

CFS, Aerial fire-fighting, Fire hydrants, Prisons, Rainwater tank rebates
Lower Murray swamp rehabilitation
Estimates A –Tuesday July 3 2007

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.180, investing payments summary for the Port Lincoln Fire Station. Does the amount of \$2.6 million allocated in the budget for the Port Lincoln Fire Station include the purchase of the land and will the minister advise how much was paid for the land on which the MFS station will be built; and which body received the payment for the land, who owned the land and what is the status of the negotiations for an adjoining block of land where a collocated CFS and SES facility will be built?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: In response to an earlier question I placed some information on the record, but I will reiterate it here. The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service has listed the Port Lincoln Fire Station for priority replacement and aims to commence construction in 2007-08 of a new fire station which is due for completion in June 2009. In November 2005 the SAFECOM board agreed to pursue the principle of a collocated SES/CFS facility in Port Lincoln to be situated on an allotment adjacent to the proposed Port Lincoln MFS station.

In February 2006 Brown Falconer was engaged to develop a number of options to accommodate the SES/CFS facility and recommended a site located between Matthew Place and St Andrews Terrace (the Matthew Place land allotment). As part of this recommendation it was noted that an existing Porter Street site held by the CFS could be sold with part of the proceeds to be directed towards the cost of a new site. In October 2006 a formal approach was made to the City of Port Lincoln on behalf of the CFS and the SES to request that the Matthew Place land allotment be rededicated to me as Minister for Emergency Services. A response from the council advised of its in principle support.

The CFS and the SES have finalised plans and are ready to proceed. The MFS is also aiming to finalise plans in liaison with DTEI over the next six months. SAFECOM has agreed to work closely with the Land Management Corporation and the City of Port Lincoln to acquire the land so that the works can commence as soon as possible in the 2007-08 financial year. The proposed site for the emergency services precinct is the old netball tennis court area located between Matthew Place and St Andrews Terrace. The area is crown land and is currently under the care, control and management of the Corporation of the City of Port Lincoln.

The Land Management Corporation has previously negotiated with council for the MFS portion of the site. Council is now seeking compensation for what it perceives to be a loss of amenity for the land proposed for the CFS/SES project. SAFECOM is seeking to engage the services of the Land Management Corporation to advise and support SAFECOM and the Crown Solicitor's Office in the process of achieving the rededication of the Crown land to me as Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer again to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.180 regarding the new works at Port Lincoln. Will the minister then say why the government has chosen not to use the railway triangle land in Port Lincoln and the available railway land opposite as the site for the combined emergency services operations, especially given that the new site will be further from the new multi-storey hotel development, and does the government have plans to sell the railway triangle land?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I am advised that the land is too small for the combined services. The intention is to sell that land.

Mr PEDERICK: On the same budget line, can the minister explain why the government has paid \$250 000 for land designated as recreational land in a residential area at Kirton Point, within the vicinity of the Kirton Point Primary School and Kirton Point Kindergarten, as the location chosen by the government for the MFS? Can the minister also confirm that the government will pay \$300 000 for land designated recreational land alongside the proposed MFS site as the site for the collocated SES and CFS Region 6 headquarters? Also, can the minister advise the total cost of the emergency services investigations, plans and property purchases for Port Lincoln undertaken by the Labor government since it came to power for all proposed sites?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I will ask Mr David Place, Chief Executive of SAFECOM, to respond to that.

Mr PLACE: As the minister has said, the area has been dedicated under the care and control of the Port Lincoln council. It is crown land, but the council is seeking loss of amenity for its recreational facilities. As we mentioned earlier, there are tennis and basketball courts and some other infrastructure on that site. MFS engaged the Land Management Corporation to arrange for the transfer of the land into the name of the minister. I believe that happened, and that the agreed amount was in the order of \$250 000.

As far as the CFS and SES acquisition is concerned, exactly the same process applies. We are talking to the Land Management Corporation, which is talking with the Port Lincoln council on our

behalf. No financial figure has been agreed at this point because we are still in negotiations with the council, through LMC and in conjunction with crown law.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 3, pages 2.11 and 2.12, 'Justice—expenditure initiatives. South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service Fire Station (Southern suburbs)'. What options did the government consider in terms of providing a fire service to Seaford and, in particular, did it consider the introduction of MFS firefighters to the existing CFS station to cover weekday shifts? Is the establishment of the proposed station at Seaford consistent with the sector-wide service delivery standards, which are referred to as SAFERS?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Mr David Place, the Chief Executive of SAFECOM, will respond to that question.

