, as we have received health advice in just the last couple of days that would suggest or indicate that modelling will have an uptick in COVID cases over the next number of weeks, the ongoing support of this work and the ongoing work that is undertaken by a combination of SAFECOM, paid staff from other agencies, as well as supported by NGOs like the Red Cross and Surf Life Saving South Australia, will be critical and does continue to be critical to our statewide COVID response.

To date, 1.2 million tests have been distributed. I also note that voting packs—a number in the hundreds—were distributed on that election day back in March, which I remember so fondly for a number of reasons.

The work that we will examine today is supported, as I said, by our extraordinary volunteers and our paid staff; they are well placed to support the community across the forward estimates. The state is in extraordinarily good hands when it comes to the leadership of our emergency services sector. I thank all of the chief officers, their staff and volunteers for their work for the community and also in preparation for today's estimates.

Mr PEDERICK: I have a brief opening statement. I, too, would like to thank all the officers and volunteers involved right across the sector, especially in light of not just the emergency work that seems to have to happen every year but the work that everyone did in the management of COVID-19. I also want to acknowledge the work of the former government in regard to the emergency services, but the volunteers especially: well done.

We will go with SAFECOM. My first question is on Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 73, highlights 2021-22, dot point 1. Is the new purpose-built emergency services headquarters at Keswick completely finished?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is; it has moved in. In the first couple of days after being cleared of COVID—I tested positive for COVID two days after I was sworn in as a minister, so I cannot say that I was able to get down there in the first two days, but within the first couple of days thereafter—I was very pleased to spend considerable time at the emergency services headquarters. I do note the member for Hartley, who is here today, and the role the former government had in delivering that capital project.

I am very pleased as a new minister to be supporting the tenancy migration over the forward estimates, particularly in 2022-23, but it is a good building and it is fit for purpose. Having spent considerable time in a former life in the old emergency services building, I think we can all agree that it is a marked improvement.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 73, highlights 2021-22, dot point 4: is SAFECOM still providing assistance to the state Logistics Functional Support Group in their response to the South Australian rapid antigen test close contact program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Absolutely they are. SAFECOM is continuing to provide support for the delivery of that project, as I mentioned just a moment ago. I think it is very important to note in estimates today that this pandemic is not over and that the vigilance that the South Australian community have operated within in the last two years continues to be necessary. With the uptick of cases there are two things that are incredibly important to ensure we maintain a safe community and that we lower and flatten that curve and the strain on our hospital system, the first of which is a testing regime.

If there are even the mildest of symptoms, get tested, and that is a combination within the state of RAT testing as well as PCR testing. The distribution of the RAT testing that is facilitated by SAFECOM for household close contacts is a central pillar of that response. As I said, there are a series of moving parts within that, but to contemplate that, as of today, 1.3 million RAT tests have been distributed is quite profound.

I spent some time very early on at one of these sites as the minister just thanking the people involved. They are highly dedicated and this government continues to fund and will be funding across 2022-23 the ongoing management of the RAT distribution through this sector. We will respond as the health advice maintains, but there is no indication whatsoever at this stage that that will change in the foreseeable future.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 3, page 111, emergency services, major projects: this is about the automatic vehicle location system. This project was expected to be completed by mid-2023. Is the rollout of the AVL system on time and within the budget of \$5,625,000?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Before this government was sworn in, the advice to the former government was very clear—and I am glad the former minister is here—that this project was not on

time. It was not on time for a number of reasons. I do not have access as a new minister to some briefings that were provided to the former government, either to the minister or to cabinet, but I can say that the advice provided to the former government was that this project would not be delivered by June 2022.

It was very clear that there were failings in the delivery of the app in its initial phases by the vendor. I have been most disappointed to inherit as a new minister a series of failings by the vendor. I will not go as far today as suggesting—and I do not intend to—that the former minister would have been in there delivering or installing this app personally, but there have been significant delays in the delivery of the app and that has meant that there have been a series of rolling and fluctuating changes to the delivery of the project as a result of that pilot phase being significantly compromised.

By way of time line for the member, the application was contracted to be delivered on 29 October 2021, and it was not completed until 28 February 2022. That has meant that all of the associated testing and then installation of terminals has been compromised and delayed. Again, I am more than happy today to go through that time line with the member because I am sure that he has had a degree of briefing on this as well.

The other concerning matter I found when coming to government was that, despite advice from agencies that a mobile data management solution for the CFS was critical to the delivery of this project, that was not included in the scope, it was not included in the budget and it was not included in the contract. So I have been working with the CFS to ensure that the failure of the contract and the delivery and funding of this by the former government does not compromise the CFS's ability to have this delivered.

I am very confident and pleased to report that I have worked with the CFS and an MDM solution will be found and the AVL project will be delivered, but this has significant delays as a result of matters that were well and truly under the remit of the former government. I would not suggest that these delays were not announced at the time because of political reasons, but I am now getting on with the job of ensuring that this is delivered, it is done within scope and the vendor is living up to their part of the contract, and that is delivering the project.

The other matter that was very concerning was the failure rate or the damage rate or otherwise of the first tranche of installations by the vendor. There was a failure rate I think of above 90 per cent in a two-week period and, as a result, there was an urgent review of the human resourcing provided by the vendor, and remedial action has now been insisted upon. Reports and advice I have received is that those installations have improved in quality, but that has been a process that should not have been contemplated and should not have been taking up the time of the administrative services agencies in what is effectively micromanaging the trade's installation of terminals.

