

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**Monday, 3 July 2023**  
**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

**Chair:**

Mr E.J. Hughes

**Members:**

Hon. V.A. Tarzia  
Ms N.P. Clancy  
Ms L.P. Hood  
Ms C.L. Hutchesson  
Mrs R.K. Pearce  
Mr A.S. Pederick  
Mr S.J. Telfer

*The committee met at 09:00*

*Estimates Vote*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$1,006,195,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$69,000**

**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, Executive Director, Business Service, South Australia Police.  
Mr B. Cagialis, Director of Finance and Procurement, South Australia Police.  
Mr J. Stubing, Acting Superintendent, Commissioner's Support Branch, South Australia Police.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome to today's hearing for Estimates Committee B. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land upon which the committee meets today and pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present.

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

**Mr TELFER:** Yes, sir.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister

undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk Assistant via the Answers to Questions mailbox no later than Friday 8 September 2023.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of up to 10 minutes each, should they so wish. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions. A member who is not on the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair.

All questions are to be directed to the 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 and referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*.

I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply in the committee. Consistent with the rules of the house, photography by members from the chamber floor is not permitted while the committee is sitting. Ministers and members may not table documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution.

The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house; that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. The committee's examinations will be broadcast in the same manner as sittings of the house, through the IPTV system within Parliament House and online via the parliament website.

I now proceed to open the following lines for examination. The portfolio today 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 an opening statement, if he so desires.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Thank you, sir, and good morning. Thank you to members for your attendance this morning. Can I start by introducing those advisers that I have with me this morning for South Australia Police. I have Commissioner Grant Stevens; Steve Johninke, Executive Director, Business Service; Bill Cagialis, Director of Finance and Procurement; and sitting at the table behind me is Acting Superintendent Jake Stubing, Commissioner's Support Branch, SAPOL.

This state budget makes a significant investment in the South Australia Police, with a major focus on getting more staff on the frontline sooner to enhance public safety right across our communities. It builds on substantial investments made in the first Malinauskas government budget. These included \$6.5 million to fund 1,500 new multipurpose load-bearing vests for frontline SAPOL officers.

Now we are making a further strategic commitment for 2023-24 and beyond through the forward estimates which will set our police force up strongly for the future. These measures are about finding smarter ways to recruit and train new police officers, at a time of low unemployment and high competition for skilled workers right across our country and economy and particularly across police forces in Australia.

The 2023-24 state budget expands further the number of sworn police security officers, who are now also able to perform additional duties and release police officers to spend their time on other tasks. It is important to note that this investment in sworn PSO numbers marks the first increase to sworn PSO numbers, or sworn numbers more broadly, since 2018. This is a government that is committed to more police for South Australia and one that is taking the action required to achieve the results on the frontline.

The budget provides \$7 million in 2023-24, increasing to \$25.3 million per annum indexed from 2026-27, for the recruitment of these sworn police security officers in the SAPOL district support section. This initiative will expand the PSO workforce by 69 FTEs in 2023-24, increasing to an additional 189 FTEs in 2024-25. The additional sworn PSOs will perform roles currently undertaken by sworn police in areas such as major event control, event security, police prison guard, transport, crime scene guard and hospital guard, allowing for the redirection of existing police officer positions to other priority frontline operations.

The state budget provides \$12.2 million over three years from 2023-24 to accelerate cadet recruitment by increasing the number of courses delivered by the Police Academy, engaging in recruitment campaigns, improving vocational pathways and exploring cross-jurisdictional recruitment. This initiative will accelerate recruitment and training to address existing vacancies and attrition within SA Police.

The state budget also provides \$2.7 million capital funding to enable the construction of the Indulkana police post—I know this is one that is very close to your heart, sir. The construction of police posts at Fregon, Indulkana and Pipalyatjara is part of a broader APY lands facility initiative that includes the multi-agency facility in Umuwa. This is a joint initiative between the SA government and the National Indigenous Australians Agency, with \$4.3 million provided by the commonwealth government.

The state budget provides investing expenditure of \$1.7 million over two years from 2023-24 and operating expenditure of \$240,000 over four years from 2023-24 for the upgrade and maintenance of soft interview rooms, which support vulnerable witnesses. The state budget also provides \$3.8 million per annum indexed from 2026-27 to establish a telephone resolution desk. Police officers performing this function will contact complainants by telephone and apply strategies to reduce SAPOL attendance at non-emergency incidents, without compromising public safety or service delivery standards. SAPOL will employ 31 administrative call takers to free up police officers to undertake the telephone resolution duties.

The budget provides \$1.5 million per annum indexed from 2023-24 for additional SAPOL-led road safety initiatives in an effort to reduce serious injuries and fatalities in South Australia. The South Australian Road Safety Strategy to 2031 and the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 provide future direction to achieve a reduction in road trauma on South Australian roads. The strategy sets targets of at least a 50 per cent reduction in lives lost and at least a 30 per cent reduction in serious injuries per capita on South Australian roads by 2030. SAPOL is committed to contributing to achieving these targets.

SAPOL's Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2026 identifies nine priority areas to assist in driving outcomes in support of achieving zero lives lost on our roads by 2050. SAPOL utilises evidence-based deployments on roads that pose the highest risk to the public and focuses on law enforcement of offences around speed, seatbelts, distractions (particularly improper and illegal use of mobile phones), road user impairment, drink driving, drug driving and fatigue, as well as recidivist dangerous road users.

The South Australia Police Road Safety Centre provides lifelong road safety education to all members of the community and continues to develop and provide targeted road safety information to vulnerable road users. To ensure road safety information is accessible and relevant to Aboriginal community members, road safety resources have been translated into appropriate languages such as Pitjantjatjara and Kurna. This is important work as we seek to reduce the avoidable loss of life and serious injuries that we see on our roads and, tragically, at a much higher rate at the beginning of this year than it was in those previous years.

The budget also provides \$5 million in 2026-27 towards the delivery of a new SAPOL communications centre. The new centre will ensure SAPOL can continue to respond and coordinate the responses to emergencies, ensuring the long-term safety of the South Australian community while also meeting critical infrastructure requirements. Under the Attorney-General's portfolio responsibilities, the budget has also allocated \$348.9 million over four years from 2023-24 for new facilities and accommodation to support the operations of Forensic Science SA and the SAPOL Forensic Services Branch. This purpose-built facility will be equipped to ensure the continued delivery of expert scientific services to the justice system.

The government continues to work with SAPOL to relocate 15 separate business units from Thebarton barracks to make way for the new Women's and Children's Hospital. SAPOL is working closely with Renewal SA, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and SA Health to ensure works on the new hospital will commence on schedule. SAPOL sees this as an opportunity to move its operations from an ageing site that no longer meets its business requirements. The existing

barracks were constructed in 1917 and are no longer fit for purpose. Our government is committed to providing appropriate alternative accommodation.

SAPOL is working closely with community, government and relevant stakeholders to progress the recommendations from the national Closing the Gap agreement. In addition to business as usual activities, SAPOL has commenced a specific project to develop a First Nations strategy and action plan to further enhance our approach to Closing the Gap recommendations. Thank you, sir, and I am happy to take any questions.

**The CHAIR:** Do you have an opening statement, member for Flinders?

**Mr TELFER:** I have a brief one. Can I say thank you to the commissioner and the team for the session today. Obviously, keeping our community safe is an incredibly important task and the roles and responsibilities of officers are vast and broad and cover the whole of the state. I have the utmost respect for the work that the police do and I think this is a good opportunity for members in this place to be able to unpack a little bit about the detail of those operations.

As decision-makers, we certainly are separated from the actual operations of police but it is always important to make sure that decision-makers know the challenges that are faced, the legislation that may need to adapt to suit the need, and also to be making sure that we are fully informed when making decisions around community safety. On that, I am happy to proceed.

Just to start off, I am going to look at Budget Paper 4, Volume 3. I think most of the time we will be wandering around those areas from page 190 and just unpack a little bit, minister, the workforce aspects of the police force. Of the FTEs that are there indicated, the 2022-23 estimated result, how many of those FTEs were operational officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Can I just confirm, sorry, member, what page we are on?

**Mr TELFER:** Page 190.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise the member that projected—and I appreciate we are pretty close to the end of the year, but we will do our best to project, in my answers, to the end of the financial year as opposed to a point in time today. As the member would be aware, the establishment numbers, being sworn police, are 4,684. We project that at the end of financial year 2022-23, that sworn FTE establishment will be 4,469.8 FTE.

**Mr TELFER:** At the end of—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** End of financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** The financial year just gone?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, at the end of this financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** Okay; 2023-24.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, we are in the 2022-23 financial year now, so at the end of the 2022-23 financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, it is 3 July. We are in 2023-24.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry—at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. My apologies. We will get there.

**Mr TELFER:** So at the end of 2022-23, say, three days ago—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Say, three days ago—4,469.8 FTE. I can also advise that at the end of financial year 2022-23, there are 122 cadets above cap, so in addition to that there are 122 FTE cadets above cap. Those cadets are currently in training at the Police Academy. That 122 is substantially more than this time last year, I think. Last year, if we go back 12 months, it was about 52 or maybe 57. I am happy to correct that if it is wrong, but there are substantially more numbers of FTE in the Police Academy at this point in time. That has been a sustained effort throughout each month this year. That is 122 in addition to the FTE cap.

**Mr TELFER:** What about PSOs? How many of them are part of that FTE count on page 190?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** They are not part of the cap. They are not part of the sworn—

**Mr TELFER:** As a proportion of the FTE cap—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Police security officers are not counted as part of those establishment numbers.

**Mr TELFER:** As part of the FTE numbers that are on page 190? That is what I am asking. How many PSOs were there at the end of the 2022-23 financial year, which has just finished?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We have a total number of police security officers of 254.2 FTE. I can advise further that they are broken down into 145.1 in PSSB branch and 109.1 across other duties.

**Mr TELFER:** Can I clarify, are the 122 cadets you mentioned earlier all police cadets, and are they all included within the total FTE as at 30 June?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the total FTE of 5,920.1 does include a portion of cadets who are sworn in at six months of their training. The additional police cadets who are not yet at six months of their training are not included in those numbers, but the total number of 122 is included in the 5,920.1. For the sake of clarity, I would reaffirm that even though police cadets are sworn in as a matter of process under the Police Act at six months, they are not operational. They are not able to be deployed as sworn officers.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, you just quoted the number 5920.1. Is that number the estimated FTE at the end of June?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the 5,920.1 is higher than the estimated result, and that is primarily due to the fact that there are, in that 254 number that I gave you for PSOs, a number of police security officers who have been recruited and retained, utilising cash flow from unspent sworn salaries that will allow us to move this financial year into our budget commitment of 189 additional permanent sworn PSOs. That is why the 5,920 is higher than the estimated result for 2022-23.

**Mr TELFER:** So the money that has been saved because the police workforce is not as high as budgeted then gets spent on PSOs?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I would not characterise it as saved; we are certainly not handing it back to Treasury, despite I am sure the great protestations of some officials. The money that is unspent on salaries for sworn officers this year has been deployed in part to a number of other important areas, including what has already been an amplified recruitment task.

Coming in to government 12 months ago we advised that there were six cadet courses programmed per year. That has almost doubled in the last financial year and that has been able to be achieved in part because of the reduced expenditure in sworn salaries, and further in part that reduction in sworn salaries has been able to sustain an earlier recruitment and retention of sworn police security officers on the basis that we are able to confirm in this year's budget the permanent ongoing employment of 189 new sworn PSOs.

**Mr TELFER:** So the unspent funds you speak of obviously result from a shortfall in the sworn salaries. What is the current shortfall for officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that as at 28 June 2023, as advised, the sworn FTE establishment under the cap is 4,684 and the actual was 4,469.8, so about 214.2—do not forget the 0.2. As I said, that does not include 122 cadets above cap at the Police Academy. Often it is somewhat cyclical in nature in respect of when those cadets will be graduating. If I go back 12 months, it was, as advised, about 50, and they were coming online pretty soon. The majority of the 122 are coming online in the next couple of months.

**Mr TELFER:** Do you want to equate the numbers? It is obviously quite complicated. How many of the FTEs were community constables?

**Membership:**

Mrs Pearce substituted for Ms Hutchesson.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We did not bring that information to the proceedings today.

**Mr TELFER:** I did not think it would be quite such a tough ask.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We want to get the number right for you.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** As you would be aware, the community constables include not only metropolitan-based community constables but APY community constables. I can advise that at the moment, and for a substantial number of years, there have been recruiting challenges with APY community constables. I note the presence of the former Minister for Police in estimates today. At my strong request we are doing everything we can to look at new ways of reducing barriers for the recruitment of APY community constables.

When I was on the APY lands myself, speaking to a number of the permanent police up there, as well as community constables, it became apparent that there were multiple challenges with recruitment, some of which were the complex family and community issues.

**Mr TELFER:** Indeed.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We were mindful that often good young, or not so young, men and women from the APY lands were, for complex family reasons, not putting their hand up and remained not putting their hand up. There are strategies in place that we are investigating as well, including whether there are any barriers whatsoever, within reason, that can be either removed or reduced in getting more First Nations APY community constables.

**Mr TELFER:** I will be interested in that number if and when it gets here.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide that there was an FTE cap of 46 community constables, and that is across Adelaide metropolitan operations and APY and regions. I will bring back the best part information for the member on notice, but the actual at April was 26, so a shortfall of 20 FTEs as at April. That shortfall, as I articulated, was largely because of the APY shortfall, which I think is about 13.

**Mr TELFER:** That is certainly quite a difference. How many of the FTE are administration?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Can I just clarify for the member: by administration do you mean non-sworn?

**Mr TELFER:** Of the FTE, perhaps a breakdown in administrative staff, non-sworn and sworn.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the total FTE of 5,920 includes a component of sworn of 4,469.8, 122 cadets.

**Mr TELFER:** Yes, got that one.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will just run through it. Then unsworn is 1,074.1. I understand the member's question regarding administrative, and across that unsworn staff there are, of course, many functions that are undertaken, not just administrative—I think far from administrative. We, of course, have our ICT experts and facilities experts. There are quite a number now of unsworn police prosecutors. There are additional resources that are being deployed into cyber. So I understand the tenor of the member's question regarding—

**Mr TELFER:** Perhaps, rather than me going through the knick-knacks, you could provide on notice a breakdown of the FTE for me?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can certainly provide to the best that we can within operational requirements the breakdown of unsworn. Maybe there will be some operational impediments to providing—

**Mr TELFER:** Specifics.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** —a line by line, but to the best that we can, within the absolute spirit of the question of the member, we will provide that.

**Mr TELFER:** How many FTEs are tasked with road safety, specifically?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Whilst my advisers are getting those specific numbers, I will take the member to page 199 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3. In the reporting, pursuant to budget and targets, in 2022-23 we have 855.0 FTEs. The 2023-24 budget anticipates 877.1 FTEs.

I do note, though, that around reporting for budget and agency statements the broad number of police that are involved in 'road safety' is substantially more. For example, every police vehicle is a constant reminder and enforcement tool on our roads. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I was driving home from work one night and there was a nondescript white van that whacked its lights on and out got a wonderful member of SAPOL to enforce road safety, thankfully not to me. It is a reminder that that FTE is very likely not to be included in Road Safety Program 3 reporting, but that road safety is a critical first order of business for SAPOL.

**Mr TELFER:** The luxuries of having a driver. The 2022-23 budget specified 744 FTEs for road safety. The estimated result is another 111 more and they are adding another 22. Is this a specific strategic decision that has been made? It is quite a significant increase.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that, in respect of the reporting under the budget papers, there is not a specific allocation for an initiative or new program; it is a proportionate increase based on the total number of individuals in the system. For example, there is a proportionate increase because of the additional sworn police, security officers and some other FTEs. There are no specific programs that would indicate the additional FTEs.

**Mr TELFER:** It seems like more than proportional growth, compared to some of the numbers.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes. That is the advice that I have. If there is some further detail that I can provide to the member on notice I will, but as I said I do not want to give any indication though that it is 877 or 744 total FTE that are dedicated to road safety policing or road safety initiatives. It is—

**Mr TELFER:** Just what the budget papers say.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** That is all I am trying to reflect. It is a 111 increase. If there is not a strategic reason why it is a proportional change then I am just reflecting that, as a proportion of what I see in the budget numbers for FTEs, it is certainly an over-representation of that proportion. How many FTEs are still dedicated to the COVID-19 response?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that as at April 2023 SAPOL has incurred \$7.3 million across the financial year 2022-23 in COVID-19 expenditure, relating to employee entitlements of \$5 million and supplies and services of \$2.3 million. Employee entitlements expenses primarily consisted of salaries for the sworn PSOs expansion initiative and sworn penalties and allowances, mainly VRSS, up to December 2022. Supplies and services expenses primarily consist of corporate accommodation expenditure of \$1.3 million, which I can advise breaks down to mainly contract cleaning. There are incurred SES-CFS resources of \$0.4 million and other supplies of services and external staffing of \$0.4 million.

The SAPOL end of year forecast for COVID-19 expenditure is \$3.5 million. I can advise that at the end of financial year 2022-23 there are no resources that remain deployed to COVID-19 functions, and as a result of the cessation of COVID-19 functions in SAPOL at the end of calendar year 2022 those existing PSOs, as part of the police security district support section, have been able to be, as I have advised earlier on, internally redirected, as part of remaining budget, towards the initiative of sworn PSOs.