Mr PLACE: SAFERS was a risk and resourcing methodology model that was commenced by SAFECOM. We have changed the approach to that. It was a little too detailed. It probably would have been world-breaking research, which we would like to continue, but it would not give us the information that we are seeking to answer this question in the right time frame. SAFERS is a background project that SAFECOM is working on. We have replaced it with a more pragmatic risk and resourcing review model, to which I think the minister referred in her opening statement.

In particular, in the southern suburbs, there were several issues that combined to require some reasonably urgent attention. For the last two years, we have seen significantly increasing response times from the Seaford brigade, and there have been several incidents where it was unable to put a crew on in a reasonable time. As the minister also has outlined, the southern suburbs has undergone a major urbanisation change and is now classed mainly as a typical metropolitan type suburban area, as opposed to a rural area.

There is also future expansion of, I believe, 10 000 to 20 000 homes which is planned for that area in the next five to 10 years. It is undergoing a major transformation. We were already having problems in that area. We had introduced some specialist response procedures whereby MFS responded into that area probably more than it would normally do to cover off the short-term goal. What we are saying here is that we had several trends that were all heading in the wrong direction. We had increasing response times, difficulty during the day for the CFS in that brigade to supply crew guaranteed and also the trend of an increasing urban area requiring an expectation of immediate response.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to, Budget Paper 3, page 2.12, regarding aerial fire-fighting. It is a series of questions, but they will be in one, and I can repeat them if necessary. Can the minister explain how the additional \$4 million of state and federal money is to be spent on aerial fire-fighting, and indicate whether that will give us additional days to have aircraft based in South Australia? Will the minister consider having one of the four air cranes in Australia based in South Australia for a large portion of the fire danger season? As a personal observation on aircraft and fire-fighting, I know that they do a fantastic job but I believe that, in connection with a couple of local fires, they should have been up in the air at daylight the day after a big blaze to stifle scrub fires before they flared up again. I think they would be better up in the air than left on the ground, and perhaps this would have saved a hell of a lot of effort later on.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I thank the member for his questions. We were incredibly fortunate (I think that is the word that I would use) in the past bushfire season, after the driest winter on record, that we did not experience some of the losses that the eastern states suffered. South Australia has numerous geographically dispersed fire-fighting aircraft to support the CFS's aggressive initial attack strategy for aerial fire-fighting in the high bushfire risk areas of the state. The South Australian fleet of leased aircraft is located in the Mount Lofty Ranges, the Lower South-East, and the Lower Eyre Peninsula regions. Aircraft also responded to other areas of the state to assist in the control of bushfires in accordance with the risk posed to the community, significant assets, or the environment.

Because of the extraordinary season that we had this past bushfire season, the Rann Labor government increased aerial support to the CFS. For the information of honourable members, I have an amount here: it was a total of \$2 million for 2007-08 in relation to the NAFC arrangements. The total amount for this past season is thus far \$5.725 million, even though, as I said before, we were fortunate to not suffer some of the bushfires and resultant losses that we saw in the eastern states. To best explain the arrangements, it is important to note that South Australia is a member of the National Aerial Fire-fighting Centre. The Chief Officer of the CFS, Mr Euan Ferguson, has just finished his term as the chair, but he is able to further explain our arrangements with NAFC, Madam Chair.

Mr FERGUSON: If I could just clarify, the question referred to \$4 million of additional funding; that is actually not correct. For South Australia there has historically been about \$1 million spent on the

national aerial firefighting agreement. For 2007-08, it will be a total of \$2 million, so it has doubled. That relates to a doubling of the federal contribution. Prior to 2007-08 the federal contribution was \$5.5 million; this coming year it will be \$10 million, so it has virtually doubled. This allows us to increase the general number of resources across Australia. Can I clarify a further point with you: last fire season there were four air cranes in Australia, whereas the normal arrangement has been for only two air cranes. Last year, both Victoria and NAFC engaged an additional air crane each, which brought it up to four, but that was in recognition of the exceptional fire season last year. However, having said that, I point out that the extra commonwealth funding allows NAFC to look at expanding the number and type of aircraft across the board.