Mr PEDERICK: I appreciate your answer, but at the end of the day the former government did start rolling this vital work out. Will it be completed by mid-2023, which is the new target date to finish it?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It will be completed in the 2022-23 financial year, yes. I note the premise of your question that the former government did start rolling it out. I absolutely acknowledge that. What the former government unfortunately oversaw were significant delays that were not communicated and that have required a significant amount of remedial action, which is ongoing.

Mr PEDERICK: I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 73, targets, dot point 2. From where does SAFECOM take advice in completion of the ESO information technology tenancy migration, including cybersecurity improvements?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The advice is taken from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 74, targets 2022-23, dot point 1: can you describe the actions to be implemented, aligned to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and Stronger Together: SA's Disaster Resilience Strategy 2019-24?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The national partnership agreement on disaster risk reduction is a joint commonwealth and state government agreement that provides the funding for the Disaster Risk Reduction Grants Program, administered by the South Australian fire commission, SAFECOM.

The NPA will deliver on the goals of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. Since mid-2020, \$3.5 million has been allocated through this NPA for the grants program, for 21 projects and initiatives to build resilience and reduce disaster risk.

Including grant recipient contributions, the total value of the project's initiatives is \$9.28 million. Through this NPA and associated grants program, the government is contributing more than \$1.2 million per annum—and this is indexed—of state funding over the next five years, with additional contributions by grant recipients of cash and/or in kind to match the Australian government funding of \$1.6 million per annum. The total allocation of grant funding over the five-year agreement is \$16.7 million, including commonwealth, state and applicant co-contributions.

As the member would know, this is a matter that was first instituted as a result of the 2015 agreement—I think it was a UN framework for disaster risk reduction from which the commonwealth subsequently developed their disaster risk framework. To date, \$3.15 million has been allocated across the two rounds of the DRS grant stream in one round of the state strategic projects. Both of these streams are due to open in the first quarter of the 2022-23 financial year. A new innovation stream is under development, with the pilot due to be delivered in the first quarter of the 2022-23 financial year.

Mr PEDERICK: We might switch to the Country Fire Service: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 34, Program 1: Country Fire Service. I certainly wish to thank Chief Officer Mark Jones for his valuable service to the community of South Australia. In regard to the recruitment of a new chief officer, what methods will the minister use to attract applications locally, nationally and internationally?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I thank the member for his question. I will also take the opportunity to thank Chief Officer Mark Jones for his service to South Australia. I was saddened, when Mark and I met personally, to discuss his calling back to the UK due to family circumstances. I have spoken a little bit about those circumstances in parliament in my ministerial statement.

I would like to note for the record how I empathise entirely with Mark's decision. I also acknowledge the excessive strain the COVID separation has caused many families, whether it be across state borders, as the member for MacKillop and his community would know well, or across international borders. It has certainly amplified some of the considerations that people have when it comes to the prioritisation of family and family considerations.

As the member for Hammond noted in his question, it is important for the recruitment of a new chief officer to be local, Australia-wide, as well as international. As minister, I have committed to instituting a process, which I will run through now for the member, that prioritises the ability for us to attract the best candidate, a candidate that is the best fit for South Australia.

The Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, on my request, has initiated the recruitment process. The commissioner has advised me that she will facilitate the search for suitably credentialed candidates across all jurisdictions. An external recruitment agency, which will be named shortly—and as soon as I am possibly able to do that, member for Hammond, I will advise you—will be charged with undertaking the search for our new CFS chief officer.

The selection panel will have a number of participants. It will be chaired by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Erma Ranieri. The commissioner has extensive experience in executive recruitment and I and this government greatly appreciate and value her contribution, as I know the former government did as well. There will also be a CFS volunteer representative on the panel, which I am very committed to and very pleased to have confirmed with the CFS Volunteers Association. There will be an experienced fire service leader from the jurisdiction and there will also be the Chief Executive of SAFECOM.

Mr PEDERICK: I will go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 33, dot point 4. Are cold burns being increased as a bushfire mitigation strategy?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Member for Hammond, I will take that on notice and provide a fulsome answer in respect of the schedule and also the rollout of those cold burns.

Mr PEDERICK: I will go to Budget Paper 3, page 111, emergency services, major projects and 'High and Bulk Capacity Fleet Renew'. What size trucks and how many are in this fleet renew, and where are they being posted?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you for the question, member for Hammond. As a result of reviewing the CFS operational fleet requirements based on risk and capability prescriptions, and in collaboration with CFS regional commanders, the following 63 new vehicles commenced manufacture during the 2021-22 financial year in preparation for deliveries to commence in late 2022:

- There are nine quick attack vehicles. These nine quick attack vehicles will be placed at Cherryville, Laura, Lower Inman Valley, Morgan, Norton Summit, Ashton, Port Victoria, Sellicks, Strathalbyn and Waitpinga.
- There are 10 type-14 tankers. These will be placed at Ashbourne, Bridgewater, Echunga, Greenock, Neales Flat, State Training Centre, Streaky Bay, Swan Reach, Upper Sturt—I see smiles across the chamber—and Waitpinga.
- There are 10 type-24 rescue tankers. These will be going to Cowell, Eudunda, Meadows, Mount Pleasant, Orroroo, Padthaway, Parndana—a wonderful community in which I spent some time over the weekend—State Training Centre, Williamstown and Wudinna.
- There are 16 type-34 tankers going to Angaston, Balaklava, Cadell, Coffin Bay, Eden Hills, Kapunda, Keith, Kimba, Littlehampton, McLaren Vale, Mil-Lel, Nairne, Owen, Port Broughton, Port Elliot and Tumbly Bay.
- There are 12 type-44 tankers at Aldinga Beach, Brinkworth, Dublin, Haines/MacGillivray, Hamley Bridge, Lucindale, Roseworthy, State Training Centre, Taillem Bend, Tintinara and Willalooka.
- There are five bulk water carriers going to the Barossa, Caralue, Mid Murray, North Barossa and Victor Harbor.
- There is one rescue vehicle going to Lobethal.

