

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 26 October 1994

The **SPEAKER (Hon. G.M. Gunn)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PORT LINCOLN WOMEN'S SHELTER

A petition signed by 1 570 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ensure that the Port Lincoln Women's Shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, was presented by Ms Penfold.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the following written answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

EDUCATION POLICY

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)** 4 August.

The **Hon. R.B. SUCH**: My colleague the Minister for Education and Children's Services has provided the following information. No instruction has been issued to school teachers employed by the Department of Education and Children's Services regarding public or media comment about Government policies.

School teachers along with other public servants are subject to the provision of Commissioner's Circular No. 64 'Guidelines for Ethical Conduct'.

The GME Act general principles of public administration detailed in the Circular state:

Public Employees

- in their dealings with the public and other employees are to exercise courtesy, consideration and sensitivity.
- are to be impartial, accurate and competent advisers and efficient, prompt and effective implementors of Government policies.
- are to perform their duties with professionalism and integrity and efficiently service the Government of the day.
- are to observe fairness and equity in official dealings with the public and other public employees and real or apparent conflicts of interest are to be avoided.

The Commissioner for Public Employment recognises that public employees should not purely, because of their employment with the Government, be constrained from participating in community debate concerning political and social issues.

Teachers are subject to disciplinary action under section 26 of the Education Act. This section refers specifically to an officer contravening the Act, is negligent, inefficient or incompetent in the discharge of his duties, is absent from duty without proper cause or is guilty of any disgraceful or improper conduct.

Should the comments made by any teacher fit the above categories then disciplinary action may be possible. However, given the spirit of the Commissioner's Circular there is unlikely to be any recourse if teachers make public comment in a prudent manner.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)** 6 September.

The **Hon. R.B. SUCH**: The Minister for Education and Children's Services has provided the following response. The Minister has repeatedly stated both before and after the Audit Commission that all this Government will do in relation to school closures is to continue the program initiated by the former Labor Government which equates to approximately 40 closures or amalgamations over the next three to four years. This figure of 40 is an estimate.

It is a figure which is dependent upon several factors which at any time are somewhat fluid. They include the outcomes of formal

restructure reviews, student enrolment declines which can affect the curriculum viability of small schools and urban expansion and renewal projects initiated by developers. There are also instances where rapid enrolment reductions have led school councils and staff to press for school closure/amalgamation, often at short notice. It is therefore impossible to list the schools which will be closed in the next three years. In fact, there is no 'hit list' as some sections of the media, members opposite and SAIT officials insist upon.

Generally before school closure and amalgamation occurs it has been normal practice for broad community consultation to occur. School restructure should not be considered as a necessarily negative experience. Some school communities have recognised that their students will be better served by closure, by amalgamation, by reconstructing their management structure, for example, a small school becomes an outpost of a larger nearby school. Currently DECS is considering a number of community driven change initiatives of this sort. Community consultation has been and will remain an essential element in the restructuring of schools.

LANGUAGES, ACCELERATED COURSES

In reply to **Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth)** 14 September.

The **Hon. R.B. SUCH**: It would be possible for a student to join an accelerated level course in any language at Stage 1.

At Stage 2 courses are available in French, German, Spanish, Thai, Russian and Korean in 1994. In 1995 Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian are planned to be available.

Enrolments to date at Stage 2:

German	4
Spanish	8
Thai	1
Total	13

Stage 1 Accelerated Language courses are as follows for 1994:

Chinese	1
French	29
German	5
Indonesian	8
Italian	6
Japanese	90
Spanish	25
Vietnamese	8
Total	172

CRICKET, JUNIOR

In reply to **Mr FOLEY (Hart)** 20 October.

The **Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD**: I referred the question to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, since this is clearly within his area of responsibility.

I am informed that the Minister met with a delegation from Marryatville High School and the South Australian Cricket Association on 28 July this year to discuss a proposal to establish a special interest cricket program at Marryatville High School.

Marryatville was the school identified by the South Australian Cricket Association (SACA) as the proposed site after considering a short list of other schools. Marryatville was the only school proposed, not three as indicated in the question.

The proposal suggested a contribution from SACA over a three year period to include upgrading of turf pitches and nets, use of Adelaide Oval indoor facilities, an equipment subsidy, access to SACA coaches, and funds to top up a teacher salary should the teacher/coach appointed be above the base teacher status. In addition to the provision of a bus, and increased pitch maintenance as Marryatville's contribution, it was proposed that the Department of Education and Children's Services provide 0.5 of a salary in 1995, 0.75 of a salary in 1996 and a full salary in 1997.

Whilst the Minister acknowledged the importance of sport in our schools and the particular prominence of cricket in Australia, at this time in a context of financial restraint and a reduced number of teachers, he could not support the provision of salaries to the program.

Further consideration of proposals of this type may be possible where any additional salary costs can be met by the sporting association and/or through sponsorship, with the recruitment of a suitable teacher facilitated by the Department of Education and Children's Services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I wish to announce to the House decisions taken by the Government to encourage local government reform in South Australia. Nationwide, the public sector, particularly at State level, is undergoing massive change in response to legitimate community demands for improved efficiency and accountability. It is important for local government to be part of this reform process because it delivers a range of vital economic and social services to the community. Decisions by local government have a significant bearing on the encouragement of new investment and job creation in South Australia and on the maintenance and improvement of community living standards.

Our intention to assist the third tier of government to participate in the reform process was foreshadowed in the May Financial Statement. In that statement the Government indicated its view that 'a lift in the efficiency and effectiveness of local government can be seen as a logical and desirable extension of the major reforms being pursued by the State Government.' Accordingly, the Government stated that it would consult the Local Government Association prior to announcing its approach to a broader local government reform program.

The Government recognises that some councils in South Australia have acted to improve their performance by resource sharing, contracting out, giving customer service guarantees and introducing other efficiency measures. However, when the sector is considered as a whole, it is the State Government's view that the rate of change must be accelerated, and the Government has now decided how it wishes to achieve this.

A Ministerial Advisory Group on local government reform will be established immediately by the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. It will report by April next year on terms of reference which require it to address the following issues: current local government structures and boundary reform, including financial incentives to encourage council amalgamations; improved service delivery by councils; the performance of individual councils and how best practice can be achieved; contracting out of council services; and any legislative change required to facilitate the reform process. To assist councils wishing to pursue amalgamation proposals as part of this reform process, the Government will, if those councils so request, suspend the elections due in those council areas next May.

In making these decisions, the Government has adopted the following objectives for reform of the local government sector: to develop a stronger local government system which is better able to deliver more efficient and effective services; to enable local government to participate effectively in strategies for regional economic development in South Australia; and to facilitate the interaction of local government with other spheres of Government. In deciding a course of action for local government reform, the Government has taken note of the work of the Structural Reform Task Force of the LGA. Earlier this year, the task force surveyed member councils about options for structural change. While the results of the survey revealed a diversity of opinion within local government, the task force did confirm the need for reform.

In relation to the reform of council boundaries, recent developments demonstrate an increasing interest in this matter. For example, the cities of Glenelg and Brighton, the District Councils of Kanaka-Quorn and Hawker and the District Councils of Warooka and Yorketown have all agreed to commence amalgamation processes. South Australia is currently served by 118 local government councils; 29 in the metropolitan area and 89 outside the metropolitan area. The State Government has the view that the effectiveness and efficiency of local government would be served by having fewer councils and wishes to facilitate the resolution of this important matter by playing a coordinating and facilitating role and by supporting voluntary amalgamations.

The Government will not force amalgamations. We believe that, while the State Government has a vital role to play in facilitating change, local government itself must make that change happen. I also make the point that improved delivery of services does not necessarily depend on council amalgamation. Significant improvements can be achieved through councils sharing facilities and resources and ensuring competitive tendering and benchmarking for the provision of services. This approach is enshrined in the terms of reference for the independent ministerial advisory group. The group will be responsible for examining and making recommendations on the means by which the State and local government can together achieve structural reform in the shortest time with the greatest economy of resources and minimum community dislocation.

The group will have specific regard to (a) the functions carried out by local government, both by individual councils and within defined participating council areas and the means by which more responsive, effective and competitive service delivery might be achieved, including the planning and delivery of functions between councils; (b) the performance of individual councils compared with a range of appropriate benchmarks for best practice and the means by which the performance can be improved; (c) examining and advising on the extent to which council services should be contracted out and options for the use of competitive tendering; (d) the need for structural arrangements under which local government areas can encompass a full range of current and proposed functions, together with the people who do or will require them and the procedures to achieve the structural arrangements as expeditiously as possible; (e) the need for provision of financial incentives or assistance to amalgamating councils to assist with the initial costs associated with boundary reform and the form and source of such incentive payments; and (f) any legislative amendments required to facilitate the reform process.

The advisory group will comprise five members as follows: a nominee of the Minister who will chair the group; a person expert in the field of public sector administration with specialised knowledge of local government; a former elected member of local government; a former chief executive officer from local government; and a nominee from the LGA selected from a panel of four names provided by the association. In being asked to report by April next year, the advisory group will consult with the LGA, local councils, State Government agencies, employees of local government and their representatives and members of the community in both urban and rural areas.

In relation to council amalgamations which are now under consideration or which may be proposed as a result of this announcement, the Government has considered how such discussions can be facilitated in the light of council elections

due in May next year. The Government has decided to propose an amendment to the Local Government Act to allow the Governor, by proclamation, to suspend for a period of 12 months the holding of next year's elections where proposals for amalgamation have been lodged with the Local Government Association and where appropriate public notification has taken place.

The Government will review the results of the program announced today by 1996, when it trusts that the efforts of the local government sector and the implementation of the recommendations of the advisory group will have resulted in measurable, sector-wide structural reform. I commend the Government's approach to the House as a strong commitment to work with local government representatives, administrators and the communities they serve over the next two years to ensure that South Australia has an economically efficient and socially effective system of local government achieved in a cooperative and coordinated manner.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

District Court Act 1991—Rules of Court—Appeals—Meat Hygiene Act and Guardianship and Administration Act.

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Regulations under the following Acts:
Superannuation—Members—Festival Centre and TransAdelaide.
Superannuation (Benefit Scheme)—Prescribed Authorities—Construction Industry Long Service Leave Board.

By the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Regulations under the following Acts:
Harbors and Navigation—General.
South Australian Ports Corporation—Control and Management of Ports.
Electricity Trust of South Australia—Powerline Clearances.

By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. R.B. Such)—

Regulations under the following Acts:
Education—Teacher Registration.
Fees Regulation—Teachers Registration Board.

By the Minister for Primary Industries (Hon. D.S. Baker)—

Fisheries—Rock Lobster Fisheries.

YOUTH, HOMELESS

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD (Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: Last night on television, a homeless youth was shown as living in a car and supposedly being denied access to housing by the South Australian Housing Trust. This report on Channel 7 provided an incomplete picture, and I am disappointed that no effort was made to contact my office or the South Australian Housing Trust to clarify the situation.

I have been advised that the youth, Simon Curnow, has a current Housing Trust rental application, which was lodged in October 1994. He has also been given the waiting time he

accrued on a previous application, which was lodged in June 1993. Simon was interviewed by Housing Trust staff of the Salisbury Regional Office on 13 October 1994, and he was offered a bond and one week's rent in advance to secure private rental accommodation. He recontacted the Salisbury office yesterday, 25 October (the same day he did his interview with the television station), and was once again offered financial assistance to secure private rental accommodation. On both occasions Simon made no mention of either being homeless or living in a car. The urgency of his situation was never conveyed to the South Australian Housing Trust.

Simon has told Housing Trust staff that he wants housing specifically in the Modbury area. Unfortunately, due to the high demand for housing in this area, the trust is not in a position to offer housing in Modbury at this time. However, if Simon wishes to broaden his options and consider other areas with shorter waiting times, the trust could make an immediate offer of housing. Simon could have a house today; he could have had a house yesterday; and, of course, he could have one tomorrow. The Housing Trust will continue to make every effort to assist Simon to obtain housing as soon as possible. I do not like anyone to be living in a car, and nor would any other South Australian. However, Simon has housing options available to him and I strongly suggest that he take up the offer of housing assistance that has been made already.

I would also like to state that the vacant houses shown in the Channel 7 program were part of the redevelopment project at Rosewood. If the Housing Trust is to continue to provide better housing appropriate to the 1990s and beyond, it will be necessary for some houses to remain vacant for a short time when relocating current tenants while houses are being refurbished.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): I bring up the report of the committee on the Mount Gambier Regional Health Service and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I bring up the tenth report 1994, second session of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr CUMMINS: I bring up the annual report of the committee for the period 1993-94 and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. As today is universal Children's Day, celebrated in over 100 countries each year

to promote the welfare of children, and in this the Year of the Family, will the Government publicly release the names of the 92 pre-schools and child-parent centres that will lose staff next year as a result of the Government's decision to increase child-staff ratios, and will he ensure that the Government will consult with the centres and the families involved?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I will refer the question to the Minister for Education and Children's Services in another place. I understand that indicative figures have already been put out to each of the various schools involved and, certainly, that has been the case in my electorate and, I presume, it has been the case throughout the State.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Have you seen this list?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I have not seen a specific list, no. I wonder why the Leader of the Opposition asked the question—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: It's your job: you run the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: If the Leader of the Opposition had the list there throughout, one must question his sincerity in asking the question to start with. As I said from the outset, I will take up the matter with the Minister for Education and Children's Services in another place to see whether there has been consultation. I understand that there has.

TATIARA MEATWORKS

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): Will the Minister for Primary Industries tell the House of the conduct and outcome of meetings he instigated in Melbourne yesterday with the receivers and the main bank involved in respect of the future of the Tatiara meat company's abattoirs at Bordertown?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his question and interest in this most important subject. I did attend a meeting yesterday in Melbourne with the receivers, the principal bank, the Commonwealth Bank, and the managers of the Tatiara meat company to work through the bank's and the receivers' attitude to the ongoing operations of that meatworks. Paul Houlihan, an industrial relations consultant, and Ken Waldron, a business consultant, were engaged by the Government and their report covered the negotiations to date. The bank was most concerned about what would happen with respect to equity if the company traded on because, quite obviously, more equity needs to be put into that company.

The directors, to that end, gave the bank some assurances which, of course, the bank and the receivers will need in writing within the next couple of days. The bank wanted the South Australian Government representatives to reach an agreement with the employees of the meatworks that was in a form that ensured those employees honoured the agreement if the meatworks reopened. Mr Paul Houlihan is negotiating that agreement at present and putting it in a form acceptable to the bank; and Ken Waldron is preparing a business plan. The bank was very keen that the meatworks must have a cash flow that reflected the weekly limits and cash flows of that company to the end of December, and then on a month-by-month basis for the next six months.

All of that will be handed to the bank, at the latest, by Friday afternoon. The bank has said that it will make a quick decision next week. I pay tribute to everyone who has been involved, and the Government brought in Paul Houlihan and Ken Waldron. The employees have been very cooperative,

as have the directors of the company, in making available to those people any material that was needed, and I also thank the bank for the way in which it entered into the discussions in a very constructive and cooperative manner. I would think that, everything being in place—and the bank will have everything by Friday—an early decision will be made, and I am very hopeful, given the goodwill of all parties involved, that a final outcome will be announced by Monday or Tuesday next week. Of course, we all hope that the meatworks can then go on and trade.

I cannot stress enough the value of that not only to South Australia, as it makes up some \$100 million of the export market, but also to Victoria, because 60 per cent of that comes from livestock purchased in Victoria. The relevant Ministers in Victoria have been briefed on the progress of this matter; they too are very supportive and we will be discussing it at the ARMCANZ meeting on Thursday. So, hopefully, by early next week there will be a resolution to the whole matter and, thanks to the work put in by the consultants engaged by the Government, it will result in a positive outcome.

The SPEAKER: In the absence of the Minister for Health, I advise that questions otherwise directed to him will be directed to the Deputy Premier.

WORKCOVER

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Can the Minister for Industrial Affairs explain how the general community will understand the journey provisions of the Government's WorkCover amendments when his own department has concerns and is confused about what the provisions actually mean? The Opposition has a copy of a memo signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Minister's department which states that the legislation has created significant concerns. The memo further states:

At this stage there clearly is concern and confusion about what the provisions actually mean, and of the practical aspects involved in their implementation. . . . Verbal advice provided by staff of the Crown Solicitor's Office on the relevant approved provisions of the Act provide little clarity on the impact of the changes and seem to be at odds with the debate that occurred in Parliament.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I thank the Deputy Leader for his question. I have not seen the memo, but I can assure the Deputy Leader that the Director of the department will have no difficulty in understanding what the Act means tomorrow.

HOOLIGANISM

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): Has the Minister for Emergency Services had discussions with the Police Commissioner regarding means available to the police to combat hooliganism and thuggery in relation to bike gangs? Recent media reports concerning bikie gangs in Adelaide have also contained statements attributed to the Leader of the Opposition, calling for the establishment of a special police squad to combat such incidents and for an extension of police powers.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have had a number of discussions and meetings with the Police Commissioner and, indeed, I meet with him regularly at least once a week. I had a discussion with him this morning just after 7 a.m., after hearing a broadcast on the media news, which carried the story that the Commissioner was about to approach me

seeking an extension of powers to combat hooliganism, allegedly following calls by the Opposition Leader.

