

## **KEVIN FOLEY**

Minister for: Deputy Premier  
Treasurer  
Police  
Federal/State Relations  
Assisting the Premier in Economic Development

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### **1. Port Lincoln Police Station - PPP**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 4.13 2003/04 Targets

#### Question:

Can the Minister advise if the new PPP Police station proposed for Port Lincoln will include holding cells and a court complex?

***A similar question was asked by Robert Brokenshire, Shadow Minister for Police:***

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I have a question on the government's privatisation policy with respect to police stations. I acknowledge that more police stations need to be built, so I agree with the Treasurer, and we were building them at Netley, Mount Gambier, Wakefield Street and Grenfell Street. We spent about \$60 million worth of taxpayers' money when I was minister. How sure is the minister that the privatisation proposal announced for police stations will proceed, given the caveat in his budget papers that the privatisation of the Rann Labor government for police stations will proceed only if it is subject to value, which in itself is a broken promise? Notwithstanding the broken promise, if the caveat does not stack up, will the minister guarantee building those police stations with taxpayers' money?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** This is why I had a sleepless night last night, in anticipation of the onslaught that I would receive today. It has been a very stressful time, with anxious moments, facing the political skill of the member opposite. To suggest that PPPs are a form of privatisation is nonsense. Public private partnerships are a well accepted policy, initiated quite correctly by the honourable member's government, and adopted by nearly all state governments as a way of partnering the public sector and the private sector to deliver infrastructure.

While governments have a better capacity to borrow money more cheaply, what often is the problem for government is that we are unable to manage the project as well as we should in terms of keeping to budget and allowing innovation to occur in projects. PPPs give us an opportunity to bring the skills of the private sector together with the skills of the public sector to get what we need in terms of critical infrastructure. It is no different, if one thinks the pure model through, from the fact that the building in which the police headquarters is situated is leased. We do not own it because it would not make sense for the government to own a bit of commercial real estate in Wakefield Street. We used to do that and the governments of the past made terrible mistakes when we owned half of Grenfell Street.

Police stations are the same. PPPs to my mind are a similar approach. We are leasing an asset. We do not need to own the building. We need to have the facility for our force, and that clearly is not privatisation. We put a caveat on all PPPs, and I would have thought that

the honourable member would appreciate this. The business case has to stack up. We cannot commit the government to a PPP for philosophical reasons: it must be good, financial, economic sense. If it is not, it should not be done.

PPPs started under the previous government, and the PPP unit within Treasury, together with the very good work undertaken by SAPOL itself, has reached the point of making a decision when it is confident that these can proceed, that it has done the due diligence prior to committing the budget to these projects. We are very confident these projects will be delivered under a PPP.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** Why has the government not approved a police station for Golden Grove, as requested prior to the last election by the member for Wright?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Because we are building police stations in Victor Harbor, Mount Barker, Gawler and Port Lincoln.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Exactly. This is a very interesting point. We are acting on the advice of the police as to the areas of most need.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** So the member for Wright is irrelevant.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** The member says that the member for Wright is irrelevant; that is offensive. What this government is demonstrating is that, unlike the former government, it will make decisions based on good policy, not on political considerations. The urgent demand is in the Liberal held seat of Mount Barker; we are building them a police station. In the Liberal held seat of the deputy leader, we are building a police station. In the Liberal held seat of Flinders, we are building a police station. In the Liberal held seat of Light, we are building a police station. Why? Because the police advise us that they are the areas of most need. I think that it would be wrong for government to allow political considerations to influence its decision making as it relates to these types of matters.

That is not to say that Golden Grove should not be considered for a police station: it is simply to say that the advice of the police to us is that, as a priority at this point (and it may change), this is not a station that meets the test of the most urgent need for our policing. That is not to say that it may not in the future—not at all. However, I would have thought that we would be applauded for making sound policy decisions and for not being influenced by politics.

## **PATRICK CONLON**

Minister for: Emergency Services  
Energy  
Government Enterprises  
Police

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### **2. Facilitation Planning Services**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 2  
Page 5.28

#### **Question:**

My question relates to wind power, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 5.28, 'Facilitation planning services (energy)'. There is no mention of the encouragement of wind power in this section, although, in the past, this has been a lead agency responsible for Energy SA. Which agency or group within government presently has lead responsibility for assisting the establishment of new wind power opportunities? Who is the lead Minister? Who do industries contact for advice in establishing their new ventures?

*This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** You raise a good question. Let us be plain at the outset: the greatest impetus to wind farm development in Australia has been the MRET scheme. I urge the opposition to take a bipartisan approach to encourage the commonwealth to maintain—

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** I agree with this, and I am happy to put it on the record.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I stress that the greatest assistance to the establishment of wind farms is the MRET scheme. A number of other issues follow from the establishment of wind farms. The member for Flinders would be well aware of transmission issues associated with it. I do not think anyone would be more aware of transmission issues associated with the establishment of wind farms than someone seeking to establish them in her electorate. They are a long way from a strong enough grid.

A second issue about the establishment of wind farms in South Australia is the percentage of wind energy, and to put it with current technology into the overall average base demand. We believe that, as long as the MRET scheme is maintained, there is substantial opportunity to put in wind farms to meet that second factor about which I talked, that is, the component that can be put into the average base demand. We have seen the success of Starfish Hill, which is facilitated not only by MRET but also the ability to plug into and bring ahead an upgrade of the distribution system at Cape Jervis. Lake Bonney, which recently announced its deal to the Denmark Stock Exchange, is very close to a transmission system, which allows it to overcome those problems. I know that a number of other proposals are running around the state, which are close enough either to the distribution system or grid to overcome those transmission problems.

Of course, the other issue in this matter is planning. Planning is always an issue when it comes to wind farms. The government has given significant support in terms of planning through a range of agencies. It has just been pointed out to me that in relation to Starfish Hill, it was a great support to have an off-take agreement with AGL, which was made very much easier by the government's agreeing to purchase the energy to which I referred earlier. What we have in the pipeline in South Australia, as long as we can get a decent outcome in MRETS—and I am very confident about that; I sincerely hope we will see an

improvement in the MRET scheme—is that there are more planning approval applications or initial applications at present than our base capacity could withstand. There is something like 700 or 800 megawatts in applications. The nature of wind farms is that not all applications become wind farms. There are sufficient applications there to believe that we will get that component of the base demand that is tolerable in our system.

I think an important issue for the future growth is the level of interconnection of South Australia with the eastern states. We have got a reasonable level of interconnection with Victoria. I think that will allow the Lake Bonney wind farm to produce into the combined pools of South Australia and Victoria; and, therefore, increase the amount of wind power we can put into the combined pools. I would like to see the completion of SNI, or the interconnector with New South Wales, in order to allow us to feed into those coal-burning states. As the pressure grows on emissions from the coal burners, South Australia is well placed with a wind resource, but strong levels of interconnection are necessary to get beyond making the contribution of component to our base demand, and, rather, a contribution of component to the combined demands of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. That will allow us to make full use of the wind resource we have in South Australia. I was interested to talk to a number of people about how they have overcome some of the shortcomings—as members would know—in the irregular nature of generation through electricity, as compared with conventional generation, and there are some technological improvements, which we are keen to monitor.

That is a long answer on wind, but there is a large set of complex issues that will allow us to go beyond the 150 or 200 megawatts wind power to what I would really like to see our developing for full wind resources, including those on the West Coast. They also involve a different regulatory approach to transmission. What we have seen in a number of jurisdictions in Europe is the ability to smear the transmission costs across all the national electricity market, and not simply to South Australian consumers. That would require a significant regulatory change. I do not think it would be a good regulatory change; I think we need to pick up on the component of renewables in the national electricity market, not just South Australia, but they are all issues which occupy our mind and on which we are working.

### **3. Electricity Bills - Pensioner Concessions**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04

Budget Paper 4, Volume 1

Page 3.14

#### **Question:**

This question is about pensioners and carers. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 3.14, energy infrastructure policy. Pensioners receive an annual concession of \$70 on their electricity bills. As these concessions have not been increased, pensioners have been hit with a proportionately higher increase in their electricity bills than the general community. Will the minister now agree that pensioners, many of whom are also cared for or are carers of others, have received disproportionately higher increases in their electricity bills than the general community; and has the minister argued around the cabinet table for higher concessions for these pensioners and their carers?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I have made my position plain on this on a number of occasions. In the past, we were able to offer concessions and do a number of cross subsidies in the

electricity business. That ability was largely taken away from us when the previous government decided to sell the businesses lock, stock and barrel. We have been very concerned about the effect on low income earners. The recently announced energy audits for low income earners—and I stress this—were in response to a select committee on poverty which addressed this aspect. From memory, they responded positively to almost every single recommendation of that committee. They told us that this was the best way to go. Of course, that committee contained Liberal members, from memory, the Hon. Terry Stevens, and certainly Joe Scalzi, the member for Hartley.