**Mr TELFER:** How many FTEs are currently on parental leave?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We do not have a number that I can provide you today on those individuals who are on actual paid or unpaid parental leave, but I can provide that on notice.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Perhaps just to give some context to the broader question from the member, which I will provide a specific response on in respect of parental leave, flexible working arrangements commenced in May 2018: from May 2018 through to 30 April 2023 the flexible work team has received a total of 3,637 applications from police officers requesting various types of flexible working arrangements, and these generally are greater than 28 days.

Of those, I can advise that 63 per cent were from female police officers and 36 per cent were from male police officers. Of these applications, the following types of voluntary flexible work arrangements were requested: part-time work was requested in 1,711 applications; variation to start and finish time, 507 applications; shift changes, 403 applications; work from home (that do not include temporary work from home applications due to COVID-19) were 361; special leave without pay, 363; purchased leave, 170; compressed weeks, 87; and working remotely, 35.

**Mr TELFER:** So that is how many applications there have been in that five-year period. You have taken on notice how many current—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, on that specific parental leave, absolutely.

**Mr TELFER:** How many FTEs are currently on medical or stress leave?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Stress leave, do you mean unpaid leave or unfit for duty due to an accepted workers comp claim?

**Mr TELFER:** Are they split in your numbers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Just to be clear, stress leave is not a form of leave.

**Mr TELFER:** Medical leave then.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes. I will take that on notice and provide a specific number as of 30 June, particularly on the medical leave. Thank you for the clarification.

**Mr TELFER:** How many police stations are single-officer stations in the state?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** There are 126 total police stations. Across South Australia I think it is 104 in the regions. I will take on notice as of today the number of those stations that may be single police, simply because there are, at any given time, a number of positions that are subject to application processes or competitive processes to fill. So without wanting to give an incorrect figure of those 104 regional stations, I will take on notice as of today the number of those that are single stations.

Perhaps, if I can further assist the member, I can take on notice, if it would be helpful, the number of other positions within those. For example, there may be stations that at any given time have multiple police but there will be positions that are unfilled because of competitive application processes. I am happy to take that on notice as well and furnish the member with a fulsome answer.

**Mr TELFER:** Is that number of 104 regional stations mooted to change at all? Are there any potential closures?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Nothing to be advised of.

**Mr TELFER:** To unpack a little bit more about the recruitment aspect, which we started to in that FTE work, and noting also the workforce summary in Budget Paper 5, page 60, which specifies a few of the numbers in particular: what are SAPOL's order of recruitment priorities for the next 12 months and over the next three years?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Can I just seek some clarification? When you said order of priorities, do you mean in respect of diverse cohorts, multicultural groups, genders?

**Mr TELFER:** And also specific tasks and roles.



**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the recruitment for police is never for specific tasks or roles. It is very generalist in nature, which is, of course, one of the reasons that the police cadet course is 10 months. Probationary constables graduate with an incredibly diverse range of skills and skill sets that allow them to be deployed across both regional and metropolitan operations, so it is—

**Mr TELFER:** Are there any other priorities that SAPOL have with the recruitment, especially the accelerated police recruitment?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** As I advised, there has not been and does not remain a priority of specific recruiting for sworn officers because each sworn officer is, by virtue of being sworn and graduating from the Police Academy, able to be deployed across a multitude of operations. They are, by the very nature of their training, able to be generalist and across all of the priority areas of SAPOL. That is within the existing framework.

I may be able to assume the member's interest around whether there are particular target cohorts or different target jurisdictions or different target individuals. Absolutely, within the dedicated \$12 million in this year's state budget, there are a raft of opportunities that have been made available to South Australia Police in respect of their recruiting.

Right at the heart of that is a review of marketing program. I am sure that all of us in this room are somewhat tied to traditional media, but it is fair to say that younger people, of which I am, sadly, no longer one, are consuming news and media in different ways, and so a comprehensive review of marketing program and attraction of younger potential recruits is underway. That has been deployed across our paid spend this year.

The other focus areas of the \$12.2 million for accelerated recruitment in this year's budget, of which the work is already underway, will enable an analysis and a comprehensive targeted package towards other jurisdictional recruitment. That involves jurisdictions, as I am advised to date, such as the United Kingdom, as well as, much closer to home, New Zealand. Of course, at any point in time, the attraction of police from other jurisdictions within Australia is front of mind but also a less binary consideration considering the immense challenges that most other jurisdictions are currently having with being so far under their own establishment numbers and having attrition running at a much higher rate than South Australia.

I am also pleased to advise that another target area for SAPOL, as the member has asked, is young people, and that is through the exploration and development of a youth partnership and youth pathways. SAPOL is working closely with TAFE and the Department for Education on schools-based pathways. We are a government that is dedicated heavily to promoting pathways for young students that do not involve tertiary studies. Right at the front of that are our new technical colleges and we hope and expect that the development of youth pathways through schools-based partnerships for SAPOL will enable those new groups, as asked by the member, to be a priority focus for SAPOL.

If I am also very frank and honest, there is no age group, no gender, no group that is not welcome and is not a target for SAPOL. In a vast number of conversations that I have with groups very close to my own heart—multicultural groups—we are working almost daily with opportunities to promote and tap into the immense trust in those multicultural and ethnic communities around promoting policing as a potential career pathway.

**Mr TELFER:** You referred to the attrition rate in your answer. What is the current attrition rate for this financial year, and how does that compare with the last five financial years, potentially?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am not certain I can give you the last five years. Perhaps if I can take any information for that on notice, but the current attrition rate—

**Mr TELFER:** I would appreciate that.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** If I can. The current separations through to 28 June are 248. That of course includes resignations and retirements as well. The attrition rate is 5.3 per cent, I am advised. As Minister for Emergency Services I will have to admit my own part to play in this. Across

the emergency services sector I have recently employed three senior police in emergency services and emergency management roles.

**Mr TELFER:** That is only three of the 248; do not take too much responsibility.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That is very kind of the member. I will not hang my head too low in shame, but I use it to indicate the fact that police are incredibly well trained and employable across a multitude of both private sector and public sector employers. In a tight job market I know that employers are desperately reaching out for former police. They are great employees and we would like to hold more of them.

**Mr TELFER:** Of the 248 total, how many have separated by age retirement, resignation before retirement age or termination due to discipline?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will take those on notice, particularly the latter part.

**Mr TELFER:** Regarding the 248 total, I am interested in the differentiation between the recruits that have come in and the recruits that have gone out. For the last financial year, what is the number of recruits coming into the force?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Before I come to the member's question regarding those numbers, I am happy to provide numbers now for the former question that I undertook to break down for him. Projected out through to 2022-23, that breakdown of 248 is about 50 per cent retired—and that does not necessarily mean retired due to age, it is just retirement due to choice—and resigned is around 50 per cent as well. Of the remainder, I am advised that as of 30 April there are 14 in the other category, and that other category includes invalidity, deceased or dismissed. As for the member's—

**Mr TELFER:** Sorry, before you go on, regarding the invalidities, is there a fitness test for existing officers? Is that something that is periodic?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, none of those separations are as a result of any failed periodic testing.

**Mr TELFER:** So there is not a periodic fitness test for existing officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. Regarding the second question from before, I can advise that 242 police have been recruited across that same period.

**Mr TELFER:** There were 248 leaving and 242 recruits and an existing shortfall of 214.2 from the previous answer. On page 60 of Budget Paper 5, where it talks about accelerated police recruitment, the full-time equivalents line there under accelerated police recruitment says 20. Of that \$4.651 million in the 2023-24 budget, is it estimated that this will successfully recruit an additional 20 officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, that is not correct. With respect, I can advise what the 20 is. That is the 20 FTE equivalent—new FTE—that are directly related to the employment of 900 recruits over the next three years, so that is not 20 new recruits, that is—

**Mr TELFER:** That have been tasked with that role?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes. Those 20 involve civilian educators, FTEs that are involved in the administrative side of processing of applications. I think it does reflect and indicate the substantial nature of the commitment that the government has made in the accelerated recruitment of 900 cadets over the next three years. On top of our current cohort that do recruiting, we will need an extra 20 people just to get these 900 cadets through.

**Mr TELFER:** Over the next three years with the 900, what is the target breakdown for year one?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is about 300 across—

**Mr TELFER:** Even?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes. There is no specific target that I have asked of the police commissioner. I have given him licence in essence to recruit well and truly to front end, to back end—

the preference is front of course. Early indications are that year one may be higher than 300, but at this early stage it is fair to say on average about 300 across the three years with some slight variation.

**Mr TELFER:** With 248 members retiring, or resigning early—with 50 per cent of that resigning before retirement age—are there any additional programs that SAPOL has initiated to retain police officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can specifically answer the question in two parts. I can come to the retention side of the question second. The core number across the next three years does not include the very strong indication that cross-jurisdictional recruitment will be part of the package. As I announced earlier around the budget and as I advised the member, we have a multipronged approach to accelerated police recruitment, one of which is to supplement the core number of sworn police with cross-jurisdictional attraction. That is very much part of the plan that there will be in the coming months—

**Mr TELFER:** But existing?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** By retention?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will come to that, but I do not want to give the member the indication that the only strategy in place is to recruit more brand-new cadets. There is also a funded strategy that will be announced with some more detail for cross-jurisdictional attraction of police. As to the retention side of the question, there is an ongoing project initiated by the police commissioner around retention. I am advised that there are senior police from senior ranks who have been taken offline to lead that project. It is a very important part of the equation, a very important piece of the puzzle. If I can be as frank with the member as I can, it is also a matter that has been discussed at the most recent national police ministers' meeting.

Attrition is a factor in policing that all jurisdictions have confronted. Of course, attrition has always been there, but increased attrition of the last number of years has been a factor that all police jurisdictions are encountering. It has also often been the case across South Australia and other jurisdictions that these are new matters that are being confronted with respect to an increased attrition over the last few years. The target of SAPOL is to keep attrition at a point which is as low as possible, recognising that attrition is always there. It is always a factor. There are some industries which have higher attrition than others. The public sector and police have always traditionally—

**Mr TELFER:** Is there a target number for police as far as attrition goes?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that the forecasted number of separations, which is a reflection of attrition, is about 150 per year. This year has been higher. It was particularly high in the years post COVID as well. There are two distinct critical and important factors involved in increasing the number of police in South Australia. Of course, there is attracting more recruits, recruiting more police and funding SAPOL to do exactly that, and then there is the retention of police. The third part, of course, is new initiatives that this government has undertaken, such as the employment of 189 new sworn police security officers.

**Mr TELFER:** What is the attrition rate for police security officers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will take that on notice. I will be able to give the member some further information. I am advised that a very substantial number of sworn police security officers will be transitioned into sworn SAPOL cadet recruiting. It is a great pathway. I will be able to provide the breakdown of both of those for the member.

**Mrs PEARCE:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 194. The Budget Measures Statement includes \$12.2 million over three years to accelerate police recruitment through measures including increased cadet training. Can the minister provide more detail about how many cadets will be trained and how that will be achieved?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Can I thank the member for her question.

**Mr TELFER:** I can answer it: 900 over the next three years.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That is right.

**Mr TELFER:** Easy answer.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It might be some time before the member gets to answer those questions. I am happy to provide—

**Mr TELFER:** You have been talking about it for 15 minutes.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I particularly note the member's interest in this; we are going to be counting on members like the member for King to be working in their communities, as well as members from all across the state, in promoting and attaining our new recruits. In this year's state budget, we have a plan to train 900 new cadets over the next three years. It is not just a plan: it is funded, and it is the first time that we have had specific funding for this accelerated recruitment. That will result in successful training of roughly 300 cadets graduating a year, as I am advised, for the next three years.

To give some context, that enhanced number of 300 cadets is graduates in the coming three years, so 300 graduates per year for the next three years, which compares to only 126 cadets who graduated in the 2021-22 financial year. Since the election of our government, cadet graduations have already doubled. In the last 12 months, the number of cadet courses increased from six to 10 and produced, as I have already advised, 240 new graduates for police. Our government is determined to do more, and that is why in the coming 12 months SAPOL intends to run at least 12 cadet courses and increase the number of cadets in each course from 24 to 26 to deliver the total number of more than 300 graduates.

A recruitment acceleration initiative project team was formed within SAPOL in March 2023 to identify immediate changes that can be made to the recruitment process to attract more recruits, improve the recruitment process and achieve a higher success rate while longer term strategies are concurrently implemented. SAPOL is also committed to employing recruits from regional South Australia, and there will be a very strong emphasis over the next 12 to 18 months to attract more country recruits to join SAPOL, including consideration of regional incentives and support for living expenses. SAPOL is investigating outreach opportunities to increase access to regional assessment.

SAPOL is also progressing new marketing initiatives to promote SAPOL as an employer of choice and attract applications, including procurement of a new recruitment campaign to enhance marketing efforts. In addition to recruitment marketing, SAPOL is progressing numerous talent attraction initiatives through partnerships, increased community engagement and actions to improve candidate engagement from application through to selection. This includes:

- the delivery of a mobile recruitment van for use at career expos and community engagement activities;
- the establishment of a partnership with the Adelaide Footy League and Football South Australia to promote recruitment at football and soccer matches;
- progress to finalising new partnerships with further sporting bodies and a broad community reach; and
- progressing towards the delivery of a recruitment shopfront on the ground floor of our police headquarters.

I was also pleased that the emergency services match, hosted by the Adelaide Football Club on 10 June, served as an excellent opportunity to promote and attract new cadets. It was a new initiative of our government to partner with the Crows for a day at the footy, which paid tribute to our frontline staff and volunteers and included 3,000 free tickets made available to them to say thank you.

The day was also about encouraging people to think about a career in policing, as well as other services, and it is just one example, in addition to those that I have already mentioned, of the creative methods that are now being employed to raise awareness about career pathways that may be available. My message to any person who may be considering joining SAPOL is very clear: get

involved and apply now. This is a rewarding career where you will be respected by our community, have incredible experiences and be able to access exceptional career development opportunities.

Those young people can also be confident that they have a government that is backing them with the support they need and putting in place plans for the future to support growing the number of men and women on our frontline.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you, sir; 900, three years—good. Can I continue in the same direction I was wandering through. The 300 a year for the next three years—at what point will there be adequate policing to appropriately assess the district policing model? I know the commentary has been that with the resource challenge we have had we have not been able to appropriately assess the model. At what point do you envision that that recruitment process will be able to fully staff that model as it is being developed?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** There are significant operational matters that I can update the member on, particularly around the district policing model. In the last week or so there has been advice to the workforce of a number of matters on updating the district policing model, particularly around the imminent implementation of the extended hours roster. That matter has been some years in the making. I am advised that, notwithstanding previous consultation on the extended hours roster but the most recent round of extended hours roster consultation, there has been agreement with the workforce and that is rolling out on 13 July. We will see it being rolled out, a very important initiative well received by the workforce.

**Mr TELFER:** What will that achieve?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** First and foremost a massive improvement to work-life balance. Substantial external research has been undertaken in the development of the options for the extended hours roster. The member I am sure would know police personally in his life—I certainly do—and one thing that is very clear is that police rosters are tricky and have often and historically provided a difficulty for individuals and families to plan around.

The improvements that will be attained through the roster changes will be immediate in the sense that the rosters will become more linear and easier for families and individuals to plan around. Primarily they were also through the support of external health research and expert research, due to the impact that shift work has on individuals, not just in policing but in any workforce. It will have very substantial improvements to the wellbeing of those police who are on roster.

Keep in mind that there are many police across our system who are on day work and are not impacted by this, but those who are on shift work have already told me, loud and clear, and I am sure that in the police commissioner's very good work in this space they have told him as well, that they are eagerly awaiting the implementation of this roster change.

**Mr TELFER:** The government has a position of reducing the number of executive appointments across all departments. Are there positions within SAPOL—assistant commissioners, executive directors, directors, etc.—seen to be included in that?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that SAPOL has not received any advice on that. As for the efficiencies within all government agencies, I was very pleased to note that the small efficiency public sector wide that was instituted in the first Malinauskas budget did not include SAPOL frontline services or, in fact, any of my other frontline agencies. That was a very distinct difference from previous approaches of previous governments. As for the small number of executive efficiencies, I have not received advice that SAPOL have been asked to set a target.

**Mr TELFER:** Just unpacking a little bit—I do not want to pre-empt announcements about extended hours roster changes. You talked about the work-life balance benefits for police. Has the work been done, external or internal, about these changes and what they would mean for what we have seen with the increased demand and calls on police assistance from the public? From an external perspective, what are people going to see differently with the extended hours roster changes?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I might ask the police commissioner, he can provide some really specific details for the member's benefit regarding the benefits of the extended hours roster. He has been working on this for some years.

**Mr TELFER:** I would appreciate that.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** I could start by saying that historically, for as long as I have been a member of South Australia Police, we have been working what is regarded as the five-week roster, which I think has sufficient evidence to show that it does have an impact on an individual's wellbeing, and fatigue management is very difficult. The transition from the five-week roster to the extended hours roster commenced as an undertaking as part of our enterprise agreement that we would trial an extended hours roster. We did that for a period over 12 months in the western district, and the feedback from members working the roster was that it was exceptionally good in terms of being able to manage their own wellbeing and work-life balance.