Whilst nothing has been set in concrete, it is likely that there will be a third air crane, which will be shared, in south-eastern Australia along the lines of the shared air crane resource which was in south-eastern Australia last year. I reiterate that the NAFC board still has to make a final determination on that. Could I also reinforce that 34 aircraft were contracted by NAFC last year. All of those aircraft are technically available to any member of NAFC. Obviously, it will depend on the operational requirements and arrangements at the time. It also depends on the ability of the requesting jurisdiction to pay.

Last year, there were four occasions when the air crane was brought to South Australia. Probably the most notable was in late 2006, when an air crane was used successfully on both the Clare and the Onkaparinga Gorge fires. We see that the air crane is most successful operationally in areas such as the Mount Lofty Ranges, the Lower South-East and Kangaroo Island. In other areas of the state, such as the Flinders Ranges, the Mallee, the Upper South-East and northern Eyre Peninsula, the lack of readily available groundwater severely limits the operational usefulness of the air crane, particularly when it is compared with the operational effectiveness of fixed-wing aircraft, which are also easier to support logistically.

I note the honourable member's comment about blacking out the day after the fire. Using high volume aircraft for blacking out is not a traditional use of aircraft, for two reasons: first, when you are blacking out, there will be people on the ground who necessarily have to be involved, and the use of aircraft for blacking out (particularly rotary wing aircraft) would probably be done from a relatively static position. So, there is minimal or less opportunity for the dispersal of the load of water; it will come down in a stream as the doors open. That presents a greater risk than the use of the aircraft on a running fire when, generally, it drops its load with a forward direction. So, there is a safety issue.

Probably more importantly, without ruling out the use of these aircraft for blacking out, it is not a really effective tool for blacking out because, invariably, if there are logs and stumps, it will not get into all the nooks and crannies, but it will certainly help. We have been trialling the use of helicopters for mopping up (it is a technique called heli-mopping), but it needs to be recognised that it is very expensive. Our experience has been that it will cover only the surface burning materials and that it is not as efficient as having crews on the ground. It is certainly not a proven technique; it is something that we are continuing to trial and something that is much more expensive than the traditional use of firefighters on the ground for blacking out.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.180, minor works. Which agency is responsible for the maintenance of fire plugs, and are the CFS and MFS of the view that the plugs are maintained to an adequate standard in both metropolitan and regional South Australia? If they are of a reasonable standard, why did brigade captains in the CFS need to ring landholders to find out which fire plugs were accessible and useable?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I thank the member for his question. I can advise the member in relation to this issue that a meeting was held on 5 July 2006 regarding street hydrant maintenance in Murray Bridge. I am assuming that the honourable member—being the member for Hammond—may well be asking this question in relation to his area. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Country Fire Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, SA Water and local government. SA Water is the responsible agency that is currently investigating and considering their position with regard to a memorandum of understanding which was signed in October 2005 between the South Australia Country Fire Service and SA Water. The discussion between the fire services and SA Water is ongoing. I do not think there is anything else we need to add, except to say we are very much aware of this issue.

Mr PEDERICK: Do either of the agencies think there needs to be more work done with regard to the readiness of fire plugs and making sure they are accessible?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Mr Euan Ferguson would like to respond to that.

Mr FERGUSON: We get regular reports from brigades of locations where fire plugs are in need of maintenance. We have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with SA Water. Those requests for maintenance are all passed on to SA Water. I would not be in any position to make any comment as to whether additional resources are required. I might further add that the fire services

acknowledge that it is partly a fire service responsibility to practise setting up hydrants from fire plugs, so there is an element of sharing in making sure that the fire plugs are operational. But probably the best answer to that question would be from SA Water, Madam Chair.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.209, program net costs and services summary total. Will the minister provide an explanation for the \$1.1 million overspend by the SES for 2006-07, and can she explain why the budget for 2007-08 is still less than the total expenditure for 2005-06 and 2006-07?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I will ask Mr David Place, the Chief Executive of SAFECOM to respond.

Mr PLACE: I assume you are asking why the 2006-07 budget is lower than the 2005-06 actual?