Our response to the needs of low income earners has not only been dictated to by the position that we inherited in terms of the sale of utilities but it is exactly in accord with the recommendations of the select committee into poverty. I will say this, though, that in relation to the constant questioning of this government by the opposition, it would be more helpful if they would take up the level of support given by the commonwealth government, the people who provide the payments to these people, that is, to pensioners and to carers. It is my very strong view that the commonwealth government rides free on the back of carers in our community while pocketing a \$2.4 billion surplus this year, after \$2 billion worth of tax cuts. I am quite happy to take these questions, it is our responsibility for government, but I really would like it if the Liberal opposition questioned their own people federally about whether they are doing enough.

They are the people with the \$2.4 billion surplus; they are the people with all the money. We have to work our brains out to get a balanced budget in this state, yet we have a commonwealth government which rakes in the money and which is simply not doing enough for the pensioners and the carers in this country. I am happy to accept my responsibilities and live up to them. We have responded to the select committee on poverty and we have done what that committee asked. I really would like it if someone in the Liberal Party could knock on the door of their federal colleagues and say, 'How about sharing some of that big surplus with the needy in the land?'

#### **4. Desalination Plant – PPP's** Portfolio Statements 2003/04

Question:

The minister, in his answer to the question relating to the new office of the Minister for Infrastructure, indicated that the PPPs would be run out of a special unit in Treasury, and he provided a list, which included police stations, the women's prison and a youth detention centre. Will the minister reassure me that it will also be handling the desalination plant for Eyre Peninsula?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** In fact, the honourable member touches on a very good point. People have been treating PPPs as some new thing. The truth is that SA Water has been delivering infrastructure with PPPs for some time. I understand that it is well advanced in the delivery of the Tod River desalination plant. It would not be my intention to play a role there, unless there was some strong reason for it. My understanding is that the project is well advanced and there is no reason why we would need to be involved.

It comes down to this distinction about delivery and policy decisions. The decisions about that plant were taken some time ago. At this stage, we do not see any reason for a role for our unit, other than considering, in a strategic sense, where that fits into our overall infrastructure needs. We are not interested in taking SA Water's desalination plant away from it.

**Mr HOOK:** If it is okay, we will run with that.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** We are not going to fix something that is not broken.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** At some stage I was told that we were waiting for some guidelines on PPPs. I assumed they were going to come with this new group.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Guidelines on PPPs were completed and released months ago.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Will they apply to the desalination plant? Are they the same guidelines?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member should understand that the way in which SA Water has been operating PPPs in the past is unlikely to have offended any of the guidelines released, anyway. The truth is that SA Water has a long history of delivering such projects. I am quite confident that it will deliver this very excellent Labor initiative on Eyre Peninsula.

## **5. Infrastructure Projects**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04

### Question:

My question relates to grants that may or may not be for infrastructure. I have been told that more than \$100 million in grant funding has recently been allocated to Babcock & Brown, presumably for infrastructure. If this is the case, was any of that funding from the state government? If so, what proportion and which infrastructure projects are expected to benefit; and over what period of time?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is news to me that Babcock & Brown has any grant funding. I can tell you that it has not received any from us. It is a private sector venture and we do not give grants to private sector infrastructure development. Are you talking about the Lake Bonney wind farm—

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Yes, that is why I am curious.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I would be absolutely amazed if someone gave it \$100 million to establish a wind farm. None of it came from us. My understanding of the project is that it is an entirely financed project, which relies on the MRET (Mandatory Renewable Energy Target) national legislation. I understand that recently it announced that it has an off-take agreement with, I think, a New South Wales retailer, but my understanding is that it is an entirely privately financed proposal. We are not in the business of giving grants for private infrastructure development.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** That was my understanding, but I thought that there might have been a bucket of money that I had not found.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** If someone is dishing out \$100 million for projects, I myself would be in line.

## **MICHAEL ATKINSON**

Minister for: Attorney General  
Justice  
Consumer Affairs  
Multicultural Affairs

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### **6. Regional Crime Prevention Programs**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 4.116

#### Question:

Can the Minister advise whether the establishment of regional crime prevention programs in a number of areas involving local government as a key partner which is listed as a target for 2003/04 will reinstate the crime prevention programs in regional areas that were cut from the previous budget?

#### Explanation:

The City of Port Lincoln had a successful Crime Prevention program which was cut at the last State Government Budget. There is also a smaller budget allocation, see page 4.142.

***This was incorporated into a question which was asked by Liberal member for Heysen Isobel Redmond***

**Mrs REDMOND:** In the same volume of the budget paper, page 4.117, there is a decline shown in the crime prevention program, as shown in the net expenditure summary. The last Liberal budget was \$3.225 million and this year the amount proposed \$1.755 million. However, the first target for the year is to establish regional crime prevention programs in a number of areas involving local government or a key partner. The opposition is aware that the government is trying to cobble together something with a number of councils, which each previously had its own program, and there have been meetings with crime prevention people.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Some did, some did not.

**Mrs REDMOND:** For instance, I know that the member for Flinders has said that the City of Port Lincoln had an excellent local crime prevention program but, because of its being cut, it went. What is being offered to the people of Port Lincoln this year in terms of crime prevention? Does the Attorney-General believe that we can produce more effective crime prevention with less money?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** First of all, the use of the figures made by the member for Heysen is misleading, because there was a carryover, and Treasury (as it did in so many areas of government) refused permission for that carryover to come into the budget this financial year. What has happened is that crime prevention has just gone back to its base funding. As for Port Lincoln, it will be offered a role in regional crime prevention, and it will be interesting to see if it is able to form a partnership with another area.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Where do you suggest—Mount Gambier?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I was in Ceduna recently, and I had discussions with the woman who runs the Bush Breakaway program and with the policeman from Ceduna. I hope to be able to make an announcement about the Bush Breakaway program in Ceduna.

But Port Lincoln is welcome to put a proposal as part of the regional crime prevention program.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I am a little puzzled by the Attorney's explanation about the carryover, because when I look at page 4.117, line 8, Crime Prevention, I see that the last Liberal budget had an actual expenditure of \$3.225 million. You then budgeted for \$3.332 million. According to your information there, you have an estimated net result of exactly that amount, \$3.332 million. So, where is the carryover that leads to the lowering to \$1.755 million?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** There had been a number of carryovers in successive years, but we will shortly demonstrate it conclusively to the member for Heysen.

## **LEA STEVENS**

Minister for: Health

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Question:

Can the Minister advise what funding is in the budget to provide locum services for regional hospitals when they do not have the required number of doctors to service their area or to provide “time off” for doctors?

***A similar question was asked by Dean Brown Shadow Minister for Health in relation to the Mount Gambier doctor crisis.***

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I accept that. I would like to talk about the doctor/medical specialist situation at Mount Gambier. Yesterday, the *Border Watch*, the local paper in Mount Gambier, said that general surgical services would be maintained and that locum services would be brought in. I would like to know how the minister can guarantee that, because we are only about 10 days away from that situation. There are basically two locum services in Australia, one is called On Call Locums, and I know it got a rather desperate fax from the Mount Gambier Hospital on Friday of last week. As of Tuesday this week, I know it still did not have a job description. It had still not put down what any locum would be paid. However, it indicated that it would be \$1 000 plus for a general surgeon per day, plus the state would pick up the cost of medical indemnity, of all meals, of all travel—that is, airfare in and out, from wherever in Australia—all accommodation, all telephone and other office expenses, and all car expenses.

If you look at that, you see the cost is approximately twice that which the existing resident medical specialists at Mount Gambier are being paid per day. However, clearly, the amount of work being done will be substantially less, because apparently the locum would deal largely with emergency work. Of course, if there were any consultations done as outpatients, that would be done in the hospital. I understand two very small rooms at the Mount Gambier hospital have been set aside—and they are very small, indeed. That then means the cost for that comes out of the hospital budget, whereas the cost previously where patients saw the medical specialists in their own clinics would come out of the federal government's MBS scheme.