However, there were some concerns highlighted regarding the organisation's ability to surge resources in for particular policing activities, and some members working the extended hours roster also raised concerns about the struggles of dealing with administrative tasks and fitting their compulsory training into their work weeks. On that basis, we contracted with a rostering expert and we also engaged with Flinders University to undertake some significant analysis on what our demand drivers were and peak periods of demand.

With that demand analysis done and provided to our rostering experts, we were able to come up with an alternative extended hours roster that met some core principles that we applied that has produced an outcome where we have a roster that about 93 per cent of the people working it have endorsed. The Police Association has also agreed to this roster being implemented and the commencement of that new extended hours roster will occur in the next week or so.

The implementation process for this new roster will include periodic reviews of the impact of that roster both on employee wellbeing and the impact it has on their ability to undertake their primary duties as well as the impact for the organisation in terms of our ability to meet ongoing demand. One of the key elements we provided, in terms of the criteria for a new roster, was that we had the capacity to surge resources as necessary so we can meet those demand issues that are impacting on SAPOL.

**Mr TELFER:** Is there an insight as to how regular those periodic reviews are going to be to assess the extended hours roster?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy to have the commissioner provide that advice.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** My understanding is that the extended hours roster is going to be reviewed on a six-monthly basis and after 14 months there will be a final review by both PASA and South Australia Police to determine whether any adjustments need to be made or to absolutely establish that as the permanent roster moving forward, so there will be significant ongoing review. There may be adjustments to the rostering arrangements during that review period if something appears that would require some change in the first instance.

**Mr TELFER:** That is the extended hours roster—the rostering within the district model as a whole—but I do not know if we got to an answer or not for the question I was asking before. At what point can we expect that there is going to be a review of the district model as a whole?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide some advice and then ask the commissioner to provide some more specific detail. The primary focus of our government is to expend the necessary capital money in the budget to recognise that the only way we can get to establishment numbers as quickly as we can is to accelerate recruitment—that is absolutely critical.

As I have already indicated to the committee, already since coming to government we have internally dedicated not only the planning but also the funding to almost double recruitment. We will be supporting that with the substantial package I already articulated to the committee across the next three years but also starting immediately with the investigation of additional resourcing.

As for some of the details I can advise from the most recent couple of weeks regarding the DPM, I can ask the commissioner to provide some more operational detail around that.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Can I start by pointing out that, as I think you have indicated, the ability to test or evaluate the district policing model has been hampered by the impact of COVID-19 and that was then followed by the lag in recruiting in late 2021 that saw us in a situation where we are now trying to get back to our funded establishment.

The ability to properly evaluate the district policing model, stage 2 in particular, is reliant on us achieving our funded establishment. The accelerated recruitment program of 300 a year will certainly go a long way to getting back to our funded establishment as quickly as possible and it is at that point when we are operating with a full establishment that we will be able to commence a proper review of the DPM stage 2.

What I can say, though, is that, as a result of significant consultation with key members of our frontline workforce, we have been provided with substantial feedback in relation to some of the challenges experienced by our frontline staff in relation to the operation of the district policing model. It is worth acknowledging the frank and honest feedback we were provided by that part of our workforce.

As a result of that we have effectively established a district policing model stage 3 program where, as a result of that consultation, we have identified key areas where we believe we can make changes to the district policing model that will enhance its operations, make it more user-friendly for the people who are actively involved in the DPM and provide better outcomes for the community as well. Part of our organisational reform program is taking that feedback and operationalising those key opportunities for change to, as I say, effectively run a stage 3 for DPM as we work back towards achieving our establishment.

**Mr TELFER:** Is there a time line for when you envision you will achieve that establishment—e.g. the opportunity for the review to actually happen with the DPM?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Return to establishment is an absolutely high-order priority for SAPOL and is funded appropriately by the government. We are looking at opportunities to return to establishment as soon as possible, noting of course that it takes 10 months to train a police cadet. That is why across the next three years we are setting a funded target of 900 cadets through Fort Largs but recognising that there will be opportunities to inject further numbers into SAPOL through cross-jurisdictional recruitment and attraction.

**Mr TELFER:** I respect the 'as soon as possible'. I am trying to do some maths on the 10 months' training. With your target for 150 going out the back door, albeit that currently it is 248, would you envision that it will still be at least two years, if not more, before we get to that full establishment?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. The advice I have had in respect of that internal target expectation is within the 2024-25 financial year. Thanks to the hard work and diligence of SAPOL, I can advise already a question I had undertaken on notice for the member. I am happy to provide now that there are 49 single-officer stations.

**Mr TELFER:** Out of 104. Thank you. Continuing on about the challenges that we have with resourcing at the moment and probably going through to the public safety aspect at page 193, at what point did the additional officers/surge within the CBD become a high priority?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that Operation Paragon was stood up in late 2022 and that within that there was the dedication of additional resources. This has been and remains a very high-order priority for SAPOL, as has been advised both in this house in response to questions from the member during question time but also through the very apparent, very substantial presence of police throughout the CBD.

Operation Paragon, of which this surge and supplementation is part, was stood up in late 2022. There has been, within that, periodic and sustained surging of resources. What we see at present is a more sustained surge of resourcing, but there have been multiple events occurring throughout that period, such as Gather Round and LIV and other incredibly successful major events that we have been able to attract here as a government that have seen other surges. But directly to the member's question, Paragon has been stood up since late 2022—I think December. If it is November, I will correct the record on notice.

**Mr TELFER:** Regarding the surge that you are referring to, my understanding of that from media reports and the like is that that surge is staffed with officers who are volunteering to do overtime, extra time; is that correct?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That is correct. We do not have private police in South Australia, or anywhere in Australia for that matter.

**Mr TELFER:** Rather than being a permanent allocation, it is temporary based on volunteers from overtime and extended time?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The existing permanent workforce in the eastern district, of which the CBD is part of that district, of course, is the permanent, as it is across the other districts in metropolitan Adelaide, but the surge is the operational mechanism by which SAPOL respond to matters of concern, matters of focus for them. The operational response that SAPOL has undertaken is the longstanding internal operational capability of uplift that is deployed across this operational surge and other operations across many years of experience.

**Mr TELFER:** Is that surge only provided from within the eastern district or from other districts?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The surge itself is supported by multiple districts as well as specialist operational resources. The additional resources, directly to the member's question, are from other districts, but also from specific operational units outside of district, including the Mounted Operations Unit, the State Operations Support Branch, Traffic Services Branch, Operation Meld and the Licensing Enforcement Branch.

**Mr TELFER:** In recognising that it is a surge, it is additional strain on existing resources, at what point will that additional strain mean that there is going to be a detrimental affect to policing as a whole, or will the surge have to be eased back at a certain point and, if so, do you have a time frame for when you may need to reduce that surge that is happening at the moment with Operation Paragon?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that there is always dynamic risk assessment undertaken by SAPOL. As I said, whilst this is a current, very important, and very substantial increase to the visible presence, both to disrupt antisocial behaviour but also to enforce and take a zero tolerance approach to violence, in respect of a time frame or otherwise that the member seeks, I am not advised that there is an end date.

**Mr TELFER:** Does SAPOL do any statistical reporting that identifies antisocial and criminal behaviour?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide some advice to the member in respect of some statistics from the early days or short start to the operation. In respect of the reporting for non-criminal behaviour, that is often caught in a raft of data sets, including interactions, but as the member I am sure would understand, and has been articulated well, is that there are criminal behaviours and there are non-criminal behaviours, and antisocial behaviour is across both. It is entirely incorrect to characterise antisocial behaviour as always being of a non-criminal nature, but also you cannot, and nor should we, characterise that all antisocial behaviour does meet a criminal threshold.

I can advise that from 22 June to 26 June, directly relating to some of the metrics that the member asked for, there were 29 additional taskings to North Terrace and 11 arrests. There were seven further offences and 42 expiation notices issued. This is a good example where, obviously, expiation is not a criminal matter but often it is due to behaviours or actions that are contributing to antisocial behaviour. There were two persons removed from the area for their own welfare under the Public Intoxication Act, six expiation notices have been issued for the possession of cannabis, and a drug diversion for possession of a controlled substance.

**Mr TELFER:** They are good stats at a point in time, but do the police produce, periodically, these reports that do that comparative work and, if so, is it formalised within reports that the assessment can be appropriately made as to when a surge is necessary within the CBD? Currently, with the additional crime and antisocial behaviour, which is being reacted to with Operation Paragon—I am trying to get an insight into the decision-making behind it.



**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that there is not a formal reporting of Operation Paragon, but it is more appropriately informed by operational experience and intelligence as well. Further, SAPOL is working and has been working incredibly closely with other government agencies on a focus across the CBD to address, disrupt and respond to factors that are contributing to antisocial behaviour.

**Mr TELFER:** Is that on the safety and wellbeing task force; is that what you are referring to?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, that is one of the mechanisms by which there is engagement, but of course there is constant operational engagement as well.

**Mr TELFER:** Who is the SAPOL rep on the safety and wellbeing task force? Is that the commissioner?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will take it on notice, but I understand and am advised—and I will correct this if it is incorrect—that it is the officer in charge of eastern district, who of course is the officer in charge of the CBD area.

**Mr TELFER:** Can you take on notice who the other members of that task force are?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That would be a question I believe would be better directed to DHS, which I think convene it—to Minister Cook. We are a participant in the task force, so I am not aware of other participants. We can certainly advise that police are members of it, but are not in a position to advise other members.

**Mr TELFER:** Say that again, please.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Members of SAPOL, of course, are on the task force, we are happy to advise as I have, but I am not in a position to advise the staff or employees of other agencies.

**Mr TELFER:** So you do not know the other members of the task force?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, I am not the minister responsible for health employees or Department of Human Services employees. I take it in good spirit, the question from the member, but simply if you want to get an answer you would be best directing that towards the ministers responsible for their agencies.

**Mr TELFER:** Do you have an insight into what measures are being put in place in the CBD by the task force?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can and have advised that the work that SAPOL is undertaking—and I can advise broadly, as I already have, that the reason that SAPOL are engaged so wholeheartedly in the task force is that the response and planning is very much a whole-of-government matter of concern and priority but also matter for action. As for the work that other agencies are doing, again I would direct the member to perhaps the Minister for Human Services and the Minister for Health.

**Mr TELFER:** So DHS has representatives. Health does as well, does it?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That is correct, yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Do you know what other agencies?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I understand Adelaide City Council do as well. As for those, for example, for the Department of Human Services and SA Health, they may have within their subordinate agencies some specific representation as well; for example, through Wellbeing SA or, more specifically, DASSA as well.

**Mr TELFER:** Alright, I will have to inquire next estimates with the minister for DHS. Can I go to—and I do not know whether you will push this one off as well—the relocation of the mounted operations, which there has been plenty of discussion around. There is reference to it on page 194 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3. It is obviously something about which there has been much public discussion and, I am sure, discussion within police. I am trying to get my head around the process.

Were the newly announced potential locations for the mounted operations part of the initial sites identified by SAPOL?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Can I just clarify that, so I can actually get the proper information for you? Is the member referring to the three current priority sites for exploration—

**Mr TELFER:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** —and whether they were—

**Mr TELFER:** Part of the initial tranche of options that SAPOL considered.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the initial advice received by SAPOL was that Park 21 was the preferred site for the relocation of the mounted operations. A suite of other sites were being considered at the time and continuing throughout that exploration, some more actively than others and—particularly with the nature of the market—some more dynamic than others, but I can advise that Park 21 was the preferred site that was identified by SAPOL.

**Mr TELFER:** By SAPOL, or was it told to SAPOL that was the preferred site? You just said something different.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry, I can advise that was the advice provided to government by SAPOL. The work continued, and as a result of that ongoing work and exploration of options by SAPOL and the government, supported by agencies like Renewal SA and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, we as a government were able to, not too long ago, make more definitive recognition that two sites currently held by Adelaide Airport were high-order priorities. I can advise that the work is being undertaken there regarding supplementary and important things like soil testing and site fits, etc.

A third option at Gepps Cross, which is a government owned parcel of land, is being investigated concurrently with Adelaide Airport sites. I can advise that, whilst Gepps Cross is being investigated, it is very much a supplementary investigation to the two dedicated sites that are held by Adelaide Airport Limited.

**Mr TELFER:** In the initial investigation into potential sites, how many other sites, apart from Park 21, did SAPOL initially identify as potential sites?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Just so I can be very specific about the advice, that 'identification' was effectively a matter of a market search or a location framework that was identified by Renewal SA and provided on advice to SAPOL. That was some months ago, and I would not want to give any indication that it was static. It was a dynamic set of investigations that have been occurring. I know that, with some of the public interest in this relocation, mounted operations has sustained some of the most public interest, but there are 15 business units at Thebarton barracks, all of which are part of this ongoing dynamic assessment of availability of other appropriate sites.

**Mr TELFER:** At what stage was SAPOL advised by the government that their preferred location of Park 21 was not going to be the proposal that they would move forward with?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That is a decision that was made in conjunction with multiple ministers and a matter that was considered by cabinet as well. I am not at liberty to disclose those cabinet deliberations.

**Mr TELFER:** No, I am asking when SAPOL found out that their preferred location was not going to be the one to be used.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I would be happy to provide some advice on notice, if we can try to track down a particular date or otherwise.

**Mr TELFER:** The site at the—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry, I just want to be at great lengths to advise the member in his inquiries that it was not a matter of silos within government agencies or the government undertaking this work. This has been a full force approach that has been collaboratively dealt with by SAPOL, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, Renewal SA, the Treasury, the Premier and myself.

**Mr TELFER:** The staging location that has been mooted at the Supreme Court site: are there any heritage aspects to that site that need to be considered?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that question was taken on notice at Budget and Finance. I am not advised that there is, but of course that investigation is underway. We have no advice or indication that there is, but I am happy to correct that on the record if there is anything further that I can add, but there is no advice whatsoever that there is any.

**Mr TELFER:** So SAPOL has not had any advice that there is a historic well on the site that is heritage?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Not that I am aware of but, again, that work is all dynamic so if that advice does come through or if there is anything that has potentially come through in the preceding days or weeks, I would be happy to provide the member with that.

**Mr TELFER:** That will be interesting. Obviously, there is the community discussion and I am sure the discussion within the bureaucracy is around the challenge of having a main site and then a staging site, the transition between the two, the time and distance between them. Do we have an insight into the amount of—I will use the terminology that I heard used by the acting commissioner—the planned, the unplanned and the emergency incidents that the mounted operations react to? Is there a breakdown as far as the number of those different jurisdictions over the last three years, for instance, that we can have an insight into?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I do not have the information with respect to the breakdown specifically, other than I can note on advice that the vast majority of mounted operations are planned. Of course, that is a good thing, but all of our operational planning contingency from SAPOL is through multiple lenses. The staging area is a very important part of the planning for the placement of mounted operations. It is a very unique way to stage and deploy mounted operations across the country.

There are many other states that have their mounted operations units well and truly out of their core operating area—and by core operating area for South Australia I mean the CBD—so the staging area that will be deployed and constructed at that site, as referred to by the member earlier, will be really important to the unique contribution that mounted operations make to South Australia.

**Mr TELFER:** You speak about the vast majority being planned. I am not going to lock you into the answer, but are we talking about 90 per cent, 80 per cent, or 70 per cent?

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

**Mr TELFER:** I would be interested because I think that is an area that the public in particular are uncertain about. They obviously see the mounted operations within the CBD and the challenges of that transition. How long does it take to prepare a horse once they are transported into the staging area? That is something that I am sure the public would be interested in.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It sounds like the member is arguing to put it on Parklands.

**Mr TELFER:** I just want to make sure that the full information has been taken into account by decision-makers so that the public has full visibility.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised, as the member was asking that question, that about 85 per cent of the operations of the Mounted Operations Unit are within the CBD. As I previously advised, the vast majority of that 85 per cent are planned, but I will be able to break some of that down for the member if I can.

**Mr TELFER:** Continuing on the public safety aspect, from pages 193 and 194, there is Operation City Safe in Port Augusta. This is one that you as Chair might be interested in, sir. How many additional police officers have been assigned to Port Augusta?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I thank the member for his question, and I note the Chair's interest in this as well. On 25 May 2023, a specific operation near Port Augusta commenced after incidents of criminal trespass and theft of and from motor vehicles caused very reasonable concern. Local police have been assisted at various times during this operation by police officers from special areas, including the special task and response operations, more commonly known as the STAR

Group; the Security Response Section; the State Operations Support Branch; the Mounted Operations Unit; the Dog Operations Unit; a volume crime team; and specialised areas of the state criminal intelligence investigation branch.

Operation Port Augusta City Safe commenced with dedicated resources focusing on the following: high-visibility policing; regular foot patrols; high-visibility bicycle patrol members; enforcement of the dry zone, and this includes the issuing of expiations for possess and consume liquor; the proactive enforcement of liquor licensing legislation and restrictions; the application for welfare barring orders where appropriate; utilising the Bail Act as a strategy to prevent the commissioning of further offending; and engagement with business owners, staff and patrons to inform and reassure the community. I can further advise the member that Operation City Safe has to date made 137 arrests and 41 reports, and eight Liquor Licensing Act barring orders have been issued.