The Police Commissioner also heard that report, and he was most surprised. It is not the first time that the Commissioner has been most surprised about matters which have arisen in the media and which have been purportedly stage-managed by the Leader of the Opposition. The Police Commissioner was surprised also at the press conference held by the Leader of the Opposition on 24 October, just as he was further surprised some half an hour ago when I spoke to him about a paper which has been released by the Leader of the Opposition and which is entitled 'Tackling the Gang Problem'.

The Police Commissioner had not seen a copy of the paper, and I have undertaken to provide him with a copy. The Deputy Police Commissioner was there also, and he had not seen a copy of the paper either. It could well be that the Opposition Leader has sent a copy; it could well be that it is contained within the bowels of his office or that it has just arrived in the correspondence section of the Police Department. However, I would have thought that, if the Opposition were serious about what is an important issue, it would have tackled the issue appropriately by contacting the relevant authorities before running to the media.

The paper put together by the Opposition calls for the establishment of a gang control intelligence unit, which would use a computer database to monitor gang activity. I do not know whether that is a bit like the old Special Branch that was abolished by a previous Labor Government because the Special Branch was keeping a database; my recollection is that the Labor Party of the day objected to it, so it got rid of it. Now the Opposition Leader is calling for a gang control intelligence unit but, not satisfied with that, also a State anti-gang task force.

The police have acted. The Commissioner has acted strongly and responsibly, and has established a task force to tackle bikie violence. Operation Titan is under way and is investigating this crime, and the Commissioner has ruled out categorically the establishment of these groups suggested by the Opposition Leader.

I can also report to the House that Operation Titan is working, as is appropriate, with the National Crime Authority, to determine whether there are national links with gangs in South Australia so that police can provide appropriate support. It is not appropriate in this House, beyond that, that I release details of that investigation, because obviously to do so could jeopardise the activity and outcome of Operation Titan. That operation will be under way for three months. After that time, police will assess the value of the operation, assess what has been achieved and determine what future measures may need to be taken.

In so far as the carriage of knives and other weapons is concerned, it is important to clarify this position properly, because the Opposition Leader, either unintentionally or deliberately, has made a series of statements that distort the facts. I refer to the Police Ministers Council that was held in May this year, a meeting of all police Ministers from around Australia with Police Commissioners present. Council resolved the following:

- (a) To endorse the expansion of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations to include nunchakus, pistols, crossbows, blowguns, blowpipes and blowpipe darts and ballistic knives except where the importer produces an authority to possess the article in the relative jurisdiction, similar to the authority required to import a hand gun;

- (b) to endorse a prohibition of the possession and sale of nunchakus, pistol crossbows, blowguns, blowpipes and blowpipe darts and ballistic knives in all jurisdictions, with exemptions for people who can demonstrate that they have a legitimate need for and can provide storage of specific items, and who satisfy a police criminal records check;

- (c) to consider out-of-session advice on the feasibility of all jurisdictions prohibiting the possession and sale of all dangerous goods covered or to be covered by the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations, with a view to reaching a final decision at the 27th meeting of the Australasian Police Ministers Council.

That meeting again convenes in December this year. During the intervening period, obviously the Police Department and I have been working closely with the Attorney-General and his department. We have made them aware of the resolution and we have talked about the possibility of prohibiting the sale of such items.

Further, we have indeed looked at the prospect of changing the Summary Offences Act 1953 to provide that a person cannot be the holder of dangerous weapons. Whatever action is taken, because of the nature of this issue, it is important that it is taken nationally by all States so that any problems can be tackled by all States together. I return to just how genuine—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The Opposition might not like this.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I return to how genuine the Opposition is regarding the claims it has been making. When I came to office as Minister, I found the most disgraceful backlog that I have ever witnessed since my time in Parliament or working in any industry.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: In the early days of office, my staff spent 210 hours overtime, working weekends and nights to clear Labor's backlog—unanswered correspondence from Labor's Ministers and unactioned files from Labor's Ministers. We sent letters to all those people advising them that, even though in many cases up to eight months had elapsed without their hearing from the Minister to whom they wrote, as a community service my office was clearing Labor's backlog to tackle the problem seriously. Let us have some frankness in this Parliament: if the Opposition Leader has genuine concerns, let him express them appropriately and properly. Let him talk to the Police Commissioner first and put his documents forward before going to the media.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: When members are ready, the next question will be called.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

WORKCOVER

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Affairs. How much productive time is being lost across the entire South Australian Public Service thanks to his amendments to the WorkCover journey accident provisions which have forced public sector workers to report for duty at their normal workplace before proceeding to their first job of the day? The memo from the Chief Executive Officer from the Department of Industrial Affairs states:

To ensure that staff are appropriately covered it would be sensible to report for duty at your normal workplace before beginning a journey to a client or another workplace and to return to your normal workplace before commencing your journey home. The executive and I realise this appears to fly in the face of sensible work practices.

This simply means that Government workers start on a job later and finish earlier as they divert via a depot or office instead of going straight to or from the job.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I find it staggering—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I find it staggering that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would question where one begins work. One of the fundamental—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: One of the fundamental—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that you are sympathetic to the numbers on the other side, but they are making the House unworkable and interjecting at every opportunity. I ask you to call them to order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! When members are quiet the Chair will give a ruling. The Chair, as always, has endeavoured to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate effectively. Unnecessary interjections are completely out of order and the Chair will take appropriate action from whichever side of the House it continues. Twice today I have remained silent while members continue to converse unnecessarily across the Chamber. A number of actions are open to me and, if members continue to interject when they should not, their names will be taken off the question list.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Throughout Question Time today the Opposition has been subjected to continual comments from the Deputy Leader of the Government in this House, and that is a feature of every Question Time.

An honourable member: What's the point of order?

Mr FOLEY: I ask that you rule in future that the Deputy Leader refrain from such action.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has just advised members that interjections from any quarter will not be accepted if they disrupt the proceedings of the House. I have indicated one course of action, and other courses of action are open to the Chair of which the honourable member and other members are aware. The Chair will not be selective. The Minister.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: As I was attempting to say before I was interrupted by the Deputy Leader, we are dealing here with an activity called work, and people clock on when they start, which is usually where they are at the first point. That is where journey accidents begin and end.

Mr ASHENDEN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I point out to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that it is against Standing Orders to have displays in this House.

The SPEAKER: The Chair did not see any display, but if displays are being used in the House it is totally out of order and I would uphold the point of order. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. With regard to the definition of 'work', a person may commence work at, say, 9 a.m. and finish at 5 p.m. The Government wants to ensure that we get the maximum

production per day, and this means that when people commence work they are at work and when they are expected to go home they go home. The whole concept of journey accidents is to recognise accidents at work. It is not meant to recognise accidents to and from work and there needs to be a clear definition, and the clear definition is exactly as stated in the Act and as stated by the Director: you commence at the place where you commence your work and, if it so happens that a person is required to go to another place, so be it.

That is very clear, and it will mean that the responsibility for work accidents involving a journey to be paid for by the Government is very specific. Then we will not have the problem of a worker saying, 'I began my journey at home at 7.30 in the morning and did not clock on at work until 9 o'clock.' The purpose of the exercise is to make it clear so that we do not have the legal ramifications which historically are involved in the WorkCover area and have these processes drawn out on legal argument, not fact. I do not believe there has been any reduction in productivity in the public sector. In fact, I think evidence will show that it has significantly improved.

PIPELINES AUTHORITY

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Treasurer inform the House of the progress being made by the Government towards selling the Pipelines Authority of South Australia, the owner of the Moomba to Adelaide and Katnook natural gas pipelines?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It is important that the House should be updated on this matter. Prior to the last election we made it clear that pipelines were inappropriate to be owned and operated by State Governments, and that view has since been endorsed by the findings of the Hilmer committee. We have seen clearly from the Federal Government that competition must prevail in the marketplace and that Governments shall not be the owners and occupiers of these facilities. We are pleased to say that we are consistent with the Federal Government's designs in this area, and in many ways we are in front of the Federal Government's determination to increase productivity.

As regards PASA, we have changed one item in terms of what we said originally. We said that we would sell PASA. However, we are not selling PASA; we are selling the transport facility. We sell the means of transport; we do not sell off the regulatory body and some of the other responsibilities that go with PASA. That created another legal dilemma, and we have solved that by taking a separate path, which is to leave PASA as an entity governed by statute with certain regulatory functions, but to sell off the facilities which transport the gas from the gasfields to the distribution points. It is important to understand that item. We are very proud of where PASA has been and we shall be proud of where it is going in future. There are exciting developments in gas exploration and distribution.

The time for the completion of sale and legislative change is scheduled for 30 June next year for all matters to be satisfied. It is important to understand that in a professional way we have been tuning the organisation for this process. Importantly, we have also embarked on pre-selling by getting national and international investors interested in this exciting proposition. It also carries with it some responsibility to be part of and to invest something back into South Australia, so we are looking at the economic development that will flow from the sale of such a facility.

We are now entering the final phase of determining an appropriate price and successful tenderer for the sale of this pipeline. The matter is proceeding very smoothly. I pay particular tribute to the asset management task force, to Mr John Eastham, the Director of PASA, and to all the staff who have been involved to date, because it has certainly been an exceptional effort.

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Affairs. Is the Government able to identify which public servants are and are not members of unions? The new Industrial and Employee Relations Act requires employers to negotiate directly with employees who are not represented by an association. This will require the Government to know whether or not every teacher, nurse and other category of employee is a member of an association.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I should have thought that, if the Government wanted to know that and when it decided to enter into any arrangement with a union and/or any group of people, it would simply ask. I should have thought that, if that was the path that the Government chose to go down, it would do that. As the honourable member would know, in recent times the Government has asked all members of its staff whether they wish to join a union. Since we forward to the unions on a regular basis the money that we collect for them, I can say that we would know all of those members because we are forwarding their contributions to the unions. I am sure that we could ask any other members whose contributions we do not forward to a union if we needed to know. We are in the process of negotiating enterprise agreements with all departments and we will be going through the legal requirements to make sure that any enterprise agreement that we enter into stands up under the law.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): Will the Minister for Industrial Affairs advise the House whether the State Government proposes to consolidate and update occupational health, safety and welfare regulations in South Australia? The Government's worker safety policy proposes initiatives designed to improve occupational health, safety and welfare practices by employers and employees in South Australian workplaces. It has been put to me that safe working practices would be assisted if employers and employees could deal with updated, simpler and consolidated regulations with less duplication in Government agencies.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I thank the member for Wright for his question and note his continuing interest in this issue. Some time ago the Government outlined its position on occupational health, safety and welfare. Part of that program was a \$2 million injection of funds from WorkCover to the whole process of occupational health and safety in this State. We made a commitment to get on with the job of looking after workers' safety instead of merely talking about it, as happened under the previous Government over many years.

When I took over responsibility in the Department for Industrial Affairs, the first thing that was given to me was the fifth draft of the occupational health and safety regulations. That document had been drawn up over two or three years. All that was happening was that the department and the

Minister were sitting down and writing the regulations, giving them to industry, and finding industry giving them back with another 50 to 60 pages of errors. Then they would take it back and redraft it and put it out again, with further errors being noted.

That was causing problems, and when I came into the ministry I set up an evaluation committee comprising the UTLC and the employers. That committee has had 17 meetings between March and October, and last Friday it had its final meeting, having just a couple of issues still to be resolved. We expect soon to have a new set of regulations bringing together 16 different sets of regulations into one document, which will explain in a very simple and clear way the requirements of every business and employee. Where appropriate, it will adopt a hazard-based approach to compliance and a more effective and less prescriptive approach to regulation.

This issue has been going on for two to three years. We expect these regulations to be consolidated and in place by April next year. After many years of playing around with occupational health and safety, it will be a real program and a real set of regulations which everybody in industry will be able to understand and carry out.

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Affairs. How will the Government simultaneously negotiate with individual employees, employees represented by the Employee Ombudsman, employees represented by agents and employees represented by a union? Under section 76(2) of the Industrial and Employee Relations Act, all employees have the right to negotiate as a group and to be represented by the employee ombudsman, an agent or a union. In large departments this means that the negotiation could involve thousands of separate respondents. For example, the Education Department has 18 000 employees at 800 work sites. The Opposition understands that the Minister for Education and Children's Services and his department are unable to work out how enterprise bargaining can proceed under this Act.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: It is a pity that the member opposite does not sit down with some of her union mates. This exact situation is occurring in the private sector, where the union official nominated to represent the group of employees, a person representing the balance of the employees and the employers are sitting down at the table, and they are actually and practically negotiating an enterprise agreement.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Just let me finish, before the Deputy Leader rudely interrupts, as he has the tendency to do on many occasions. It is our intention to do exactly the same thing in the public sector, and we will get a representative of the teachers to sit down, whether or not it is SAIT. If SAIT does not want to be involved, that is its choice under this Act. Those who wish to sit around the table with the Government may negotiate an enterprise agreement; provided it represents more than 50 per cent of the employees of that department, we will take that agreement to the enterprise agreement commissioner for recognition. If, with less than 50 per cent of the membership, SAIT wishes to be excluded, that is its choice.

AUSINDUSTRY

Mr BUCKBY (Light): Will the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development tell the House what steps South Australia has taken to ensure that business advice and support from both the private and public sectors and from Federal and State agencies is more streamlined and easily accessible and verify that the model South Australia has developed is setting the pace for the rest of Australia? I understand that a meeting of all Australian Ministers of Industry is to be held in Perth this week, where the concept of AusIndustry will be discussed.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: South Australia has been working towards a cooperative, coordinated approach in the provision of information and advice to small and medium business in South Australia on the range of programs available to assist business. It is fair to say that not only in South Australia but also in other States of Australia there has been confusion as to the number of access points that exist for business information and also the wide range of programs available to businesses at both the national and State levels. The Working Nation statement delivered by the Federal Government earlier this year sought to streamline the process and put in place a more coordinated approach to remove some of the confusion and duplication in relation to business programs.

The Federal Government's policy direction as announced in its Working Nation statement is consistent with the policy put down by this Government prior to the last election wherein we wanted to remove the confusion and make the information more readily available and accessible to a wider range of small and medium enterprises in South Australia. To that extent, the South Australian Government has been working cooperatively with the Federal Government for the introduction of the AusIndustry scheme; the Working Nation statement. We believe that that scheme delivered here in South Australia will be of benefit and assistance to the business community.

It is important, however, that the provision and delivery of those programs are undertaken by the State Government instrumentalities. At the meeting in Perth on Thursday and Friday of this week the South Australian Government will vigorously pursue the need to have the State instrumentalities delivering the programs to the business sector, simply because State Governments better understand the regional or local needs of the business community than the Federal Government or a scheme administered out of Canberra. That is consistent with the approach that has been taken by previous governments in South Australia.

To that extent, South Australia has been leading the pack. The NIES program (the National Industry Extension Scheme) that has operated in South Australia for a number of years now has not only been recognised by the Federal Auditor-General for the efficient way in which the scheme operates but also other States in Australia well recognise and have indicated publicly that the South Australian extension of that scheme is a model that ought to be picked up and pursued by other States. To that extent we have been successful in being at the forefront in negotiations with the Commonwealth Government for the memorandum of understanding that will be debated in Perth.

The objectives for the AusIndustry scheme are to improve the impact and effectiveness of the services to let business,

particularly small business, better understand the range of programs and services available to them; to improve access to the information and advice on those programs; to increase the number of access points so that regional areas of South Australia have access points for small to medium business enterprises; to provide integrated, consistent and up-to-date information and assistance to those companies and timely, relevant advice to their clients; and to achieve a partnership approach where the State Government is the delivery point for the programs determined at the Federal level. It will be a two stage process. Hopefully, out of the meeting in Perth we will be able to get an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States and the memorandum of understanding will be signed on Friday. That will then lead to bilateral arrangements between the States individually and Canberra for the delivery of those programs within the individual States.

In summary, it builds on existing South Australian advice and assistance infrastructure regarded as a national benchmark for these programs; it is consistent with the legislation currently before the Parliament in relation to the restructuring of the business advice programs available from the Economic Development Authority, the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing and the Business Centre; and it complements the decisions which we have already made and which we are implementing in South Australia, plus that legislative change. The bottom line is that it makes commonsense to cut the red tape for business and make it more readily available for business in South Australia.

STATE TAXES

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Will the Treasurer categorically rule out any tax increases in the next State budget and any further cuts in health and education beyond those already outlined in the May financial statement and the recent budget?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his question. He could ask Mr Keating about that, because quite simply we have run out of options when we are dealing with—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am having trouble getting the message across, Sir. The issue is very dear to my heart right at this moment. Unless we get some responsibility in Canberra, we face enormous cost pressures on our budget. I said when we delivered the 1994-95 budget that it would have to be held within the grounds that we had laid down. Of course, since that time the lack of Federal Government action on its deficit and a number of other areas has been astonishing. We are now in a situation where the financial markets are speculating about the future. We have the Reserve Bank running the Government at the moment.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart will not carry on a conversation.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: We have the extraordinary situation that when the last budget was delivered Mr Keating said that we were on the doorstep of the greatest growth seen in Australia virtually since the Second World War, and now he is saying we cannot manage it so we have to allow interest rates to blow out. If anyone looked at the statements made by the Prime Minister over the past four months, one would suggest very kindly that he needs his brain examined. Principally, he is allowing markets to determine where the interest rates of this country are going. He has taken no action

to bring his deficit under control. He has taken no action on the current account; and he has taken no action to ameliorate the effect of wage rises, so on all fronts we are in a very difficult situation.