Mr PEDERICK: There is a broad range of vehicles there. Where are these vehicles being manufactured?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that the majority of the builds are at Fraser, well known to the member. The majority of the vehicles themselves are Isuzu. If there is an additional list that I can provide the member, I will. I asked very early on in my time as minister, across all agencies, what are we doing to support local business?

Obviously, Fraser is a great local business, which is with the procurement and contracts with local emergency services. We support local jobs and local industry, so there is certainly a focus. I would be happy to provide, even if it were not to be a question from the member, some degree of detail from the SES, which undertakes significant work with local businesses in their procurement.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Can I take the minister and the committee to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 34, under the table headed 'Annual programs' and the line 'Capital works'. Has land been acquired for a new Lenswood Forest Range CFS station? If it has, when was the land acquired and when did title and risk pass to the state or agencies?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: This takes me back to my Public Works days with the member. Can you repeat that last part of the question? I could not hear you.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: It is a twofold question: has land been acquired for a new Lenswood Forest Range CFS station? If it has, when was it acquired and when did title and risk pass to the state or state agencies?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thanks to the member for that question. Also, for my hearing, it is me, not you.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: I think it might actually be me.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can advise the land has been acquired in the member's electorate for the Lenswood Forest Range CFS station. Lot 2 of Coldstore Road, Lenswood, has been acquired. The best information I have is that it was acquired in April 2022 and that concepts are yet to be developed, although they are being developed. I should not say they are yet to be. The process has started. I think the architects are engaged. I am not sure if engineering is on board yet, but there are certainly plans afoot.

Understandable delays are being experienced right across the building sector, so before these projects even start we are anticipating, and I am advised, that across this and other projects there are lock-in delays. What I would advise, broadly speaking, hypothetically speaking, for a build of this general remit, is that the concept design would be anticipated to take six weeks, architect plans would be anticipated to be eight weeks and requests for tenders would be expected to take five weeks.

A further week would be required for the evaluation of those tenders and then the appointment of a contractor, so that would take it to, probably, somewhere towards the end of 2022 for consideration. I would not want to mislead the member and say that there will be a lock-in date for 2022; it may be early 2023. This is fully funded and, subject to working with the local volunteers up there, we look forward to getting this rolled out.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Thank you, minister. I appreciate that there are construction delays across the state but emphasise that those works are important and urgent for my community. Whilst I still have the call, can I take the minister and committee to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 34, under the table heading 'Annual programs' and the line 'Replacement of telecommunications equipment'. Would the minister please confirm the scope of this project and, in particular, whether any CFS telecommunications equipment will be replaced in the Adelaide Hills, in particular tower assets and related assets?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There is a scoped project for the replacement of the SA Government Radio Network UHF mobile, fixed and portable radios and associated products to be purchased by the CFS to replace the existing fleet of SAGRN UHF fixed, mobile and portable radios. The following is sought within this procurement and is included in the current approved budget allocation.

I may need to take on notice the time lines for that procurement, but there is the supply and installation of the SAGRN UHF fixed radios at fixed locations and mobile radios in vehicles; there is the supply and installation of the UHF portable radios, batteries and battery chargers; and there is the ongoing support and maintenance of the SAGRN UHF mobiles and portables. The CFS also uses the SAGRN command and control comms, as well as radios for simplex communications, as a means of managing the load on the SAGRN during these peak levels of activity.

Due to the substantial number of terminals to be replaced and the fact that installation during the fire season is not practical, the rollout of the terminals is expected to occur over a three-year time frame, and that began in 2021. The scope excludes the tactical comms, which is VHF, and the long-range infrastructure independent communications, which is the UHF and CB radio for communicating with farm firefighting units. Options within this are also being sought for the inclusion of a number of other operational requirements.

I have already given you a rough rundown of the rollout schedule, but I can provide some additional details. The upgrade is for the planned rollout of CFS operational groups, rather than geographical areas; it has been planned to roll it out to groups rather than geographics to ensure that each group retains the interoperability they need within their brigades, all encompassing the group where this is being rolled out.

Onkaparinga has been scheduled for 16 September 2022 through 22 September 2022 and Heysen and region 1 headquarters are scheduled for 22 August 2022 through 7 September 2022. There is another degree of rollout schedule that I may be able to provide to the member on notice. There are quite a number of locations that I can provide, but I do not want to take up more time with that answer.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Thank you, Minister, that would be of great assistance and I would appreciate the location list for the replacement of those assets.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can confirm Mount Barker.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Very well. There are others.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is a long list.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Excellent. It was also, of course, a happy moment to reprise our PWC experience.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The good old days.

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN: Yes.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to MFS, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 51, investing expenditure summary. This is in regard to the general purpose pumpers that the former government ordered, just like the fleet renew with the CFS. Is the 2021-22 estimated result of \$4,152,000 for general purpose pumpers for the MFS part of the allocated funds for the 12 new fire trucks?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: No, it is not, member for Hammond. The 12 new fire trucks is new funding. I am very pleased that you asked me about this as it gives me an opportunity to respond on another election commitment being delivered by this government, that is, the 12 new fire appliances, and also, as part of that commitment, four new staff engineers at the MFS engineering department, including, much to my pleasure, two apprentices.