**Mr TELFER:** Is Operation City Safe active, continuing, at the moment?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** As I advised earlier, with all operations it is dynamically assessed, but I have no advice that there is an end date or anything like that.

**Mr TELFER:** The additional resources that you say have been put in, the additional arrests that have been made—obviously, in the first days of that, there was quite a public discussion in the media about arrests that were made. There were 66 at that time. I am interested to have those additional numbers. Do we have an insight into the age demographic of those arrested? Is this a task force that is focused on youth or is it antisocial behaviour in general?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide the best advice that I can, but similar to before, if the member's questions relate to some specific measures or additional measures by agencies like DHS or SA Health, I would advise him to seek further details there. The operation itself is not focused on a particular age cohort—it is crime, it is offending, it is antisocial behaviour that may be committed by any group, be it youth or offenders of age.

**Mr TELFER:** Of the arrests that were made, is there a specific cohort that seem to be more represented than others?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** When you say more represented, do you mean—

**Mr TELFER:** A higher representation of, proportionally.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that, of the arrests, 97 were adults and 37 were youths. Of the 41 reports there were 25 adults and 16 youth, and of course the eight Liquor Licensing Act barring orders were all people 18 years or over.

**Mr TELFER:** Brilliant, thank you. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 192, the APY Lands accommodation projects: the 2022-23 budget total project cost was \$9 million, the Mid-Year Budget Review was about \$10.5 million for 2022-23 and now the 2023-24 budget total project cost is \$13.9 million, near on \$14 million. Has this project been expanded in what it is trying to achieve, or is it purely around the cost dynamic and the existing projects already underway?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I do note the particular interest of the Chair in this one.

**Mr TELFER:** Indeed, I thought I would put in a couple for the Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Very much appreciated.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that some of the matters influencing the cost escalation as defined within the budget were particularly relating to COVID-19, and the scope and the intention to deliver that scope has been largely impacted due to building constraints and cost escalations. The approval for the construction of Fregon was provided in March 2020, noting that the amended design was required due to the change of the site. This change of site was required by the APY council back in 2021, which was some time ago. Completion was scheduled for June 2023. Unfortunately, I can advise the member that the builder withdrew from building Fregon but did commit to building the Umuwa facility.

The additional funding that the member referred to was pleasingly provided in the 2022-23 budget, as delivered by the Treasurer, but owing to delays in the building industry, industry-wide market increases and the ultimate withdrawal of the builder, SAPOL has been required to retender the project and seek this further funding of \$2.9 million, but pleasingly to complete all three posts.

In April 2023 the builder was appointed to complete Kaltjiti and Pipalyatjara, with contract conditions to allow the Indulkana project, which has now been funded, and that, as I have advised and the member rightly points out, was the additional that was supported and completed, thanks to the additional \$2.7 million that has been provided in the 2023-24 budget. It is a project that is very important to the government for the updating of these facilities. The building of these new facilities is not only critical to the SAPOL workforce up there but, primarily and acutely, to the wonderful community of APY.

**Mr TELFER:** So the difference between the \$9 million from the 2022-23 budget and the near on \$14 million from the 2023-24 budget is not an expansion of the task, it is purely around increase of costs and time frames?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, that is correct. There is no additional scope. It is primarily down to the cancelling of the contract by the builder, into which we had a degree of fixed costs built, and the necessary retendering of that project has seen the escalation. We are seeing escalations right across the private sector and the public sector when it comes to build, and I think it is fair to say that the unique challenges of the geographic isolation of the APY lands add another complexity to those building costs.

**Mr TELFER:** But the estimated completion quarter has not changed; it is still the same as it was in the previous budget. The estimated completion quarter, June 2024, was what was within the budget papers from the previous year.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The advice I have is that is still the expectation, yes.

**Mr TELFER:** So the challenges with the tenderer and the additional costs have not actually pushed the expected completion date out at all?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, not as advised to me. I think it would be reasonable for this estimate to be made on an ongoing basis. The geographic isolation of the APY lands, and particularly with the extremities of which road and transport and workforce are required, can often mean that small factors can lead to more serious implications. We will happily take on notice any future updates for the member, but as we stand today I am advised that that is still on track.

**Mr TELFER:** What is the status of the regional policing model? Have there been any changes to that, or is it envisaged that there will be a review of regional policing?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that there are no changes at this stage that I can provide to the member.

**Mr TELFER:** Has there been any indication as to any areas that need additional resourcing with regional policing?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, as the community is growing that is an operational and dynamic assessment made by police. Suffice to say, our regional interface and peri-urban communities are growing and will continue to grow at significant pace with the very substantial investment into housing that this government is making—that is north and south of the city in that Gawler-Willaston area and also the Aldinga area. I am advised that is where future planning, albeit early stages, is being considered by SAPOL.

**Mr TELFER:** Is there any update on the work being done by the Premier's Taskforce, the policing review? Is there an insight into when there may be some public communication of what that task force is going to achieve?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That report is being prepared by the chair of the Premier's Taskforce, Damien Walker, Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I do not have advice other than in the not too distant future it will be provided to cabinet for consideration, but it pleases me greatly to advise that three matters that were of very substantial consideration and advice

of the Premier's Taskforce were sworn police security officers and the strong support for the enhancement of their functions, as well as the ability and opportunity for the deployment of those sworn police security officers into the system. We have been able to back that in with an \$82 million investment in this budget.

The other is the extended hours roster. When I came in as minister, and when the government came in, the extended hours roster had had substantial work undertaken but was, I think for all parties, including police, moving somewhat slowly, so it has been very pleasing to see that that has been able to be both finalised as well as implemented in the short period that we have been in.

**Mr TELFER:** Just a quick question on that: you talked about the enhancement of the function of PSOs. Has the government or SAPOL received any concerns from stakeholders about the enhancement of those powers?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, quite the contrary. It has been one that has been resoundingly supported through those negotiations. In fact, it was a matter that was contained within in the last enterprise agreement between the government and the Police Association.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of SAPOL completed. The examination of the proposed payments for South Australia Police and the Administered Items for South Australia Police is adjourned until 2.15 today. Thank you to the officers and SA Police in general for all the work that you do and for all the work you do leading up to estimates.

*Sitting suspended from 11:00 to 11:15*

## **DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, \$400,308,000**

### **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.

Ms S. Borrillo, Executive Services Officer, Department for Correctional Services.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolio is the Department for Correctional Services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I declare the proposed payment open for examination. I call on the minister to make an opening statement if he so wishes and to introduce his advisers.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am supported today by the Department for Correctional Services Chief Executive, Mr David Brown, to my right, and senior departmental officers, Mr Chris Sexton, Executive Director, People and Business Services; Ms Megan Deer, Manager, Executive Services; and Ms Sofia Borrillo, Executive Services Officer. I thank them for all the work they have undertaken in supporting me today in the preparation of the budget, as well as, of course, preparing for estimates.

DCS staff provide an essential service to the people of South Australia. They perform their work in complex and high-risk settings. The environments in which they work are of critical importance. I am pleased to confirm the government has committed \$29.99 million across the forward estimates to perform these critical works so necessary for our workforce and our prisoner population

at high-security units at Port Augusta Prison. The upgrades to Bluebush and Greenbush units will work to bolster safety and security at the site.

I also want to reflect on the successes of the department's ongoing efforts to reduce the risk of reoffending and, ultimately, the contribution this makes to a safer community. In 2016, 10by20 was a goal set by the then Labor government and the efforts of DCS staff and our community partners have resulted in DCS not only meeting the 10by20 target but exceeding it.

I am also very proud to add that on 23 November this year, the 2022-23 budget year, at the DCS partners' forum, I officially launched the new government strategy to reduce reoffending 20 per cent by 2026. Through 20by26, the government will continue to invest in innovative and effective ways to drive down rates of reoffending and enhance community-based reintegration responses.

One investment this budget specifically makes, backing in 20by26, is the \$6.29 million allocated across forward estimates for Work Ready, Release Ready Plus. This will build on the successes of the Work Ready, Release Ready pilot by increasing access to the program for more participants. Work Ready, Release Ready was a key initiative of 10by20. It is an employment-focused rehabilitation program that supports people in prison to transition to paid employment in the community. It is provided both in prison and post-release for individuals at medium to high risk of reoffending.

Work Ready, Release Ready is currently delivered through a contract with Workskil Australia and the data I have been provided reflects that as early as this year Work Ready, Release Ready recorded 787 individual participants having engaged in the employment phase of the program, with an amazing 425 gaining employment. Work Ready, Release Ready Plus and all the 20by26 initiatives will be important in the next steps to build on the success of 10by20. I look forward to updating the community on the successes as they come through.

In addition to 20by26, another key strategic focus for DCS and me as minister and, frankly, the entire government is Closing the Gap. I could not be prouder this year of our government—the Malinauskas government—delivering on our commitment to establish the First Nations Voice to the South Australian parliament. Of course, reforms such as the Voice will not be successful if we do not also work to significantly close the gap and improve these Closing the Gap statistics. This includes the critical issue of Aboriginal over-representation in our justice system.

As part of the budget I am very pleased to confirm that \$11.18 million has been allocated to our department, DCS, across the forward estimates for Yalakiana Tappa, an Aboriginal community led initiative to reduce the rates of Aboriginal incarceration. This program will include a community support program, a cultural reintegration, tenancy and rehabilitation support program to assist incarcerated Aboriginal South Australians in applying for bail, successfully complying with bail conditions and addressing treatment needs.

Further, Yalakiana Tappa will include an accommodation and support program. This will be a 12-week supported housing, tenancy and rehabilitation program for Aboriginal people without access to culturally safe accommodation. Additionally, the cultural residential drug and alcohol treatment facility will be a 12-week residential therapeutic community program for Aboriginal people needing intensive drug and alcohol treatment to support successful compliance with bail conditions.

A further Closing the Gap initiative from this budget is \$4.54 million allocated across the forward estimates to secure and fit out a new community corrections centre in the home of your electorate, sir, Port Augusta. The new premises will be able to better provide for culturally appropriate spaces to support offenders and include new secure interview rooms for staff to use with high-risk offenders. The site will also look to have its own dedicated facility for urinalysis.

DCS is also working closely with its counterpart agencies to deliver on all of our government's commitments to not only reduce the rate of Aboriginal people in custody but to also improve all opportunities and services available to Aboriginal South Australians.

Today, I also highlight a completed Malinauskas government election commitment shared between the Department for Correctional Services and the Department for Transport, which was to increase the cleaning schedule for major arterial roads and maintenance of town entrances in

southern areas. This was facilitated through the DCS community services program Repay SA. Litter collection for the following locations, fence to fence, has now been arranged by Repay SA, including Main South Road from Robinson Road, Seaford Heights, to Sellicks Beach, and Victor Harbor Road from Robinson Road, Seaford Heights, to Old Willunga Hill Road, Willunga. Both projects commenced in early June 2022 and all reports are that they are going exceptionally well.

The final area of success I wish to quickly highlight before I close is the department's workforce planning efforts. In the last 12 months, DCS has recruited over 150 new frontline staff, and further trainee correctional officer schools commenced on 5 June 2023 and 26 June 2023. These two TCO schools, on 5 June and 26 June, include 16 and 34 trainee correctional officers, respectively.

It is always great to see these TCOs graduating and new specialist highly skilled frontline DCS employees hitting the turf. They demonstrate the exceptional work DCS undertake, and I thank DCS and all of their staff, both custodial and non-custodial, for the efforts they undertake every single day.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. Any opening statement, member for Flinders?

**Mr TELFER:** Only a very brief one, Chair. Can I thank the DCS staff for being here and also recognise and reflect the minister's words that it is a challenging workplace and it is a challenging role that our community has tasked this department with and the people who work within it. Once again, I give my utmost respect to the department staff who work in often challenging, potentially personally dangerous times and in a workplace that is uncertain.

I look forward to unpacking a little bit about the detail within the budget, the existing projects, new projects and some of the dynamics within the budget lines themselves. Perhaps I will put the omnibus questions at this point rather than try to make sure I have enough time to finish them at the end.

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been made since 1 July 2022 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive positions have been abolished since 1 July 2022 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 1 July 2022?

4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 engaged since 1 July 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?

5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide an estimate of the total cost to be incurred in 2023-24 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?

6. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise whether it met the 1.7 per cent efficiency dividend for 2022-23 to which the government committed and, if so, how was the saving achieved?

7. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees are there in June 2023, and for each surplus employee what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the number of executive staff to be cut to meet the government's commitment to reduce spending on the



employment of executive staff and, for each position to be cut, its classification, total remuneration cost and the date by which the position will be cut?

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

- What savings targets have been set for 2023-24 and each year of the forward estimates; and
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister advise what share it is receiving 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 is being used in each case?

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

- What was the actual FTE count at June 2023 and what is the projected actual FTE count for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and
- How many targeted voluntary separation packages are estimated to be required to meet budget targets over the forward estimates and what is their estimated cost?

12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2023-24 and for each year of the forward estimates?

13. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2023-24 and each year of the forward estimates and what is their estimated employment cost?

14. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2023-24?

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

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

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

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

- Is the agency confident that you will meet your expenditure targets in 2023-24;
- Have any budget decisions been made between the delivery of the budget on 15 June 2023 and today that might impact on the numbers presented in the budget papers which we are examining today; and
- Are you expecting any reallocations across your agency's budget lines during 2023-24, if so, what would be the nature of this reallocation?

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

- What South Australian businesses will be used in procurement for your agency in 2023-24;
- What percentage of total procurement spend for your agency does this represent; and
- How does this compare to last year?

19. What protocols and monitoring systems has the department implemented to ensure that the productivity, efficiency and quality of service delivery is maintained while employees work from home?

20. What percentage of your department's budget has been allocated for the management of remote work infrastructure, including digital tools, cybersecurity and support services, and how does this compare with previous years?

21. How many procurements have been undertaken by the department this FY, how many have been awarded to interstate businesses, and how many of those were signed off by the chief executive?

22. How many contractor invoices were paid by the department directly this FY? How many and what percentage were paid within 15 days, and how many and what percentage were paid outside of 15 days?

23. How many and what percentage of staff who undertake procurement activities have undertaken training on participation policies and local industry participants this FY?

Thank you for your patience, everyone. Can I start with Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 108, and we will be dwelling on this area, I think, for the majority of the hour. The FTE count in 2021-22 is 1,926.5. We see there is a 2022-23 estimated result of 2,039.6. How can you explain the increase? What is that based around?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that, around the member's question from 2021-22 through 2022-23 estimated but also into 2023-24, there has been a reduction and an offset of FTE, both in recruitment and across projects. I can advise that, from 2021-22 through 2022-23, there was a reduction of 56.4 FTE. I am happy to provide advice to the member that that was 43.8 FTE from the iSAFE project, which was a matter of cycle; 11 FTE relating to the completion of the commissioning of the Yatala Labour Prison 270-bed expansion; one FTE reduction for the cross-borders reintegration program; and 0.6 for budget savings measures.

I can further advise that this has been offset by an additional 37.3 FTE: 31.3 of those FTE for the ongoing operation of the Yatala Labour Prison expansion; four FTE for the Yalakiana Tappa program; and two FTE for Work Ready, Release Ready. I can also advise that across the forward estimates, the increase of 113.1 FTE compared with the 2022-23 estimated results relate to 96.6 FTE for the ongoing operations and set-up costs for the 270-bed Yatala expansion; 16 FTE for the iSAFE project, which was a reclassification from investing into operating; and 9 FTE for MPY cross-borders family violence program funding. That was further offset by a decrease of 13.2 FTE due to budget savings measures.

**Mr TELFER:** I followed that eventually. You answered the second part first and the first part second.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I like to help you with everything.

**Mr TELFER:** So the increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23 was around those numbers that you quoted—the 113.1—the majority of which were the operations for Yatala, and then the reduction of the 20 is the sum between the reduction of 57 and the increase of 37, the different aspects?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, that is largely correct.

**Mr TELFER:** I note, on page 109, the program net costs of services summary, ever increasing each financial year. Can you give an explanation as to what these increases have included? The difference between the community-based services 2022-23 estimated result compared with the 2023-24 budget of some 10 per cent more than that for the rehabilitation and

recreation custodial services, up by \$14 million. I will not work out that percentage there, but can you give me an insight into the reasons behind the significant increase in program net costs?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sure. That is quite a lot of information, that question. I am happy to take top to bottom, if we can. I can advise that the custodial services is a component of headcount but also a substantial increase from 2022-23 to 2023-24, which is almost exclusively as a result of the onlining of the increased capacity at Yatala Labour Prison of 270 beds.

The Community-Based Services and Rehabilitation and Reparation programs are largely influenced by two factors. One is from community-based services, the number of individuals at any time who are on community-based orders. That could be electronic monitoring, intensive bail supervision or parolees who are on various tiers of support. Across both rehabilitation programs—programs Nos 1 and 3—is the net increase of services, thanks to the budget measures included in the 2023-24 state budget handed down by the Treasurer recently, and that is a net increase of \$52.027 million and six FTE specifically to these measures.