As far as the member's question is concerned, there are three possibilities if the situation we are facing today is reversed tomorrow, should the Federal Government take action. I have made it quite clear. If the Federal Government gave a clear undertaking on the reduction of that deficit to more appropriate proportions, the financial markets would take the lead and we would see the pressure on interest rates removed immediately. They have not done it to date, but I still expect them to do so. Unless they do take action on their own behalf to control their own destinies and the future of this country, we will see this continual blow-out in interest rates, we will see pressure on the current account, pressure on wages and pressure on the whole system.

I said under the circumstances and faced with that intolerable position that the State Government had a number of options. It can spread out its savings targets, increase the take, reduce the savings, or a combination of those; or we can go cap in hand to Mr Keating and say, 'You have caused the problem; how about paying for it?' I know what reception we would get. The answer really is in Canberra's hands.

I would make the point quite clearly on the taxation front that we can hardly put up taxation while at the same time the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister are causing enormous heartache to business in this country and in this State by increasing the costs of their borrowings. As a Government, the commitment on taxation is clear. We can hardly increase taxation at the same time as we are trying to say to businesses, 'Come and do business in this State' when they are facing increased cost pressures from the interest rate regime being forced upon them by the incompetence of the Federal Government.

ST MICHAEL'S

Mr EVANS (Davenport): My question is directed to the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government. What is proposed for the St Michael's site at Mount Lofty following the current public display of development proposals for that site? The St Michael's site was destroyed by the fires in the 1980s. Numerous proposals under the then Labor Government for whatever reason did not proceed. I seek clarification of what is proposed for the current development.

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: Certainly, the development of the site has been generating a good deal of publicity lately, albeit favourable publicity, for the way this Government is going about the process. We have put out already two public displays, one in the Stirling council chamber and the other in the foyer of my office, and through those displays we are inviting the public to come in, look at the displays and write to a consultative committee, putting down what they believe are the types of development they would like to see on the site. Then, in about two months, we will close the consultative process and look for registrations of interest from the development industry so the development industry, when they tender and put in their ideas and plans, will at least know what the public expectation is for the site.

Very briefly, the consultative committee consists of local government, local community interest groups and the development industry itself, so we will get quite a composite assessment of the ideas that come in. The whole point of the

exercise is to ensure that developers in the future have some certainty and expectation of success. In the past, so often we have seen ideas floated and developments have come forward where developers have spent a lot of time, effort and money in putting together a development only to have the public come in, highly criticise it, can it, or whatever. In the end, it just becomes too difficult.

This is a new process very much in the experimental stage. All participants accept that it is experimental. If it is a success, it could flow on to other developments to be proposed in this State. I would expect early in the New Year that we would be going out for registrations of interest and inviting developers to come forward with their proposals for the St Michael's site. In conclusion, I point out that there are two developments up there. When members hear about the development of the Mount Lofty site, it is a separate proposal. The answer to this question this afternoon refers specifically to the St Michael's site.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Will the Treasurer assure employees of the Modbury Hospital who transfer to the new private operator, Health Scope, that their superannuation arrangements with the South Australian Government will remain in place, and that persons not yet in super will have access to the SSS scheme, as will all other public sector employees?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am not sure whether the question is being addressed to me as Treasurer or as the Minister representing the Minister for Health. On the issue of the Modbury Hospital, the Minister for Health has taken great pains to explain to the House the process that is being followed, and the issues that the member refers to are under a whole range of issues that are obviously being gone through right at this moment. There have been expressions of interest, and there are a whole lot of issues that obviously get sorted out in the process.

In principle, we are saying that Modbury Hospital shall be under private management. We have said that time and again. There are a whole lot of issues that are resolved. We have said in terms of other contracts, in the IT outsourcing area and a whole range of areas, that the process will be the subject of deliberation and negotiation, and therefore a conclusion will be reached based on all those matters. I expect that there will be a range of issues, and that will be one of those issues that will be negotiated at the time of change-over. It is an important issue that needs to be addressed, just like it is in all circumstances for those people providing for their future.

I do not expect that there will be any difficulty in the process. That is further down the track. Until such time as we reach that point, it is inappropriate to speculate. If the honourable member would like to have a special briefing on that or any other matter relating to the Modbury Hospital and the program that is being pursued there, I am sure that when the Minister for Health returns he will provide that information to the honourable member.

PALM HOUSE

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Will the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources advise the House of the progress that has been made in respect of the restoration of

the old Palm House in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and when the work is likely to be completed?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am sure all members of the House would be aware of the heritage significance of the old Palm House in the Botanic Gardens. It is probably one of our more significant heritage items in this State. I appreciate the interest that the member for Hartley has shown in this matter. He would be aware that, in recent times, considerable work has been carried out with respect to the refurbishment of the Palm House. After being totally dismantled, the iron work of the old Palm House has been repaired and a protective coating has been applied in an off-site workshop during the past several months. Work has now begun on reassembling the restored iron work prior to reglazing taking place. Program completion for the building is anticipated in March next year, thanks to the excellent cooperation between the Botanic Gardens staff—

The Hon. R.B. Such: Palm Sunday?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Well, it might even be on Palm Sunday; that might be appropriate. Subcontractors have been working under the management of the SACON Heritage Unit project. The budget is currently on target with \$750 000 having been spent. Funding of \$1.1 million was provided by the Federal Government, with an additional more than \$60 000 being donated by South Australians in a public appeal. I would certainly like to recognise the contribution that people in the community have made. The donation of an extra \$60 000 by South Australians who have an interest in this building is to be commended. The restoration project is one that all South Australians can feel very proud of and, if members of the House have the opportunity to walk through the gardens, I would recommend that—

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:—they look at the work being carried out, which is significant for all South Australians, even for the member for Giles.

The SPEAKER: Order! During Question Time the member for Giles has carried on ongoing conversation. I would suggest to the member for Giles that, if he wishes to remain for the rest of the day's sitting, he cease that continued chatter. The honourable member for Napier.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ms HURLEY (Napier): Will the Minister for Family and Community Services allow small volunteer based community groups, such as SANDS (Stillborn and Neonatal Deaths Society) to shut down through lack of funding? One of my constituents who has derived considerable support from SANDS informed me that a cut to this association will jeopardise its continued existence. The organisation is run entirely by volunteers who have undergone the same experience. The small Government contribution is used for basic administrative expenses.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I can assure the honourable member that I have received a considerable amount of representation on this matter from both sides of the House, and I would like to thank those members who have taken up this matter with me. The issue is under consideration. The honourable member needs to realise that significant demands are coming from groups, voluntary organisations and community service organisations seeking funding at this time. The honourable member may also be aware that her colleague

in the previous Government, the former Minister for Health and for Family and Community Services (Hon. Martyn Evans), made it his business to reconsider the priorities of the Department for Family and Community Services, and many of these organisations, it was found, were outside those priorities.

I have asked my advisory committee to reconsider this matter. As I said, I am currently reassessing whether or not SANDS should be provided with funding, as is the case with other smaller voluntary organisations that have made an approach to me. I take this opportunity to commend SANDS and many other organisations working in the community. They are all doing an excellent job. Most of them involve large numbers of volunteers and we all recognise the part that volunteers play, particularly in providing community services throughout the State. I would be happy to provide further information to the honourable member, when that decision has been made, in regard to the specific matter she has raised this afternoon.

STATE TRAINING PROFILE

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna): Can the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education provide information on the directions outlined in the 1995 State Training Profile and how they will benefit South Australia?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I thank the member for Kaurna, who is an excellent local member in the southern region. The State Training Profile is a very important document not because it is a document *per se* but because it charts the direction for training in South Australia. It is important that, if we are to maintain a high quality standard of living, create and preserve jobs, and promote productivity and profitability in industry, we must have highly trained and qualified people.

An honourable member: The Opposition included.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: The State Training Profile focuses on a number of areas where we must make sure that we have additional trained people, because there is a risk of a skills shortage in the not too distant future if industries and enterprises do not train enough people. The Government is therefore very keen that industry be encouraged to train people, and some of those industries include electronics, the horticultural-rural industry, tourism, hospitality and food processing, business studies, particularly for small and medium sized business, and engineering, including the automotive area.

Training costs a lot of money but not to train costs a lot more, and South Australia now, through industries such as the automotive and wine industries, is showing that high quality training pays off with a great demand for those products. The quality of those products is excellent, and the Training Profile, in the submission to the Australian National Training Authority, will help to ensure that we are tightly focused and do deliver in regard to the number of trained people needed by industries and enterprises in the years ahead.

HOUSING TRUST TENANTS

Mr De LAINE (Price): When will the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations introduce a new policy to make it easier to evict Housing Trust tenants who continually harass and interfere with the privacy and comfort of surrounding tenants or residents? The announcement by the Minister that a new credit policy will be introduced on 31 October has the

potential to devastate many genuine tenants in financial hardship. The problem in relation to troublesome tenants is seen by many people to be a far more serious one.

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: I suppose every one of us at some time or other in representing constituencies has had this problem come across our desks. We all share the honourable member's concern that, if you do get a difficult tenant who is causing mayhem in a street, who is being totally unrealistic and who does not understand about community living and the rules regarding community living, that person must be evicted. I have no sympathy whatsoever for these people. If the trust comes to me with sufficient reason and it wants to take that course of action—although it is a decision of the board, and not my decision—I would always support the board.

The dilemma the trust has is really tied up in establishing a sequence of events so that, when it eventually does go to court, the case stacks up and will not be lost. My principal support for the board is the suggestion that, once you have decided to take a course of action, it should be expedited as quickly as possible for the sake of the tenant. All members would realise that there is a set procedure that must be followed and that, unless those steps are gone through, there is the possibility of a challenge or the possibility of having it thrown out at the time when they least want it.

The Housing Trust and the Government are very sympathetic to tenants, and anyone who becomes an unreasonable tenant through unacceptable social community behaviour should be evicted as quickly as possible for the benefit of everyone in the street, and we would facilitate whatever action the board wanted to take.

INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education give a guarantee that there will be no threat to the continued existence of the South Australian Institute of Languages, which was established by statute in 1989 to advise the Minister and the principal tertiary institutions on language studies in South Australia, and to work with the institutions to provide and develop language study courses?

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I do not believe it is correct in Question Time to pre-empt debate. There is a Bill on the Notice Paper, schedule 2 of which addresses that matter. Therefore, the question should not be in order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair suggests that members be a little calm and the Chair will make a ruling.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If a particular question relates to a matter that is before the House and anticipates debate, it is out of order. At this stage the Chair believes that the question has not gone that far. I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he should be particularly cautious in the further asking or explaining of his question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you, Sir. Concern has been expressed to me that the South Australian Institute of Languages, under the leadership of the highly regarded Romano Rubichi, may be under budgetary threat, and I understand that there has been a dispute in Cabinet over this matter.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is now commenting, and he knows that that is out of order.

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I address your attention to schedule 2 of Bill No. 27 which canvasses this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has already ruled that, if a particular question relates directly to a matter before the House, it is out of order. However, the Chair is of the view that the Leader, in asking his question, has referred to budgetary considerations, and I ask the Minister to reply only to that section of the question which deals with the budgetary considerations raised by the Leader.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I cannot give any guarantee about matters. In this State, we are seeking to have the best provision of languages at the tertiary level. That is something that was not done under the previous Government, and I am ensuring that it will happen under this Government. So, I cannot give any guarantee about financing, including SAIL, or any other area of my responsibility; it would be foolish to do so. If the honourable member is patient, he will shortly be made aware of what the intentions are in relation to that organisation.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: The question before the Chair is that the House note grievances.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I was very interested in the comments of the Minister for Emergency Services today about a radio report which quoted the Police Commissioner. If he or the Police Commissioner have concerns about that radio report, I would suggest that they contact the reporter and the station concerned. However, if the Minister for Emergency Services does not support legislation to deal with knives, baseball bats, intimidation and harassment by youth gangs, the Opposition will introduce that legislation.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will take their seats. The Leader is addressing the House.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If the Minister for Emergency Services is prepared to sit on his hands during a crisis in the community, which has been highlighted in recent weeks, if he is prepared to turn his back on a legitimate bipartisan attempt to seek a community discussion on this issue, he must be very nervous and very insecure. The fact is that the Minister is soft on law and order and is out of touch with the community. I have received a letter which relates to an attack on the 12-year-old daughter of a woman who lives in Salisbury Heights. The letter states:

On Thursday 20 October, at approximately 4.20 p.m. my two daughters were coming home from school and went through the Salisbury interchange to catch a connecting bus to home. Whilst one of my daughters was sitting on the seat waiting for the bus, my other daughter walked across the road to buy a drink from the shop. In her absence, three youths (two females and one male) approached my younger daughter and said, 'We want your top, get it off.' Her first reaction was to say 'no', but she became very frightened that they were going to hurt her. They told her to accompany them to the toilet block, which is situated at the interchange.

Two of the girls forced her to the toilet block, with the other male youth following behind. As she was being led to the toilets she was

crying and very distressed about what they were going to do to her. When they reached the toilets, they made her stand behind the shelter wall of the toilet. The male then said to the girls, 'I am better at rolling people than you.' He then grabbed her jacket and undid the top buttons. She said, 'I'll do it myself.' She did this because she did not want them to touch her. She then took off her school bag from her back and they grabbed her and ripped the jacket from her. The male youth also asked if she had any money, then proceeded to search her school bag. Once they had what they wanted, they just left her there and walked out as cool as anything.

My daughter had saved for three months to buy this jacket, just to have somebody take it. What really stresses me is that this incident happened in the middle of a busy interchange with a lot of people around. Sitting next to where my daughter was seated, there were two adults who saw everything and they did not do anything to help a defenceless 12 year old girl. Has it come to the stage in our society that not even adults will help out children in trouble, or is it everybody is too scared?

As a result of this assault, I have informed my children that they have to take another bus route to come home from school, which will take an extra half hour to three quarters of an hour. I don't think this is fair, but I will not allow my children to be placed in that situation again, which is a common occurrence in Salisbury and the interchange especially.

There is a big group of youths in Salisbury which have been terrorising the children in Salisbury and surrounding suburbs for the last couple of years, and nothing is being done to try and get on top of this problem of rolling children for their clothes, shoes and money. The children affected are too scared to do anything about it, for fear these youths will attack them again or their families and friends.

On numerous occasions these youths have attacked children in the local school grounds during the children's lunch break, at children's homes, at the local shops and at the Parabanks shopping centre. Once rolling these children, the youths have stated, 'Your parents are rich, they will replace your clothes and shoes, we know where you are and what school you go to, we will get those as well.'

There is no constant supervision at the station to protect our children, but with all the problems there has been you would think something could be done. I know the police have not got the human resources to be everywhere at the same time, but maybe it is about time the community jumped up and down and demanded the Government to place more police in this area.

I know there is going to be a police station opening in Salisbury later this year, but will they be given enough staff to supervise the interchange more closely? There was once a police station in Salisbury but it closed down, and I don't understand it as there is always constant trouble in the centre of Salisbury.

Why can't there be police or transit police, stationed at the interchange to protect our children between the hours of 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to alleviate some of these bullies from assaulting our children when going to and from school. This is the second time one of my children has been assaulted for their clothes and shoes by this gang of youths.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): There is no doubt that television plays a tremendous role in influencing people from all walks of life and of all ages, and it especially has a powerful influence on the young people in our society. You would not have to be Einstein to work that one out. Television has the power to be both constructive and informative on the one hand, and totally counter-productive and even destructive on the other. One has to only look back three weeks ago to see Port Adelaide's win in the South Australian National Football League to realise the depression that some prime time viewing can cause.

We have been told by the experts—and it is hard to know what constitutes an expert—that violence and explicit sex scenes shown on television really have little effect on people. However, I refer this House to a film called *E.T.*, which was a Steven Spielberg production made some years ago. It was not exactly my type of film, nevertheless it was a very popular one for young people. In the movie there was an

incident where a young boy produced a piece of gum, which he unwrapped. This would have been a 10 second grab, yet young people watching the film quickly picked up this piece of action, they recognised the gum wrapper, they identified with it and, during the next few weeks, tens of thousands of dollars worth of that gum was purchased in confectionary shops throughout the United States of America.

With this in mind, I refer to the *Advertiser* of 22 October 1994, which carried an article about voluntary euthanasia being performed in Amsterdam and shown on television. I know that this story is highly emotive and tragic indeed, and it is not a time to push one's barrow on euthanasia. Here was an account of a man's life being terminated by lethal injection, being shown live and in prime time on national television in Holland. This comes under the category of mercy killing, and it has naturally triggered off a row throughout the Netherlands, where mercy killing is still officially illegal, although there were 1 318 reported cases of voluntary euthanasia in 1993.

This is the first recorded case to be shown on national television. My view on mercy killing is quite clear; I am strongly and totally opposed to such action. People are entitled to their views on the matter, but God forbid that a situation similar to that which occurred in the Netherlands last week could ever occur in Australia. People will say that such a thing will not happen, that it will not happen nationally, yet as a nation we have become very insensitive to such issues. What was objectionable in the 1960s for television viewing and theatre is now mild compared with what is shown, accepted and approved of in the 1990s.