We will build trades and trade capability at every opportunity we can within our government departments. I know it is not a matter that requires partisan support but getting our trades back into government and back into our economy where we can is very important to many people in this chamber. We are very pleased that our delivery of this commitment also involves those two apprentice positions.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 51: the budget for an aerial firefighting appliance is \$2,800,000. Is this on budget and on time?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can confirm to the member that on both fronts and both questions it is both on budget and on time, which is somewhat music to my ears considering the significant delays we have seen across the supply chain and delivery of appliances right across the sector. Anyone who has tried to order a new car has been expecting to wait 12 or 18 months, so the fact that we have a \$2 million fire appliance being delivered on time puts Toyota Kluger to shame. No offence to Toyota Kluger. I like what they are—

Mr PEDERICK: It is out there now; it is too late. Let's try another angle then. You are going well. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 51, dot point 3, key agency outputs: what programs and practical efforts are made in reducing the number of preventable fires and emergencies in South Australia?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: That is a very good question from the member for Hammond and one thing that we want to see right across our sector is reducing the instances of fire and emergencies. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I was able to speak publicly about the need to be fire vigilant throughout the year, not just in summer but as we move into our colder and winter months. I will ask the Chief Officer of the MFS, Michael Morgan, to provide a bit of operational detail to assist the member on that one.

Mr MORGAN: There are a number of initiatives that the minister has highlighted. We have an annual fire awareness program that we run with the CFS as well, highlighting the dangers that members of the community face within their own homes. As well as that, we have campaigns around smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, the risks associated with household goods within the home, but it is that community engagement that both fire services provide that highlights that awareness.

Mr PEDERICK: I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 54, frontline services, dot point 4. How many stage 1 buildings have been found to have had aluminium composite panels and what rectification works are involved with these buildings?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I note that this has been a matter being contemplated and acted upon by emergency services organisations for a number of years now. I do recall a significant degree of parliamentary interest in this matter a number of years ago under the former government. This is an issue that continues to be of close interest to the MFS. The degree of combustibility of one of these panels, depending upon the type of polymer and the type of fuel present within its core, is very significant. The response here in South Australia has been commensurate with that.

For some specific details, all 30 building fire safety committees (BFSCs) have advised that the owners of identified buildings that contain aluminium composite panels of some description—so that is 30 building fire safety committees, this is limited to class 2, class 3 and class 9B buildings three storeys and above—are in the first stage of the inspection process. Inspections of all other buildings will start shortly and some of these councils around South Australia have already combined the inspection of all classes as they did not have a large number in their area, so that combination has certainly been advisable for the progress of this.

The Adelaide City Council has the largest number of buildings that are still to be inspected as part of the second stage of this inspection process. Specifically, the Adelaide BFSC has just recently been reconstituted under the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act and will now start the inspections for all other classes of building that were not covered in the first stage of inspections.

Late in 2021, the MFS were notified by the Attorney-General's Department that due to machinery of government changes, the responsibility for the continuation of the SA building cladding audit transitioned from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to the now Building Policy and Programs unit in AGD.

The MFS will consider the findings of the audit outcomes and any associated impacts on MFS operational firefighting within the detailed buildings to minimise the risk to operational personnel and the broader community, and I will just perhaps suggest to the member for Hammond that if there is more specific detail that he is after on that, he direct questions to the AGD which is now the lead on this.

Mr PEDERICK: Just quickly then to finish this little section off: what is the difference between a stage 1 building and a stage 2 building in the aluminium composite panels program?

Mr MORGAN: Like I said, it is the type and class of building, so it ranges from a domestic dwelling through to an aged-care facility or high-rise facility or multiple tenancies. It depends on the class and type of the building as to the inspection.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 54, targets 2022-23 at dot point 2: in regard to the MFS Road Awareness Program, is there information on the fire risks involving electric vehicles?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, is that a question regarding does the road accident—

Mr PEDERICK: I am just asking, is there any specific information in the MFS Road Awareness Program around the fire risks involving electric vehicles or is there any other general information that you can give me on the fire risks, seeing as we have seen some of these cars burn for days? I am just interested in some information on whether we are, in this state, having a look at this.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sure. Thanks for the question. I will ask the chief officer for the operational response to that, but I can say within the Road Awareness Program that that is focused upon driver behaviour, so it does not focus on the associated risks. It is an extraordinary program. I was at one only a couple of weeks ago, and if I can use unparliamentary language, sir, it was bloody hard-hitting, and it should be. We will get to road safety in just a moment, but it is a message that is important for students of that age, but for the electric vehicle operational risk I will ask Michael Morgan.

Mr MORGAN: Thank you, minister. Yes, the minister is correct. It is not in the Road Awareness Program, but certainly both fire services are always looking at emerging technologies, and certainly electric or battery-operated vehicles, and other types of vehicles. It is something that

we are always reviewing, developing training packages, and then that information is passed on to the crews who will respond to those types of incidents.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 58, targets 2022-23, dot point 2: can you give an insight to the committee into the staff development framework, the technology involved and the community engagement strategy involved? This is in regard to the staff development framework.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: To the extent that I can, so as to not disclose any material within the SDF that is privileged or subject to copyright. Otherwise, I will provide that on notice for the member.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 58, targets 2022-23, dot point 4: in regard to the new firefighting training facility at Angle Park, will there be an opportunity for private sector firefighters to train there—for example, mining companies—and will a fee be charged?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the chief officer to respond.