Clearly, there is enormous concern in the South-East, particularly by the GPs. As the minister knows, 41 GPs have signed letters to the Premier, with a vote of no confidence in the performance of the health minister on this issue. They are concerned for the safety of their patients. Let me read what Dr Senior said:

I am now very concerned and frightened for them— that is, his patients— for I believe that your Health Minister and her Department have taken recent, carefully calculated actions that are at best sadly misguided and at worst could be considered quite evil. These actions will put the lives of my patients at risk, and will now cost the South Australian taxpayer much more than s/he needed to pay. We are about to get a poorer quality health service in the South-East, that will cost much more than it has before, will serve less people and will cause more extended public hospital waiting lists for people in Adelaide.

There is another letter signed by six doctors at the Ferrers Medical Clinic. I will quote part of that, as follows:

It is with great concern that the doctors at the Ferrers Medical Clinic believe that the situation in the South East with respect to the local surgeons has reached a point where all three have now announced their intention to leave the area on 30 June. As a consequence of this, and other recent events that have affected the medical care of the residents of the

South-East, we feel we have no alternative but to express a motion of complete no confidence in the current Health Minister. In fact no confidence in the complete Labour Ministry including yourself— and this is a letter to the Premier— The manner in which this crisis has been managed is appalling and I would hope that you would feel the full displeasure of the local population at the next election.

How will the minister guarantee locum services at the Mount Gambier hospital in about 10 days' time, from 10 July, and will she confirm the cost is likely to be about twice that which the resident specialists are currently being paid for a substantial reduction in the amount of work actually done?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** I am very pleased to answer this question. At the outset, let me assure the committee that the government is absolutely committed to providing the services that are required in the South-East. I remind members that there have been ongoing issues concerning the delivery of services in the South-East, dating well back to when the member for Finnis was the minister. These issues started on his watch. In the year 2000, GPs raised concerns regarding their inability to participate in the on-call roster for accident and emergency at the Mount Gambier hospital. As a result of the inability to negotiate a resolution, a decision was taken by the Mount Gambier District Health Service to introduce salaried medical officers. By the end of the 1999-2000 financial year—when the member for Finnis was minister—the South-East Regional Health Service had an accumulated deficit of \$2.6 million.

In 2000-01, an additional resident general surgeon was recruited to the South-East. This was intended as a transitional arrangement, given the understanding that another surgeon was planning to retire. However, this did not happen in the time frame, nor was there any successful negotiation regarding the redistribution of surgical activity between the three residential surgeons. This necessitated additional activity funding of approximately \$100 000, resulting in oncosts to the hospital of some \$400 000. In 2001-02, this situation remained unchanged, and again additional funding was required, all under the watch of the previous minister.

In 2001, the Mount Gambier District Hospital Board and the South-East Regional Health Service Board sought the assistance of the Department of Human Services. Mr Tom Neilsen was seconded from the Mid North Regional Health Service for an initial period of three months, commencing on 8 October 2001, to undertake a review of the situation. A key recommendation from the Neilsen report was the establishment and implementation of a specialty services plan to ensure that the Mount Gambier District Health Service could operate within its allocation and manage its debt while maintaining service outcomes.

The Neilsen report also recommended that negotiations regarding contractual obligations with resident specialists be completed prior to 30 June 2002. Mr Neilsen's contract negotiations with the resident specialists began in August 2002, and from time to time these negotiations have strayed into the public arena—often, I understand, with the help of the member for Finnis. A major issue in negotiations has been the belief of surgeons that historical unfunded activity should be the benchmark used, not budgeted activity. In November 2002, the chair of the South-East Regional Health Service Board, Mr Bill DeGaris, with the agreement of the resident specialists, contracted the services of a mediator and facilitator, Mr Bob Gaussen, to assist with the contract negotiations.

Mediation meetings began in December 2002. Throughout the negotiation process, there has been continual debate in the public arena. Members should realise that these are negotiations for people's contractual obligations to work and provide services. There has been continual debate in the public arena. Due to confidentiality agreements, as part of the facilitation process, the region was unable to share confidential information. However, the Chief Executive of DHS did say at a public meeting held in February 2003 and chaired by

my colleague, the Hon. Rory McEwen, that the department would continue to negotiate with resident specialists in an attempt to retain their services. Negotiations with all resident specialists have continued throughout this period.

The Mount Gambier District Hospital Services Board and the South-East Regional Health Service Board determined that negotiations should be concluded by 30 May 2003 to ensure that any contingency plans required could be orchestrated to take effect on 1 July should negotiations fail. After all this time and all these negotiations, they finally realised that a line had to be drawn so, in case it still did not work out, the hospital could provide services. An advertisement for general surgeons was placed in the *Weekend Australian* of 14 June 2003—last weekend.

Without being at liberty to provide specific details, the contract offers, I can assure members, are very generous and offer higher incomes than received by the Premier, and, indeed, the Prime Minister of Australia. However, if people choose to move away from the region, that is their choice—and we respect that choice. If necessary, Professor Guy Madden from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has given an undertaking to provide locum services from 1 July 2003. These services will cover acute work and outpatients for elective work. The Mount Gambier District Hospital and Health Service is arranging to have outpatient clinical facilities for one surgeon available, Monday to Friday, for three months from 1 July.

These interim arrangements are put in place so that—if it comes to this—we can recruit new people to be there permanently. I am advised that, from 1 July 2003, it is expected that there will be three resident anaesthetists, one specialist and two general practitioners. Professor Guy Ludbrook from the Royal Adelaide Hospital continues to work with Dr Kevin Johnston, Director of Anaesthetic Services at Mount Gambier, and arrangements have been made to provide cover of a fourth anaesthetist from the metropolitan area for the next six months while recruitment occurs.

Before I hand over to Ms Ramsey, Executive Director, Country Services, I must say that these contractual negotiations have been protracted and very frustrating for all concerned. Members of the board of the South-East Regional Health Service, the Mount Gambier board, the chairs, the regional general manager and the hospital CEOs have bent over backwards—as has the Department of Human Services—to get a satisfactory outcome that will mean that we have a sustainable health service in Mount Gambier and the South-East region. Country members are not present in the committee at this time—

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** Well, the member for Finnis is, so perhaps he might think about this, too. Every time the Mount Gambier District Health Service overruns its budget to the tune of what it has been, where does the money come from? It comes from the budgets of the other country health services. What I say as minister is that everyone has to do the right thing by their budget and the way in which they manage their budget and their services. It is not fair and it is not right for that to continue. I will hand over to Ms Ramsey to give greater detail on the other issues the shadow minister raised.

**Ms RAMSEY:** This information is current as at 18 June. I want to stress that, because of the way in which the contract negotiations have been occurring, they change and they are very fluid, so I can only say they were accurate yesterday. In terms of orthopaedic surgeons, discussions are occurring with both surgeons, with draft contracts being offered or discussed. In relation to anaesthetists, one anaesthetist has signed an agreement for 18 months; one has indicated he wishes to sign, but the construct of the contract is awaiting Crown Law advice; one other has rejected the contract offer—however, that process has not been finalised; and one doctor's contract has ceased. In relation to ophthalmology, discussions on the offer draft contract continue. In relation to specialist obstetrician-

gynaecologists, negotiations continue. The outstanding matter to be decided is whether it is a regional contract or two separate contracts, one for Millicent and one for Mount Gambier.

In terms of GP obstetricians, a draft contract has been offered with the outstanding issue being medical indemnity. The department is awaiting final advice from the commonwealth regarding commonwealth reforms on this matter. In the interim, the Chief Executive of the department has written to country doctors to inform them of the work occurring between the department and the Medical Defence Association of South Australia and to inform them of the current grants being offered by DHS and the insurance options for 2003-04. It is hoped that this letter will clarify the concerns for this group. A further letter is expected to go out on this topic tomorrow.