Returning to the mercy killing in the Netherlands, I refer to an anti-euthanasia Dutch doctor's report appearing in the *Advertiser* on 22 October, as follows:

I think it is horrible that this [euthanasia] is being brought into the family living room so that everyone can see. It shocks you to the bones to see the way people talk about doctors killing as if it is the normal thing to do.

I refer also to a newsletter from the Editor of St Paul's College, Walla Walla, in New South Wales, which sums up what is happening to our society as we move into the twenty-first century. Entitled 'What used to be', it states:

What used to be called modesty is now called a sex hang-up. What used to be called Christian discipline is now called unhealthy repression. What used to be called disgusting is now called adult. What used to be called moral irresponsibility is now called being freed up. What used to be called chastity is now called neurotic inhibitions. What used to be called self-indulgence is now called self-fulfilment. What used to be called perversion is now called alternate lifestyle. What used to be called depravity is now called creative self-expression. What used to be called ethical anarchy is now called the theology of liberation.

As we approach the twenty-first century we really must ask ourselves what effect incidents seen on television, such as the mercy killing on national television in Holland, will actually have on future generations not only in Holland but also in Australia.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles): Yesterday in response to a question I asked the Premier about Central Standard Time on a meridian of 135 degrees east, the Premier attempted, in effect, to kill off this issue; to kill off any prospect of South Australia moving to this particular time zone. I was very disappointed at the Premier's response because the Australian Labor Party has made a decision to support the select committee that has been moved by the Hon. Caroline Schaefer in another place. The reasons why we will

be supporting the Hon. Caroline Schaefer in her move for a select committee is that the proposal to have a select committee is a very reasonable one and we believe worthy of support. I will read the principal terms of reference of the select committee. The Hon. Caroline Schaefer moved:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to consider and report on the economic and social viability and long-term implications of altering the time zone for South Australia to 135 degrees east;

2. That the select committee seek comment from representatives of the Northern Territory Government in respect of any change.

It seems to me that they are interesting points and well worth considering. However, the Premier, not waiting for the select committee, giving no support whatsoever to the Hon. Caroline Schaefer and people in country areas who believe in this proposal, just said a straight out 'No'. I know that the Premier did happen to win the day on the extension of daylight saving—he wanted six months; he has got close to only five months—but he did win the day on that for a while. However, I am hoping that we can reduce that back to four months with the assistance of the more sensible people in this House by joining with me and the Hon. Ron Roberts in another place to reject the regulations that extend daylight saving—utterly unnecessarily—for a further three weeks.

The Premier, as I said, completely pre-empted that select committee, but I know that he does not have the numbers in the Liberal Party room to maintain his position. There is no doubt that there appears to be a majority of Liberal Party members within this Parliament and from the Upper House who disagree with the Premier and believe that this proposition is one that should be carefully considered. That is all the Labor Party is saying: let the people in rural areas—let the people in the Mid North and on the West Coast—have a go. But not the Premier; it is clear in everything this Government does that the Premier is totally antagonistic to country people.

The fact that nominally the Premier represents a country district is an absolute joke. This Premier represents big business and the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. This Premier has no sympathy whatsoever for people who live outside the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. If the Premier had any sympathy at all for those of us who live outside the metropolitan area, he would, without a doubt, have given this proposition a hearing. That is all the Hon. Caroline Schaefer is saying. She is not saying, 'Do it': she is saying, 'Give it a hearing; give it a fair go.' I cannot see anything unreasonable in that. I was shocked that the Premier would disagree so vehemently with the majority of his Caucus. The Hon. Caroline Schaefer gave her reasons for wanting the issue considered in these words:

If we were to use 135 degrees east as our time meridian, we would be on the same time zone as Japan and Korea—two major trading partners of Australia. We could promote tourism to Asian countries using a slogan such as, 'To avoid jet lag, start your holiday in Adelaide.' We could promote tourism within the eastern States and say, 'Add an hour to your holiday. . .'

Ms HURLEY (Napier): I refer to transport issues in my electorate. The current Minister for Transport during the election spoke a good deal about the necessity to increase the use of public transport by people in Adelaide and about the need to improve services. It is possible that the Minister has only a vague idea of what lies beyond her North Adelaide home, because if she examined the matter she would find that the people in the northern suburbs are still having difficulty in attempting to get the bus services and other services they need—that, in fact, it seems to be still the case that people are being pushed into using private transport.

The issue that I wanted to pursue today—and there are a number of other issues concerning my electorate—involves transport to the city centre of the Munno Para district, where a large shopping centre (the Munno Para Shopping Centre, adjacent to the council chambers and other facilities such as the library and the Commonwealth Employment Service) has just been completed. At the time this shopping centre was proposed and construction had commenced, there were promises from the Department of Transport that bus routes would be rearranged so that people within the electorate, but particularly those on the western side of Main North Road, could get to that shopping centre and could, therefore, get to the council chambers and to the CES. That involved rerouting the bus services from the western side of Main North Road, because currently—and there were some good reasons for this—most of the bus routes tend to go into the Elizabeth City Centre almost exclusively.

The problem is that the shopping centre is now finished and is due to be opened this Friday. The bus routes have, indeed, had some changes, but the buses operate to that centre only between 9 and 3 o'clock during the day. It is, in fact, a shoppers only bus, with the result that people who commence work in the shopping centre before 9 a.m. cannot get there and they cannot get home. School children have also been waiting for this service so that they can, for example, get from the western side of Main North Road over to the Craigmore High School. They are also caught in this situation: they cannot use this bus route to get across the Main North Road.

Also, outside those hours people cannot have access to the Smithfield railway station. It means that people who live in areas along Peachy Road, Devon Park, and Andrews Farm on the other side, if they want to get to that shopping centre or the council chambers outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., have to catch a bus to the Elizabeth City Centre and then a train to Smithfield station before walking the reasonably short distances to those facilities. It is a time consuming and ridiculous problem confronting those people.

In the short time available to me I do not want to touch on the inadequacies of the rail interchanges at Elizabeth City Centre and Smithfield railway station. Certainly, they are not places where one would want to hang around while waiting for connecting buses or train services. The Leader of the Opposition outlined some of the problems at the Salisbury interchange, but fortunately we do not normally have the difficulties they have there, but certainly there are incidents of the type he described. The people in that area are stuck with very inadequate transport. People at the Elizabeth depot of TransAdelaide have attempted to be cooperative. They sent residents away to conduct their own survey and get proof of the need for these services. People in my area are currently running around, getting letters, petitions and surveys arranged and doing their own lobbying to get this transport, yet it was something promised to the people in the area before the building started.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): This morning it was my pleasure to open for the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development an Education SA workshop. This involved the universities, TAFE, the Education Department, Eynesbury College, the Catholic system and other independent school sectors coming up with a strategy to market one of the pre-eminent services of South Australia—our education sector. No-one in this House needs to be reminded that the Premier and his Ministers are most

anxious that South Australia move towards world's best practice and that in doing so this State should export that at which it is good, and one of those things is education.

The advent of the Leader of the Opposition in the Chamber reminds me that in his time as Minister responsible for TAFE I heard him espousing much the same course, that is, that as South Australia's education was of such a high standard we should be exporting it and gaining dollars by doing throughout the world that which we are good at, including bringing students here and educating them and, where possible, exporting the service through links with universities in China, Singapore and the like. It would be an education service, and we would be, if you like, educational consultants to Asia. I believe that the Western Australian Government might already have moved slightly in this direction but, as I said, it was my pleasure to be asked by the Minister to open a conference on this matter today.

It is most pleasing to see the cooperation of all sectors of education in moving towards goals which I believe are bipartisan in nature. That is not to denigrate the work previously done. The Leader of the Opposition and members in general are well aware that institutions such as the University of South Australia, the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the independent schools have all done much on their own. SAGRIC has played a part in the development of South Australia and the promotion of South Australia's educational services overseas, so we are not starting from scratch: we are starting from an area in which we have some expertise and we are building on that area.

However, I believe the time has come when South Australia should look seriously at creating for itself or for Adelaide the concept of a university city. In bringing together the CAEs we have rationalised them to form one University of South Australia and we are now a city with three autonomous universities: the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia. If we are going to be a truly notable world centre for education, we have to take the next step. The next logical step is to create in Adelaide—the same as in Christchurch (New Zealand), Oxford, Cambridge and Yale (in the United States)—a university city. That is easily achieved. I know that among academics there is dispute because each institution jealously guards its traditions and autonomy, and so they should, but I point out to the House that in Oxford, Cambridge and other university cities each of the components of a university city, in other words, the colleges, are largely autonomous.

Oxford has tens of colleges, each largely autonomous but each under an over-arching umbrella which is what the world knows as the great University of Oxford. There is no reason why Adelaide could not do similarly, that is, have an over-arching authority and under it have a number of autonomous institutions. If we were to do that we would truly be a university city. It would facilitate cooperation among the three institutions, and that cooperation is already at a high degree, but it would develop it even further and it would enable competition to be retained.

It would enable the autonomy and integrity of those individual college units to be maintained and also competition to be maintained, and at the same time it would enable us to market Adelaide in the same way as Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and Christchurch are marketed as university cities. It would be a city where people could come and look at the alternatives, and South Australia would be the better for it.

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): I do not want to upset my colleagues on this side of the House, but I must advise them that last Saturday I attended a meeting of the combined ALP sub-branches of the north-eastern suburbs. As members of the House would know, the Government proposes to introduce major changes at Modbury Hospital which will result in improved health services to residents of the north-eastern suburbs and, at the same time, achieve a reduction in costs to the Government. Despite this, the Labor Party letter-boxed extensively throughout the north-eastern suburbs advising that a public forum on Modbury Hospital's future would be held at the Modbury Sporting Club, Ridgehaven, from 2 to 4 p.m. The aim of the meeting was to try to stir up an issue that just does not exist.

As a result of that extensive advertising a whole 80 people turned up. I looked around those 80 people and I can advise that the number was definitely 80. They were counted and there were not 150 as falsely claimed by the ALP in the *Sunday Mail*. What did I see—I saw all the faces we see at the polling booths handing out ALP how-to-vote cards at election time. There were virtually no general members of the public at the meeting, and I am sure that the Labor Party must have been most disappointed. While considering the question of dishonesty about figures, I ask myself why it is that Labor cannot tell the truth. Five spokespersons were present at the meeting, all pro-Labor, of course, and one was the shadow Minister for Health for whom I have considerable respect.

However, even she could not resist the temptation not to tell the truth. When asked a question about future ownership of the hospital, she said, 'That's the problem. We don't know who is going to end up owning Modbury Hospital.' It is really frustrating when the Opposition sets out deliberately to use mistruths to create concern. In all of its advice the Government has clearly stated that it is only the management of Modbury Hospital that will be changed. Ownership of the land and buildings will be retained by the Government. The Government has made this categorical statement time after time but still the shadow Minister had to say, 'Well, we don't really know who is going to end up owning the place.'

Does this mean that the shadow Minister is incompetent? I do not think so. I believe she is just so involved with Labor's tactics that the end justifies any means. Therefore, I put her comments down to the fact that Labor knows it is in the wrong and, as usual, is resorting to mistruths. While dealing with the meeting, I point out that the Federal member for Makin, Mr Peter Duncan, showed his real colours. At a previous public meeting Mr Duncan made great play of the fact that he had allegedly cancelled another appointment to be at that meeting and criticised the member for Florey and the Minister for Health for not being at the meeting.

So what did we find on Saturday? Mr Duncan turned up for the commencement of the meeting, but once he had his coverage on television he could not get away quickly enough. I would say that he was at the meeting for no more than 20 minutes of the 2½ hours. All Mr Duncan wanted to do was to get there, get on the television cameras and get out. Where is his interest in health services for the north-eastern suburbs? Mr Duncan was only interested in scoring cheap political points and putting out mistruths—and I remind him of the point he made about others not being at meetings. Where are Mr Duncan's interests? They are solely with Mr Duncan. He could not care less about the residents of the north-eastern suburbs. After all, he does not even live anywhere near his electorate, and nor do the two members of the Labor Party sitting opposite.

We only have to look at the lack of ability in another place, too, in relation to South Australia to see how poorly the Democrats are represented. In the Federal Parliament I think they are probably represented even worse, if that is possible. Senator Meg Lees was at the meeting on Saturday, and I have never heard such emotive drivel in all my life. She talked about privatisation, and at one stage she made the allegation that if gaols were privatised the owners of the gaols would be looking to fill them all the time because that is how they make their money. When that sort of pathetic argument is put forward—applauded by ALP members present—what hope have we got when we have people like that with the so-called balance of power?

Again, to indicate the depth to which the Labor Party will sink, a comment passed by one of those present was that the Minister for Health was not there but was at the races where his horse had just won him \$10 000. The shadow Minister yesterday repeated that mistruth. The obvious implication was that the Minister was more interested in horse racing than in public health. This statement is utter nonsense, as was the rest of the drivel that was put forward by those present. I repeat: it is most unfortunate that the shadow Minister perpetuated that story in this House yesterday. When only 80 people of the entire north-eastern suburbs can come to a meeting that was so heavily advertised, it shows only too clearly there is very wide general acceptance of what this Government plans to do.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

ELECTORAL (DUTY TO VOTE) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Electoral Act 1985. Read a first time.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

The object of this Bill is to remove the criminal sanctions which currently apply when people fail to exercise their right to vote.

Australia is one of the few democracies which compels (via the use of penalties) its citizens to vote in elections.

In all other democracies the right to vote entails the right not to vote. The fact that Australia persists with compulsion is something which may generally be seen as incompatible with a fair and democratic society.

Most democracies see the right to vote as embracing the fundamental right of individuals not to vote if they so choose. One of the principal reasons Holland abolished compulsory voting in 1970 was the view that to force people to exercise their right to vote was to destroy the very nature of that right. Another critical factor influencing the Dutch was the view that election results should be based on the clear choice of voters voluntarily participating in the election process. Election results should not be influenced by the votes of those who would not bother to vote but for compulsion. This Bill therefore removes the threat of criminal sanctions against those who do not vote.

The arguments have been debated extensively, so there is no need to repeat them all.

At the last State election 64 744 people failed to vote. Please explain notices were sent to 33 746 and expiation notices were

posted to 9 814. At the present time 5 849 summonses are being prepared—5 672 are for failing to respond to either the please explain notice or the expiation notice and the remaining 177 are for failing to provide a valid and sufficient reason for not voting.

The estimated costs of the resulting court action is expected to be greater than \$500 000. Further costs will be incurred by the Electoral Commissioner in following up non-voters in the by-elections of Torrens, Elizabeth and now Taylor.

Chasing up non-voters is a costly and time consuming process and the end result is that non-voters are penalised for failing or choosing not to exercise their basic democratic right to vote.

This Bill preserves the expressions of the basic duty of citizens to vote but removes the sanction of a criminal penalty where the citizen chooses, for whatever reason, not to vote. It is the view of the Government that the obligation to vote and the exercise of the right to vote should be voluntary and not subject to the sanction of a criminal penalty. Those who would rather not vote should not be subject to that coercion. If they do not vote they should not be penalised and if, ultimately, they refuse to pay any fine and costs it should not be possible for a non-voter to end up in gaol.

This Bill achieves that end.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Substitution of heading

This clause provides a new heading to Division VI of Part IX of the Act as a consequence of the amendments to be effected by clause 3.

Clause 3: Amendment of s. 85—Duty to vote

It is proposed to remove from section 85 of the Act (being the section that creates a duty for every elector to record a vote at each election in a district for which he or she is enrolled) those subsections that require the Electoral Commissioner to send out a notice to each elector who appears not to have voted in an election, and that create various offences in relation to failing to vote.

The Hon. M.D. RANN secured the adjournment of the debate.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY ARTS TRUST (TOURING PROGRAMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 October. Page 632.)

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak on this Bill not only as Leader of the Opposition but as shadow Minister for the Arts. The Opposition supports this Bill, which seeks to amend the South Australian Country Arts Trust Act in relation to the functions and powers of that trust. The Country Arts Trust was established in January 1993 and was an initiative of the Labor Government to help develop the arts in country South Australia. As the Minister said in his second reading explanation, the Government was given a broad mandate to do this. I agree that the timing of that coming in and the Federal Government at the same time establishing a national performing arts touring fund was less than optimal. The Federal fund, called 'Playing Australia,' was set up to support tours throughout Australia by performing arts companies, many of which are community based and require subsidy in order to tour.

I am aware that the Country Arts Trust has now requested a change to the Act to make sure that it has the necessary legislative power to manage and develop touring programs of country arts undertakings both intrastate and interstate. I understand that the Country Arts Trust was faced with some situations where it was constrained in managing tours in country areas of other States as its functions, as set out in the Act, do not allow it to do so. It makes sense that it should have this power, as often there are tours which can be successful only if they are allowed to extend beyond the

boundaries of the State, such as the Green Triangle where there are overlaps of responsibilities, interests and needs.