Mr PEDERICK: I am referring to the \$1.1 million overspend by the SES for 2006-07 and asking why the budget is still less than the total expenditure for 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Mr PLACE: The 2006-07 estimated result is \$1.072 million higher than the 2006-07 budget. I will give you some of the major factors that have contributed to that. There was the transfer of funds from capital to operating as a result of changes made to the capitalisation policies as requested by the Auditor-General. The quantum of that was \$300 000, so that is just a change of accounting policies. Some funding was received from other emergency service agencies for the Road Crash Rescue Challenge, for which SES was the coordinating agency. There was an increase in the depreciation allowance granted during the 2006-07 mid-year budget review of \$120 000; and a \$370 000 write-off of assets that occurred as a result of the change in the asset capitalisation policies. There was a transfer of commonwealth support package funds from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to SES of \$226 000; and a range of other minor adjustments such as increases from wage and salary supplementation of \$26 000, offset by decreases in fuel funding of \$11 000 and the take-up of work safety staffing in the out years of \$40 000.

Mr PEDERICK: Why is the budget for 2007-08 still less than the total expenditure for 2005-06 and 2006-07?

MR PLACE: The 2007-08 net cost to services budget is \$548 000 lower than the 2006-07 estimated result, chiefly comprised of reductions and expenses that occurred as a result of:

- the cessation of a number of activities that received funding specifically in the 2006-07 financial year;
- increasing savings impacts, including the write-off of assets as a result of changes in the asset recognition policies (that has a one year impact isolated to the 2006-07 budget and therefore does not contribute to the 2006-07 budget), the quantum of which was \$370 000;
- as I mentioned earlier, the funding received from the emergency services agencies for the road crash rescue, which was a one-off figure; and
- an increased impact of savings allocated during the 2005-06 bilaterals for the centralisation of the equipment purchases of \$50 000.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.147, targets and highlights. In respect of target 2007-08, what are the key milestones for the new prisons project, and which milestones have so far been achieved? Further, what is the term of the private-public partnership?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Perhaps I will commence with some background, and then Mr Severin may wish to add some comments. In the 2006-07 budget, the South Australian government approved the procurement of three new prisons via a public-private partnership (PPP) contract. In a PPP contract, the private sector finances, designs, builds and maintains the facility, generally for a period of between 25 and 30 years. In considering private sector participation in public services, the South Australian government must be satisfied that the following key criteria are met:

- Private sector involvement delivers a net benefit to government, having regard to the risks of the project, compared with traditional public sector delivery;
- The risks associated with the project are clearly identified and allocated to the parties best able to manage those risks;
- Projects are subject to a competitive bidding process, with direct negotiations entered into only under a limited set of circumstances; and
- Probity is maintained during all phases of the process.

It is proposed at this stage that the PPP contract for the new prison project will be for 25 years. These facilities will include a 150-cell new women's prison to replace the existing 92-cell Adelaide women's prison; a 760-cell new men's prison to replace the existing 341-cell Yatala Labour Prison; and an 80-bed new pre-release centre, with 60 male and 20 female beds, to replace the existing 60-bed (males only) Adelaide Pre-release Centre. The new women's prison and new men's prison will be located on government-owned land adjacent and south of the existing Mobilong prison, and

presents the department with a number of potential efficiency options by sharing services between the three facilities.

The new pre-release centre will be located on government-owned land in Goldsborough Road, Cavan. The estimated capital cost of these three facilities is in the order of \$438 million. Construction is anticipated to commence in 2009, at this stage, with completion in 2011. Collocation of three prisons at Mobilong—one existing and two new—obviously provides maximum opportunities for economies of scale for their operation. The existing 61- hectare prison precinct on Grand Junction Road, Yatala/Northfield, will be available for alternative use. It is proposed that there will be regional development opportunities for Murray Bridge. All three prisons—existing Mobilong plus the two new facilities—will continue the government policy to 'buy local' where possible (an additional \$12 million per annum); increased population through the relocation of Corrections staff and their families; secure long-term employment of over 550 staff in the three prisons; and the two new prisons will introduce an additional \$27 million per annum in salaries and wages into the local community.