In relation to general surgeons, while formal advice has not been received, it would certainly appear that one surgeon will not be re-signing his contract; one will be retiring in the imminent future; and negotiations appear to be reopening with another. The FIFA service budget for general surgeons, the actual gross paid in 2001-02, was \$846 000. The actual gross being offered in the new contracts this year is \$935 901, which is 10.6 per cent on the 2001-02 figure. I think the minister has talked about the interim arrangements.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** The government has a strong commitment to provide services in the South-East region, just as it has a strong commitment to provide services across all country South Australia and across the metropolitan area, as well. We have tried always to be reasonable in our approach. I am hopeful that these negotiations will reach an end shortly, because we will reach 1 July. What we can say to the people of Mount Gambier is that services will continue and we will put in place interim arrangements until we can replace the permanent positions.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Before I ask my next question, I must comment on some of that. It is just unbelievable that this debacle has been going on for eight months. I was down with the doctors—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Just be quiet if you would, please.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Madam Chair, I ask for your protection.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You seek protection—I am happy to afford it. Members on my right will maintain silence.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** For the last eight months this debacle has been going on. I was down in Mount Gambier in December and spoke to many of the specialist medical practitioners. They wanted to stay in Mount Gambier. They were willing to stay. The anaesthetists have been out of contract effectively since 1 January this year, now almost six months. I understand that one of them has signed an interim agreement for 18 months, but that specialist anaesthetist—and he is the only specialist anaesthetist there—is fuming at the poor way the negotiations have been handled.

I have talked to the doctors. They would sit down and reach agreement with the mediator who had been brought in from Sydney—and I would like the minister to give details of the cost of that mediator, as I understand the mediator has flown in from Sydney on five or six occasions to have discussions—would reach an agreement in principle, go off into the operating theatre and come back five or six hours later to find that what they had agreed to had been completely changed in their absence, even though they had expected to come out and be able to sit down and sign contracts. When you have general surgeons who have been in the town for 23 years, like Dr Mark Landy, who is a highly respected person in the Mount Gambier community, who packs up and leaves in absolute disgust; when you have 41 doctors from the South-East expressing no confidence in the minister; when you have contracts still unsigned eight months and more after negotiations have been commenced,

there is something fundamentally wrong with the way the negotiations have been run by the minister.

I made the suggestion to the minister back in December that she get on a plane, fly down to Mount Gambier and sit down and talk to the specialists. She declined to do that. A perfectly reasonable step, I would have thought. The Premier in fact spoke to one of the specialists when he was down there a couple of weeks ago but, clearly, the minister is just not willing to get in and resolve what could be resolved with some appropriate steps by the minister. As a result of that, the people in Mount Gambier are now ending up with the demolition of their specialist medical services. Three specialists have left. We had the reply that one of them may retire shortly. That specialist has rung me from Broome, absolutely hostile at the way he has been handled, and said that he does not intend to go back working and is fuming at the manner in which the negotiations have been handled.

One of the other two specialists, on the day that he was considering his options, was told 'Sorry, all further negotiations have come to an end.' Therefore, he had no option that day but to elect to go to Albury Wodonga. I understand that the third one is expecting to finish and has given notice of finishing as at 30 June, in about 10 days' time. For the minister to come back and give the answer that she has just given belies the facts of what has occurred. You do not have an entire community down there in absolute uproar unless there is something fundamentally wrong with the way the negotiations have been run and with what has been achieved.

If the minister wanted to get rid of medical specialists out of Mount Gambier and bring in a hospital based system, why did she not say so eight months ago? Because that is exactly what all the actions of both the minister and the department have been about: trying to get rid of the specialists. There is a series of articles today, I see, with about four pages in the *Stock Journal* on it. We have the headline 'Government walks away from rural SA', from John Lush, the President of the South Australian Farmers Federation. You have the entire community down there fuming at the way they have been dealt with by the government and at the breakdown in their medical services. My question to the minister is: why did the minister not get on a plane, fly down to Mount Gambier six months ago and resolve this issue, rather than see what is clearly going to be a less than satisfactory service at approximately twice the cost of what it is currently costing to provide those services in Mount Gambier?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** I would like to pose a question of the shadow minister. Why did he not fix it when he was minister?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I am happy to answer that, Madam Chair. I have been asked a question: I am happy to answer that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister can ask a rhetorical question but the deputy leader is not in the position to answer the question. Would the minister like to continue with her remarks?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** He can comment later. I know that the deputy leader has been involved in this all along. It is really disappointing when he is someone who knows only too well about the issues in Mount Gambier; who knows them back to front because he in fact was the minister and knew of a range of issues that have been ongoing in Mount Gambier in relation to the provision of services, in relation to medical specialists and in relation to the coverage of those services. I was down in Mount Gambier myself as part of a select committee when the member for Finniss was minister, and the same issues were occurring then. We had a number of conversations, which of course I will not talk about, in relation to those matters, and the member for Finniss was well aware of the issues.

The issues were presented to me when I became minister and, when I went down to Mount Gambier the very first time as minister, I was confronted by the regional board, the members of which actually pleaded with me to do it differently from the previous minister: to back up the process; to stand firm with the board in negotiating reasonable and fair contracts, and fair negotiations and fair processes across the region; not to cave in and

undermine the board and its process, which appears to have happened on not a few occasions on the watch of the previous minister. I agreed with the board at that time to do it differently, to take it through the fair and reasonable process that we have been doing all over the rest of the state.

Unfortunately, the member for Finniss was not prepared to behave in a responsible and constructive way in relation to these negotiations. I remember the December fly in, fly out of the member for Finniss. I think he was fresh from being done over on the ABC about legionnaire's disease. I remember that very clearly because he jumped on the plane, went down, stirred things up, got back on the plane and came back again. I would have thought that, as a former minister who knew only too well what was going on, he might have been constructive and helped, as other people have tried to do, to resolve this issue. So, again I say to the member for Finniss that the department will continue to work. As minister, I do not get involved with face to face negotiations with people about their contracts.

This is the role of boards, the employers of the persons concerned. These sorts of negotiations occur right across the system. Of course I am concerned about what has happened. I have been kept informed and have said all the time, 'Do everything you can to be reasonable.' And many people have spent hour upon hour doing this. It has not been helped by being in the media with one side of a confidential arrangement displayed across the pages of a paper, aided and abetted by politicians from the city, including the member for Finniss, just stirring things up.

I say again that, obviously, we are committed to continuing the services at Mount Gambier. If people choose to go from their contracts, to leave the district, so be it; new people will be put in their place. In the meantime, interim arrangements are being set up now with the help of people from Adelaide, and we will make sure that they are in place to cover those gaps while we get new people in.

## **TRISH WHITE**

Minister for: Education & Children's Services

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### **7. Port Lincoln Schools**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 2  
Page 8.5 – 2003/04 Targets

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise when new school facilities will be commenced to replace the totally inadequate Port Lincoln Junior and Primary Schools?

#### **Explanation:**

The Port Lincoln Junior and Primary Schools have completely outgrown their current facilities, both building and land wise. Both schools are located in the central CBD area of Port Lincoln and there is no room for expansion. There is an increasing number of safety issues with traffic problems.

***A similar question was asked by Vickie Chapman, Shadow Minister for Education:***

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Can I ask a supplementary question? It may have been answered by the minister. In relation to the feasibility study for Birdwood, that will commence in January this year and is covered in the 2003-04 budget; is that right?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Yes, it is.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I do not have the capital works list: has that been provided yet? I asked for it this morning at 11 o'clock. This is the full capital investment list for the 2003-04 year.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Yes. I can provide that now.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You can circulate it without having it incorporated into *Hansard*. It will not be incorporated in *Hansard* unless you read it. If it is purely statistical, you can have it incorporated but, otherwise, you cannot.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** It will not take long. In the capital investment statement there is a category called 'Other' which shows the allocation for 2003-04 for the following projects: Pasadena High School, \$650 000; Peterborough Community Kindergarten, \$425 000; Marryatville High School, \$1 million; Willunga Preschool, \$750 000; Christie Downs school, \$700 000; LeFevre High School, \$740 000; Mannum school, \$950 000; Marie Dunstan preschool, \$350 000; **Port Lincoln, \$950 000;** Salisbury High School, \$750 000; Southern Fleurieu, \$400 000; targeted asset program, \$6.5 million; and, Woodville Special School, \$1.25 million.

## 8. School Based Apprenticeships - Child Care

Portfolio Statements 2003/04

Budget Paper 4, Volume 2

Page 8.15 – Planning and Support for Child Care Centres

### **Question:**

Can the Minister why School Based Apprenticeships (SBA's) for Child Care cannot be undertaken by Government Agencies under her control as Child Care in the country is a growth area of great need and in regional areas government agencies are the major providers of child care?

### **Explanation:**

The only private providers of School Based Apprenticeships are in major centres, such as Port Lincoln and Ceduna, which means the children at all the smaller regional centres miss out on this very valuable opportunity.