I note that the Minister for the Arts has made it clear that the trust will not be taking the financial risk when the relevant production moves outside this State's borders but that it will continue to take the risk within South Australia, and appropriately so. The Opposition supports any move which promotes the arts in South Australia and our artistic products interstate. I applaud the Country Arts Trust for its hard work and initiative over the years and I wish it every success in its future endeavours. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development): The Government appreciates the Opposition's support for this measure. As one who represents country seats, having done so over a period of time, and having been involved in the early stage at Port Pirie with the arts and festivals and supporting functions at the Keith Michell Theatre at Port Pirie, I know that for country people to have access to quality arts programs is important. The Country Arts Trust is a vehicle or mechanism for ensuring that country people in South Australia are given a similar type of service in the provision of arts at a local venue as are metropolitan-based people. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS (ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 October. Page 564.)

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are some issues that I can raise while we are waiting for the member for Hart.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take it that the honourable member is not the lead speaker.

Mr CLARKE: I am not the lead speaker, Sir. I should like to outline some of my concerns with respect to this legislation, and no doubt the Minister will be able to answer my comments during his reply or in Committee. One issue relates to a company—for example, Clipsal—being licensed to test various products coming on to the market. The Opposition is concerned about Clipsal being able to test its own manufactured goods in terms of reaching certain standards. One would want to see an independent checker of the manufacturer with respect to reaching those standards. Also, there is the issue of that same manufacturer checking the quality of the goods of its competitors. Obviously, in a competitive environment there could be a temptation for that company to be more stringent with its competitors' goods. Some difficulties arise with respect to those sorts of issues, and I think that they need to be addressed by the Minister.

I do not have the same sort of qualms with respect to Amdel and I do appreciate that, as far as I am aware, by and large Clipsal is not involved with many of the consumer goods such as washing machines, air-conditioners and the like which are contemplated within this Bill. Nonetheless, Clipsal could engage in that exercise at some future time in terms of expanding the role of products, and therefore these serious issues that I have raised need to be addressed. I am sure the member for Hart will be able to elaborate far more

strongly than me, having studied this matter in some depth. I will not take the time of the House any longer.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I appreciate that as the lead speaker for the Opposition I have unlimited time, and I thank the member for Ross Smith, the Deputy Leader. I am one who honours seniority within the Labor Party, and I appreciate that the Deputy Leader wanted to pull rank and speak first. I acknowledge that that is his right as Deputy Leader and I was happy for him to speak first on this Bill. I apologise for my late arrival. I was listening very attentively to the previous Bill and it got rushed through somewhat. This is not a complex Bill. It is a Bill that simply seeks to divest certain functions that are currently undertaken by the Electricity Trust of South Australia, being the licensing of certain electrical products. I understand that the ETSA restructuring means that a lot of its non-core activities are being done away with, this being one of them. Obviously this is an area which on the surface appears to be a small issue but which does have some significant implications if one gets it wrong. The licensing of our electrical products is a very serious and important issue. I must put on the record that ETSA has clearly fulfilled that role with distinction over time.

The Bill seeks to allow privately accredited laboratories to undertake this work, and I understand they are Gerard Industries, the University of South Australia and Amdel. That in itself does not present the Opposition with a problem, except that the Opposition has some concern in the area of Gerard Industries, namely, that a private sector organisation will have the ability to license products. I am not exactly clear about the breadth of products that are likely to be licensed by this laboratory, and I will explore that with the Minister in the Committee stage. If a private sector company such as Gerard Industries had the power to license its own products, we would be concerned about the appropriateness of that, whether it caused a conflict or a concern within the community and whether a private sector company would be licensing a competitor's product.

I want to explore that issue in Committee and ascertain whether there is the potential for any commercial conflict. This is in no way a reflection on Gerard Industries and its technical capacity. Clearly it is a leader in electrical products in this State and Australia, if not the world. I acknowledge that; I simply raise the question as to whether licensing its own or its competitors' products is a proper role. There may well be ways to avoid that. In conducting that work, Amdel and the University of South Australia are clearly non-commercial or non-private sector organisations.

NATA accreditation is simply that: it is accreditation. Again, this is not necessarily something on which I would expect the Minister to comment, but I would hope that NATA maintains an appropriate level of supervision of these sites. Whilst an organisation can be accredited by NATA, for me to be completely satisfied with this Bill there would need to be sufficient continual monitoring of the role of these organisations because, particularly with the way our economy and society are developing, more complex electrical products are coming on the market all the time. Just about everything we take into our home these days is an electrical product, and the safety of those products is paramount.

In this House only yesterday we heard the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations make the point that as of 1 January next year all new homes must be fitted with a fire alarm wired to the central wiring of the house. That is an acknowledgment that

we have a terrible and horrific incidence of house fires and loss of life in this State and throughout the country, and that many of these fires are caused by faulty electrical products. Unfortunately, I suspect that that is a fact of life, but it is one that we should not tolerate or accept.

The safety of electrical products is paramount. Faulty electrical products mean devastation for families and our community, so the safeguards to ensure that those products are as safe as possible is a prime concern. Clearly, ETSA has performed that role well. This Bill attempts simply to take that function away from ETSA. The Opposition supports the Bill, but I want to raise the point that we have some concerns about ongoing monitoring and safeguards in the new arrangements to ensure that those laboratories are consistently and constantly monitored and are performing to the appropriate standard.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Infrastructure): I thank the Opposition for its support of this Bill. I remind the House, that when in Government and proposing Southern Power and Water, the present Opposition had a similar provision in its draft legislation to that which we are proposing here today, so I would have been surprised if there had been anything but support for this measure from the Opposition. Both the member for Hart and the Deputy Leader have raised concerns in relation to testing and its importance. The Government concurs in that view. The safety of electrical equipment and confidence in the people in the testing procedures are of vital importance; that is a critical issue. Anybody wanting to look after the well-being of other people in the community would ensure that that is the case.

We have an Electrical Products Advisory Committee, which comprises representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Australian Electrical Test Centre, which is the University of South Australia; electrical wholesalers; the Electrical Contractors Association; the Electrical Trades Union; and ETSA as the current regulatory authority. If anyone has concerns about the testing process of any one of the agencies, including Gerard Industries, they clearly have the ability to take up the matter with the advisory committee. Further to that, in view of the general process that was commenced by the former Government and followed through in this Bill by the current Government, since June 1994 ETSA has abandoned its product testing activities to facilitate a heads of agreement with Gerard Industries. The international testing and certification services are that independent, arms-length testing company. But there are also several other laboratories in South Australia and interstate, for example, the Australian Electrical Testing Centre, which is a subsidiary of the University of South Australia.

Clearly, therefore, there are alternatives to Gerard Industries. It is a competitive marketplace out there, and that will require a competitive discipline and marketplace pressures on Gerard Industries to ensure that its performance as a competitor in that marketplace is up to the mark. In any event, if anyone has concerns, they have recourse and redress through the Electrical Products Advisory Committee, to which I have previously referred. Again, I thank the Opposition for its support in this matter. It can be assured that the Government will want to ensure that appropriate testing mechanisms and safety of public and electrical equipment are paramount and not compromised and that the processes put in place are there to ensure that that does not happen.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 12 October. Page 572.)

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): This Bill has the general support of the Opposition. There are a number of concerns relating to it, but I hope that they will be addressed by the Minister in his reply to the second reading debate. We will move amendments in Committee and they have been distributed, as far as I am aware. However, the Opposition generally supports the thrust of the Bill. It broadly achieves its aims of, first, meeting the State's obligation as a participant in the national vocational, education and training system and, secondly, it establishes a mechanism through which public policy in areas of employment, education and training can be subject to the advice and guidance of industry and commerce, including the employees.

Whilst the Opposition welcomes in broad terms the thrust of the Bill, we do temper that enthusiasm somewhat because of certain serious deficiencies as we see it in this legislation. Amongst those concerns is the representation of the various players in the industry. The Minister, in his second reading explanation, said:

The board, [the Vocation, Employment, Education and Training (VEET) Board], which will advise the Government generally on employment and training issues, will be constituted so that people with relevant experience and expertise in industry and commerce, including representation from the union movement, will constitute a majority of members.

Unfortunately, from the Opposition's point of view, the Bill does not guarantee what the Minister has said in his explanation. Clause 7, for example, lays down who will be represented on the VEET Board. It will have a floating membership of between 7 and 12 persons, and I will come to that point later.

There is a guarantee that the board membership must consist of at least one man and one woman: nowhere in the legislation is there in-built protection that the VEET Board will have amongst its membership representation drawn from employer organisations or the peak trade union council, the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia. Whilst I appreciate that the Minister may assure me that his intentions are good and that he has every intention of doing as promised in his second reading explanation, I prefer legislative guarantees, because Ministers can come and go, and vocational education and training in South Australia is too important in this State to the employers and employees for there to be a training board which has insufficient input from industry and the employees in industry. The Opposition has drafted amendments with respect to the constitution of the VEET Board which we will move in Committee.

We also have similar concerns with respect to the membership of the Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC). It is very important that members appreciate that this legislation repeals the Industrial, Commercial and Training Act 1981 and the Tertiary Education Act 1986. The Industrial, Commercial and Training Act 1981, which established the Industrial, Commercial and Training Commission, regulates apprenticeships, traineeships and prevocational education throughout South Australia. Its provisions cover disciplinary and disputes powers. It is an extremely important body and has had tripartite representation from the principal players within industry, namely employers and

unions, prior to the 1981 Act which was brought in by the then Minister for Industrial Affairs, the now Premier, the member for Finnis.

The legislation as currently drafted provides that three persons will be nominated by the Minister who he believes will represent the interests of employers and three persons who he believes will represent the interests of employees. The legislation does not provide for the Minister to consult with those employer and employee organisations who have a vested interest in vocational education and training. The Bill allows the Minister basically to pull any six persons off the street to represent those respective interests, and none of them may have any involvement whatsoever with vocational education or training.

To suggest that employer organisations such as the South Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Master Builders Association of South Australia, and the Engineering Employers Association South Australia should not be consulted first on these issues, with respect to their being able to nominate people directly to that board, is an insult. In fact, it is ludicrous, given that those employers have a keen and active role to play, and have had an ongoing relationship with vocational education and training in this State. Indeed, their contribution and that of the trade union movement was recognised with the enactment of the Industrial and Commercial Training Act 1981 by the then Minister for Industrial Affairs, Mr Brown. I am simply—and I will elaborate further in Committee—seeking to reinsert within the Bill before us the provisions of the 1981 legislation that was introduced by the member for Finnis.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: We certainly do—not only the unions but also the peak employer groups operating in South Australia. It is from their respective membership that the ARC committee is comprised, as has occurred quite successfully over a number of years.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: Yes. The member for Unley wants to interject. I wish he would listen to the Speaker's ruling that was given early today and on past occasions about interjections. I had the pleasure of serving for three years as a member of the old Industrial and Commercial Training Commission and, for three years prior to that, as a deputy member of that body. I was very proud to serve on that organisation and, in particular, to serve with people of such distinction as Mr Allan Swinstead from the Engineering Employers Association South Australia, Mr John Marshall from the Master Builders Association, and Mr Lindsay Thompson from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as it then was.

In the three years during which I was a member of that body I am not aware of a vote being taken: it was done by consensus. Indeed, it is a tribute to the chairmanship of Mr Graham Mill, Chairman of the ICTC, the cooperative spirit engendered within that organisation over the years, the camaraderie and, more importantly, the common purpose of industry, that is, employers and employees. I do not want that interfered with at all. I think it would be a retrograde step as far as industry in South Australia is concerned. The Minister may say, 'Of course we would consult with those peak employer bodies and the UTLC with respect to these matters.' But I am simply pointing out that the legislation does not provide it, and not every Minister responsible for vocational training will necessarily be as genuine or as big-hearted as the present Minister—or at least that is what he

tries to intimate to me—with respect to this matter, and I would prefer the safety of legislation.

I also raise the issue—and, again, we will deal with this in more detail in Committee, but this is to give the Minister some flavour of the Opposition's concerns in this area—of the functions of the board as constituted under clause 9. The Opposition believes that the VEET Board should have the authority to select its own staff members or consultants, if it so desires. The Minister, of course, retains his right to give directions to the board as expressly provided in the Bill, so that the Government can say to the board, in effect, 'No, we do not have the budget allocation', or, 'No, we refuse you the right to hire certain staff.' But, short of that type of direct ministerial direction, the Minister, we believe, should provide the board with the type of independence and flexibility it needs to do its work. This is particularly important when one takes into account that this new organisation created under this Act includes TAFE as a provider.

The VEET Board may well be wanting to bring in external consultants and external training providers—external, that is, to TAFE. It would seem ludicrous that the board, in wanting to perhaps explore those options, might feel somewhat inhibited from doing so because it would probably have to approach employers already employed by TAFE regarding recommendations with respect to employing consultants or securing a private training provider for a certain course that the VEET Board wanted to undertake. In effect, TAFE employees would be writing the charter for their own destruction in terms of bringing in an external provider or in relation to being in any way critical of their own performance.

We are saying that, once a budget allocation has been made by the Government through the Minister to the VEET Board, the VEET Board should then be free to hire the sort of staff it wants and, if it has to go outside the Public Service environs to do that, it should be free to do so, and this would avoid potential conflict of interest in the situation I have just described. The Opposition has drawn amendments around that issue.

The Opposition also has some concerns with the Minister's being nominated under the Bill as the State training agency rather than VEET itself. The decision to participate in the national vocational education and training system has inherent in it the recognition of a vocation, employment and training sector in the State which is more than just the public TAFE sector. It recognises the important role industry, enterprises and private providers play in undertaking vocational education and training. In the past, there has been a reliance on the TAFE institutes, or colleges as they were in the past, to be the most significant providers of training. The new emphasis on a more flexible vocation, employment and training system which recognises that training occurs in many settings and at different rates is critical if, as a nation, we are to progress.

In the past, too many of our young people left school and entered the labour market with little or no basic vocational skills. On the other hand, those who sought a post-school qualification did so in a vocational vacuum, often pursuing skills within a narrow career path. The national training reform agenda seeks to ensure that training works for all. It will provide the following: nationally recognised qualifications; greater convergence between general and vocational education; greater employment related key competencies among new entrants to the work force; recognition of skills acquired by individuals, on or off the job; responsiveness to

industry needs; and a greater range of training opportunities for all Australians, in particular, young people.

The response to the challenge has been the formation of ANTA at a national level and State training agencies at the State and territory level. It is important to note that at each State or Territory level, except in South Australia and Western Australia, there has been a recognition of the need to separate the State training agency from the public TAFE authority. I draw attention to the third paragraph (page 3) of the Minister's second reading explanation, where he said:

During consultations several industry commentators expressed the view that the VEET authority should be clearly separated from the TAFE administration.

I understand that by March last year some 78 responses had been received to the green paper which was put out by the former Labor Government on vocational training and which called for public submissions, and those responses came from unions, both those involved in vocational education and training and those in industry serviced by it, from the TAFE Students' Association, from 19 of the State's 20 industry training advisory boards, and so on. A whole range of consultation has taken place, including consultation with the Local Government Association.

What is important is that, out of all of those responses, whilst there was generally a desire for the board to have a significant role in policy making in the public TAFE system, there was also a desire for it to be seen as distinct from TAFE. The new agenda and way of operating requires there to be separation of responsibilities. Public TAFE authorities have a very significant role to play in the provision of vocational and educational training services, but they must not be seen to be determining the direction of the whole vocational, educational and training (VET) sector. While it will remain for some time the most significant provider of VET in the State, the perception of its needs must not overshadow both the policy formulation and resource distribution of the VET sector.

The Labor Government distributed the green paper for comment in relation to the various issues, and practically all responses from industry, including those from unions and employer organisations, overwhelmingly called for a separate State training authority, which is to be strongly influenced by industry, along with a strong public TAFE authority. That is very important: industry itself has called for this separation—not just unions but employers within these key industries have made this call.

The national framework for the recognition of training requires the State to establish a training recognition and accreditation unit separate from public TAFE, and I have already dealt with that. All providers should be seen to be competing on a level playing field. The ANTA agreement requires the State to encourage the development of a competitive training market. Under the agreement there is a stipulation that a proportion of the growth funds for VET be distributed to non-public providers. How can this be seen to be fair and equitable if the agency responsible for State effort, VET and the distribution of resources is also the agency responsible for public TAFE?

It is not in the interests of public TAFE to be identified so closely to the State Training Authority. Public TAFE has a proud record in this State for servicing the training needs of industry in the community, and a former director of TAFE, Kaye Schofield, captured the role of public TAFE so well when she cited as its goal 'building a prosperous and socially just society'. Public TAFE cannot have a more worthwhile

goal, and it should not be distracted from that role, irrespective of the VET activities of industry, enterprises and private providers.

Criticism of such a proposal will come from those who do not want to see yet another bureaucracy established. This is not necessarily the outcome. Under the ANTA agreement the work must be done; the State training profile must be prepared; and recognition and accreditation of training and training providers must occur. The State must establish VET sector policies and procedures, and statistics on VET activity must be collected. Under the Government proposal, the one department responsible for public TAFE and VET activity in this State will do all the work, but inherent in the proposal is a conflict of interest that is strongly opposed by industry, employer organisations, unions and the community.