Mr MORGAN: Thank you, minister. Certainly, the structural firefighting facility will provide a state-of-the-art facility for our firefighters to train in. The focus currently is on recruit firefighters who have just completed or are in the process of doing their training. That training will then be provided to MFS staff both full-time and retained, and certainly I have had discussions with the chief of the CFS around CFS using the facility. The intention is that once all that training has been provided we will be exploring the potential opportunities for external training, for the facility, and it will be at a fee.

Mr PEDERICK: For the private sector?

Mr MORGAN: For the private sector.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 51, investing expenditure summary: can you give the committee some information about the structural firefighting training prop, and will it come in on its budget of \$4,539,000 and be completed this month, if it has not been already?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to advise the member that it has been completed and, if we can take it offline, I am happy to perhaps go with the member and take a look at the new—I think 'prop' is underdoing it a bit; it is a significant piece of infrastructure.

Mr PEDERICK: I think that is what it says in the budget papers. I am just using the words.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It does. We will have to fix that next year.

Mr PEDERICK: I get what it is. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 54, frontline services, dot point 1: can the minister give the committee some insight into the People and Their Hoarding (PATH) program, and advise how big a problem is hoarding in the community?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the chief officer to speak about the operational delivery of that project. On the early advice I have received, and from conversations I have had, and as no doubt the member knows well and truly himself as a local member, the matter of hoarding is a societal issue and it requires a whole degree of across-agency support.

As a local member I have constituents who have a lot of inquiries through my office, either from hoarders or families of hoarders or those who have been subject to SACAT rulings as a result of hoarding, or from neighbours of hoarders. Its primary concern here is the fire risk that poses, not only to the tenant but also to others who may find themselves in the danger zone. Perhaps the chief officer can provide how that rolls out operationally.

Mr MORGAN: As highlighted, the significant increase in fuel load presents not only a risk to the occupants but also to firefighters intervening. Access and egress is very challenging. We are developing a program where we can go into the education space, similar to what we are doing in the Road Awareness Program and in our junior firefighting intervention programs. Members are identified, and then we have staff from our Community Safety and Resilience Department who will engage, just highlighting the risks associated for the home owner or tenant, as well as identifying that risk it poses to anyone coming in if that building happens to be on fire.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. I might try to squeeze a couple out on SES, minister. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, targets 2022-23, dot point 2: can you give us an overview of unit upgrades and maintenance as part of Project Renew?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I thank the member for his question. The total budget for that renew project is \$250,000. It is largely focused on smaller scope works. If there is additional information—I think in response to the member for Kavel's question before there was a long list—I am happy to provide it to the member.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, targets 2022-23, dot point 1: can you inform us of the scope of works for the new unit facilities being built at Noarlunga and Strathalbyn?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The Noarlunga unit will be situated on a 5,000 square metre land parcel that has been purchased specifically for the redevelopment of that Noarlunga SES unit. Plans and specifications for site works and new buildings have been prepared in consultation with the local volunteer members and detailed costing estimates are currently being prepared. It is anticipated that the Noarlunga project will be tendered in June 2022, and I am advised that that is on track and construction will commence in the 2022-23 financial year.

The construction of the SES facility at Strathalbyn has commenced with an expected completion date of August 2022. Again, with all of the significant construction delays, it is admirable that we are within frame on that. For the member's interest, the proceeds from the currently owned site for the Strathalbyn unit will offset the purchase of the new land in the 2022-23 financial year.

Mr PEDERICK: Just for the interest of the committee, the project was started under the former government and in my electorate, so I am very pleased with that. I will go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, highlights 2021-22, dot point 5. Has the New Pathways: Volunteering Recruitment and Retention program been fully implemented?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will ask the Chief Officer of the SES to provide some details on how it has been rolling out.

Mr MORGAN: The New Pathways program is well progressed. Since its implementation, we have brought on a number of new measures focused on the attraction and selection and onboarding of volunteers. This has seen an increase in volunteer numbers over the last 12 months. Furthermore, I can report good progress on our Youth Development Pathways program, and we are in the current throes of finalising some high-level discussions with Scouts SA in relation to a future partnership agreement.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 90, Workforce summary: FTEs for 2020-21 actual were 106, and the estimated result for 2021-22 is 104.8. I note the budget for 2022-23 is only for 72.8 full-time equivalents. Will any support and programs be lost?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: This reduction is due to the cessation of the SES-SAPOL support unit that I referred to earlier. That contract ceases on 30 June. I am advised that that number, since the emergency management declaration, has ceased and those numbers have been declining, by attrition or otherwise, largely due to the management of the COVID pandemic transitioning to SA Health. That is the matter at hand about which the member asks.

Mr PEDERICK: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, targets 2022-23, dot point 3: can you inform us of the progress in regard to land acquisitions on the Copper Coast and at Port Augusta and Aldinga Beach? Does the purchase price of the acquisitions of this land come from the internal SES budget or does it come from Treasury externally?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can update the member on that. The locations of the current SES units are largely the result of historic initiatives. As the member knows, they are a combination of commonwealth sites or otherwise, council sites. The Port Augusta SES unit is currently operating on council land, and the Aldinga site is also in a situation that needs upgrading.

If I go one by one, the cost of the land acquisition for Aldinga is \$0.6 million, and that has been included in the 2022-23 financial year capital program. The Port Augusta SES site is ongoing. A number of potential government sites have been considered over time; however, none were

considered appropriate. Consideration was given to the Aldinga site. The community in that area is not well serviced by the current emergency response capability. Consideration is being given to rezoning a large portion of government land at Aldinga to support light and medium-density dwellings and community infrastructure. The SES is progressing with the sale, and the settlement is expected in the 2022-23 financial year.