Ecologically sustainable development principles will be used throughout the new prisons; that is, solar hot water and lighting, recycled water, energy-efficient design and building materials. The Chief Executive of the Department for Correctional Services, Mr Severin, is to chair an interdepartmental government services group to investigate the effect of the new prison infrastructure near Murray Bridge. A community consultative committee will be established to ensure that matters of concern to the local communities have a focus for communication with the project team that will be established.

Mr SEVERIN: In relation to the detailed time lines, in addition to the information that the minister provided, we have a full group of consultants on board to project manage the technical consultants for this project. The current timetable has been revised. The overall period for the project has not changed; however, within that period there are some slight adjustments in relation to different phases. The current plan provides for a market-sounding exercise to be undertaken in July-August for interested consortia. An expression of interest process will commence in October to identify interested consortia and those capable of tendering for this project. We will narrow those down to two or three consortia, who will be invited to tender for the project. It is anticipated that the contract will be finalised by the end of 2008, in accordance with the original time lines that were issued last year. As the minister outlined, construction will commence in 2009.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Investment in this new infrastructure will allow the government of South Australia to increase the Department for Correctional Services prison bed capacity, providing flexibility in prison management and sentencing options. It will replace the outdated and inefficient Yatala Labour and Adelaide Women's prisons and reduce operating costs associated with inefficient infrastructure. It will provide appropriate treatment and conditions for prisoners and improve opportunities for the rehabilitation of prisoners, providing safer communities through reduced recidivism.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.147. To date, how much has the government spent on the new prisons project, including development of the business case and the tendering process? Does the government still expect the total cost of the project to be \$517 million and is that the lifetime cost of the project?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I will ask Mr Severin to respond.

Mr SEVERIN: The department has spent approximately \$750 000 over three years in relation to various stages of the preparation of the business case. The budget allocated internally last financial year for the commencement of the project, after it was approved by government, is in the order of \$450 000, which mainly comprises consulting fees. The total budget for project management involvement over the life of this project is in the order of \$4.5 million. Those funds are to procure the facilities and manage the project. Obviously, there will be additional budgetary requirements for the commissioning of the new facilities and the transitioning of our operation from the Northfield precinct to Murray Bridge and Cavan.

Mr PEDERICK: As a supplementary question, apart from, say, some commissioning costs, will it still be within the \$517 million total cost for the two sites?

Mr SEVERIN: The estimate for the project cost is certainly still the same. However, we need to separate the anticipated cost of procuring the facility under a public-private partnership from the costs involved in managing the project, which are part of the costs provided in the forward estimates. The other costs are obviously based on an estimate that was arrived at as part of the business case, and they will be confirmed by establishing the public sector comparator before we go to tender. However, that is an expense that will be realised over the life of the contract, be it 25 years.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to the previous budget line in Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 4.147. Have there been any discussions or proposals regarding the possibility of the redevelopment of the Northfield site?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: As I said in my previous response, the existing 61 hectare prison precinct at Grand Junction Road, Yatala North, will be available for alternative use. There have not been any further discussions, but we have announced it will be available for further use.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: At this stage all I can say to you is that it will be available for alternative use. Clearly it is going to the LMC, and we will be taking it from there.

Mr PEDERICK: Referring to the former budget line, which agencies are on the project management group, which agency is the lead agency, what executive support has been given to the management group, and how many full-time equivalents are there associated with the group?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I will ask the chief executive to answer this question.

Mr SEVERIN: The governance structure approved for this project, and the other public-private partnerships projects in this state at the moment, is that there is a ministerial committee chaired by the Treasurer which has on it all the relevant portfolio ministers for all the PPP projects at schools and prisons and the Minister for Infrastructure. There is the chief executive's steering committee chaired by the Under Treasurer, which also has relevant chief executives from the portfolios, including justice, transport and infrastructure, as well as myself and the chief executive of the education department.

Then there are the respective project teams which look after the prisons and the youth detention centre project, and the schools have their own. I chair the steering committee for the prisons and the new youth detention centre, and the team includes the project director and representatives from the Department for Families and Communities and the Department for Correctional Services. Those teams are responsible for managing the projects.

I chair a broader, interdepartmental group—which the minister mentioned in response to previous questions—which has representatives from a range of agencies including emergency services, police, housing, courts, transport and other agencies that have service delivery responsibilities in the local community. This committee is there to ensure that we continue to be mindful of the impact the new facilities might have on the Murray Bridge community and to ensure that the service demands will be planned for and met in the future. That committee has no formal standing as part of the governance arrangement, but it is certainly important in relation to the associated issues with this project (as it relates to Murray Bridge).