So, whilst I have not formally drafted an amendment with respect to our concerns about that aspect of the Bill, I flag to the Minister and to the Government that it is a very real issue for us and something which we will be pursuing and seeking answers on in Committee, and it may well be that, depending upon those answers, the Opposition in another place will move further amendments to the Bill with respect to the Minister's assuming the mantle as the training authority.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: Again, the member for Unley, in his usual uncouth manner, Mr Deputy Speaker, has ignored the warnings of the Speaker with respect to needless interjections. The other concerns that I want to touch on for the Minister's information relate to the provision that there must be at least one man and at least one woman on the VEET Board. If the board is going to consist of only seven persons, one woman out of seven, whilst not ideal or necessarily appropriate, is not intolerable. However, if the board is to be expanded to 12, having only one woman on the board is clearly intolerable. I would have thought the Minister would take note of the tapestries hanging in this Chamber and the significance of 1994. Again, depending on answers that the Minister may give on this issue, either in his second reading reply or in Committee, the Opposition in another place may have to move further amendments with respect to the minimum guarantee of gender representation on the board.

I am aware of the flurry of activity in relation to whether this Bill was actually going to be debated today, and another point that I would like to take up with the Minister relates to the South Australian Institute of Languages. The Opposition is well aware of the bun fight that has erupted within the Minister's Cabinet over this issue, and of the attempts by some to scuttle the South Australian Institute of Languages—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: —to absolutely scuttle it, which would be an insult not only to those who established the body but also to the very genuine and very hard working people in charge of that organisation. I noticed a lot of scurrying backwards and forwards this afternoon between the Minister, the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and I suspect it had a lot to do with schedule 2 of the Bill. I will be very interested to see what the Minister has in store for us with respect to that matter. I note that the amendment has already been circulated, so we will see how that goes. So, the Opposition supports the second reading of the Bill. However, it has flagged its concerns and its intention to move certain amendments with respect to this Bill both to strengthen it and in particular to ensure that the key players within the industry—the employers and the trade union movement—are adequately represented within the process.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I am most grateful for the centenary of women's suffrage. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has alluded to the tapestries that now hang both before and behind us, and I can gaze at those tapestries and realise that, in the great tapestry of life, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is but one dropped stitch, and that gives me some consolation. Sir, you have been here longer than I and you know, better than I, the number of years that we have listened to the doctrinal monologue of members opposite. Whenever there is a committee or whenever there is anything to be done, you have to involve the maximum number of people, no matter what, so that the committee ends up having buses to deliver all the people; having quorums of about 105; and generally, as admitted by the Deputy Leader, having to act like an old boys' club and arrive at things by consensus because otherwise nothing gets done.

Mr Clarke: A lot has been done; it just shows how ignorant you are.

Mr BRINDAL: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition accuses me of ignorance. If he will actually listen he might learn something, and that would be interesting for him. Somebody once said to Sir Robert Menzies, 'Tell us all you know, Bob; it won't take long', and Sir Robert replied, 'I'll tell you all we both know, sir; it will take no longer.' I could easily make the same quip about the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am not saying that under the previous Act nothing was done. I do not think the Minister or any member on this side would pretend that the previous Act was useless or that much was not accomplished under it. However, we are a legislature, and we are about progress and about change, and no matter how good the previous Act was, this Minister comes into the Parliament today to make constructive and useful change for the future development of this State.

Had we had the Florence Nightingale mentality of members opposite, we would still be running around with hurricane lamps and the ladies in long petticoats. Members opposite are like the troglodytes; they do not seem to want change. They do not seem to realise that in 1994 the larger and more mammoth like the committee, the less representative and less effective it may be. This is a new engine to drive a new machine for a new decade. It is a structure to see us into the next millennium. It is not a structure to be protected because it was good in the past. So, no matter how good it was in the past—and nobody says it was not—we must look at this new shape.

I would point out in collegiate fashion to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he has to get the mentality of being a legislator. In contribution to this debate we heard him clearly say he believed this and he believed that because he was a member of one of those committees; it was his great privilege to serve on the committee. I would ask this House to contemplate a scene that most of us would have seen in a picture. The scene is of Napoleonic wars and an officer, a general, sitting on a horse on a hill. If you looked beyond the general into the valley you could see the masses of troops, the cannon, the cavalry—all aspects of the army—engaged in battle; and far off were hills and passes. That is where the word 'strategy' comes from—the Greek word for general.

The theory is that only the general on the hill was in the position to see the battle and to so marshal the forces that not only would they be victorious but they would get through the pass. If the Leader of the Opposition is to come into this place and contribute as a legislator, he must get out of the mentality he is in of being one of the caravan owners, one of the people leading a little bit of the cavalry down in the valley, and get

with the generals up on a hill, and adopt not that middle, parochial attitude of his section of the battle but the general strategy for seeing how the battle is best won for all South Australia. I mean that in a collegiate way, because his criticisms, while they may have some merit, come from a limited perspective.

We have here a Minister who has had some vision in the matter. We had a previous Minister who, regardless of his current faults, exhibited some vision when he was the Minister responsible for TAFE. We have a tradition of that in TAFE. We have had a Minister in the past who exhibited some vision. We now have a Minister who exhibits some vision, but we also have aberration in the form of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who wants everything to stay the same and, indeed, go backwards.

The Deputy Leader talks about a bun fight on this side of the House and about scurrying around, but I assure him that nobody on this side scurries; indeed, we are in Government and we do not fight over trivial things like buns—the price of bread maybe, but not buns. If there has been negotiation and debate over the South Australian Institute of Languages, that is the legitimate province of those who have the responsibility of the Government benches. The member for Hartley, who sits alongside me, has a large ethnic constituency; so does the member for Norwood and so do I in Unley. The Premier is the Minister in charge of ethnic affairs.

The Minister is charged with the responsibility for tertiary education. Each of those people and others on our benches have an absolute and perfect right to negotiate and discuss matters on behalf of our constituencies and on behalf of interest groups in the community. If, as a result of those discussions, not machinations or any other more sinister thing, this Minister decides that an amendment is in order to make this a better Bill, then I look to the Opposition to commend the Bill, to support the amendment and say that this Government has done the best possible thing for all South Australians. With the Leader of the Opposition's promise that he is going to commend the Bill, I certainly will sit down because this is an opportunity not to be missed.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Certainly, the Opposition will be pleased to support the passage of this Bill with only minor but important amendments. The Bill, of course, is a natural consequence of the move to a national partnership model for vocational education and training. Just to recap, because I think it is important to look at the history of this matter, back in 1991 at a meeting, I think in Melbourne, the former Federal Minister, John Dawkins, talked of his plans to take over funding responsibility and control of the TAFE system by the Commonwealth.

This was of considerable concern to me as Minister for TAFE in South Australia; it was of considerable concern to the honourable Kay Hallahan, who was Minister for Education and Further Education in Western Australia; and, fortunately, it was also of considerable concern to my friend and colleague, the Liberal Minister of Further Education in the Northern Territory, Shane Stone; to the Liberal Minister of Education in Tasmania and also to other key players around the country. But the Commonwealth was convinced that it had the numbers to turn TAFE nationally, not into a national body but into a Commonwealth body. Therein lies an important difference which many people do not understand. A Commonwealth TAFE system would have meant TAFE and training being run as an adjunct to DEET. In South

Australia it would have been simply the colonial outpost of a vast DEET bureaucracy.

At that stage the Victorian Labor Government and the New South Wales Liberal Government were supporting the Commonwealth in its endeavours to take over TAFE. I think there must have been more Ministerial Councils, both the AEC and MOVEET, meeting on this matter than ever before in the history of further education. We had about 10 or 12 meetings over the space of about 18 months, and it was very important that I, as the South Australian Minister, gained the support, bit by bit, inch by inch, of other TAFE Ministers in order to roll my Federal Labor counterparts on their proposal. There was a great deal of argy-bargy. There was a great deal of consternation between John Dawkins and myself, during which I accused the Federal Government of adopting an East German model for further education. It was important that we have a bipartisan small States commitment to defend the regional needs for training in our State and other States.

We certainly agree that there have to be national standards. We certainly agree that there has to be a national agenda for training. But what concerned me was that the model being proposed by the Commonwealth would have meant that essentially our needs would be subordinate to a Commonwealth agenda and that the special needs of South Australian industry would be ignored. Therefore, we came up with an Australian national partnership model, basically setting up a national training structure, but one in which the individual States had special responsibilities both for funding—and that, in turn, leveraged extra funding from the Commonwealth which we all wanted—but also in terms of the separate powers of Ministers and, indeed, vocational educational authorities in each State.

We were successful. The Commonwealth Minister was confident of success. It went to a vote, and I think two States supported his position. Fortunately, the New South Wales Government under John Fahey, as Minister for TAFE then, followed by Virginia Chadwick, decided at the last moment to support the South Australian position, and we were able to get established the Australian National Training Authority, which has a board, which is a ballot of all States, to ensure that people of distinction are on that board, but still reserving the special rights and responsibilities of the States.

I am told that ANTA is under threat because of concerns about some States not maintaining their effort, and that would be a great pity. This Bill is a natural consequence of a move to a national partnership model of vocational education and training. The Bill follows a review of the structural arrangements for the delivery of vocational education and training in South Australia, which was undertaken by the former Labor Government. The keys to the proposal at that time were the concepts of partnership and shared responsibility. Vocational education and training is an integral part of the revitalisation of industry in this State. It is clear that training needs to be industry driven—not bureaucrat driven—and needs to harness the wealth of experience and knowledge contained in our community.

I am aware that there has been overwhelming support throughout industry and the trade union movement for the passing of this legislation. However, there are a number of points which industry in particular has made clear it wishes to have reinforced, and I will mention those later. Certainly, when I was Minister of Employment and Further Education, in response to the New Directions for South Australia's Economy report, known as the Arthur D. Little report, I put forward a proposal known as 'Training 2000', which was a

strategy to support economic development. I was concerned that the process for reducing tariffs, albeit far too quickly, was placing a huge challenge on our industry to become internationally competitive in an increasingly global market. I made it clear at the time that I considered skill formation to be a key requirement for South Australia to take that step up on to the international stage. This would give us the competitive advantage we require.

Creating competitive advantage in sophisticated industries demands improvement and innovation, finding better ways to compete and then exploiting them globally. This quest for competitive advantage is wholly dependent upon the application of human skill and ingenuity, which requires a highly developed vocational education system to be exploited fully. The national partnership model requires the development of State training profile models, and profiles which encompass the activities of trainers in all sectors, that is, public, commercial enterprise and community. This profile was to provide the base for all funding negotiations with the Australian National Training Authority.

I understand that the South Australian Government is having some problems convincing ANTA that South Australia is maintaining its effort in vocational education and training. Under the former Government it was decided that institutes of vocational education, employment and training would become the focal points for these activities and for youth services within their region and to provide a more coordinated and comprehensive service than was possible under the college based system. On the national stage, the Commonwealth Government was pushing very hard for a greater emphasis on vocational education and training, with the Government in Canberra identifying that it was an area that had been neglected in comparison to the great emphasis put on growth in university funding.

This culminated in the 1981 Australian Education Review of Young People's Participation in Post Compulsory Education and Training, which set targets for participation in these matters for young people and also, of course, in the Carmichael report entitled 'The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System', which further developed the apprenticeship training and traineeship system. From all that we have before us in the Bill today, my colleague the Deputy Leader has outlined to the House some of the concerns that we, and more particularly industry, have with parts of the Bill. Certainly, I will be interested to hear the Minister's reply to these concerns, both in Committee and later.

I would like to see a better recognition of women in the Bill, in terms of their participation on the board. It is a shame that that bipartisanship, that tripartite sense that has been so important for training provision in this State has been watered down. We need to reinforce the essential role of trade unions in this process. We have to have industry, business, unions and the Government working together. That was always the way in TAFE in this State, and it must be the way forward in the future. There can be no alibis, no excuses, no buck passing, no one saying that we as a community do not have common ownership of the training agenda.

I understand there has been considerable toing-and-froing today about the South Australian Institute of Languages (SAIL). It is interesting that the Premier supported the Cabinet submission for the abolition of SAIL. He supported it in terms of the legislation coming to this House which specifically abolishes SAIL. A couple of weeks ago the Premier was prepared to take on the ethnic communities, the multicultural sector, and to take on Romano Rubichi. He was

prepared to do that and along with this Minister he voted for an end to SAIL. Apparently it all changed today, because I think they were tipped off that my colleague was going to be raising the issue of SAIL and that I was going to be asking a question. Suddenly an amendment has been cobbled together that seeks to amend the Government's own Bill. It provides:

Despite the repeal of the Tertiary Education Act 1986—

(a) the South Australian Institute of Languages will continue in existence;

What a weak and wobbly bunch. Basically, the Premier had a rush of blood to the head; he was going to take on SAIL and get rid of it and he was reinforced by his hapless Minister who, in other respects, has been bipartisan in supporting the training agenda that we established. Now we see that the Government is going to correct the matter, fix up SAIL and fix up Romano's position and others in the future. I am pleased to see that there is at least some recognition of the importance of languages in further education in this State.

Certainly, I hope that the Minister has a long and fruitful relationship with Professor Rubichi. I hope that we can continue to pursue these matters in a bipartisan way. When we issued the green paper there were strong responses from industry. I am delighted that much of what was done before has been incorporated in the Bill. The Minister has excellent officers. I had the great privilege to work with people of outstanding merit, such as Peter Kirby and Kaye Schofield. Along with Andrew Strickland they make a threesome of outstanding heads of department in this State. I would mention other people in the department but, for fear of ruining their careers by praising them fully, I will not mention them by name. It was an immense privilege for me to be Minister responsible for TAFE and further education for almost three years.

On my last day in that portfolio the former Premier, Lynn Arnold, phoned me to say that I had become the Industry, Tourism and State Services Minister, and that I had to pack up my TAFE bags. I was down at Regency College in the kitchen. I had just opened and signed the deal to set up the International Hotel Management School. Indeed, the other day on a plane I was sitting next to a student from another State who told me with great excitement about how fantastic the South Australian TAFE system was, how fantastic Regency College was and asked me whether I knew about the excellent hotel management school down at Regency Park that involved *cordon bleu* and the Swiss Hotel School.

It is pleasing to see those initiatives continued. As I say, I have fond memories of my time in TAFE and I can assure all those people, whether they are institute directors, head office staff or staff teaching throughout the State, that TAFE in South Australia under whatever name it is given will always have my strong support.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): This is an exciting day for training in South Australia. The introduction and swift passage of this Bill heralds a new era in terms of more flexible delivery in training, giving training the recognition it deserves. It not only maintains and supports the very positive role played by TAFE but it also recognises that there is a place for private providers, for skill centres and other organisations involved in the provision of training.

The important aspect of this Bill is that it is owned and driven by industry. That is very important, because the purpose of training is to meet the needs of industry, the

community and individuals. If it does not do that, it has failed. As I have said on many occasions, training is not an end in itself. If it does not provide for the needs of industry, particular enterprises and individuals working in those enterprises, it will be a failure. It is important that with the establishment of the board we have quality people on it. It is my desire and strong commitment that that will occur. I acknowledge the work of those who have been on the interim VEET Board, and I am in no way suggesting or implying that any person on the interim VEET Board will not be considered for the board when it is established by this legislation.

This Bill has been subject to extensive consultation over a very long time. There has probably been more consultation on this Bill than on any other measure that has come before the House. It has been looked at by every legitimate organisation in the State which has an interest in training, and their contributions have been considered and, wherever possible, incorporated into the Bill. In terms of drafting the Bill, it has been made clear that we are separating TAFE from the VEET Board. There is a clear intention to do that, because, despite the fact that TAFE is vital and something of which I am very proud, it is separate from the VEET Board.

The VEET Board is not TAFE under a different name. The reason we have gone down that path, and in respect of my being the State training agency, is so that we do not create additional bureaucratic bodies, but, for the size of this State, have something that is efficient and effective and which maintains a distinction between provision via TAFE and the advice and direction that will come from the board. This process is focused on contributions from employers and employees. It is vital that that should continue. Training is a very good mechanism for bringing together the various parts of industry. Where employers and employees work together, it is a win-win situation for the community. It is happening more and more across industry. We have seen it recently in the vehicle, textile, clothing and footwear industries. Where it has happened, employees benefit in terms of enhanced employment, with increased productivity and profitability for the enterprise, which in turn means an improved standard of living and a greater chance of security of employment for South Australians.

This Bill acknowledges the constructive roles of both employers and employees and the contribution of people in the education and training sector. The intention is that they should continue to work together and elevate vocational training to the point where it is recognised not as something that one does if one does not get into university but as something that is vital. We must correct the imbalance that has been in our community for a long time. For many decades, as a community we have denigrated and downgraded technicians, technical and trades people. It is time that we stopped that nonsense. If someone uses their hands as well as their head, the implication that somehow they are inferior must be rejected.

My strong commitment is to get the vocational, education and training sector to a point where it has the high regard of the community and is seen as an equal partner in terms of providing opportunities for people, not as something one does if one cannot get into university. Of course, universities are important. We are not seeking to attack or criticise them. The point is that for too long our system has been out of balance, with a focus and assumption that everyone is going to university, when in reality we also need, as is becoming more and more evident, chefs, mechanics, people who can fix

aircraft—a whole range of people with skills who can serve industry and the community.

Various points were made by Opposition members, and I acknowledge the general bipartisan support for this measure. It is important in regard to training that we have bipartisan support. In that respect, it has to be seen as analogous to immigration. We do not want lurches over time, suddenly changing direction, because the consequences and costs for the community are enormous: we need stability. Training is a long-term investment and commitment, so bipartisan support is vital. I am prepared to look at the amendments foreshadowed by the Opposition. When we reach the Committee stage I shall be prepared to give them due consideration and address them, because I believe they have been put forward with good intent. Therefore, as is my usual practice, I will not arbitrarily dismiss anyone's constructive input.