***This question was asked by Vickie Chapman, Shadow Minister for Education:***

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Will the Minister advise why school-based apprenticeships for child care cannot be undertaken by government agencies under her control, particularly as child care in the country is a growth area of great need. In regional areas, government agencies are major providers of child care. Does the minister propose to cause the non-government schools' planning policy to be reviewed? If so, who will undertake the review and what provision for cost of the same has been made in the 2003-04 budget?

On child protection, what funding has been made available, if any, to facilitate non-government schools to access services of obtaining police checks on prospective employees at no cost to the applicant school, or is it intended to remain restricted to government schools, that is, free of cost, and their attention in respect of child protection? On the question of funding, will the minister confirm that non-government schools will receive their 85 per cent of funding in the 2003-04 year in July this year, and if not, why not? I have one matter for St Patrick's Special School. Has the government made any provision for children with disabilities attending non-government schools to assist in their transport costs, and if not, why not?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I wish to raise some issues relating to year 12. I have met with Dr Jan Keightley, who heads SSABSA, and raised some concerns with her. One relates to the stress experienced by many students doing year 12. I do not advocate that it should be stress-free, but it is ironic that year 12 is often more stressful than university itself when year 12 is the basis for university entrance and gives rise to the tertiary entrance score (TER). I ask that that issue be addressed in terms of offering some assistance, such as a help line. I believe that is the sort of thing that SSABSA is looking at and I know of many cases first-hand where year 12 students are under incredible stress.

Another issue relating to year 12 is the way in which assessments are carried out. Given that the system has moved away from being exam-based, a lot of parents are now doing year 12 because they are helping their children. I do not criticise them for that because I would do exactly the same thing, but the question arises as to the integrity of the year 12 assessment process, given that much of the assignment preparation is done outside the school environment, outside an exam environment. I am aware that Victoria has taken steps to address that aspect.

A related issue is that, if people can afford it, they can get tutors and they can put their child in a special program during vacations. However, if a child comes from a poor family, they do not have that opportunity, so there is no level playing field in terms of undertaking year 12 and having the opportunity to increase the tertiary entrance ranking.

Another point relates to English as a second language. If a student is competent in a foreign language because their parents have come from a non-English speaking background, they can do an exam in that and claim English as a second language, even though in English they may be as fluent as any other student. The consequence of that is that such students can boost their score, vis-a-vis other students, when in reality they are not genuine non-English speakers. They may have grown up in a family where they have access to a foreign language, they can nominate that as their main language, do very well in it, and undertake English as a second language, where the expectation is a lot lower, and still do well because they are a very competent English speaker, as competent as anyone else in the community.

I am concerned with the way in which the current year 12 programs are offered and are operating, and I ask the minister to consider undertaking a review of the process. I know that Dr Keightley does not favour a review and believes in incremental adjustment, but I think that some serious issues have resulted from the way in which year 12 has evolved in South Australia, and it is time some of those matters were addressed.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** My response in general to all three questions is that the department is focusing attention on year 12, what is offered at year 12 and the way it is offered, with a view to anticipating improvement in a whole range of aspects for students into the future. In response to the first question, I am happy to have discussions with Janet Keightley, the Chief Executive of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board, on that matter.

The Chairman has raised some significant issues regarding year 12 and how it is provided here in South Australia in comparison with the approaches taken interstate, and in general terms my departmental officers and I are paying some attention to those matters at this point.

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## 9. Learning Assistance – Dyslexia

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 2  
Page 8.5 – 2002/03 Highlights

**Question:**

Can the Minister advise what funding is provided to enable special assistance for children with dyslexia?

**Question:**

Can the Minister advise why a 7 ½ year old Year 2 dyslexic child in a country school should still be in a class of 28 students and provided with no other assistance, given the Government claims of smaller class sizes and special assistance for children with disabilities?

***Both questions were asked by Ivan Venning, Liberal Member for Schubert:***

**Mr VENNING:** My three questions are about children's disabilities. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, with references also on pages 8.18 and 8.16.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** I think that is the family day care page.

**Mr VENNING:** No, it is children's disabilities.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Page 8.18 is the children's services page. Where on page 8.5 is the member referring?

**Mr VENNING:** Half way down the page it states: 'Develop a framework for inclusion', and so on. My question relates to dyslexia. Will the minister advise what funding is provided to enable special assistance to children with dyslexia in the 2003-04 year? Will the minister advise why a

7½ year old year 2 dyslexic child in a country school is still in a class with 28 students and is provided with no other assistance, given the government's claim of smaller class sizes and special assistance for children with disabilities?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** I will ask one of my officers, who is the senior officer in this area, to approach the table. I introduce to the committee Stephanie Page, who is Director, Learning Improvements and Support Services. Does the member have more details about the student's needs? The member has just said that this is a dyslexic student.

**Mr VENNING:** I believe that this child has been assessed to have dyslexia.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** What supports have been put in place for the child so far?

**Mr VENNING:** Apparently none. The school is on the far West Coast.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** It is very difficult when members come forward without details of a particular case. It does not allow us to approach the school for an answer, nor does it allow us to identify any resources that have been provided. The member's question is specifically about resources to this child.

**Mr VENNING:** I will ask the first part of the question, which is not specific. Will the minister advise what funding is provided to enable special assistance for children with dyslexia in the 2002-03 year?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Quite a range of resources are put into schools that are of benefit to any one particular child with any range of needs. I will ask Ms Stephanie Page to address the issue.

**Additional Departmental Adviser:**

Ms S. Page, Director, Learning Improvement and Support Services.

**Ms PAGE:** First, I think that probably the best thing to do in relation to a specific child is to provide that information to us so that we can check in relation to that child and their specific circumstances—perhaps through the minister's office. However, generally speaking, our approach in the department for children with learning difficulties (a category into which dyslexia falls) is that normally it is our policy to develop an individual learning plan, and that may require some negotiated changes to the curriculum. That negotiated education plan would include what kinds of supports the child would need.

**Mr VENNING:** As a supplementary question, what funding is provided to enable special assistance to these children? The minister must have it in her books.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Funding is provided to schools through their global budget for children who have varieties of needs. In addition, targeted support is given to children for their particular need. The level of support obviously depends upon what that child's needs are at a particular time. So, that varies from child to child. As Ms Page pointed out, many children of varying disabilities have negotiated education plans, which set out specific supports for the individual child and are arrived at through discussion between family and teacher. As to the member's question about a specific child, the answer is that it depends on the need.

## **JOHN HILL**

Minister for: Environment and Conservation  
River Murray  
Southern Suburbs  
Assisting the Premier in the Arts

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### **10. National Parks - Fire Management**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 3  
Page 9.8

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise what proportion of the extra \$10 million from the budget going to the Department of Environment & Conservation over the next 4 years to increase fire management capacity in National Parks will be going to Eyre Peninsula National parks and what will it be used for and in which of the many parks will it be spent?

***This question was asked by Mark Goldsworthy, Liberal member for Kavel.***

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** I have a supplementary question. Following all the detail that the minister just gave the committee, can he advise what proportion of the \$10.3 million over the four-year period being allocated by DEH to increase the fire capacity in parks and the like will go to the Eyre Peninsula national parks? What is the budget for each of the Eyre Peninsula parks in regard to this budget line?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The detail of it has yet to be worked through with CFS. No-one knows the answer to that question at this stage. But I would say, in general terms, high priority will be given to the Mount Lofty Ranges (where, I guess, there is a lot of housing and where a lot of people live) and also Kangaroo Island. But we will work through over time the detail of the funding allocations.

### **11. River Murray Levy**

Budget Statement 2003/04  
Budget Paper 3  
Page 3.2

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise whether the Government has taken into consideration that in many areas water levies are already collected for Catchment Water Boards to overcome local issues and that many areas will not be paying the River Murray Levy?

***This question was asked by Mark Brindal, Shadow Minister for Water Resources and the River Murray.***

**Mr BRINDAL:** Can the minister advise whether the government has taken into consideration the fact that, in many areas, water levies are already collected for catchment water boards to

overcome local issues and that many areas will not be paying the River Murray catchment levy?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The River Murray catchment levy?

**Mr BRINDAL:** The River Murray levy. In the South-East they pay a catchment levy but they will not pay the River Murray levy. In Onkaparinga, they pay a catchment levy and a River Murray catchment levy through SA Water, and they will still be paying the River Murray catchment levy.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The government's intention through the Save the Murray levy was to have a levy to which as many South Australians as possible would contribute, and the way it was determined to collect that levy was through the SA Water bill, which a vast majority of South Australians pay. It is true that some people do not have a SA Water bill and they will be lucky and they will miss out. Whether or not governments in the future decide to extend the provisions to include those people is a matter of public policy, and also a question of practicality. For instance, what would be the cost of doing it? If it becomes so difficult to track down all the others, you would wonder about whether it was necessary to do it.