The measures of this \$52.027 million, as inquired by the member, can be broken down into \$4.58 million across forward estimates to secure and fit out the new community corrections centre in Port Augusta; \$29.999 million across forward estimates to perform critical upgrade work at the two high-security units at Port Augusta Prison, being Bluebush and Greenbush; \$6.299 million across forward estimates for Work Ready, Release Ready Plus; and \$11.181 million across forward estimates for Yalakiana Tappa, our new initiative to drive down Aboriginal incarceration.

**Mr TELFER:** For clarification, you talked about the significant increase in custodial services—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The commissioning of the Yatala Labour Prison—

**Mr TELFER:** You talked about the increase in the workforce, being that significant jump from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Is the cost for the transition into the 2023-24 budget just because of the lag—as the officers come in at a period of time, it is only a short period of time?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is a full year cost coming in but also recognising that the recruitment efforts have been ongoing and that the commissioning and the opening, as you would be aware—we were pleased to welcome you and the former minister to celebrate the opening with us—will be in the 2023-24 financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** Regarding the significant increase in the FTEs that we saw from 2021-22 to 2022-23, which you talked about because of that but that had not come in, they are employed but the expansion has not been commissioned yet?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** More specifically, the explanation to your question regarding the additional FTE is yes, that is a portion of it. The employment of the new correctional officers ready for the commissioning has been an ongoing piece of work. Much of that employment has been taking place periodically over the last 12 months. In addition to that, since coming to office there has been a strong focus by our government to recruit new COs and, as you have identified, that is also playing out throughout the Budget Statement regarding the FTE as well as the operational costs.

**Mr TELFER:** Continuing on with what you have started to unpack in your opening statement and comments since about the works that are happening up at Port Augusta with the community corrections facility, it speaks about a new community corrections centre. Is that within existing DCS premises, or is that external to—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I might just try to clarify for the member's interest. You may be meaning it is in relation to the current Port Augusta Prison?

**Mr TELFER:** As in the footprint.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, absolutely not. There is a community corrections centre in Port Augusta which is very separate from the custodial settings. It is of an era and it has been subject to the impacts of wind and rain over the last 12 or 18 months more than we could have planned for, so this is an investment in a new fit-for-purpose facility.

**Mr TELFER:** On the same footprint as the existing?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. It will be a new site. I am advised that the current site is not fit for purpose.

**Mr TELFER:** So the new facility will be on a different footprint and the old facility will continue to operate until the new facility is ready to be commissioned?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, I understand that is correct. It is not a site location that is owned by DCS or the government, so it is a leasing arrangement.

**Mr TELFER:** Is the new arrangement going to be one which is owned and managed by the government and DCS?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. The preliminary work has very much only just begun. Obviously, there has been an announcement and commitment made in the budget, so in fact consultation with local community leaders such as the member for Giles has not even yet taken place. As far as I can advise today, it is very unlikely to be a new building construct, although it is not off the table. The intention of the planning from DCS regarding the budget and the forward planning is very much on the basis of a fit-out of an existing facility to make it fit for purpose, but particularly a facility that is culturally appropriate and provides a series of opportunities for the community corrections staff and DCS that the current site simply cannot because of its antiquated nature.

**Mr TELFER:** Is the work being done on a similar sort of vicinity within the CBD?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. There are a number of community corrections facility sites across the CBD and other regional centres.

**Mr TELFER:** Sorry, I am still talking about Port Augusta.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry.

**Mr TELFER:** Is the work that has been done to look at location within the CBD of Port Augusta?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry, yes, it is within Port Augusta. That is correct. I have never heard Port Augusta referred to as a CBD before.

**Mr TELFER:** It is very much segmented.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is in the footprint that the member is referring to.

**Mr TELFER:** Continuing on and looking at the new projects and the upgrades to the Port Augusta Prison, and the work on the Bluebush and Greenbush which you speak about, is this purely around upgrading existing? It is not about increasing capacity?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, primarily it is not about increasing capacity. It is providing for two very distinct goals: one is for a better more contemporary working environment for the staff who work in Port Augusta Prison or specifically for those working in Bluebush and Greenbush; and, additionally, providing for a more appropriate location and built environment to facilitate rehabilitation and other education programs.

I can advise that the accommodation blocks—Bluebush and Greenbush—that the member questions were built in 1969. They accommodate 156 prisoners across 87 cells and it is these 87 cells which are subject to the upgrade. These accommodation blocks have significantly aged. No major works have been completed since the construction in 1969, save for a ground floor refurb of Greenbush in 2018.

I can advise the member that the proposed works will be in three stages. Stage 1 will be the ground floor of Bluebush: its first floor and its yard. The second stage will be the main yard and stage 3 will be the Greenbush first floor. The upgrades aim to transform the existing aged accommodation blocks into a fit-for-purpose site, a culturally inclusive, safe environment that increases the health and wellbeing of incarcerated men. The project proposal also contributes to the department's strategic plan 2022-26 by improving the safety and wellbeing of staff and prisoners whilst also providing greater opportunities to promote prisoner rehabilitation.

**Mr TELFER:** Are the three stages you talk about over the next three years—stage 1 in 2023-24, stage 2 in 2024-25, etc.? Do you envision it to be as linear as that?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** If only. No, the stages are not confined to financial years. It may be that there will be some crossover, and I think the final time line of this has not yet been—

**Mr TELFER:** What about as far as budget goes? You could split \$30 million three ways pretty easily.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We could split \$30 million three ways, but stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3 are not all of equal capital comparability. I can advise that imminently, I think sometime in August subject to the sitting schedule of the Public Works Committee, there will be a matter-of-course submission to the Public Works Committee. Of course, within that there will be a staged breakdown of the estimated capital costs as well as, as much as we can endeavour, a time line on the delivery of stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3.

**Mr TELFER:** Just to unpack a little bit more, you talked about the work on the 87 cells. There is reference to staff facilities as well. Are they encapsulated within those stages for Bluebush and Greenbush? Are they within that footprint, or are they separate?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise they are within that. To provide a bit more advice to the member regarding the breakdown of some of the works planned within those stages, Bluebush and Saltbush do not have shower facilities in cell. There is no natural lighting and very poor ventilation. The upgrades will include a redesign of the units to include showers in cells, to improve the natural light and ventilation where possible and to provide safer and improved visibility through better planning for officer posts, which goes directly to the member's question regarding staff amenities and facilities. It will improve amenities for both staff and prisoners and provide a new flexible multipurpose yard for Bluebush and Greenbush.

**Mr TELFER:** Continuing down the page, under existing projects, there is the Adelaide Remand Centre critical security upgrade. Has this project been completed, and was it on budget?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, it has been.

**Mr TELFER:** On budget?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Likewise, the Women's Prison upgrade, noting that there was an event to recognise that only a week or two ago: completed and on budget?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, it has been completed, and yes, within frame.

**Mr TELFER:** What is 'within frame'?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The analog-to-digital project is still being undertaken, and also there is, for example, as the member will have seen—sorry, I am not sure if you were there for this one. My apologies. There is a small children's playground in the vicinity of the visitor centre, a very important part of improving and, I think, humanising the interaction that children have. Often, we lose sight of the fact that children of incarcerated individuals are themselves victims. There is a fence to be constructed around that play equipment, which is yet to be completed but does not affect the commissioning of the area.

**Mr TELFER:** The audiovisual link upgrade is estimated to be completed in the quarter just gone—completed on time, on budget?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Completed and on budget.

**Mr TELFER:** Brilliant, like the work DCS is doing. The Cadell Training Centre dairy, can you see that as something ongoing? It has another \$1.5 million in 2023-24, is this on track to be completed by the end of next calendar year?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise specifically in relation to the forward works on this that in late 2020 the department committed internal funds to deliver this dairy. In August 2021, architects were engaged through the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. The new dairy,

which is quite a revolutionary step forward from very much the dark ages of the current dairy into an incredible new proposed build, will also be a significant development for the prison and will work to affirm its role and function in the dairy industry, and the expansion will also provide for increased employment and training opportunities that will greatly assist prisoners on their release to gain employment.

I can advise that, when appearing before the Public Works Committee on 4 July 2022, the pre-tendered estimate provided by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport was \$8.7 million. In July 2022, the short-listed requests for tender through the EOI were within 5 per cent cost variance. In October 2022, a contract was awarded to Mossop Construction and Interiors, a total project cost of \$12.2 million, inclusive of all construction and professional fees, which were rounded out. No additional funding for the operating costs of the redeveloped dairy will be requested or required as a result of the commissioning. Work is progressing, but I have been advised that it is likely that there will be some carryovers due to the timing of this.

**Mr TELFER:** Carryovers on that \$4.2 million from the 2022-23; is that what you mean?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Any idea—has the vast majority of that \$4.2 million been expended or is it still—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that the vast majority has been expended, yes.

**Mr TELFER:** The \$1.5 million in the 2023-24 budget, is that the final amount that will be needed to complete this project, or is there more in the forwards 2024-25?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that in the forward estimates there is an allocation of \$4.8 million in 2024-25.

**Mr TELFER:** The line on mobile phone detection, looking at \$776,000 in 2022-23 with no more budget continuing on, was this project completed? Have all the installations been put in place? Is it on budget and completed?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the project began as a trial and the trial has resulted in successful technology testing and technology appraisal, and DCS has begun implementing and trialling further elements of the project. I am further advised that as the project matures DCS will be able to report on the efficacy of these elements in targeting mobile phones in prisons and additional scope.

**Mr TELFER:** The continuing trial, obviously there is no budget allocation towards it?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No, it is rolling out the trial as lessons learned from the allocation in previous budget years.

**Mr TELFER:** Will there be a report at some stage about the efficacy of the mobile phone detection process for the minister to be considering a further rollout of comparable technology?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am rightfully advised by Mr Brown that, whilst the short answer is yes, the publicly available information that would be provided on this is limited due to the operational nature of it. Of course, the member would appreciate that this is a highly operational tactic, to disrupt this type of contraband, so we would not want to be saying anything publicly that would compromise the ability to implement and utilise the rollout.

**Mr TELFER:** The last line there, on 109, is the modernisation of the roster management, with a \$700,000 budget line from the previous financial year. Has this process been completed? What learnings have been gained through that modernisation project, and has this resulted in significant roster management changes for the department?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy to provide some time lines. I might ask Chris to provide some further advice to the member regarding lessons learnt, but I am advised that the full implementation will be by late calendar year 2023. Perhaps Chris can provide some additional information.

**Mr SEXTON:** Yes, certainly the procurement process has been finalised and we are now working with the vendor on the implementation across all of our sites. We will have a pilot at one site and then implement it at all sites by December 2023. From that, we consider that there will be—certainly, learnings will come from that, and efficiencies will come from that also, which we will document as part of that implementation process and review process.

**Mr TELFER:** Just flicking over to page 110, top line, the transition from analog to digital, noting that there is an asterisk with a bit of commentary. The transition of electronic security systems from analog to digital was purely focused on the Yatala Labour Prison and the Adelaide Women's Prison, it was not envisaged that that allocation would try to deliver results in any of the other facilities?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the majority of the expenditure has been recognised, as foreshadowed by the member, against the Adelaide Women's Prison for beds, reception and visit centre, as well as the Yatala Labour Prison with 270 beds and infrastructure upgrade projects, therefore the budget has been reallocated to those projects. Whilst the initial funding of this was approved in 2018-19, the aim of the project is to facilitate the transition of existing analog electronic security systems to digital at the Northfield site, being obviously Yatala Labour Prison and Adelaide Women's Prison, and the Adelaide Pre-release Centre.

The majority of the existing analog infrastructure has reached and surpassed its useful estimate: for example, the security management system and intercom system. An additional budget of \$4.5 million was added to this project in the 2020-21 budget process. After the final costings were received for the transition, an additional budget of \$9.1 million was approved in the 2021-22 budget process, and this consisted of \$1.5 million specifically at Adelaide Women's Prison and \$7.6 million specifically for Yatala Labour Prison. An additional budget of \$10.6 million for this project was added in the 2021-22 budget process, being \$7.6 million for the Yatala Labour Prison and \$3 million for the Adelaide Women's Prison.

**Mr TELFER:** Have other facilities transitioned from analog to digital? Is there a time frame on that?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the reason it has been contained to these sites is that all other sites have transitioned.

**Mr TELFER:** All the other sites have? Regarding the budget line for the Yatala Labour Prison expansion, was that project on budget?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Between the two, with the transition from analog to digital, was the amount that was transitioned—or perhaps it is \$7.4 million for the transition from analog to digital at those two sites you talked about—embedded already within the budget for the Yatala Labour Prison and thus is it a saving from the original project cost by reallocating the funding from the transition from analog to digital from that line?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that, whilst it was initially allocated and approved by Treasury as two separate projects, it was then transitioned to a central project, but there was no additional cost involved in that. So there were two distinct projects, they merged and there it was a net sum of both.

**Mr TELFER:** So in the original budget framework there was not an allocation to transition from analog to digital within that Yatala budget line originally?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. I can advise that the original scope of the project, as contained within the then budget, did not include the transition project.

**Mr TELFER:** Flicking to page 111, looking at the Work Ready, Release Ready program, what did the evaluation reveal and how are you measuring the outcomes? Also, is this program offered to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the Work Ready, Release Ready program was a key initiative of 10by20. It is an employment-focused rehabilitation program that supports people

in prison to transition to paid employment in the community. It is provided both in prison and post-release for individuals at medium to high security at a high risk of reoffending. The program operates on a self-referral basis and internal stakeholder referral and targets those individuals who are motivated and willing to work.

Participants are supported in custody by a mentor, who works with them on an individual basis to develop and implement a training and employment plan. Participants engage in education and prison-based vocational training programs and may gain work experience through the Prison Industries program. The mentors work with the participant for up to 18 months post-release to support them to achieve their employment goals in the community.

**Mr TELFER:** How are you measuring those outcomes?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can go to the aims. The aims of Work Ready, Release Ready, which of course we use to measure success, are to support participants to build job skills pre-release through education, vocational training and employment readiness training; help participants gain financial security, purpose and social connection as a result of returning to work; mitigate against the likelihood of breaches of community-based orders; and assist participants to find and maintain employment post-release.

Work Ready, Release Ready, which, as I previously advised, are the lead on this, have been successful since 2018. So far, there have been over 1,600 participants inducted into the three-phase journey of the program. In respect of key metrics, as the member inquired, to February 2023, Work Ready, Release Ready recorded 787 individual participants having engaged in the employment phase of Work Ready, Release Ready and 425 of those having gained employment, which is 54 per cent of participants who have engaged in the employment phase so far.

**Mr TELFER:** Did the program have a target at its inception?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide some further advice on the KPIs embedded within that.

**Mr TELFER:** I would appreciate that just to get—

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** In respect of the member's question regarding cohorts of prisoners, particularly around Aboriginality, the program is currently run at Port Augusta Prison, Adelaide Women's Prison, Adelaide Pre-release Centre, Cadell Training Centre and Mobilong Prison. That has been open to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal prisoners.

New initiatives within the program, though, have been the development of the Road to Redemption program—this is a specific program only open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples delivered by both Workskil but also in collaboration with Carey Training, a very well respected ACCO—and the Out2Work program, which is open to all participants, which is a Workskil development program for prisoners about to be released. That is also in conjunction with the Local Jobs Program and Carey.

**Mr TELFER:** What are the current statistics around recidivism, and how do they compare with the last five years?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that DCS currently has, at the end of 2022, the lowest rate of recidivism in the nation, with a rate of 39.3 per cent, a rate that is demonstrably outperforming other jurisdictions. That is a rate of recidivism which has dramatically improved since the formulation of our policy of 10by20, which was 2016, so out of the five years that the member has inquired about. I can provide some further detail on notice, potentially, as to how 10by20 reductions in recidivism were tracked over those five years.

**Mr TELFER:** Yes, that measure point would be interesting.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes. But the very proud take-out for South Australia is that the rate of recidivism has dramatically dropped in that five years and that the 20by26 initiative is very firmly about not putting the cue in the rack but around an ongoing commitment to reducing reoffending.



That downward pressure on reoffending and reducing recidivism within the 20by26 target has very firm target groups and particular focus areas of Closing the Gap, the remand to bail cohort, alternatives to custody and community reintegration, education, training and employment and targeted programs for other specific cohorts. I have gone through in some detail some of those new initiatives contained within this budget which complement the 20by26 policy announcement.

**Mr TELFER:** Just flicking to page 115, the activity indicators, are the figures for the percentage of prisoner population on remand comparable with other jurisdictions? How does South Australia sit?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that, quite the opposite of our 10by20 figures, where we are leading the nation, our remand population is amongst the highest in the country. I cannot provide advice to the member regarding other jurisdictions other than to say South Australia is at the high point.

**Mr TELFER:** What is considered to be the reason?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is a very good question. There are a number of factors, many of which are across multiple portfolio areas. In respect of the key factors, it is often the case that remandees are not able to successfully obtain bail, and those reasons for not being able to successfully obtain bail will often relate to housing—secure housing, appropriate housing. It is being able to access not just a home or a house but the appropriate housing for the conditions contained within those bail conditions.

It is also the case that a high portion of remandees within our DCS system are remanded on breach of bail, again attaining a higher portion. There may be some, and I am sorry I have not seen or been advised of any questions of the Attorney, but there are also court flows that are impacting this, but I could not, with any assurity, give you some advice outside of the Attorney.