Mr PEDERICK: Is there a specific number of full-time equivalents of which you are aware?

Mr SEVERIN: The project team of the Department for Correctional Services has a project director, two senior project officers, an administrative assistant and one other adviser. There are also members of the Department for Families and Communities on that project, given it is a joint project, but I am not aware of the exact number of people.

Mr PEDERICK: In relation to the same budget line, what have been the outcomes/recommendations/findings of the interdepartmental government services group investigation into the effect of the new prison infrastructure on the community and associated services? Some of that may have been covered before.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I think the honourable member is correct. We have spoken already about some of them, but I will ask Mr Severin to respond.

Mr SEVERIN: All the departments involved are fully apprised on the scope of the project and the proposed configuration of the prison and its role and function. There has been some direct consultation with those departments which will continue to provide a service or be involved in the direct service provision. Obviously, the health department currently provides prisoner health services to our state-run correctional facilities. The courts and the Legal Services Commission have a direct involvement with us, and there is a range of agencies, such as housing, transport, emergency services, and so on, where the involvement is more indirect.

In relation to those departments that are indirectly involved, no direct planning outcomes have been put into action, given there is still some time before the projects will come to fruition. It is proposed at this stage that, if there are any requirements for other departments to have adjustments to their level of service in the area as a result of the new prisons being in the community, they will put forward appropriate budget submissions in order to ensure that those demands will be met. Those services that are directly involved in either structuring or delivering a service to the prison, or involved with service delivery, will be very much involved in the development of the tender documentation to ensure that the procurement is inclusive of the requirements that relate to agencies other than the Department for Correctional Services.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 12.46, Highlights 2006-07, dot point 4. Are details on application forms for the **Rainwater Tank Plumbing Rebate Scheme** available at the point of sale for rainwater tanks? If not, why not?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I need to advise the member that the Waterproofing Adelaide strategy in that line is the responsibility of the Minister for Environment and Conservation (Hon. Gail Gago). It would be useful if we did a little research on which minister has responsibilities.

Mr PEDERICK: It would be useful perhaps if the government did not play so many games, and certainly—

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr PEDERICK: —no—

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I have a point of order. There are—

The CHAIR: Minister, you cannot raise a point of order: you are a witness. There is no need to do so. I am asking the—

Mr PEDERICK: Everyone can play the game, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR: Member for Hammond, we are not about playing games. We are about respecting the budget lines and the processes of this parliament. I understand that there are some difficulties in working out these portfolios, but it is necessary to respect the minister's response as to whether or not she has responsibility: she knows.

Mr PEDERICK: That is fine. I will just keep asking, and I will defer the questions that need deferring. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 12.45, Targets 2007-08, dot point 12. When will the rehabilitation of the **Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas** be completed?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: As to the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation area, the 2007-08 targets are to arrange the rehabilitation funding deed for the remaining two districts, which is now completed, as I understand it. All rehabilitated land in the program is to be metered by 1 July 2007. All drainage water and reuse works are to be completed by 1 July 2008. There is a continuation of the on-farm infrastructure works through 2007-08 and to complete the farm consolidation and exit payments in 2007-08.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 12.45, Highlights 2006-07, at dot point 9. Have water meters been installed to cover all of the thousand hectares already rehabilitated in the Lower Murray reclaimed irrigation area? If not, when will this area be fully metered?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I am advised that not all properties have been metered as yet, and there have been some specific reasons in relation to different individual circumstances and, in particular, the fact that the funding deeds have only just recently been signed by some irrigators. So, the metering program is slightly behind schedule, although we anticipate that over 2007-08 that will be rectified.

Mr PEDERICK: I have a supplementary question on the same budget line. Is it because meters just have not been physically available?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I am not aware that that is the case, but we can certainly inquire.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 12.46, Highlights 2006-07, at dot point 11. How long will it be before the Murraylands and the South-East are fully metered?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: Once again, the Natural Resources Management Act resides with the Minister for Environment and Conservation, and that is a question best referred to that minister. I have the responsibility under that act for the Natural Resources Management Board for the Murray-Darling Basin region, but not across the state.