As I said earlier, TAFE will continue. It is an outstanding organisation. Sadly, most people in South Australia do not appreciate how good TAFE is. However, as I indicated, this legislation is not simply about TAFE; it is more about the umbrella organisation that will give direction. TAFE, along with other providers, will work within that umbrella to meet the training needs of industry and the community.

Reference was made to the involvement of women. I am a very strong supporter of the involvement of women, because, as a community, we do not want to see wasted the talent of slightly more than half the population. I grew up in a family in which one of my sisters majored in mathematics many years ago. We did not regard it as unusual at that time. However, I realise that my family may have been more enlightened, because, as I have mentioned previously, we welcomed Lois O'Donaghue into our family when she was training at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and was not so readily accepted by the wider community.

The point is that I am supportive of having women involved. One of the great things about training is that many of the senior people are women. Yesterday, when I addressed the Business Education Forum, I commented that that is important because, as a safe generalisation, males tend to focus somewhat more on things and women tend to have a more people orientation. If we bring men and women together, I think we have literally the best of both worlds. I certainly encourage women to be involved in training. For example, all the senior people with the Construction Industry Training Board are women, and that is great. I believe that people should be appointed on ability and merit.

I have never been a great supporter of things like quotas; people should be appointed on ability. If all the senior positions are held by women, I think that is fine. I do not share the Deputy Leader's concerns, because there is no intention on the part of the Government not to have full participation by women: quite the contrary. It is already happening in training, and I believe it will accelerate. I have many excellent women in senior positions within my own department. In fact, in terms of directorships in TAFE institutes, 40 per cent are held by women, and no doubt that will increase over time.

Training should not be seen as an end in itself, but there is a danger that that can happen. I think that training reform has become unnecessarily complicated. It needs to be simplified not for the sake of simplicity but so that people, particularly in the small and medium business area, can understand what it is about and not be bogged down and scared by acronyms which, when translated, are quite simple.

I will give two examples. The first is Recognition of Prior Learning, or RPL, which sounds like a silicone-based spray. It really means, 'Don't waste your time teaching someone to do something if they can already do it.' That seems common sense to me, and sensible people have been doing that for years in their training approach. The other example is competency based, or CBT, which sounds frightening. It simply means that one should make sure that people have the skills and knowledge that they need to undertake particular tasks. Again, I would have thought that was appropriate.

We are moving away from a system which is based on serving time—and the only place where that is appropriate is within the prison system—towards a system which is based on competency and a recognition that people progress: when they reach a certain level of competency they move on. I think that terms like 'training reform agenda' scare people off. I do not particularly like some of that terminology, because it frightens people unnecessarily.

Part of the challenge in the training revolution which is under way at the moment is to simplify training to make it understandable to the everyday person. My goal is to get it on the front page of the paper. With due respect to Tony Modra, in the long run training is more important than many of the issues that appear on the front page of the *Advertiser*. Ultimately, the quality of our life depends on training. I have often used the example that, the next time people are travelling by air, they should imagine hearing an announcement that the person in charge of the aircraft has had no training and is learning on the job but that they should have an enjoyable flight. Or, when they go under the surgeon's knife, they should imagine being told before the anaesthetic bites, 'This is the first job I have done; I have never done anything like this before, but have a good operation.' They are extreme examples, but the point applies across the board. When you get your car serviced, you assume that the brakes are fixed, if that is what you wanted done.

Training affects every part of our life. There has been a bit of a misunderstanding for a long time that the competency based, skills based approach applies only outside universities. That is not true. One would hope that dentists and surgeons have a skills base in what they do. The point is that a lot of these artificial barriers—the castles that have existed in the past in TAFE and universities—are breaking down, and hopefully this will result in better service for the community, better training, better outcomes for everyone and a better quality of life.

Mention was made of an amendment to schedule 2 that I have circulated. My strong commitment—and it is that of the Government—is that in South Australia we have not only high quality language provision at the tertiary level but also that it be comprehensive and encompass community based languages and also economic or trade languages, if one wants to use that sort of definition. It is the intention of the Government that we have bodies in South Australia that deliver high quality language provision, and the universities are currently very close to establishing what I believe will be an exciting centre for languages in South Australia. I understand—and it is up to the universities to release the details—that it will be based on the very successful Helpmann model that I was able to instigate to assist the universities to bring about what will be a first class arts training academy. I understand that a similar model will be followed in terms of language provision with incorporation of the functions of SAIL.

The work of SAIL in some areas has been very good in terms of the provision of Arabic and Russian, and the

amendment that I have indicated is to ensure that SAIL continues until such time as we are able to get suitable alternative arrangements in place, and that will require the cooperation of the universities. In regard to that process, members would appreciate that we have two discussion papers out, one relating to languages and one relating to multicultural education at the tertiary level. I would like to have had all the consultation responses and so on processed, dealt with and concluded by this stage, but these things take time, hence the necessity for an extension for SAIL. That is no way a reflection on the people involved in SAIL. I would like to publicly acknowledge the support of people such as Dr Cocchiaro, Professor Smolicz, John Kiosoglous, Basil Taliangis, Luigi Penna and others in respect of their contribution. Quite a few others have assisted in ensuring that that commitment to languages is maintained.

It is certainly the Government's intention that the teaching of languages not be devalued or diminished in any way. It is fair to say that in the past 10 years or so in South Australia there has been a risk of languages slipping off the agenda and becoming less popular amongst students, and we must arrest that decline, otherwise any chance of South Australia's becoming bilingual will pass us by. If you are to have language teaching, it must be not only comprehensive but also of high quality. Similarly, in relation to the multicultural education aspects, it is important that we do what we can to assist the universities to recognise not only the contribution of the past but also the ongoing contribution of people who have come from different cultures. That also includes the very special culture of the Aboriginal people and their languages, many of which, sadly, have disappeared, and it is important that we do not allow them to disappear in the future. So, in respect of languages, the amendment gives some certainty in respect of SAIL until, working with the universities, we are able to come to satisfactory alternative arrangements.

In Committee we will deal in detail with the amendments proposed by the Deputy Leader, but I can say as a general point that the reason why I did not support a specific representation from industry groupings was that in terms of the VEET Board we want the broader vision: we want to get away from the idea that someone sits on the board simply because they are an employer or employee representative. We want people who can say, 'This is the best training for South Australia; this is where we should be going. We should be putting emphasis on electronics' or whatever, not people who will sit there and say, 'I am an employer or employee rep' and all they are interested in is the narrow focus of a particular base. I am not saying that that was the case in respect of the ICTC or any other group, but it is always a potential problem if you base membership on a representational arrangement. So, the Bill seeks to focus on the broader outlook and to have people with expertise rather than people who represent a section of the community because, if this board is to work, it must have that broader focus rather than a narrow representational one. Minor changes could be made to the other amendments proposed by the Deputy Leader, and I will be prepared to consider them shortly.

I reiterate that this is a very exciting piece of legislation. I commend it to all members. There is a lot of interest in this issue within the community. It is required in order that we complement legislation not only federally but also throughout the rest of Australia and so that we can be part of the national training system. Our training needs in South Australia will be met, yet they will be within a national framework. People who are trained here will then gain recognition interstate and

vice versa, and we can get away from the silly railway gauge mentality of training that dictates that someone who has trained in Victoria cannot practise their trade here, or has to retrain in order to practise.

Under the training reform agenda we can have the best of both worlds. We can have a national focus as well as a regional and State based attention to local needs. That is particularly important in relation to the motor industry and the viticulture industry, for example. We have special needs here, and we do not and will not accept people in Canberra or Bullamakanka or anywhere else telling us what should happen here. I can assure all members that, whilst we are part of a national framework and a national approach, we are very much committed to a regional or State focus in terms of meeting needs. That must not only encompass industry but also focus on enterprises.

What we will see in the near future is not simply the generic focus on an industry but a more specific focus on the needs of an enterprise. Two enterprises within the same industry can have different needs, and the training must meet the specific needs of particular enterprises as well as focus on the generic needs of the industry. I highlight that as a caution so that when people talk about training for industry they recognise that they must train for the specific needs of an enterprise, and in some situations that might be high-tech, you-beaut electronic-type training, but it might also be the lifting of the literacy standards of employees. That is happening now with great success in sections of the automotive industry, where people in some sections of the same enterprise are being trained in computer assisted design and others in the factory are being taught basic English. That highlights the range and diversity of the training provision.

It has been a long time coming. In some ways the development of this Bill has been a bit like an elephant's pregnancy. There has been a lot of consultation and we have been eagerly awaiting the birth. I believe that the Bill represents the collective wisdom and input of employers, employees, educators and trainers. It is to the credit of all those people, and I commend my own departmental people who have put a lot of work into this. I believe it will be seen as one of the landmarks in training in South Australia. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—'Minister to be agency.'

Mr CLARKE: I understand what the Minister is saying with respect to why the Government has decided that the Minister is to be the State training agency contemplated under the Commonwealth Act. However, I listened very intently to his comments, and they relate more to the Government's perceived fear of a separate bureaucracy being established in this area, although as the Minister concedes there is a genuine desire by a significant number of players in the industry, not the least of which are employers, trade unions and the community generally, that VEET and TAFE be separated. I do not have an amendment with respect to that matter before the Committee on this occasion, and I have already expanded the reasons why the Opposition is concerned about clause 4, but I indicate it may well be the subject of amendment in another place.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I thank the Deputy Leader for raising this point. As I indicated earlier, we want to avoid unnecessarily creating additional bodies. Whilst I do not intend to walk around with a hat that says, 'State Training

Agency: please stop me', it is my strong belief that this will meet the requirements. Some other States have also adopted this approach. We are not a large State of the order of New South Wales, and I do not believe there is any justification for our unnecessarily creating additional bureaucracy or structures. As I also said, in some ways training has become over bureaucratized and the less of that, the better. It should be efficient and effective, lean and mean, and that is exactly the intention of the clause.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 passed.

Clause 7—'Establishment of VEET Board.'

Mr CLARKE: I move:

Page 4, after line 9—Insert new subclauses as follows:

- (4a) At least two members appointed by the Governor must be persons nominated by the Minister, after consultation with employer associations (including the South Australian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Master Builders' Association of South Australia Inc., and the Engineering Employers Association, South Australia), to represent the interests of employers.
- (4b) At least two members appointed by the Governor must be persons nominated by the Minister, after consultation with the United Trades and Labor Council, to represent the interests of employees.
- (4c) The same number of members must be appointed by the Governor under subsections (5) and (6) to represent the interests of employers and employees respectively.

I listened with interest to the Minister's comments on this issue and I appreciate the points he made and the fact that regarding this Bill there is a large measure of bipartisanship. I sincerely appreciate the comments he made with respect to this matter. However, I refer the Minister to the last paragraph on the first page of his second reading explanation, which states:

The board [the VEET Board], which will advise the Government generally on employment and training issues, will be constituted so that people with relevant experience and expertise in industry and commerce, including representation from the union movement, will constitute a majority of members.

I appreciate the sentiments of the Minister and the Government of the day. However, as I said, Ministers come and go, and there is nothing to stop a Minister of the day appointing anywhere between 7 and 12 persons who, in reality, are not players at all in vocational education and training. I know the Minister may say I am drawing too much of a long bow, but literally a Minister could go out into the street, tap somebody on the shoulder and say, 'I think you look like you know something about training; I will put you on.'

What I want to do also is to build up within the VEET Board institutional recognition of the major employer organisations which have a very heavy investment in the training of their work force and which have done a magnificent job—I am not talking about particular individuals but employer organisations as a whole—in advocating training, vocational education and employment, and there are a number of unions likewise very heavily involved in training. My amendment simply provides that, of a possible membership of 12, at least 2 members should be drawn from the ranks of employers after consultation with particular employer groups, and at least 2 members should be drawn from the ranks after consultation with the UTLC of South Australia. If the Minister wants to add to that number, he is free to do so. He can go up to 12 in accordance with his own legislation. I have some concerns—and I will be interested to hear what the Minister has to say—about whether 12 is too many for a

board, but I am sufficiently relaxed about it to say that I will not oppose a membership of 12.

If we look at the role of the ICTC and in particular the employer and trade union representatives on that body, we see that, whilst they are drawn from their respective organisations—and we in South Australia must go back and look at our history in terms of the old apprenticeship commission and the ICTC—the 'them and us' type fights that have existed in other States have not existed in South Australia, certainly in the past several years that I have been involved in the ICTC. I know we are talking about the VEET Board and not ARC, but I believe that same sort of mentality will flow through to the VEET Board. We have guaranteed representation of the key players who in themselves have a huge investment in training, both in financial and physical resources from within their own organisations, and a very keen interest in seeing it progress in South Australia so that hopefully there will be jobs in this State for our children. Rather than our pulling away recognition for their outstanding efforts in this area, these peak employer and union bodies ought to be included. I am simply advocating no fewer than two in each case. I see that as being of real benefit to the Government.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: The board will not work unless it has adequate representation of the key players—the employee/employer groups. In a spirit of generosity, I am prepared to accept new subclauses (4a) and (4b) moved by the Deputy Leader but not (4c), because that would create some problems when we get down to specific industry. At least that number of people would be involved from those two sectors, and I can see that the Deputy Leader wants to enshrine that to make sure that that happens. It would be foolish if we did not at least have that representation, so I am prepared to accept that. I reiterate that, if there is any suggestion that the board is one-sided in terms of employer or employee representation, it will not work. If the Deputy Leader will sleep more easily tonight, I am willing to accept new subclauses (4a) and (4b).

Mr CLARKE: With the Minister's spirit of cooperation, I hope he moves to the Industrial Affairs Ministry in the near future. Whilst I would obviously prefer new subclause (4c) to go in as well, I will not die in the ditch over it. My concern is that because so many employer groups are involved—and I have named three the Minister should contact because they are obviously the key players in this area—they would all put up their hands and say, 'Me too, me too'. They would all want to be recognised, because they have not done what the trade union movement has done, and that is have one peak umbrella group represent all their interests.

I would like some guidance from the Minister, because there might be a plethora of employer groups, for example, the Retail Traders Association, the Meat Trades Employers Federation and a number of other employer groups all wanting to put up their hand. We could be faced with the situation where we have two representatives from the UTLC and eight representatives from employer organisations because they cannot get their act together to work under one umbrella. I wanted (4c) included so that if that sort of, 'Me too, me too' type of attitude prevailed among employer organisations it would not be so overwhelmingly employer dominated. As the Minister said, if this VEET Board is to fly, as we all hope it will, there would need to be a balance between employer and employee interests.

My last point concerns the number of women on the VEET Board. I raised my concerns in my second reading contribution, and I seek some assurances or guidance from

the Minister that, if this board does blow out from seven to 10 to 12 people, it does not have only one female representative, even though that might stay in the legislation. In today's world, particularly with commercial studies, women are undertaking TAFE courses, business study courses, and so on, and their interests must be adequately represented. As this is a critical issue for us, will the Minister give some assurances that we will not be stuck with one woman on the board; that he will be cognisant of the need to increase the number of women on that VEET Board proportionate to the number of board members he ultimately appoints?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I take the Deputy Leader's point. The clause is obviously non-discriminatory, because it says that one member must be a man and one must be a woman. It would be my intention, as an objective, to seek at least 50 per cent representation. At the moment four out of the 12 members on the interim board are women. That will increase over time. In fact, it is very much Government policy at the moment that before appointments are made to boards the question of representation of women is addressed. It would be my very firm commitment that we have, as far as possible, 50/50 representation on the board.

I have never been a great one for quotas, because I believe that if appointment is taken on merit all members of a board could be women, and I would have no problem whatsoever with that. In fact, if women are the best people that is what we would want. In terms of representation from an industry area, it would be my hope that the person representing an industry could be the union person. The Deputy Leader might be assuming that, for example, the chemical industry would be represented by someone from the employer group. I would hope we have reached the point now where the industry representative, in terms of the training aspect, could actually be a union person.

Once again, I am trying to get away from this 'them and us' locked-in approach, which says, 'We all have the blinkers on. I am an employer; you are an employee.' I think we are moving very much toward a situation where the industry person is not necessarily from management. I reiterate the point: this will not work if the board is seen as one-sided, and that is certainly not something that I would wish to see happen. I would certainly do all in my power to ensure that that did not happen.

New subclauses (4a) and (4b) inserted; new subclause (4c) negated; clause as amended passed.

Clause 8 passed.

Clause 9—Functions of VEET Board.'

Mr CLARKE: I move:

Page 5, lines 13 and 14—Leave out paragraph (c).

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

New clause 9a—'Minister to provide facilities, staff, etc.'

Mr CLARKE: I move:

Page 5, after line 26—Insert new clause as follows:

9a (1) The Minister must provide the VEET Board with facilities and assistance by staff and consultants as reasonably required for the proper performance of the Board's function.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the Minister must, if so requested by the VEET Board, do either or both of the following:

- (a) allow the VEET Board to select persons to be engaged as staff members or consultants to assist the Board;
- (b) engage staff members or consultants otherwise than as Public Service employees or officers or employees under the Technical and Further Education Act 1975.