It is true that, through the catchment water boards, there is a levy in place for the management of catchments in South Australia, and I think that I answered in part a question about that earlier today, that the rate of that levy is 1¢ a kilolitre for most of South Australia's irrigated water. It is 1¢ for public water and for non-public water supplies it is 0.35 of a cent. In the McLaren Vale prescribed area, it is 1¢ a kilolitre, and so it goes. In the Northern Adelaide Plains, it is half a per cent on allocation and half a per cent for water use. The member is right, there are water catchment levies in place, but they provide services of a different type to the Save the Murray levy.

As I said in answer to an earlier question, the Save the Murray levy is to do a couple of things. It is to provide us with the resources necessary to try to rescue the river. Half of that funding, approximately, will be spent on specific programs and the other half will be allocated to obtaining more water for environmental flow. The benefit of having that kind of levy in place is twofold. First, until the government or the parliament decides to stop it, it gives us a permanent allocation of resources to that specific purpose, which will be protected by a special fund that will be established, so the money can only be used for that purpose—it cannot be siphoned off for other purposes. That will go on until we fix the problem.

Secondly, and more importantly in one sense, it sends a very powerful message to our colleagues in the Eastern States and to the commonwealth government—and I know that people have sat up and paid attention—that the government here is introducing a Save the Murray levy, and that has given us a whole lot of brownie points. That will help us fight the general argument in those states because they can see that we are serious and we are prepared to do difficult things.

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## **12. Zero Waste**

Budget Statement 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 3  
Page 9.24

### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise what funding has been allocated to assist Local Government to comply with the Zero Waste SA policy which is anticipated to be established in 2003/04?

Explanation:

Waste management is a huge cost to local councils. Rural councils have large areas with a small population base therefore collection costs are high. The traditional landfill is no longer the easy or cheap option due to EPA and legislative requirements. Recycling is not a viable option due to distance to markets and low commodity prices.

***A similar question was asked by Iain Evans, Shadow Minister for the Environment.***

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I have not made a practice of making an opening statement, but I support the minister's comments in relation to Jill Fitch and pass on the congratulations of the opposition and my personal congratulations. I have worked with her and she is an outstanding officer and thoroughly deserves the recognition she has been given.

Given that the EPA is negotiating with a range of local government bodies to introduce waste recycling services, either to those council areas that currently do not have them or to those that have restricted services, is the EPA intending to force local councils to take on waste recycling measures regardless of the impact on rates, and has the EPA assessed what its requirements for waste recycling services are doing to council rates? There is a lot of criticism in the community about council rates and we hear consistent complaints that some of the requirements that the EPA negotiated with councils will put up rates somewhere between \$500 000 and \$1 million a year.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I think that is an important question, and I have certainly had comments from my local council about this matter. I guess the process the EPA was going through in its waste management EPP was to develop a command-driven policy which would require certain types of recycling performance and certain sorts of bins to be put out under certain circumstances. So, it is a very directional kind of arrangement. From a policy point of view, I think that this needs to be looked at—and is being looked at. The establishment of Zero Waste, and the shifting of the arrangements between the EPA and Zero Waste, will have the EPA in a regulatory role, ensuring that the rules are complied with whereas Zero Waste will be setting up some sort of general policy structure aimed at achieving Zero Waste. I think that I would prefer to see a system in place where outcomes rather than inputs are specified, and where we could work with local government to achieve those outcomes.

Zero Waste has yet to be established, but that is the direction that I would hope Zero Waste will pursue. So, I think there needs to be a fair bit of policy work and sorting out between the two agencies as to what it is we are really trying to do. I think the points made by the member are incredibly valid, and I assure him that we will take them on board.

## **STEPH KEY**

Minister for: Social Justice  
Housing  
Youth  
Status of Women

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### **13. Youth – Suicide Rate**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04

#### **Question:**

I am most concerned that the regional statement failed to mention anything about supporting young people from rural and regional South Australia. Is the Rann Labor Government committed to ensure the future of young people in country areas and how other than by rhetoric is it committed to this position? My point is the suicide rate which I understand is once again rising rather significantly in my own electorate. How will the government ensure that regional youth get the support they deserve to assist with this problem?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** Thank you for that question. Again I compliment the member for Flinders on her work, because I know she has a holistic approach to the work she does in her area. I compliment her and thank her for her support. As I mentioned earlier, I think the report on the YACfest and the youth advisory committees in some ways answers the member's question. The Office for Youth is committed to ensuring that young people from rural and regional South Australia can address programs and have access to programs and funding. We have had \$300 000 in grants made available through the youth empowerment grants and the youth in community grants.

Of the 13 successful applicants, five rural and regional organisations received funding totalling \$75 000. The second round of funding through both grant lines will be allocated by 30 June 2003 and \$100 000 provided in grants to local councils statewide. These grants are matched dollar for dollar and/or in kind by councils and are made available to them by funding National Youth Week activities in their local area.

The councils develop events in partnership with young people which target local needs; in 2002-03, \$58 100 or over 50 per cent of the grants were allocated to rural and regional areas. As I mentioned earlier, youth advisory committees are also really important to make sure that youth advice is provided on a whole range of areas. Again, through this process grants of up to \$3 000 per year for three years have been allocated to councils statewide. Of the 67 youth advisory committees that were funded in 2002-03, 45 are from rural and regional areas and, again, grant funds have also been allocated to strengthen youth networks across South Australia. Some 23 networks are receiving funding and 13 of those networks were from rural and regional areas.

As you would have heard before, the Premier's Youth Challenge funds organisations statewide, despite what the member for Unley may have said. We make sure that a youth development program extends as far across South Australia as we can. Some 1 539 new

participant places have been approved for funding from the 2002-03 funding round and, of these, 492 participants—so about 32 per cent—are based from rural and regional areas.

With the specific issue you raised about youth suicide, I will ask the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Human Services to talk about the work that we are doing in that area because, as I said in some of my other portfolio areas, we do not run the social justice program just in the youth, status of women area or community services areas: what we have been trying to do is take a whole of government approach. Certainly, the issues of youth suicide are part of a whole of government approach. I think that the member for Flinders would probably like to hear about that. Another thing I should mention is that the issue of suicide, particularly for Aboriginal young people, is one that comes under the umbrella of the Social Inclusion Unit and will be one of the references that we will be seeking to address along with the school retention and homelessness issues and the Drugs Summit recommendations, etc. So, this is a particularly important area.

The only last comment I would like to make before I hand over to the chief executive officer is that we believe it is really important that the health and mental health parts of the DHS portfolio work very closely with the social justice portfolios to try to make sure that we come up with programs that respond to all those issues, from petrol sniffing and drug addiction right through to different forms of mental illness. That is a very thumbnail sketch of what we are trying to do with regard to rural and regional youth but also the whole issue of suicide prevention, particularly for young people.

**Mr BIRCH:** As the minister indicated, this is not something specific to the Office of Youth: it is also specific to the Department of Human Services portfolio in general. As an opening point I will be very happy to provide you with a more comprehensive response about the department's response to youth suicide and in particular rural youth suicide, as an aside. I could raise a few quick points in relation to Aboriginal issues. In particular, the focus this year will be on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands and there is an amount in the budget of, if I recall, \$650 000 for a rehabilitation and disability facility for substance abusers and petrol sniffers on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands.

We would all be aware that the rate of suicide amongst that group is quite high, so that is an initiative that will roll out during the coming year. An amount of \$1 million is for the well-being program on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands; again, this is to focus on primary health care for all ages but there will be a specific focus on home maker programs. Six youth workers are also to roll out on the lands, one per community, again with the youth coordinator and again designed to try to focus not just on youth suicide issues but also employment and education issues and so on for young people on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands.

You would be aware that we have recently appointed a replacement for Dr Margaret Tobin, Dr Jonathan Phillips, who has a special interest in rural mental health issues. We know that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services get quite a low proportion of the total mental health budget, yet we also know that most mental health issues that occur in adulthood have their origins in adolescence or young children. We are very keen to see whether we can shift, albeit incrementally, some of the mental health dollars progressively to improve Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. You would know that the waiting time for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services is quite long. Indeed, a number of people who attempt suicide do not get immediate access, so we are attempting to remedy that as we speak.