**Mr TELFER:** So with this highest in the country aspect, how are these prisoners on remand being accommodated? They are obviously not all in the Adelaide Remand Centre?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. For many years—decades it is safe to say—the remand population has been dispersed across all custodial facilities.

**Mr TELFER:** Noting the recent incident at Yatala that has been in the media, and I am not going to talk about the specifics of the case itself, is there a time frame expected for the investigation, when it is going to be completed?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Obviously, I will be as careful as I can—

**Mr TELFER:** Yes, I am trying to be cautious as well.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** —as this matter is before the courts. It is a very tragic event, one which, thankfully, we have not seen in South Australia for many years, unlike the rest of the country where we have seen 24 in the last 10, and the number of investigations in this are important. There is, of course, the police investigation, which is occurring.

**Mr TELFER:** I am talking about the DCS investigation.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, but the police investigation has primacy, and that is very important because whilst charges have been laid the investigation to bring justice is paramount and that will have primacy over the other two investigations that I can foreshadow. The second investigation, which is mandated and will occur, is a coronial investigation by the fact that this was a death in custody. That is the second priority.

As for the internal investigation, that is currently occurring but the focus of that at this juncture is to support the police in their criminal investigation. If I can take some advice from Mr Brown. Of course the police investigation, police are charged under the act to undertake the preliminary work for the Coroner as well, so all of those investigations are occurring. I cannot foreshadow time frames on the police investigation or the Coroner's investigation, but when the criminal matter—without prejudicing the proceedings—may proceed further I will be in a better position to provide any advice that I can.

**Mr TELFER:** The internal investigation, how many investigators have been tasked with conducting that?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** There is a lead and then additional supports that have been provided to that lead, and of course any department-wide support that is required. The advice is there will not be a silo in this regard.

**Mr TELFER:** Is that number comparable to other similar investigations? The one that comes to my mind is the Wayne Fella Morrison investigation. As far as numbers of investigators or the process involved, is that comparable?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that it is largely consistent. They tend to have one lead supported by the manager and then supported by the department.

**Mr TELFER:** And DCS staff have all been directed to fully cooperate with the investigation?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that the current interviews and evidence gathering component of the investigation is still very much live with South Australia Police, so I am not in a position to comment regarding those interviews but, of course, at the appropriate juncture there will be the internal interviews, etc., that have happened. Whilst there is a primacy of the police investigation, there was and continues to be an immediate response from DCS as well.

**Mr TELFER:** Have any operational changes been made despite the investigation still being underway? Have any immediate operational changes been made in light of the incident?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** No. I am advised no, and it may be that I would be in a better position to comment on why, but I would be reluctant to do so just because of the nature of the criminal proceedings taking place.

**Mr TELFER:** I am interested in page—

**The CHAIR:** Last question.

**Mr TELFER:** Time has gone quickly.

**The CHAIR:** Time flies.

**Mr TELFER:** Without being able to unpack it too much, the prisoner employment that is referred to at page 112, is this employment within facility or post-release? What is that referring to?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** That just refers to employment within a custodial setting, so prisoner employment internally.

**Mr TELFER:** Do we have an insight into whether those programs are leading to better outcomes upon release for those who are involved in that work within the facility as opposed to those who are not?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is a very good question. The short answer is yes. Every program, every intervention that is made within a custodial setting is one of value, and it can be as early as the first assessment that is made when someone comes into custody, namely, whether they can read or write—literacy is a huge issue—to the attainment of skills all the way through the custodial settings, because government, DCS, firmly believe in the dignity of work and the attainment of work is necessarily through skills and translatability and adaptability post-release.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of the Department for Correctional Services completed. The examination of proposed payments for the Department for Correctional Services are now complete. I would like to thank the correctional services staff for the work that you do day to day, but also for the work that you have to do in the lead-up to estimates, so thank you for that.

*Sitting suspended from 12:17 to 13:15.*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION, \$500,000**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE, \$3,513,000**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE, \$1,050,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE,**  
**\$3,557,414,000**

**Membership:**

Ms Hutchesson substituted for Mrs Pearce.

**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, Chief Financial Officer, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Mr B. Loughlin, Chief Officer, South Australian Country Fire Service.

Ms V. Halikias, Business Manager, South Australian Country Fire Service.

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

Mr J. Swann, Deputy Chief 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.

Mr G. Tudini, Business Manager, South Australian State Emergency Service.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolios today are 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 declare the proposed payments open for examination. I call on the minister, if he wishes, to make an opening statement.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I start by acknowledging the tremendous work, the outstanding work, of the volunteers and staff of our emergency services sector every single day in their roles as they serve the community and dedicate themselves to the protection of life, property and the safety of all South Australians. Each year, the response efforts by our sector, the CFS, the MFS, the SES, supported by SAFECOM, put themselves out of enormous time, energy and resources in preparing, responding and recovering from activities and emergencies.

I also acknowledge, as has been highlighted tremendously through the floods of 2022-23, the efforts of other agencies as they work with our sector, including the Department for Environment and Water, ForestrySA, SAPOL, local government and, of course, farm firefighting units as well, especially volunteers from all of those communities who pull together in times of crisis.

I am proud to highlight that the government has provided a very significant investment through the 2023-24 budget that includes \$36.5 million in new measures for the sector. At the heart of that is \$26.7 million over four years to secure up to an additional nine aircraft to significantly enhance the state's aerial firefighting capability to combat the risk of bushfire.

These funds will support the addition of up to nine aircraft and three ongoing full-time employees to significantly enhance the CFS's aerial firefighting capability. It will be the largest

number of aircraft ever to support South Australia during bushfires and will play a key role in supporting the incredible work the CFS on-the-ground firefighters undertake. I also note that, as part of the state's digital investment fund initiative, \$2.3 million over four years is being dedicated to the emergency services incident management system.

In 2023-24, \$6.7 million is also being provided to implement strategies that address future resilience, preparedness and risk mitigation from significant and catastrophic disasters through the commonwealth's Emergency Response Fund. In addition, \$1.9 million is being allocated over four years to increase mental health and wellbeing support to more than 15,000 volunteer emergency services first responders, staff and their families in the sector, and a further \$1.2 million investing in 2023-24 to establish the strategic flood barrier cache of DefenCell or like product.

I would also like to highlight that the 2023-24 budget also included \$12.3 million for the cost of extraordinary events that occurred across the 2022-23 period, of which \$9.8 million has been allocated to the State Emergency Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, Country Fire Service and SAFECOM for the extraordinary response costs relating to the River Murray flood event, and a further \$5.6 million in 2022-23 to support the CFS for extraordinary response costs for significant fires, including Mount Wedge, Lincoln Gap, Montacute, Port Lincoln and Baldina, as well as the extension of firefighting aircraft availability in line with bushfire risk.

Over 2022-23, the SAFECOM logistics functional support group managed the SA rapid antigen testing close contact program from January 2022 until its ultimate transfer to SA Pathology on 20 December 2023. Through that period, 1.92 million tests were distributed to South Australians, with 15 fixed collection points and 39 hybrid sites, some co-located with testing sites across metropolitan and regional parts of the state. At its peak, the program employed 548 staff. The program also tailored support for outbreaks in university accommodation, assisted with testing of regional-based education staff and provided other support to NDIS participants of the national disability and inclusion scheme.

As part of the final closure arrangements, \$5.2 million has been recovered from SA Health during 2022-23 and the final accounting of all service providers is all but complete. SAFECOM has identified a range of administrative and operational lessons from the experience, which will improve the conduct of other operations in the future.

Last year, South Australia experienced its worst flood in over 50 years. The River Murray flood was a protracted and complex flood that impacted 11 major towns across seven local government areas. On 21 November 2022, the police commissioner declared a major emergency, which remained in place for three months—the second longest duration for a declaration under the Emergency Management Act, with the COVID-19 pandemic being the longest.

Ultimately, the peak flow of around 190 giganlitres per day reached the South Australian border on 23 December 2022. The SES and the broader emergency services sector worked tirelessly with communities and local councils to prepare for this flooding. Permanent levy structures were assessed and repaired, with thousands of tonnes of clay being sourced and used to shore up the levy networks. Temporary flood barriers were deployed, with over five kilometres of DefenCell barriers being installed to protect essential infrastructure and high-value community assets.

Community meetings were held across Riverland and Lower Murray areas. Sandbag distribution centres were established, with emergency services staff and volunteers helping households prepare for flooding, distributing nearly half a million sandbags. A doorknock of over 4,000 premises was conducted and an outreach program had crews visit over 800 houseboats on the river.

While the budget impacts for the SES are highlighted in the Agency Statements, this only partially reflects the resources and the extraordinary efforts of volunteers and staff from across all agencies. SES, CFS, Volunteer Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving volunteers contributed to thousands of hours of support by over 220 staff, interstate crews, Army personnel, local council officers and contractors. Leading the state's response to the flooding event, the SES was steadfast in coordinating the preparations and response. I put on the record my thanks for the extraordinary job done by all of those involved.

This government has also made a significant investment into our firefighting capability. The sector also received \$588,000 per annum from 2023-24 to reflect additional costs incurred by the MFS and the CFS when providing assistance to the Ambulance Service, to their paramedic colleagues and to callouts. This is in addition to the \$2.35 million provided in the 2022-23 Mid-Year Budget Review over three years from 2023-24 for the installation and ongoing maintenance of automatic external defibrillators in all CFS vehicles. This funding will assist the CFS in meeting new legislation in recognition of the important role the CFS plays in protecting the community.

Finally, but not least, I want to recognise the MFS today. The MFS in South Australia remains one of the oldest continuous government fire services across the globe. On 5 November 1862, the MFS became one of the first legislated urban fire services in the world. This year marks the celebration of 160 years of the MFS.

I thank all the volunteers and staff who contribute every single day to the sector, and particularly note those members in committee today who themselves volunteer and contribute.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hammond, do you have a brief statement?

**Mr PEDERICK:** Just a brief statement. First of all, I would like to acknowledge the minister for being around during the peak flood event—that was noticed—and also all of the emergency services personnel, whether paid or the thousands of volunteers who contributed during that event. This made it something that people could actually live through, so I commend their work. I also note the ability for me to have direct contact with senior people, so that between us we got some stuff done. I will just put that on the table.

We will go to SAFECOM first and Budget Paper 1: Overview, page 19, the digital investment fund. Can you explain how the emergency services incident management system will operate and how it will enhance compatibility with other operational agencies?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that question relates more specifically to the CFS. If the member would like to shuffle up the CFS for some advice, I am happy to do so, or alternatively we can come back to that question when we get to the CFS.

**Mr PEDERICK:** We can go back to the Country Fire Service, if you like. I will have a go at this one: Budget Paper 1: Overview, page 33, emergency services. How is the \$1.9 million over four years to increase mental health and wellbeing support for volunteers, staff and families going to be spent?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The emergency services sector encompasses broadly the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission, the MFS, the CFS, the SES and the Volunteer Marine Rescue, of which the total workforce is 16,751 approximately, comprising 15,000 volunteers. As the member would know as a long-time contributor to the safety of his community, the volunteer emergency services workforce members can face a complex range of mental health factors that can reduce productivity, increase conflict and destroy interpersonal relationships.

This can contribute to the development of long-term mental health issues, including but not limited to suicidal ideation, anxiety disorders including post-traumatic stress, major depressive disorders, substance use disorders and, at worst, psychosis. Since 2018-19, I can advise that there has been a 70 per cent increase in volunteers and staff accessing the EAP and a further increase this quarter.

In the past 12 months, the Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) 24/7 helpline has recorded a 129 per cent increase in its demand for services by both volunteers and their immediate family members across the sector. I can advise, as I have already, that in the 2023-24 budget, as the member has inquired, SAFECOM has been funded \$461,000 for the provision of additional mental health and wellbeing support function.

Breaking that down, that is an FTE of 3.5 staff. The funding will facilitate the continuation of current programs and the provision of a substantial strategic approach to respond to the growing number of potentially traumatic and stressful incidents that our volunteers and their workforce attend to, such as an increase right across the state in first response road crash. I provide the following examples of particular functions that will be enhanced or improved:

- research implementation and evaluation of the suicide prevention plan in accordance with the regulations of the SA suicide prevention bill;
- the implementation of data collection and reporting systems to meet the requirements of the South Australian Suicide Prevention Act;
- increased delivery of mental health first-aid workshops for volunteers and staff and the implementation of an evaluation process;
- the development of family—partners, children and youth—mental health programs;
- the coordination, review and delivery of the 90-minute stress trauma and suicide prevention program to be delivered to 425 CFS brigades and 73 SES units and a further 14 flotillas within a three to four-year period;
- the implementation of the SA Mentally Healthy Workplaces framework action plans, to reflect the mitigation of psychosocial hazards in the workplace as described in our WHS regulations; and
- recording and managing exposures to potentially traumatic events whilst volunteering.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 23, operating expenses. In regard to the operating expenses for SAFECOM, can you explain why there is such a decrease in what has been budgeted for the 2023-24 financial year compared to what is estimated for the 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise the member that the 2023 budget and 2022 estimated results have a variance of \$16.7 million, a decrease in income. This is primarily due to income recognised for disaster risk reduction in 2022-23 of \$3.1 million; commonwealth government funding from the Emergency Response Fund for the Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program recognised in the 2022-23 year, being \$6.7 million; and income recognised from SA Health for supporting the logistics of the rapid antigen test sites in 2022-23, that being \$5.2 million.

That is offset against a \$3.9 million increase in expenses, primarily due to additional payments from the commonwealth Emergency Response Fund for the Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program and the National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program in 2022-23, that being \$8.8 million, and expenditure from SA Health for logistics in the RAT test sites of \$5.2 million.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Is the estimated additional \$15 million in operating expenses for the SES for the 2022-23 year attributable to the River Murray floods? It is still there under operating expenses.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise the member that, yes, that is correct.

**Mr PEDERICK:** In regard to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 70, workforce summary, I might frame this around all the agencies so we can perhaps get the answer in a timely manner. In regard to SAFECOM, the MFS, the CFS and the SES, is there a clear plan and time line in place for staff who are working from home to return to the office, is the right balance of staff working from home and are there more people coming back to the office, if there has been a contingent of people working from home?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am very pleased to advise the member that, being emergency response agencies, the not just vast or overwhelming majority of the workforce but the workforce almost to the exclusion of others across the sector is contained within emergency response. It is an opportunity and also important to note and reflect that this sector, our emergency services, like a number of other sectors, was never able to take those precautions that some others did, including this place. There were extraordinary measures put in place by our agencies in emergency response, risk mitigation and preparedness around the COVID pandemic.

Particularly, I do want to note the MFS, having 24/7 stations, the willingness of both the agency and the workforce to undertake work practices that were difficult to comprehend, difficult to understand, and also the willingness of the workforce to get behind it. There is a very small number of non-emergency response staff across our sector. For staff where there is a flexible working arrangement related to COVID-19 or others, it might be best to take those on notice for the member,

seeing as they are across multiple agencies. We might chew up the best part of half an hour if I get the advice now.

**Mr PEDERICK:** That is a good idea. Go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 71, key agency outputs. Dot point 2 states that providing corporate governance direction and business support to the emergency services sector, including occupational health, safety and welfare and injury management services, is a key agency output. It is my understanding that some of the work health and safety staff within SAFECOM are assigned to service the individual agencies. Given that each of the agencies has their own work health and safety staff, do you not see this as a duplication?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Absolutely to the contrary. When it comes to work health and safety, it is my view as minister that the resources being deployed are worthy, and they are worthy of our volunteers, worthy of our sector. I would entirely, with respect, reject the assertion that it would be duplication. There is a small number of embedded agency staff responsible for work health and safety, but under the Fire and Emergency Services Act SAFECOM is a designated lead agency to provide those corporate services out.

When you have one of the most diverse work groups anywhere in this country, in my view—13,500 CFS volunteers and about 1,500 SES volunteers VMR and then of course the workforce thereafter—the complexities around work health and safety, ensuring best practice to keep our volunteers safe, is worthy of every effort we can make, so I am entirely comfortable, even if it were correct to say that there were minor duplications, that the duplications are well warranted.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Dot point 2 states that SAFECOM provides corporate governance direction and business support to the emergency services sector, including finance, assets and procurement. Noting that the Auditor-General found the need for improvements in emergency services sector asset management practices, can you advise what work has been done on this in the 2022-23 financial year?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise, as the member foreshadowed, that in 2021-22 the Auditor-General's report to parliament outlined his findings in relation to suggested improvements to the current sector asset management framework and systems. As a result, the emergency services sector chief officers and SAFECOM chief executive have agreed to progress the development of a project to implement a whole-of-sector asset management system.

I can advise that the initial scoping of this system is underway, and it is anticipated that this system will be delivered within the 2023-24 financial year. The scope, and particularly the evaluation of business requirements and the associated procurement processes, I can advise are yet to be established; however, will be opened soon. The CFS has not yet implemented a system referred to as Hardcat, which will be considered a potential solution across all agencies in this evaluation. I can advise the member that SAFECOM will coordinate this project on behalf of the sector.