Finally, the Copper Coast towns of Wallaroo, Kadina and Moonta have experienced strong population growth, and there is a very compelling case. I know the member for Narungga has been in contact with me and is certainly keen on progressing that matter. The Bute SES unit continues to struggle, unfortunately, with volunteer numbers. It is a small town that is getting smaller and smaller, but it does serve a large geographic area and has averaged 87 callouts over the last year. The time line for the Copper Coast consideration will also be achieved in the financial year 2022-23.

The CHAIR: Thank you. The allotted time is up, so I declare the examination of the portfolios of SAFECOM, Country Fire Service, SA Metropolitan Fire Service and State Emergency Service and the estimate of payments for the South Australian Country Fire Service, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service and the South Australian State Emergency Service completed. I would like to thank all the staff who made a contribution today. I know there is a lot of work that goes on in the background. On behalf of all of us, this is a note of our appreciation for the work that both the paid staff and the thousands of volunteers do to look after us all in this state. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT, \$1,086,425,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND
TRANSPORT, \$6,293,000

Membership:

Mr Whetstone substituted for Mr McBride.

Minister:

Hon. J.K. Szakacs, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms J. Formston, Executive Director, People and Corporate Services, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Ms E. Kokar, Executive Director, Road and Marine Services, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Ms C. Nightingale, Manager, Road Safety Policy and Projects, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Mr L. Pineda, Manager, Budgeting and Reporting, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Mr I. Parrott, Assistant Commissioner, South Australia Police.

Mr S. Johninke, Director, Business Service, South Australia Police.

Mr S. Watkins, Superintendent, Governance and Capability Service, South Australia Police.

The CHAIR: The portfolio is Road Safety, Department for Infrastructure and Transport. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I advise that the proposed payments are 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 he so wishes. I call on members for questions.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I would like to acknowledge and introduce the advisers I have with me today. On the front table with me, to my right is Judith Formston, Executive Director of People and Corporate Services at the Department for Infrastructure and Transport; I have Emma Kokar, the Executive Director of Road and Marine Services at DIT as well; and I have Assistant Commissioner Ian Parrott from SAPOL. Behind me, I have Luis Pineda, Manager of Budgeting and Reporting at DIT; Carol Nightingale, Manager of Road Safety Policy and Projects at DIT; Stephen Johnke, Director of Business Service at SAPOL; and I think there are a couple of late additions that I am not able to turn my neck to get to. My apologies to them, but I thank them for their efforts.

Mr WHETSTONE: Use your face ID camera.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Way ahead of you. I have a short opening statement. Road safety is absolutely a responsibility that we all take. There are a number of factors that are of concern to me. One is the continuing over-representation of Aboriginal people and deaths of Aboriginal people on our roads.

There are a number of country and regional members in here today. They are well and truly aware of the impacts that road trauma and road deaths have on regional communities and the important goal that we have, and that all of us have, in challenging the notion that deaths on our roads in regional communities occur from people travelling through communities when we know that the vast majority of people who die on regional roads die close to home. That is a tragedy and a matter that requires a challenging of the orthodoxy of thought.

Finally, there is the death of young people on our roads. I have had the absolute honour of addressing thousands of young people in various forums since being sworn in as a minister of the Crown just a short while ago. Each and every time, I put to them the proposition that I put now: do you want your decision to be a decision that kills yourself, kills a friend or kills someone else's loved ones on the roads? Whilst there are many complexities in road safety, there are many moving parts and there are thousands and thousands of people who work within our public sector who address this, it can come down to as simple a proposition as that: a choice that a young person makes when driving or, more importantly, a choice that a young person may make not to drive.

I know those virtuous goals that we have are certainly not ones that just this government shares. I know the former government were as dedicated to reducing road deaths and road trauma as anyone else. I note their support, and I also note their support in a bipartisan way in reducing the impact of road trauma and death on our roads.

Mr WHETSTONE: Just quickly, I share the minister's sentiments on road safety. Obviously, being a regional MP, I spend a lot of time on the roads. I see a lot of dumb stuff on the roads. As a government, we need to protect those people by making the roads as safe as we can. Thirty per cent of the population live in the regions, and 65 per cent of road deaths happen in the regions within 25 kilometres of home or less for those regional people who lose their lives or have serious crashes.

The bipartisan investment is there, and I commend the former government for their great initiatives in road safety projects just like I do the current government. Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 120. We talk about the mobile phone detection program. It has been delayed by 12 months. Can you please update us as to why?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am very happy to. I note that this was a project that had a particular flavour that the former government approached, and that was 'announce and not deliver'. There are two major factors that have seen this project be delayed, and there were also two major things that occurred in the last financial year, which I will note in assistance of my answer.

The former government announced at least twice that this project would be proceeding and in that period failed to do two very important things, two things that must occur before a project like this can proceed, the first of which is pass legislation. Last year, I remember sitting in the House of Assembly with the Speaker when the then opposition tried to recall government to pass important legislation. This was a matter that was sitting on the *Notice Paper* and unfortunately the former government did not prioritise the passage of this through the requisite number of sitting days.

I do not blame the member for Chaffey for that. It was a decision that was made for various political reasons, but the truth is that the legislation did not pass the house, even though it had the

full support of the opposition, and the only reason it did not pass the house was that we were not there. The government decided to pick up stumps before the election, which is their prerogative, but notwithstanding that it is an important point to note. This government is proceeding through channels which are necessary and, unsurprising to the member, we have a cabinet process to go through in respect of proposed legislation, and processes are proceeding as is to be expected on that.