The key initiative, which is partly included within the budget for the next year, is the commencement of what is otherwise known as the mental health reform project. You might recall that before she died Margaret Tobin published a document called 'Strategic reform of mental health'. It was commenced under the previous government, but it was never operationalised. In other words, it was a strategic document which determined where we should go with mental health but which did not actually indicate what that would mean on the ground over a period of five to seven years.

We have now completed, if you like, the operationalisation of that document. There is \$1 million to kick that off on a recurrent basis over and above what we put into mental health at the moment, plus this year there are some capital moneys to start that mental health program. That mental health program covers a whole range of issues, including cottages for people who can be deinstitutionalised and child and adolescent mental health issues as well. I could go on, but I am happy to detail more specifically the rural mental health issues for the member but perhaps provide an overview in writing out of session of the whole mental health program and where we see its going.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I would be particularly interested to know about the hidden suicides, that is, suicides resulting from motor cars, drugs and from where we seem to lose people who I suspect are not actually categorised as suicides. I do not know what is happening to them.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I suspect they are not, yet people who know those people would tell you that they believe they are suicides.

**Ms BREUER:** Can I ask a supplementary question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I think the minister would like Mr Birch to answer the supplementary question asked by the member for Flinders. Is that correct, minister?

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** Yes, that would be good, and I would like to make a comment before answering the question of the member for Giles.

**Mr BIRCH:** Very simply, Madam Chair, I think we could organise a briefing with Dr Norman James about that very issue, particularly amphetamine use. We do not know the numbers of people who may suicide through road accidents, but he is quite well versed on that and has recently given a presentation. We could organise a private presentation.

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** I am more than happy to provide briefings to members, particularly because we are discussing the Office for Youth and the youth portfolio in particular. As a result of the responsibilities I have under the social justice portfolio, all those areas do link in with each other. As I said to the member for Flinders, I think that it would be helpful if we could perhaps provide an overview of work that we are doing, particularly in the youth suicide prevention area, which is the point of the member's first question.

I am also aware of the fact that minister Stevens and I have the opportunity through the suicide prevention advisory group to receive further details and specific briefings on issues. In addition to the points that the CEO has made, I would be more than happy to arrange a briefing on that particular issue for members of parliament. I know that the member for Flinders is interested in this area, but I am sure that other members would like to receive that information. That is something that we would be happy to arrange for members who are interested.

## **MICHAEL WRIGHT**

Minister for: Transport  
Industrial Relations  
Recreation, Sport and Racing

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### **1. Road Transport**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 3  
Page 10.25 – Investing Payment Summary

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise whether Black Spot Funding has been allocated to finish sealing the last 4.2kms of the 14 kilometre Lipson Ungarra Road, which connects the Ungarra community with the Ausbulk strategic site, schools, medical services and shopping at Tumby Bay?

#### **Explanation:**

The Lipson Ungarra Road has been sealed in a series of projects each year with only 4.2kms remaining. The District Council of Tumby Bay has applied for State Black Spot Funding to assist with the last 4.2kms to be sealed.

***This question was asked by Malcolm Buckby, Shadow Minister for Transport.***

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** Can the minister advise whether black spot funding has been allocated to finish sealing the last 4.2 kilometres of the 14 kilometre Lipson to Ungarra road which connects the Ungarra community with the AusBulk strategic site, schools, medical services and shopping at Tumby Bay?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** If my memory serves me correctly, the member is talking about an area where I have previously met with this group of people at one of our community cabinet meetings. This type of program would not be a state black spot funding program. In relation to the particular area the member is talking about, an application has been made for special local road funding, which is a federal program, and recommended to the Grants Commission. If my memory serves me correctly, in discussions Mr O'Loughlin and I had with some representatives from that area, we made a recommendation to them that this would be the appropriate area to apply for funding.

I would not imagine that that length of area would qualify for state black spot funding, but an application has been made for special local road funding and, to the best of my knowledge, they are still awaiting advice, but, hopefully, they will be successful. It would be a good thing not only for them but also for the broader area, and we wish them well with that application.

## **JAY WEATHERILL**

Minister for: Urban Development & Planning  
Administrative Services  
Gambling

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### **14. Water Supply – Coffin Bay**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 3  
Page 6.14

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise whether the \$5,500 augmentation charge for each new block developed at Coffin Bay is retained in trust for the ancillary water supply for the township and if so, where is it in the budget documents or will it simply be used as general revenue?

#### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise what the legal basis is for the collection by SA Water of \$5,500 for each new block purportedly for an ancillary water supply for the township of Coffin Bay?

#### **Explanation:**

SA Water are conducting a study of the water table level in Lens A which supplies the Coffin Bay township as there is no data regarding the size and capacity of this lens. Until the findings of this study are available no further development was declared possible within the township of Coffin Bay. However SA Water have since allowed further development by collecting an augmentation fee of \$5,500 per block which is supposedly to go towards either a desalination plant or a pipeline from the Uley basin area.

***Both questions were asked by Dorothy Kotz, Shadow Minister for Administrative Services.***

**HON DC KOTZ:** Can the minister advise whether the \$5 500 augmentation charge for each new block developed at Coffin Bay is retained in trust for the ancillary water supply for the township and, if so, where is it located in the budget documents, or will it simply be used as general revenue? Can the minister advise what the legal basis is for the collection by SA Water of \$5 500 for each new block purportedly for an ancillary water supply to the township of Coffin Bay?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Apparently, there is quite a lengthy answer to that proposition that may require us to obtain other information as well, so I will take that on notice.

## 15. Water Supply – Eyre Peninsula

Capital Investment Statement 2003/04  
Budget Paper 5

### Question:

Can the Minister advise what the \$3.2 million of proposed expenditure in 2003/04 for Ancillary Works Eyre Peninsula Water Supply will actually be used for?

### Question:

Can the Minister advise why the new proposed desalination plant cannot be found in the budget documents when it would have been mentioned in SA Waters operating expenditure when it is obviously a capital work?

### Explanation:

There is NO mention of a \$32 million desalination plant for Eyre Peninsula as promised by Minister Conlon in September 2002, only augmentation of water supplies to the Eyre Peninsula region. The total cost of the augmentation project being considered is listed as \$25.2 million including ancillary works of \$6.5 million to be undertaken by SA Water. If it is to be a PPP this should be mentioned.

Minister Weatherill was also quoted in the Port Lincoln Times on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003 as stating that “the total costs for the plant would be outlined in SA Water’s operating expenditure nor it’s capital works allocation.

***Both questions were asked by Dorothy Kotz, Shadow Minister for Administrative Services.***

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** Under the capital investment statement, Budget Paper 5, page 43, I have not been able to find mention of the \$32 million desalination plant for Eyre Peninsula which I believe was promised by Mr Conlon in September 2002. I have found a reference only to augmentation of water supplies to the Eyre Peninsula region, the total cost of the augmentation project under consideration being listed as costing \$25.2 million, including ancillary works of \$6.5 million, to be undertaken by SA Water. If it is to be a PPP, this should be mentioned. The minister at the table was also quoted in the *Port Lincoln Times* on Thursday 5 June as saying: *“The total costs for the plant will be outlined in SA Water’s operating expenditure and not as a capital works allocation”*.

Can the minister advise what the proposed expenditure of \$3.2 million in 2003-04 for ancillary works for the Eyre Peninsula water supply will actually be used for and why the proposed desalination plant (which cannot be found in the budget documents) would have been mentioned in SA Water’s operating expenditure when it is obviously a capital work?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I think I have had this debate on regional radio, but I do not know whether the member has had access to that media monitoring. The relevant reference is on page 43 of the Capital Investment Statement 2003-04 (Budget Paper 5), which talks about works in progress, as follows: *Ancillary Works Eyre Peninsula Water Supply completion due 2004-05. Augmentation of water supplies to the Eyre Peninsula region.* Of the total project cost of \$25.2 million, ancillary works of \$6.5 million will be undertaken by SA Water Corporation. The project is to be considered for delivery through a private sector provision arrangement.

That is the reference to the project that has variously been described as the desalination plant project or the Todd River desalination plant, which arises out of the Eyre Peninsula water supply plant. As was announced at the time the decision was made, cabinet approved the preferred solution to water supply problems on the Eyre Peninsula, based on the findings of the Eyre Peninsula water supply master plan. The three-part plan involved construction of a plant to desalinate water from the Todd Reservoir, as well as the reuse of treated effluent water and a water efficiency program to achieve a minimum 5 per cent reduction in water usage.