A coordinated whole-of-sector asset management system will consolidate all asset information into one single location and provide capability for the system to be utilised in the development of asset management plans and, importantly, replacement schedules. I can further advise that the project will be funded from existing resources within the sector.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 71, investing expenditure summary, line 16: why is there no figure under the 2022-23 estimated result for the Alert SA replacement project?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can confirm that the Alert SA project has ongoing funding of \$1.3 million indexed per annum. Since Alert SA was launched in December 2019, there have been over 332,000 downloads of the application. The current build of Alert SA, which was released in 2019, provided improved notifications for grass and other rural fires. Minor amendments and upgrades continue to be made to the current version of Alert SA as required.

However, a range of options are now being explored to enhance Alert SA, including uplifting the current application to a more modern and multihazards application, replacing it with a pre-developed solution, or building a completely new version. An option has not yet been confirmed, as this market research continues.

SAFECOM is currently undertaking this market research, community consultation and stakeholder engagement to help develop a road map for the future of Alert SA development. This engagement has included focus groups with metropolitan, regional and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, targeted surveys from approximately 1,100 members across a broad area of South Australia, and a stakeholder engagement forum. I can also advise the member that there is currently a YourSAy survey that is live and closing on 30 July. I encourage the member and, in fact, all members to promote that YourSAy website so that we can maximise community input into this future design.

**Mr ELLIS:** I have two questions so I hope the committee will indulge me, and both can be found in Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. The first one is at page 92, specifically the capital works and investment program with the State Emergency Service, and volunteer marine rescue, perhaps more particularly. I wonder if you might have an update for the people of Point Turton as to whether a new vessel will be found in that funding for them.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I thank the member for his question and his strong advocacy on behalf of his Point Turton community. It was a great opportunity for him to attend at our country cabinet in the Copper Coast recently. At present we do not have a future provision for a replacement vessel at Point Turton. Having said that, the process by which replacement vessels are undertaken is very much ground-up, and we particularly take advice from the flotillas themselves and the individual groups within those flotillas and, of course, ably coordinated by the SES.

We are very hopeful and open-minded about an ongoing future replacement. There are a number of vessels right across our state that will need to have a programmed replacement or have been the beneficiaries of programmed replacement over the past number of years, particularly amazing vessels coming out of Nautic Star, a great local company. I am absolutely committed to keeping the member informed but also working with him to ensure that his Point Turton community is heard.

**Mr ELLIS:** I have one more question, on page 34 now, which is a CFS component, a similar budget line with the capital works program. I wonder if the minister has any update on how works are tracking at Maitland where I think there is an SES and CFS combined facility being planned, and also whether there are any upgrades planned at Yorketown.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the Maitland work is underway and that DIT are currently engaged in that work. If there is a time frame for the progress of that, particularly around milestones, I would be happy to take that on notice for the member. I am further advised that Yorketown has been subject to some minor remedial works and improvements through the Renew project and that there are no further works as advised at this stage.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will stick with the SES, while we are there for the moment. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, Program 1: State Emergency Service, description/objective, paragraph 2. What support does the government provide for volunteer marine rescue organisations through the SES? What I am talking about here are non-SES volunteer marine rescue organisations. Do they get any support?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I thank the member for his question. I can advise that, in the 2022-23 financial year, 1.36 was provided and in 2023-24 funding will be \$1.394 million. This annual funding to the six volunteer marine rescue groups in South Australia is towards their operational service, a vessel, a tow vehicle replacement program and, further, a contingency fund.

These funds are across the VMR groups, being the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, the Cowell Sea Rescue Squadron, the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, the South Australian Sea Rescue Squadron, the Victor Harbor-Goolwa Sea Rescue Squadron and the Whyalla Sea Rescue Squadron. I can advise that, in 2023-24, a replacement vessel is funded for the SA Sea Rescue Squadron, Copper Coast.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Where is that?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The SA Sea Rescue Squadron, Copper Coast.



**Mr PEDERICK:** In regard to sea rescue vessels, is there any budgetary position for a rescue vessel at Port MacDonnell in the South-East?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** There are no future provisions across the forward estimates specifically for Port MacDonnell, but, in a similar consideration to the member for Narungga's questions regarding his local flotilla, there is ongoing advice being received across future years and under active consideration.

**Mr PEDERICK:** We will go to page 93, targets 2023-24, dot point 1. Can you describe the envisaged make-up of a state flood mitigation cache and where the assets will be stored?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy to advise the member that in the budget \$1.25 million in capital and a further \$20,000 in ongoing funding will be utilised to sustain a temporary flood barrier capability—and by temporary I mean the flood barrier being temporary, not a temporary contribution—for the state, including caches of barriers, plant and equipment and doctrine and training. This will be important in delivering training and also future large-scale responses to flooding events.

The SES's deployment of DefenCell during the River Murray flooding event was the first time that these particular DefenCell barriers have been utilised in Australia for active flood fighting. Overall, the barriers have proven to be highly effective and cost and labour efficient, with nearly 5.5 kilometres of product deployed over the event. There have been significant learnings, equipment investments and enhanced operational protocols implemented, which will result in improved barrier performance in the future.

As for the location of that strategic acquisition, I can advise the member that it is likely to be housed at the Netley warehouse but deployed across strategic locations in the state as operationally required by the SES.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 94, explanation of significant movements, line 21. Can you break down the additional costs associated with responding to the River Murray flood event?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** The specific budget allocation under consideration of the estimates committee today is of course for the SES, and this forms part of the largest ever expenditure on any event in South Australia's history, being \$190 million in state and commonwealth funding. That sustained nearly 120 people every day in the coordination and response to this flood, with over 1,000 people in total contributing.

The specialist resources deployed in pursuit of the SES response included swiftwater rescue teams, aerial observation and resources, marine skippers and crews, ADF 40M personnel trucks and Unimog high clearance vehicles from our friends and colleagues at the New South Wales SES.

The SES has incurred a total expenditure on the River Murray flooding event to date of \$13.4 million. This can be broken down to include salaries and wages for operational staff and deployments; contractor fees; operational consumables, such as the sandbags and DefenCell product that I referred to earlier; as well as very significant freight costs for these products.

The further breakdown for the additional expenditure in this year's budget can also be categorised across salaries and wages of \$1.18 million. I can also advise that the operational consumables, particularly the DefenCell product and the sandbag costs, were at a cost of \$3.772 million—product alone.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 36, the farm firefighting grant: how many farming businesses applied for the grant and how many were successful in 2022?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the farm firefighting units grant, the Regional Capability Community Fund more specifically, as committed to by the then Labor opposition and implemented as a high priority election commitment, has in its first year awarded 276 separate grants in round 1. These grants have gone to various individuals, including, of course, our farming community who attend local bushfires or local fires with their own equipment to protect their property and also the wellbeing of others.

We recognise fulsomely the contribution that farm firefighting units make and that they are an essential part of our community response to bushfires. More specifically for the member's interests—and I am not sure if he was a successful applicant himself—

**Mr PEDERICK:** No. Paid for it himself.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** We will need to look at that for future years.

**Mr PEDERICK:** It is okay.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Round 2 is now open and anybody who was not successful in round 1 will be prioritised for round 2 grants. Round 1 facilitated 257 successful applicants and the purchase of 741 separate pieces of equipment. That included 78 farm firefighting units, nine water pumps, three water tanks, four hoses or branches, 134 UHF CB radios, 428 items of personal protective clothing (this includes gloves, jackets, pants, boots, overalls and goggles), 34 amber rotating beacons, 40 first-aid kits (specifically with burn kits included) and 11 fire blankets.

I can advise that there has been a further extension of the program—\$500,000 in this year, in year two of four—being an extension to community groups that may apply for personal protective clothing (PPC). That was very clear to me, having visited the Bute CFS and having met with the Bute Lions Club. The Bute Lions Club were keen to apply for personal protective clothing on behalf of their members, many of whom are farm firefighting unit first responders, but they were unable to, being a community group, under the first round guidelines. As resourceful, progressive, regional communities tend to do they found a way around things and each of them were able to apply individually, so we were very happy to have delivered a significant number—I think it was 13 in total—PPC items up to Bute.

The second extension has been to move on from the primary production threshold for applicants to now include landowners, for two reasons: one is the recognition that many landowners, particularly in the Adelaide Hills region, may not undertake primary production. However, in pursuit of their own and the community's wellbeing and safety, they do participate in farm firefighting unit first response, or may be eager to. The second is to support conservation, or landowners who undertake conservation. Again, they are not involved in primary production; however, with the conservation undertakings that they endeavour it is entirely appropriate for the funding to consider those individuals as well.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Is there certain equipment that the CFS rules out when considering applications? For example, trailer-based farm fire units.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Yes, there are a few additional requirements that may go to answering the member's question regarding exclusions. One requirement of the funding is that these are new pieces of equipment—new FFUs, new hoses, new branches, new personal protective equipment, new radios—and we do so because we endeavour to ensure that all of the equipment that the government is supporting through funding is at the highest quality and the highest standard.

We are also very keen to ensure that where we can, and this was demonstrated in fact through the purchasing of equipment post the KI fires, we support local businesses and support economic stimulus and economic support for local businesses that are retailing or wholesaling the equipment that may be covered under the FFU grants.

Further, under the member's question regarding trailers, the CFS advice is that from a risk mitigation perspective and health and safety standard the grant round should be limited in relation to trailer-based FFUs. So if the grant application is for a trailer then it is not preferred.

**Mr PEDERICK:** That is interesting because you can cart a lot more water, but anyway be that as it may. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 36, line 31: can farmers operate harvesters on a catastrophic fire day?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** There is not a black and white answer to that, so I will ask the Chief Officer of the CFS, who accompanies me and is an adviser, to provide some additional detail. In brief remarks on that, I will take the opportunity, if I may, to thank the CFS as well as Grain Producers SA for their extraordinary commitment to safety in harvest.

I have spoken personally on a couple of occasions during harvest of last season with the member for Hammond on some dicey days. I appreciate his approach and I appreciate the approach of GPSA. What we all want to do is ensure that harvest is economically valuable for the state—it is an extraordinary primary production for our state—but also that, during harvest, the welfare and safety of regional communities is protected.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Obviously, catastrophic fire danger days are the most significant fire danger risk to the community. They happen a handful of times a year. If I can quantify that, if you look to a year like 2019-2020, we saw six catastrophic fire danger days, so these are not everyday events but are when conditions are such that bare earth will burn if there is a fire.

So, yes, technically people can harvest up until they reach the grain harvest code cut-off, but considering that you would reach that very quickly, very early in those days, typically, and considering that if you did start a fire, even if in the conditions you are allowed, it could pose a risk and a challenge to firefighters, it is always a recommendation to people that they assess that risk and they do so very carefully. So technically you can, but I am not aware of too many people who are that daredevil or risk-taking to engage in that activity on those days.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Thank you for that answer. I did have some communication direct to the minister on a day when there was a bit of a wet period during harvest and people were keen to get it off, which I fully understand, and there was a bit of frustration because people were sounding out people—calling them in, essentially—for harvesting and some of these people were well organised with 4,000 litres of water just on their chaser bins, for instance, and then, obviously, military-style fire vehicles and that sort of thing. But I do appreciate the answer. In regard to that, does the CFS recognise the mesonet weather station network and Kestrel weather meters as tools for farmers to manage fire safely?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I may ask the chief officer again to contribute on this one.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** The short answer is yes.

**Mr PEDERICK:** In regard to the mesonet weather station network, which is not right across the state, will the emergency services levy or some other funds be used to pay for the expansion and operation of the mesonet weather station network across the state to assist farmers with harvest and other farming operations?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am advised that there is no apportionment in the forward estimates for this, particularly with the various considerations, the least of which is that mesonet is a private company, but there are licensing fees of which the agencies are contracted to that contribute to that.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 35, description/objective. The question is: how much has the two-year investigation into Terry and Cheryl May cost?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** If there is information I can provide on notice, I would be happy to do that.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** If I can take the committee to Budget Paper 5, page 31, aerial firefighting fleet enhancement. Minister, where will any new assets be based?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I thank the member for his question and his fierce advocacy in this space. Leading in to the budget, I had multiple conversations with the member, particularly around his strong proposition for supporting our aerial firefighting fleet and his advocacy as a Hills MP for the acknowledgement of the extreme capability of aerial firefighting, so I am very pleased that we have been able to deliver a very significant enhancement of that capability. The capability will be significant. At this juncture I need to advise that, because procurement has not been finalised and we are very much in the throes of final back and forth on those negotiations with the support of NAFC, I cannot advise where or the composition.

However, the member is very familiar with the Brukungu site and the very significant number of fleet and assets that are deployed up there. The bare minimum will be deployed, of the current composition, but I do not think it would be unreasonable to assume a future where there would be additional fleet out of that site, protecting the Adelaide Hills region.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I understand that the acquisition is underway, but what type of aircraft is it anticipated that services will contract to?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I may ask the chief officer, who, within the constraints of that procurement, may be able to provide some broad advice regarding the framework in which the procurement is being undertaken, as well as the type of aircraft or the capability of those aircraft.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you, minister, and I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we are very proud of our aerial firefighting capacity and capability. I believe it is among the country's best systems. In fact, it is probably among the world's best systems, with our combination of primary response zones, secondary response zones and the automatic dispatch of aircraft.

In terms of the contract, as the minister has alluded, I cannot go into specifics. What I can say is that if you look at the make-up of the previous fleet, it included 14 fixed-wing bombers, the two Black Hawk helicopters, and a range of command, control and intelligence support platforms. Any increase is going to be along those same sorts of lines and that similar capability. I single out those Black Hawk helicopters as being a particularly effective tool for us in South Australia. They were used to great effect at the Montacute fire and in the Port Lincoln fire during the past season.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It may be that the minister may take the next two questions on notice. Is the minister able to outline to the committee the number of SES call-outs for the Mount Barker SES depot over the past two financial years? Are there any additional resources which have been committed for the Mount Barker SES depot?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I may need to take some of that on notice. I can perhaps provide as best I can per the information I have in front of me regarding the Mount Barker SES unit. For the five-year period ending July 2023 the unit has been tasked to 1,760 incidents, averaging about 352 incidents per year. As of today, or perhaps last week when my advice was forthcoming, the unit has 31 volunteers.

As a snapshot to the work that the SES unit in Mount Barker undertakes, of which the member no doubt would be well aware, it is broad and it is diverse, and that is reflective of all of our SES units across the state. They are called out to everything from trees down and severe weather damage, all the way through to animal and land and general searches.

The facility itself that the SES calls home in Mount Barker was purchased in 2012. It was a former industrial warehouse. The SES proceeded with construction works which were completed shortly thereafter in 2013. I am advised that minor works to be completed in 2023, and I am happy to correct the time frame for the member if I can, consist of the removal of an old oil heater. Other works that have been completed in recent financial years are repairs to gates, repairs to cracked concrete kerbs, new concrete paving and a new door to the shed.

As for future investment or capital plans to be undertaken in Mount Barker; like all of our regional centres it is a dynamic assessment by our agencies, one of which I am sure that the SES is undertaking with the full knowledge and appreciation of the growing geographic centre that Mount Barker is and the dynamic risk that is posed in Mount Barker from a multihazards approach or consideration.

**The CHAIR:** I would move at speed, member for Hammond.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Thank you sir. I do not want to leave the MFS out so I might get a couple in quickly. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 51, key agency outputs, dot point 2. What work is being done in relation to electric vehicle fires?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy to ask the chief officer for some advice directly to the committee on that one.

**Mr MORGAN:** With any emerging technologies, with electric vehicles being one, we are constantly monitoring the type of vehicle and the ramifications or implications of fires and so we continually review and update training packages for firefighters and awareness around how they manage those fires.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I might add to that as well, because the chief officer is too humble to recognise this himself, but in the days gone we have had 500 of our best practitioners of road crash rescue across the country and Australasia in Adelaide. Particularly regarding the member's question regarding electric vehicles, the Australian-Australasian road crash championships have been a demonstration of the ongoing capability of agencies when it comes to electric vehicle response as well as the preservation and protection of life. I am very pleased to advise the committee that the joint MFS-SAAS team were victorious for the second year running in the championships here in Adelaide.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Very good.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I should note many of those MFS staff are also co-badged as CFS volunteers to cover off on everything.

**Mr PEDERICK:** You get everyone rounded up. That is good and they are all very worthy people. We will go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 54, Sub-program 1.1: Frontline Services, at dot point 3, under highlights 2022-23. Can you outline the MFS resources that were deployed to support the River Murray flood event?

**Mr MORGAN:** It was a combined effort amongst all the emergency services certainly, but supporting the SES as the lead agency. We had members in the incident management team in the Riverland. We had members of the MFS workforce doorknocking, as the minister mentioned earlier, to communicate and engage with members of the community along the river where there were risks. Overall, the support was across the board where resources were required.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to page 54, targets 2023-24, under dot point 1. Can you explain what the MFS is doing to continue modernisation of operational doctrine, policy, procedure and training?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy to ask the chief officer to provide some advice to the member on this one.

**Mr MORGAN:** We are constantly reviewing our doctrine and training procedures but we are currently reviewing and developing our new strategic plan for the next five years. There is a body of work that has gone into developing that strategic plan. We have engaged with an external provider to provide oversight and we have had external stakeholder engagement not only amongst the emergency services sector but external agencies, as well as internal stakeholder engagement, which will then develop and drive our strategic plan, as I said, over the next five years.