The second important part that would rebut the member's proposition that this has been delayed was that there was absolutely no procurement. There were absolutely no steps to procure these cameras by the former government—absolutely none. The procurement and purchase of these devices is important. They are critical, but also technical. Whether that was lost in some of the priorities of the former government, I do not know. I have not received advice as to why procurement did not occur. All I know is that procurement did not occur.

Again, subject to normal processes of executive government, including cabinet, procurement will proceed, and there is nothing that this government is more interested in doing than proceeding with actions rather than announcements. That is why the member for Chaffey would note that neither myself nor the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport have been out there talking up this project and talking about when we are going to be delivering.

In fact, for that matter, nor have we been out there saying what a poor job the former government did in delivering the project. We are getting on with the job of doing what we must do. There are processes in place, but the proposition that this has been delayed is a furphy because there was a blank slate when we were sworn in as a new government.

Mr WHETSTONE: Just as an update, the reason the former government did not pass the legislation was that it was stuck in the budget measures bill, which was blocked by Labor in the Legislative Council. The total budget cost for the mobile phone detection project has been cut by \$16.3 million. You have just spent probably seven minutes patting yourself on the back, but what I would like to know is—

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If you think that is patting ourselves on the back, wait till we actually get this done.

Mr WHETSTONE: —what have you done with the legislation and what have you done with acquiring the software needed to get this project underway since your time in government?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is more than just software, on that question, it is the procurement of the hardware. The software is the least of the issues here. It is the procurement of the hardware that the member for Chaffey did note. Whilst I would not want to debate his reflections on the Legislative Council, it is unequivocal that procurement did not proceed under the former government. It is a blank slate.

I am happy to walk through the total budget cost for this in some detail to indicate the manner in which this government will be proceeding. It initially provides \$1.5 million for the purchase of the cameras and \$1 million for the installation. The decrease the member refers to of \$14.2 million in the 2021-22 estimated result, results from the 2021-22 original budget. It is primarily due to delays in passing of legislative amendments and the rolling out of the initiative in 2022-23, as well as the revision of the capital costs.

The revision of the capital costs and installation strategy follows a market sounding. This market sounding was done by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport in May of 2021. Again, I note this was an action undertaken by this government having been sworn in just a few weeks before. The advice from interstate counterparts to the department was that the cameras had higher operating costs and higher licensing costs than estimated, but a lower than needed capital cost.

Following this market sounding, again, going to budget, the price of the cameras was reduced. The installation strategy was also amended to utilise existing structures, and these structures that will be utilised, for the member's benefit, will be structures such as variable messaging signs. Cameras can be mounted on those and will provide an effective method for installation. That will be in lieu of erecting new structures. This resulted in the revised budget amount of \$1.5 million for the purchase of the cameras and \$1 million for the installation.

Mr WHETSTONE: There are two packages or strategies that we are looking at, as far as road safety is concerned. The completion of a regional road safety package has been delayed by 12 months. What is the reason for that?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Do you have a budget item for that?

Mr WHETSTONE: That is same reference point, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 121.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you for the reference, it was important to know. That is a matter best referred and necessary to be referred to the Minister for Infrastructure.

Mr WHETSTONE: Has your agency had any input into the completion or the development of the regional road safety package?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is not my agency, member for Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: No, I understand that, but did your agency have any input.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is not my agency, that is why I have referred the question to the transport minister; it is his portfolio and ministerial responsibilities.

The CHAIR: I am sure questions have been asked of the minister elsewhere.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am not sure, I am sorry.

The CHAIR: I am pretty sure it was.

Mr WHETSTONE: It comes under page 144.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, you referred to page 120.

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, a new road safety strategy for South Australia is reducing lives lost, serious injury for road users and developing a culture. Can you update the committee on that strategy?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you for clarifying that—yes, I absolutely can. The South Australian government is finalising an action plan to progress delivery on the targets set nationally through the National Road Safety Strategy of reducing lives lost by at least 50 per cent. Reducing serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2030, delivering safer regional roads, safer school precincts and safer road user behaviour are some of the areas of particular focus as, of course, is reducing lives lost and serious injuries on South Australian roads.

The action plan will be informed by the National Road Safety Strategy and the South Australian Road Safety Strategy to 2031. That was released earlier this year, and I believe the former Minister for Road Safety has a wonderful photo on the front of that one. Always a good photo.

Mr WHETSTONE: He has a lot of wonderful photos, has he not?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: My favourite would have to be the one on the jet ski but we will not go there today.

Mr WHETSTONE: Get them while you can.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Arrangements are also being put in place to enable transparent reporting on progress delivering the action plan and how well those actions are working through a set of safety performance indicators. Specifically, road safety actions also continue to be delivered, including roadside enforcement by SAPOL, behaviour change campaigns and programs, and initiatives such as On The Right Track program and Way2Go.

Rollout of safety treatments across priority locations on our regional road network also continues through a road safety infrastructure program jointly funded by the commonwealth and South Australian governments at a proportion of 80 per cent commonwealth:20 per cent state. The strategy that I referred to, the 2031 strategy that was released on 28 January 2022, was informed by analysis of road safety statistics, modelling and advice from the Centre for Automotive Safety Research.

It was also informed by community and stakeholder feedback, specifically to the member's question regarding consultation. Stakeholder and community consultation to inform the development of the strategy occurred between August 2021 and December 2021. The strategy and its targets to reduce lives lost and serious injuries were also developed to align with the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30. This national strategy was endorsed at the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers Meeting in May 2021 and then further released in December 2021.