From February 2003—and I think that it is continuing—the pilot plant study is being conducted at the Todd River Reservoir to determine the pre-treatment requirements for a full scale plant (2.3 gegalitres per year). This plant is expected to be delivered by a public private partnership (which is the reference there) into a private sector provision arrangement, and is estimated to cost \$25.2 million, subject to its final size.

Obviously, a pilot plant study is put in place so that you can work out what the ultimate specifications will be for the final project. So, it is an estimate of the total cost of the project and may have to be adjusted, depending on what we learn out of the pilot plant study.

In the nature of public private partnerships, because they are ongoing, they are structured in a fashion which is an ongoing series of payments over a relatively long period. They are addressed in the operating expenditure of SA Water, so they are not identified as an individual capital works program, but you do see it contained here because, associated with the public private partnership arrangement that it is contemplated would deliver the desalination plant, there are some associated capital works which are funded not through a public private partnership but through the capital works program. Those capital works arrangements are essentially to connect the Todd River Reservoir with the relevant desalination plant. So, that is the \$6.5 million over a period, with initially \$3.2 million in the relevant budget period.

The earlier estimate of \$35 million, which was given in the 2002 budget papers, includes works to upgrade the Todd reservoir dam. This item has been removed from this particular item, because it does not relate directly to the desalination project. The Todd Dam upgrade is included in SA Water's capital works plan as part of the \$150 million 20-year dam safety improvement program.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** If there is a partnership with government and private enterprise, I am not quite sure why that would not be mentioned somewhere in the budget papers.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** It is.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** It is? At what point?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I just read it out. I have spoken about this in horrible detail on regional radio. However, for the benefit of the member for Flinders, it states on page 43 (and I cannot imagine how the member could think that we will spend \$25 million on anything else on the Eyre Peninsula other than the identified desalination plant. It has been announced to everyone: every man and their dog on the Eyre Peninsula knows about this): \$25.2 million, ancillary works of \$6.5 million will be undertaken by SA Water Corporation. The project is to be considered for delivery through a private sector provision arrangement. It is true that it does not say 'public private partnership', but I would have hoped that is clear enough language to describe what has variously been described as 'build, own, operate, transfer arrangements, public private partnerships or a private sector provision arrangement.

## **RORY MCEWEN**

Minister for: Trade & Regional Development  
Local Government  
Assisting the Minister for Federal/State Relations

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### **16. Small Business**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 2.13, dot point 10

#### **Question:**

As the Minister for Small Business, can you advise if the inequitable payroll tax penalty will be removed from businesses, that despite being under the threshold of \$43,000/month in wages attract payroll tax because they have Directors involved in other businesses?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** I am sure that the issue of payroll tax and how it is levied on small business will be one of the topics discussed by our Small Business Development Council and that from time to time we will engage Treasury in a robust debate about collecting revenue. In opposition, we talk a lot about what we should spend money on; it is only when we get into government that we talk about where the money is going to come from. I like to engage everyone in the community about both sides of the debate.

It is easy to say that we should not be raising revenue, but of course if you have a shopping list of what you would like to have done you have to choose between doing something else or raising more revenue. I understand the context of the question and the difficulty with the many imposts and charges that the three spheres of government put on business and the community, but equally the business community demands services, and it is a matter of striking a balance.

I am sure that we will have another look at the range of levies, taxes and charges that are placed on small business and the range of services that the government provides. It must be kept in mind that this afternoon we have been talking about the services that we provide, and they are all at a cost. It is a matter of striking a balance. Obviously, that will be one of the many topics that the Small Business Development Council addresses.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I hope the minister will look at that one, because it is particularly inequitable for small businesses starting up. They like to get a bit of expertise, but of course there is a penalty for having that expertise in their business.

**Question:**

Businesses in regional South Australia are being held back by lack of tradespeople particularly in the mechanical and building trades. What is the Minister doing to help ensure that these shortfalls are addressed?

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** That is not strictly a question for me. However, the member is absolutely right. The Regional Communities Consultative Committee (RCCC) has identified not only skills development but the availability of a skills base which is a rate inhibitor for small business in regional areas. This is an issue that I will need to take up with the Minister for Education about the relevance of the senior secondary curriculum in some rural communities where the wish of a number of students is to remain in their community and have some immediately applicable and technical and technician level skills and not to be exclusively working towards a tertiary score and eligibility for higher education. We mentioned the school migration program. The challenge there is to identify skill gaps in communities and assist people to fill those gaps.

The third part, of course, is to engage the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education in terms of what skill training we are providing. Not only has significant extra money been injected into that area in the past 12 months but the Kirby report is on about the better delivery of those skills. This is a broad ranging question which has been identified by not only the member but the consultative committee. This is a challenge that we will need to take up with a number of ministers if we are going to have appropriate skills available not only to small businesses but businesses generally. This tends to be a challenge not only in regional areas but in some parts of Adelaide where businesses are looking to grow but finding it difficult to recruit the skill base they need.

**17. Capital Investment Statement**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04

Budget Paper 5

Page 12

**Question:**

Can the Minister advise what progress has been made on the Marine Innovation South Australia (MISA) Project to be located in Port Lincoln?

**Explanation:**

It is proposed that a world wide centre of excellence incorporating the renowned Lincoln Marine Science Centre be built. The centre has outgrown its current premises and has resorted to using locatable buildings, significantly stunting it's potential growth.

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** I will have to take that question on notice and bring back an answer for the member.

## **18. Capital Works**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 2.13 dot point 10

### **Question:**

Can the Minister advise if he has given consideration to the Deloitte Touch Tohmatsu report "Wind Generation Developments on the Eyre Peninsula – Economic Impact Analysis during the construction phase of \$4,72 billion to this state?

*This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders*

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** I understand why we are going over this again, but obviously the whole infrastructure area is being pulled together by minister Conlon, who arrived home from Madrid either last night or early this morning. Yes, we are aware of the report. Yes, the report was developed by my department and has been made available to minister Conlon. Yes, we are certainly putting together a plan. Are there some challenges? Yes, there are certainly some challenges, but more in terms of the federal government which does not seem to have any certainty about mandated renewable energy levels, which, of course, is causing international concern. Hopefully, the member can get hold of some of her federal colleagues, twist their ears and tell them that certainty in terms of mandated renewable energy requirements underpins the very development about which she is talking.

We would be delighted to work with it; and I would be delighted for her to give me some assistance. This state has better wind resources than any other state. There are tremendous opportunities for us, but, unless we have certainty about the renewable market, it will be difficult to attract these investments. It is a pity that the federal government is now reviewing those mandated levels again. That is the problem we have. We do have a vision as a state, but I am afraid to say that we will not achieve the level of investment that we want while the federal government is as woolly and as waffly as it is at the moment.

## **19. Port Lincoln Water Reuse Scheme**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 2.13 dot point 10

### **Question:**

The Minister has listed as a target, the reuse scheme for viticulture irrigation adjacent to McLaren Vale while support has been withdrawn to extend the existing Port Lincoln reuse scheme to Stage 2. Will the Minister assist the Port Lincoln City Council to source \$500,000 to match the \$624,900 they will provide so the project can proceed to Stage 3 which proposes to use the water for viticulture and horticulture projects?

*This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders*

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** What I will do is offer the same briefing as we have offered the member for Waite, but we will add the third element. Obviously the member for Waite was asking about Willunga and Coonawarra, but equally we will put together a briefing on where we are up to in relation to Port Lincoln, as the honourable member asks. We will add that to

the earlier undertaking we have given and put the whole thing together as one briefing. We are happy to take that on notice.

## **20. STED Schemes**

Portfolio Statements 2003/04  
Budget Paper 4, Volume 1  
Page 2.14 dot point 12

### **Question:**

I refer to Portfolio Statements, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 2.14, dot point 12. Will the minister advise whether a regional impact statement will be undertaken to assess the negative effect on business in regional communities and on the environment due to the lack of funding provision for STED schemes which have been cut by \$1 million and which already have a backlog of 30 years? This is particularly imperative for coastal communities to protect the significant growth in aquaculture.

***This question was asked by Liz Penfold, Member for Flinders***

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** The member knows that the new assessment statements will come into effect on the first day of the new financial year. Decisions made after that point will have this robust process applied to them.