I have looked at the functions of the VEET Board and taken into account clause 8, and I do not quarrel with the Minister's right to control and direct the VEET Board, except in relation

to the formulation of advice and reports to the Minister. However, I believe that the VEET Board, as the Minister and all other speakers on this Bill have pointed out, has an important function to carry out on behalf of the community of South Australia, and it must be provided with the proper facilities and assistance: in particular, appropriate staff and consultants as are reasonably required.

In other words, we cannot have an empty piece of legislation that makes all of us feel good but we do not provide sufficient resources to enable it to do the work that it needs to do. That is the purpose behind new subclause (1). Subclause (2) is again important, given the passage of clause 4, which provides that the Minister is the State Training Agency. In our view, it is necessary that the VEET Board have as much real independence from TAFE as it deems necessary.

At the end of the day, the Minister can direct the board, and over that there is no quarrel. However, once a budget has been assigned and the policy frameworks have been set by Government, as directed by the Minister, and the VEET Board has to get on and do the job, it should be free to select the staff that it wants, without having to rely on TAFE staff, and that is no reflection on TAFE employees. Also, it should be free to engage the necessary consultants, free from TAFE if it so chooses.

It is important because, as I described in my second reading speech, the VEET Board might want to engage, trial out or get a submission from a private provider on a particular vocational training course that it wants done. It is extremely difficult for the VEET Board, if it wants to go outside the TAFE system, to then ask TAFE staff to write their own demise by preparing the submission, inviting external consultants to take over a certain task, which TAFE itself might like to perform in terms of maintaining its own hegemony as being a public provider of vocational training.

So, potential conflicts of interest can arise, and I want the VEET Board to have that degree of flexibility and not, against its will in some instances, have to accept TAFE staff to do a number of these things. That is the purpose behind new subclause (2). I know that the Minister may wonder about the word 'must'—for the purposes of subsection (1), the Minister must, if so requested, do certain things. That still does not detract from the Minister's rights under clause 8. At the end of the day the Minister, by direct ministerial intervention, can say to the board, 'You may want to do all this but we do not have the money for it; I am not going to give you supplementation for it', or, 'It's beyond what we regard as Government policy.'

I do not quarrel with the Minister in taking that decision. I might quarrel about whether he is right in that decision, or about the merits of the Minister's taking that interventionist decision, but certainly as a matter of principle I do not have an objection to a Minister of the Crown having those rights and then having to be publicly accountable for taking those decisions in the Parliament and in the community generally. That is what Ministers are there for, and we all accept it. However, unless there is that overt ministerial direction, the VEET Board should be independent, in particular given the Minister's position with respect to clause 4 in relation to his retaining the State Training Agency and the difficulties that has with industry. As I have already said, all the submissions by employer groups and the like that came out of the green paper overwhelmingly indicated that they wanted to see that independence. The Government has made a different

decision. I believe that, if my amendment is accepted in full, it would go a long way towards alleviating those concerns.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I move to amend the new clause as follows:

Subclause (2)—Delete the word ‘must’ and insert the word ‘may’.

When the Deputy Leader says that concern was raised about it in terms of the separation, it was not of great intensity, from my understanding of the submissions. However, I am happy to accept new clause 9a (1) as proposed, and I will accept subclause (2) on the basis that it reads ‘the Minister may’ instead of ‘the Minister must’, because it sends a signal of the board having the opportunity to engage staff or consultants, but still gives the Minister some overall directive power. I certainly would not want to encourage the VEET Board to go on a consultancy extravaganza, because that is not necessarily always the best way to go.

Mr CLARKE: I do not want to delay this unnecessarily. As a point of principle I would prefer the word ‘must’ to remain, but I will not call for a division over it.

Amendment carried; new clause as amended inserted.

Clause 10 passed.

Clause 11—‘Establishment of ARC.’

Mr CLARKE: I move:

Page 6, lines 6 to 9—leave out paragraphs (b) and (c) and insert new paragraphs as follows:

(b) three must be persons appointed, after consultation with employer associations (including the South Australian Employers’ Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Master Builders’ Association of South Australia Inc., and the Engineering Employers’ Association, South Australia), to represent the interests of employers;

(c) three must be persons appointed, after consultation with the United Trades and Labor Council, to represent the interests of employees;

The Minister has indicated his acceptance of this amendment. First, I would like to record my appreciation of the Minister’s consideration in this matter; and, secondly, I place on record—as I am sure the Minister would want to do—my appreciation of the work that has been done by the old Industrial Commercial Training Commission, in particular, the work of those people who have served on that body over a number of years since 1981 when it was first established under the Act we are repealing. I can only recount a few names and if I miss anyone I apologise to them. However, I thank the people with whom I have worked on the ICTC, such as the employer representatives John Marshall, Allan Swinstead, Lindsay Thompson, Matthew O’Callaghan (who has been there as a deputy from time to time); those who represented the unions, such as Vern Berry (from the ETU), Brian Mowbray (Automotive and Metal and Engineering Union), myself, Theo Marks, Bob Fairweather (now an Industrial Commissioner) and John Menz from Arnott’s Motteram Menz (when he was a representative of the chamber). They have all performed an outstanding service for this State and for the training of our apprentices and trainees, as has Graham Mill, as the Chairman—I believe the inaugural Chairman in 1981, when the ICTC Act was passed.

I have not done them justice in the brief time that I have allotted myself with respect to this matter, but it is appropriate that those who have done so much for training and vocational training in this State receive recognition—employers and trade unionists alike. It was a pleasure to work on that body because we did work on behalf of the interests of the State. We put aside our respective hats and represented

our constituencies but, above all else, we put the interest of the State and of our children first and foremost.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I, too, would like to acknowledge the work of people who have been involved with the Industrial Commercial Training Commission. I will not list all the individuals—they have all performed an excellent role. It is worth recording that the role and functions of ICTC, as members would understand, are subsumed into the new Bill. It is important that we recognise the service rendered by people on organisations such as ICTC, the time and effort they put in, often without a lot of public recognition or acknowledgment but without whose contribution our society basically cannot function.

Whilst apprentices and trainees may not get down on their knees every night and thank the members of the ICTC before they go to bed, I am sure that we would all recognise that bodies such as ICTC have performed an outstanding role over the many years that it has been in existence. So, I would like to pay tribute to those people. As I said, I do not want to single out particular individuals, but I do acknowledge that at the moment Graham Mill is unwell and we wish him a speedy recovery and pay particular tribute to his contribution over many years.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (12 to 46) passed.

Schedule 1 passed.

Schedule 2.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I move:

Page 26, lines 20 and 21—Leave out subclause (6) and insert—(6) Despite the repeal of the Tertiary Education Act 1986—

(a) the South Australian Institute of Languages will continue in existence; and

(b) for that purpose, the provisions of Part IV of that Act will continue in force,

until a day fixed by the Governor by proclamation.

(7) The Governor may, in a proclamation made for the purposes of subclause (6), dispose of the assets and liabilities of the South Australian Institute of Languages.

Mr CLARKE: The comments concerning SAIL have largely already been made either by me or, more particularly, by the Leader of the Opposition, who has had more involvement in this area than me. I join in his comments to the extent that I have knowledge of that organisation. The South Australian Institute of Languages continues to exist until a day fixed by the Government by proclamation. That could be very open ended: it could be for 100 years or it could be tomorrow. If the legislation were passed and assented to with such speed, the Government, in effect, by proclamation could abolish the Institute of Languages.

What agreements, if any, has the Minister entered into with the Institute of Languages to ensure that it does not have only a brief respite from execution with respect to this? What arrangements have been entered into? With respect to subclause (7), what happens with the assets and liabilities of the Institute of Languages if it is dissolved by the Government by proclamation? Do the assets and liabilities become the assets and liabilities of the Crown or are they divested elsewhere and, if so, where?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: As I indicated earlier, what has taken place at the moment is very significant progress by the universities, in conjunction with TAFE ultimately, to create a centre for languages in South Australia, based around the universities in particular. I understand that that will incorporate SAIL. The reason that I proposed this amendment was to ensure that SAIL continues until such time as we can see that those arrangements are appropriate and satisfactory. I

cannot tell the universities what to do. Until the Government is assured that the provision of languages will continue at a high level and meet the needs of South Australia, it is our intention to keep SAIL going.

I was advised by legal experts that this is the way to specify it, because references to a 'satisfactory' this or that have little standing in legal interpretation. The amendment is to ensure that SAIL continues until the consultation process that is under way at the moment in respect of the Languages Policy Advisory Group, the Tertiary Multicultural Education Advisory Committee and the structures proposed by the university is worked out. I trust that will be literally a matter of weeks rather than months, but SAIL will continue until that is finally resolved. We have had many submissions in terms of discussion papers and, in fairness to the more than 100 organisations involved, ethnic groups, language organisations and so on, it is inappropriate to act precipitously, and it is important that we take into account their contributions and responses. This is really a mechanism to ensure that SAIL continues until we have provided a satisfactory arrangement which, as I have already indicated, is likely to be a centre for languages, incorporating SAIL.

With respect to subclause (7), the intention is that the liabilities and assets, if disposed of, would accrue to the Crown. The other point is a commitment to any students engaged in language programs that they will not be left high and dry. Students are currently studying Arabic and Russian at various levels and it would be quite unacceptable to terminate their programs or in any way jeopardise their offerings. As I said initially, we want to expand language offerings rather than have them contract.

Amendment carried; schedule as amended passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I move:

That the sitting of the House be extended beyond 6 p.m.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr ROSSI (Lee): I would like to discuss something about history. I wanted to study law at the University of Adelaide and I was told that I had to learn a bit about history before I could do it. I did not know about the correlation between history and law. Since I have been in this Parliament I have found that history is important. Although members opposite talk about giving women the right to enter politics and to giving them preference in respect of some safe seats, it was the Liberal Party of Australia that celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the extension of the franchise to the women of South Australia. The Liberal Party led the way in the promotion of women into fields that were traditionally the preserve of males.

One has only to look at our record to see the significant achievements that have been made by Liberal women in the field of politics. It was our Enid Lyons who became the first woman elected to any Australian Parliament in 1921. It was our side of politics which led the way in electing the first

female parliamentarians in each of the States. Our side of politics, in 1925, provided Miss M. Stanley in New South Wales; in 1929 it was Mrs I. Longan in Queensland; in 1933 it was Lady M. Peacock in Victoria; in 1955 it was Dame F. Miller and Miss A. Best in Tasmania; and in 1955 it was our very own Joyce Steel and Jessie Cooper in South Australia.

I should also mention the contribution of Dame Nancy Buttfield, who was elected to the Federal Parliament in 1955 and for whom many of us have great respect, including one of my constituents, the Hon. Clyde Cameron, who was himself a member of Federal Parliament. The first three Federal women Ministers were all Liberal members: Enid Lyons, Annabelle Rankin and Margaret Guilfoyle. So, it is the Liberal Party that has traditionally broken down the barriers that prevent women from participating in the political process, and I believe the majority of the female population in Australia know and understand this and appreciate that the Liberal Party selects its candidates on merit and has no need to promote people on a gender basis because, unlike our opponents, we do believe in equality of opportunity for all.

Labor, of course, has never been particularly popular with the women of Australia. Is it any wonder when we have the likes of Paul Keating who, in his maiden speech in Federal Parliament, called upon Australian women to return home from the work force. This is the man who is now being hailed by Carmen Lawrence and Joan Kirner—two failed State Premiers—as the hero of the women's movement because of the introduction by the ALP of a quota system in selecting its candidates. Looking across the Chamber, one wonders which of the current crop of male Opposition members will have to depart to satisfy the quota. Will the member for Playford, still sulking over his faction's decision to overlook him for the Deputy Leadership, depart the scene and help fulfil the desires of the quota? Will the member for Spence be tapped on the shoulder and told to take a ride to save the integrity of the quota? One can only wonder with horror at the thought of the member for Ross Smith trying on frocks in an attempt to escape persecution from the quota!

It is very comforting on this side of the House to know that we in the Liberal Party are mature enough to select our candidates on merit. We do not have any need for a quota and we do not fear open and fair competition. Unlike the ALP, we reflect our own philosophy, and I sincerely believe that our philosophy is shared by the majority of Australians.

My speech today has taken a look at one aspect of the Liberal record in our fiftieth year. I hope to cover other aspects in further speeches in this House and I hope that many of my Liberal colleagues will join me. Too many people do not realise the importance of history and how it can shape the future. We must not allow others to distort the truth and mislead the public about our record in both government and opposition. This means not that we should view ourselves through rose-coloured glasses but that we should proudly share our achievements and constructively discuss our failures. We in South Australia have been through the tough times. We have lost elections and seen our State decline under the policies of a Government that threw away our legacy of financial and social responsibility. We must now rebuild our State. It is a challenge fit for Liberals, be they male or female.

I should like some Opposition members to enlighten us on a bit of history. Did the then Premier, Don Dunstan, in about 1975 give preference to union members for promotion and employment in the Public Service? Do members opposite still believe in the principle: no ticket, no work? If so, it indicates

the type of legislation that they would like to impose on enterprise agreements.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Before raising my main issue tonight, I can say without doubt to the member for Lee that the women on this side of the Chamber and in the other place achieved their positions on ability, not because of the quota, as will future women who enter the House on this side.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: We are a very democratic Party. The issue that I wish to raise is one that I hope the Government will take into consideration when it decides on TSPs for teachers. This is an issue about which the community is seriously concerned and about which the Government should think long and hard. When all is said and done, this is about the future of this State's children. The decisions that are made now will have a profound impact on the lives of our children and the future of our State, the two being inextricably bound. The system of education that we put in place now will be judged in the future, but by then the damage will have been done.

Let us take a good look at what this Government is up to. As far as TSPs are concerned, there seems to be the motivation simply to fix the figure on reductions in teacher numbers without any clear thought of the impact this will have on the system as a whole. The Government has this ideological commitment to the pure reduction of numbers, with the by-product being to make the budget work at this time. The implications of this approach are grave indeed. We are witnessing in New South Wales the outcome of the folly of dabbling in such madness. In 1989, some 2 500 teachers were removed from the system. By 1994 the New South Wales Government had restored 1 200 with a commitment to an additional 1 466 places, which will restore the original 1989 figure. Indeed, John Fahey claims that there are an additional 3 500 places.

These are simply figures, but what do they mean in the South Australian context? To begin with, there will be an enormous upheaval in the education system. The fact that TSPs will more than likely remove from the system those teachers whom the Government deems to be surplus will have little influence on what we believe should be the correct numbers. As has been shown in New South Wales, massive cuts to teacher numbers leave the system with many problems. To highlight my point, as with any other organisation, the education system is based on the principle where the new chums are guided through the process of learning the ropes by more experienced teachers and administrators. The people most likely to go with the Government's packages are those who would provide that very expertise. What is left is the complete breakdown of the support system that nurtures younger staff, and that breakdown ultimately inhibits the process of learning the ropes, leading us to a weaker system.

Let us make no bones about this: lots of really good people will go, under this system. In the 1960s and 1970s the education system was faced with a similar crisis. This State was forced to import overseas teachers and rammed students through the system to fill the massive hole in the education system. Let us not find ourselves in the same position as we move towards the close of this decade and into the twenty-first century. On this very point, let us explore the already

imminent shortage that this State faces in the latter half of this decade. Many of those teachers entered the system in the 1960s and 1970s. Kym Adey, Dean of the Faculty of Education in the University of South Australia, points out:

What we can do now is project when the mass exodus will take place and effectively in the latter half of this decade an enormous number of people will leave the system who came into it in the early 60s and 70s.

As he puts it, 'this is the age bulge moving through the teacher employment system'.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: Thank you for your correction. Members should be reminded of the New South Wales experience. There will undoubtedly be flow-on effects. For instance, we need stability in the system. Many of the teachers I have spoken to are demoralised. There are so many committed teachers out there who get bagged on a regular basis that in the end they simply feel abandoned. There can be no question that this has serious implications for the quality of the service provided to students. After all, that is what we are in business for—the quality of service provided to students. We have one of the best education systems in the world, and we should be protecting it. We cannot have a quality education system when we are asset stripping, taking committed, quality teachers out of the system and changing the staff-student ratios.

When we act to put pressures of this nature on teachers, we all lose. Where are these teachers going when they take the Government packages? I would suggest that many will find their way interstate, where the New South Wales Government has been forced to rethink its policy. In this madness of playing teachers and the education system off against debt, we have reached some \$22 million, only half the proposed \$40 million savings over the next few years. What will be next? This Government needs to make decisions based on long-term planning, not on short-term budget reduction measures. We all work within constraints in our communities, but there are fundamental services that must take priority. One of those is education.

The Premier makes much of the way his Government is encouraging business to come to this State, so let us see a commitment by him to ensuring that this State is the source of the building blocks which build those enterprises. As I have said and will say again, the students of today are the structures of tomorrow. The quality of the education system today will determine the standard which will be set for tomorrow. As politicians, we need to look at the long term future, and the dangerous path that the Government is following will ensure that students will suffer in the long term. I do not believe there is any doubt about that.

Education is one of the most important responsibilities of Government. It is long term and provides for our future. Let us not see that influenced by ideological rationalism simply to make a budget work. Believe me when I say that the electorate is concerned about this issue, since their interest is firmly based on a commitment of giving the best to their children, something our Government should be doing. That is precisely what we should be on about: good education.

Motion carried.

At 6.12 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 27 October at 10.30 a.m.