Mr WHETSTONE: There is also a five-year Road Safety Action Plan. Is that in lieu of what the Motor Accident Commission (MAC) used to achieve?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The short answer is no. In lieu of MAC's operations, which have been dispersed across DIT and SAPOL, the action plan largely informs the work and the strategies of the government and agencies. It does not replace MAC's work. In fact, the work that MAC undertook, and particularly the funding that MAC dispersed, is now exclusively with DIT and SAPOL.

Mr WHETSTONE: It went to general revenue, did it not? I think it did. Sorry, I shall not. Acknowledging the \$12 million of additional funding to the regional road safety package, could you please provide a breakdown of how that additional funding attributed to the package will be used?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: This is another one, member for Chaffey, that is in the ministerial responsibility of the Minister for Infrastructure. If I can assist with liaising with the minister I will, but I would not want to assume that questions have or have not been asked of the minister on that.

Mr WHETSTONE: Okay, well it comes under road safety. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 121: the completion of targeted road safety works has been delayed by 12 months. Are you able to shed light on why?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: As to why, because of the complexity of these projects, I may need to take that on notice, other than the existing and already well-ventilated matters that have caused significant delays across many projects across many jurisdictions. Would the member be assisted by a detailed breakdown of those projects, or do you have access to those?

Mr WHETSTONE: I will take that on notice. Can you please explain the almost \$23 million reduction in the road safety income?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that the variation there is predominantly due to the way the commonwealth funding flows through and out. To give it a degree of breakdown for the member's interest, that is a \$22.6 million decrease in commonwealth government contributions toward road safety works as part of the targeted road safety works—that is the stimulus package that was delivered in 2021-22—and a further \$3.6 million reduction in commonwealth government contributions towards the national Black Spot program rolling out through 2022-23.

Mr WHETSTONE: I have some questions on the key performance indicators. Traffic offences: can you please explain why there is a projected decrease in the number of reports for traffic offences detected by police?

The CHAIR: What page are we on?

Mr WHETSTONE: Page 211, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3. There is a decrease from 17,741 to 14,795?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am sorry, member for Chaffey. I just could not hear you over the Chair. I am not sure whether he was asking for the same reference. Was it page 211?

Mr WHETSTONE: Page 211.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you. I am advised that is almost exclusively due to the implications of COVID.

Mr WHETSTONE: Right. Gee whiz, COVID has done a lot of damage to you, today. Minister, I go on to traffic watch complaints. Can you explain the projected decrease in the number of traffic watch complaints received? That has gone down by almost 2,000.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I will have to take that on notice as well. I am not advised that the complaints and the reasons for complaints will not have been affected by COVID, so I will take that on notice, and I am very happy to provide a more detailed answer to the member.

Mr WHETSTONE: Also, with road fatalities, the projected increase in road fatalities by four? It is a concerning projection that we are going to see more people die on the roads. I just might add to that the increase of serious injuries, up by 65.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to get the best information for you, member for Chaffey, what are you specifically referring to because the information that I am noting in that is—

Mr WHETSTONE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 146.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: If I am looking at page 146, the performance indicators, that actually predicts fewer fatalities, member for Chaffey, and it also projects fewer serious injuries, which would be consistent with our goal towards net zero.

Mr WHETSTONE: I beg your pardon, it does. I am no mathematician, no rocket scientist. It is evident, is it not? Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 146: can you provide an update on the Towards Zero Together program, and what funding has been allocated for that Towards Zero Together program in the 2022-23 budget?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to clarify, Chair, was it page 146?

Mr WHETSTONE: That is what I am told.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: There is no reference to that program on page 146.

Mr WHETSTONE: Yes, it might be in Budget Paper 5, I think. Sorry, please bear with me.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: In your hands, member.

Mr WHETSTONE: I do not think it is that. Minister, are you aware of the Towards Zero Together program?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am, yes.

Mr WHETSTONE: Excellent, that is a good start. Are you able to provide an update?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Just to assist the member, I am happy to take that broad question on notice and provide a degree of information outside of this to the member.

Mr WHETSTONE: You have a lot of competency sitting next to you there, I am sure.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: We will wait them to find—back in your hands then.

The CHAIR: We are quickly running out of time. To show my generosity as Chair, I will give the opportunity to find and put a question.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, just referring back to the mobile phone detection cameras and the delay on those cameras, reports are that there will be 100,000 drivers in a 12-month period who will be pinged, but it has over time contributed to 240 deaths. You are four times more likely to crash while using your mobile phone. Do you have any comment as to justification of why this delay has occurred? We cannot continue to blame the former government, this is a serious program that needs the attention of the government.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can assure the member that it has the full attention of the government and, rather than continuing to blame the former government, we are getting on with the job of fixing the mess that was inherited from the former government in respect of this. I can, in good grace and good spirit, as it has been today, sincerely agree with the member regarding the need for us to make significant changes on our roads when it comes to the use of mobile phones and distracted driving. It is a killer and there is no excuse.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I declare the examination of the portfolio of road safety completed. The estimates of payments for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and Administered Items for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport are adjourned until tomorrow.

I thank all the departmental employees who have made a contribution to today. We know a lot of background work goes into these estimates hearings, so you have our appreciation.

I also thank members of the opposition for the very measured way in which you have approached the day's proceedings. I apologise to the member for Davenport as it was very remiss of me—she had a question much earlier; alas, I missed out on that, so my apologies.

At 14:47 the committee adjourned to Thursday 23 June 2022 at 09:00.