As a result of that, there will certainly be emerging risks and issues that we will be looking at. We will be looking to increase the number of recruits over the next five years, with an anticipated departure of approximately 300 staff. So from a training perspective, it is not only new and emerging risks it is also recruiting and developing our staff through operational training.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Under dot point 4, can you explain what the MFS is doing to enhance training provision to personnel in regional operations?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry, what page was that?

**Mr PEDERICK:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 54, targets 2023-24, dot point 4.

**The CHAIR:** That is the last question.

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

**Mr MORGAN:** Thank you, minister, and I thank the member. With our regional operational staff, we are currently reviewing the regional operations in total. Part of that is around the training of our retained firefighters. Retained firefighters are paid a retainer. They are paid to attend training and respond to fire calls. Currently, we have a training allocation of three hours for each retained person per week, as per the station. We are looking to see how we can maximise that opportunity with training and any other training opportunities that can come forward to improve the preparedness of our regional firefighters.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolios of SAFECOM, the Country Fire Service, the SA Metropolitan Fire Service and the State Emergency

Service completed. The examination of the proposed payments for the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission, the South Australian Country Fire Service, the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service and the South Australian State Emergency Service are now complete. The examination of the proposed payments for the Administered Items for the Department of Treasury and Finance will be referred to Estimates Committee A.

I thank all the staff and all the volunteers of our emergency services for all the great work they do in keeping the state safe, and I thank them for the work that they do in the lead-up to estimates.

**DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT, \$1,107,742,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND**  
**TRANSPORT, \$7,863,000**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$1,006,195,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$69,000**

**Minister:**

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

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr J. Whelan, Chief Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Mr G. Jackson, 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.

Mr A. Ockenden, Executive Director, Public Affairs, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Ms S. Clark, Director, Road Safety, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

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

Mr N. Bamford, Assistant Commissioner of Police, South Australia Police.

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

Mr D. Fielke, Superintendent, South Australia Police.

**The CHAIR:** The portfolio is road safety. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I advise that the proposed payments are open for examination. The minister can speak for, I will say, up to five minutes this time, given there are only 30 minutes for this session.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am happy just to thank the committee for its attendance today and to introduce the advisers I have with me: Emma Kokar, Executive Director, Road and Marine Services; Jon Whelan, Chief Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Transport; Superintendent Darren Fielke from SAPOL; Sarah Clark, Director, Road Safety; and Assistant Commissioner Noel Bamford. Can I thank all of those people both within the department and SAPOL and within the broader South Australian community for the work they undertake and for their advocacy for safer roads.

I acknowledge that this is one of those matters, one of those policy areas, that does command support from across the state, across the political divide, and I thank all of those individuals

all pulling in the same direction as we vigorously and unashamedly pursue our goal, both here in South Australia and nationally, to reduce road fatalities.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Thank you to all the agency staff who work hard to ensure our roads are as safe as possible for people who travel on them. I will start with Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, Agency Statements, page 119. I will kick off with mobile phone detection cameras. I note there was a slight delay in the rollout and the work of those cameras from 2023 to 2024. How is that progressing and how many mobile phone detection cameras has the department landed on, where will they be placed and what are they expected to bring in by way of revenue? While they are a deterrent for poor driver behaviour, how much are they expected to bring in?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I will walk through all parts of the member's question—if I miss any, please do not hesitate to pull me up. As for the specific number of cameras, I advise that the procurement has not finalised on that. I can advise, as the member would no doubt be aware, in addition to the capital contained in the previous budget to purchase mobile phone detection cameras, there has been in this year's budget an additional \$13.4 million allocated to purchase more cameras. I can advise that the anticipated number of cameras that will purchase is 10. I am advised that will provide for additional deterrence but also additional locations in which the mobile detection cameras will be rolled out.

I can advise the member that the locations of the cameras have not yet been determined, advised or finalised. The government will absolutely, on advice from both the department and SAPOL, be advising the community of South Australia well in advance. I truly believe that this is one of those road safety initiatives that will change behaviour—we have seen a demonstration of that in other jurisdictions. I can also reflect on the fact that, whilst nobody anywhere likes to be expiated for speeding, for red-light cameras, for mobile phone use whilst driving, I have been genuinely humbled by the support the community has been throwing behind this government initiative.

There has been a lot of media reporting and a lot of opportunity, both through the passage of this enabling bill or amendments to the act, to enable the rollout of these cameras. I recognise the absolute support of the opposition and the member in his support, but there has been very little public negativity or pushback around this. In saying that, I think the time has come when the community has said that enough is enough when it comes to this type of distracted driving and distracted behaviour, and we know that mobile phones are a massive contributor to distracted driving and the associated trauma that distracted driving causes on our roads. I have some projections with respect to revenue and some further metrics to the member's question.

I am advised that the additional expenditure allocated in this year's budget as part of our \$98 million road safety package includes investing expenditure of \$3.6 million for the purchase and installation of these additional mobile phone detection cameras in 2023-24, and the measure provides operating expenditure of \$1.5 million for SAPOL for 2023-24, increasing to \$2.7 million per annum from 2024-25 for the implementation and ongoing maintenance of these additional mobile phone detection cameras.

The additional cameras are projected to increase expiation revenue by \$7.6 million in 2023-24, increasing to \$21.1 million per annum indexed from 2026-27, although as I have already indicated, this may vary significantly. I hope it varies significantly, depending upon driver change and behavioural change as a result of the deployment of this new technology.

The expiation revenue is collected by South Australia Police on behalf of the government. SAPOL treats the collected expiation revenue pursuant to the requirements of the Expiation of Offences Act 1996, and other relevant legislation, and specifically in relation to revenue from mobile phone detection cameras, the moneys collected will be paid exclusively into the community road safety fund to invest in road safety for our community.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Referring to the same item, will those mobile phone detection cameras be fully operational by June 2024?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** My advice is yes.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On the same budget line, I know there has been some conjecture around the nation in regard to these, and I am just wondering where we landed on privacy? Referring

to the same item, how will the minister ensure that there are no breaches of the Privacy Act in enforcing the mobile phone detection cameras, and on what basis and where will they be deployed? You mentioned that there are some locations in mind. How will that advice be formulated?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I am aware, as the member has flagged, of some of that commentary and reporting from other jurisdictions. I can advise that the mobile phone detection camera location processes and selection process does involve an analysis of road crash data, traffic volumes and road design as well as the existing variable message sign infrastructure and practical operational feasibility. It is the case that the plan for a contract of supply will be finalised in 2023, which will allow for the deployment of the cameras, as questioned by the member, by 2024.

In direct answer to questions regarding the Privacy Act, I can advise that privacy will be protected in the same way that images and registration information is currently obtained by SAPOL. Those images that are currently obtained by SAPOL are by way of longstanding arrangements in place with speed cameras and red-light cameras. This is in accordance with the information and privacy principles detailed in the short guide to the information and privacy principles on the State Records website, and also the South Australian Public Sector Code of Ethics.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 117, new projects, regarding regional road safety infrastructure scheduled to be completed by end of June 2023 at a cost of \$2.5 million: I am just wondering what that project entailed. I trust that it was completed on time and on budget—new projects, regional road safety infrastructure.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise the member that that forms part of the \$98 million package announced in the budget, including new infrastructure projects with the Mount Barker roundabout upgrade, the Adelaide Road/Alexandrina Road/Wellington Road/Flaxley Road intersection, equating to \$40 million; regional road safety infrastructure of \$10 million over the forward estimates at around \$2.5 million per annum; and additional mobile phone detection cameras as previously advised. The road safety package also includes ongoing operating expenditure for the following:

- Kangaroo Island road maintenance of \$6.2 million over the forward estimates;
- additional road safety campaigns of 6.2 over the forward estimates;
- Rider Safe program reform of \$3.8 million over the forward estimates; and
- half a million over the forward estimates for the ultra high-powered vehicle licensing scheme.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** We might touch on the Mount Barker issue. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 120, road safety package—regional. Is the minister able to advise what share of the 2023-24 budget is dedicated to the Mount Barker roundabout upgrade announced earlier this month? I am curious: how was that prioritised above other what you could call high impact and urgent road safety infrastructure needs? Was that a decision of government? How did you arrive at that particular roundabout upgrade, as opposed to other urgent road safety infrastructure needs?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I thank the member for his question. Outside of advising, as I already have, the publicly available information regarding the \$40 million that has been allocated to that particular project, I advise him that that would be a question for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. It is a matter for Minister Koutsantonis. I am not advised, nor am I aware, of the work that was undertaken in respect of that particular selection.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 142, in relation to highlights. I refer to the new powers that have been given to police officers to cancel licences and also immediately remove drug-affected drivers and dangerous or reckless drivers from the road on the spot. I am curious as to how many drivers have been removed and had their licences cancelled under those new laws and how many of those are related to drug offences? Do you have any data on that? If not, you could take it on notice.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can provide some advice to the member, particularly regarding the breakdown of drug detection. I note that, as of 11 May 2023, there were 1,544 positive tests for THC with no other drug present, 1,949 tested positive for methamphetamine with no other drug



present, 23 tested positive to MDMA with no other drug present, 754 tested positive to methamphetamine and THC together, 13 tested positive to THC and MDMA together, 19 tested positive to methamphetamine and MDMA together and 12 tested positive to all those prescribed drugs together. In addition to that, there are 150 oral fluid samples that are currently pending analysis.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** So those people had their licences cancelled?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that, as of 11 May, 956 drivers have been issued with an immediate loss of licence for those drug offences.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Under those new laws? Excellent. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, Agency Statements, page 142, highlights, sixth dot point. What was the outcome of consultation with the community on speed limits on beaches and on access by personal mobility devices and what plans does the government have in those two areas?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Sorry? Was the member's question about personal mobility devices on beaches?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Let's do beaches first and then go to mobility devices because I know the departments love them.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** On the first part of the question that the member asks regarding the speed limit on beaches, I can confirm that consultation closed on 17 March 2023. That consultation canvassed four options: a default beach speed limit of 40 km/h, a default beach speed limit of 25 km/h, a default beach speed limit of 40 km/h and 25 km/h when passing or within 100 metres of a pedestrian and a further option, the fourth, of no change at all to the default speed limits.

I can advise that the YourSAy survey received 2,651 responses, being, as I am advised, a very high number of responses, and I thank all of those participants in that survey. A consultation outcomes report has been prepared and will soon be made publicly available through the YourSAy SA website. As for the member's question, particularly around timing, I can advise that any consideration of that and any potential change to the default speed limit on beaches will require a variation to existing regulations and that is likely to occur in the second half of 2023.

So the consideration of and any potential regulation change would likely occur in the second half of 2023, which we are in now—so now. And personal mobility devices?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Yes, of course.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Of course.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** How is that going?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Good.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** When are we going to see the bill?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Are you riding around on them?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** No, I am still waiting. I am still waiting for my private one—maybe by Christmas.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Stick to the jet skis. You look good on a jet ski.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Thank you. Yes, how is that going?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that the consultation for the personal mobility devices closed on 21 May 2023. At the conclusion of that there were over 1,500 YourSAy survey completions received. In addition there were 55 email and phone submissions made as well. The outcomes of the public consultation will be considered alongside the recommendations made by the parliamentary Select Committee on Public and Active Transport in determining a future framework for mobility devices.

Again, in terms of likely time frames for the member, I can advise that the consultation report is currently being collated by the department and that consideration of that will likely occur, again, in 2023.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, Agency Statements, page 117, new safety cameras: I saw some cameras at Marryatville High School this morning, so I know there was significant movement there today, but what took so long to move on that? Obviously, the incident occurred in March and it took until basically today for the government to make an announcement in terms of red-light cameras. What took so long to make that decision?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I note that, as I advised the house I think last week in response to a similar question, the government needed to consider a number of different pieces of advice. There is of course the advice from our experts—the department as well as SAPOL—in respect of the placement of these cameras and this technology.

The second part of that is to ensure—which did occur parallel with the advice that was forthcoming—the appropriate placement of a camera at the location at Marryatville High School so that it would not compromise the operation of the other cameras about 500 metres either side of that pedestrian actuated crossing. That was very important. We did not feel it to be an optimal outcome to put one camera there and then compromise the operation of those other cameras.

Further, I am also cognisant of the court's interpretation of the offending time line in continuum where multiple detections are occurring within a short space, so the advice was very important to ensure that of course if we are placing cameras in any location, they are doing their job and that people who are doing the wrong thing are not getting a free kick or a free ride by virtue of the fact that they are placed too close together.

I also recognise that additional work has already been undertaken in the vicinity of that location with early warning signage. I think the member would recognise the very high visibility signage which has been undertaken and already installed out there. That happened with some significant urgency. Further, there are six—five other, six in total—improvements that have been authorised and will be undertaken by the department. I am advised that some of those works have already been undertaken and some of them are occurring. Some of them will occur over the next couple of weeks.

With school holidays coming up it became opportune for the works to be undertaken when there was less volume in the area, so I can advise that all of the following will be undertaken by the time school is returned in, I think, three weeks' time. That includes the wrapping of the traffic signal poles in a red and white stripe, the installation of target boards on the primary and tertiary traffic signal groups, black backing boards with a white border to provide greater prominence, and the installation of red hoop signs prior to the push buttons on each side of the Kensington Road, advising pedestrians to stop, look, listen and think. This is particularly designed to encourage pedestrians to check for vehicles before entering the road. The stop bar will be relocated to be six metres from the cross walk to meet current standards, and additional new in-pavement stop bar detection loops will be installed.

It is also important to note the impact this trauma has had on the school community. It is very clear to me, from my discussions and meetings with members of the community and school leaders, that it has had a profound impact, and particularly also some of the media interest has had an impact on the students. I do want to commend the school community for their resilience, for their tenacity in the face of this adversity, but also, as has been described to me by the principal as well as the chair of the governing council, for their extraordinary pulling together of the school community around these two students who were very severely injured, and their families and their friends and their schoolmates.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Referring to that same item, I understand that, following the very sad incident that occurred, DIT conducted an audit of crossings in the Adelaide area. I am just wondering, minister, are you able to advise of the status of that audit and any associated expenditure, and is the minister able to advise how many crossings will also be upgraded/serviced, as a consequence of that audit if it has been concluded? If it has not been concluded, when will it be concluded, and will that audit be released?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I can advise that that has been completed. The works have been completed. Almost exclusively, all those works were somewhat minor in nature, involving some pruning of foliage or otherwise. Some of that was the responsibility of the department, some of it was local council controlled but, notwithstanding that, was undertaken by the department and its contractors. Some of those sites had minor signage improvements or upgrades, as has been the case with multiple improvements across our entire network that are done on a periodic basis by the department. I do not have a particular line item for cost for the member, but I can advise that it is somewhat minor and within the existing budget of the department.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I refer you to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, Agency Statements, page 144, performance indicators, number of road fatalities. We all know that this year, obviously, we have seen a terrible increase in road fatalities compared with, say, the same time last year. What analysis has been done to assess the cause of that unfortunate increase, and what measures are being taken to address that, particularly as it pertains to this year?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** Recognising that it is coming to the conclusion of this committee, I will undertake to provide on notice a particularly fulsome answer for the member. I think it is an important question and one that is important to adequately communicate. The member is correct in his reflections that it has been a bad 2023; it is a shocker. It should shock people and should there and would there and if there were to be just a single cause of this, then the solution and the remedial action would be so much more simple.

The reality is that on a number of fronts there are factors that are occurring that are killing people and causing people to die on our roads, including, as I reflected before, younger people who are continuing to make bad decisions. I say that because there is a high proportion of deaths on our roads in 2023 that involve single-vehicle crashes and that also includes motorcyclists, as well as regional drivers.

Perhaps on notice with a more comprehensive answer, I can provide the member some advice regarding the response in regard to the specific campaigns that have been launched and articulated, one of which in particular is the motorcycle campaign, directly targeting those people on our roads who love to ride, love the freedom of riding but, in a desperately sad way, are behaving in a way that is beyond their capability or dangerously that is killing them or causing serious injury.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Do we have time for one more?

**The CHAIR:** Alright, I will be very generous: one more.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** What a sport, thank you, Chair. Thank you for your generosity. Referring to highlights again, given the escalating road maintenance backlog and the deteriorating state of our roads and the impact on driver safety, are you able to advise what the total investment was in the joint commonwealth and state-funded road safety stimulus program in 2022-23, and what is budgeted in 2023-24?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** It is a terrible shame that the member has asked that question because that is a matter for the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I thought you would say that but I thought I would have a crack while I have you all here.

**The CHAIR:** On that final note, the allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the portfolio of Road Safety completed. The examination of the proposed payments for South Australia Police and the Administered Items for South Australia Police are now complete. The examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and Administered Items for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport is adjourned until Wednesday 5 July.

I would just like to thank all of the agencies for all the work you do in trying to keep us safe on our roads—it is incredibly valuable work that has a real-world impact—and I would also like to thank you for all of the work you have to do in the lead-up to estimates. I want to thank the opposition for the incredibly civil manner in which they have gone about proceedings. It has been very good and

has made my job as Chair very easy indeed. I also have sympathy with the long-suffering members of the backbench who have to sit there for hours and hours.

At 14:49 the committee adjourned to Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 09:00.