

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 27 September 1995

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

### SCHOOL SERVICES OFFICERS

Petitions signed by 247 residents of South Australia urging the House not to support the reduction in the number of school services officers were presented by Mrs Geraghty and Ms Hurley.

Petitions received.

### VENUS BAY NET FISHING

A petition signed by 116 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ban fish netting in Venus Bay was presented by Mrs Penfold.

Petition received.

### GLYNDE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A petition signed by 300 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to install a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Hilltop Avenue and Payneham Road, Glynde was presented by Mr Scalzi.

Petition received.

### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. DEAN BROWN**: The Parliament yesterday received a comprehensive report by the Auditor-General. The extent of the advice provided by the Auditor-General reflects the fact that the role, size and structure of the public sector and its relationship with the private sector are undergoing fundamental change. The report raises a number of important policy issues in relation to management procedures within the public sector and accountability to this Parliament. I have directed that the chief executives of the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance and the Attorney-General and the Director of the Office of Public Sector Management develop advice to Cabinet within a fortnight on these policy issues.

As honourable members are aware, the Government has had to confront a rapid escalation in public sector debt, mainly due to the failure of the former State Bank. That financial failure, and some others in recent years, called into serious question South Australia's economic and financial credibility. In seeking to restore confidence in South Australia to rebuild jobs and repair the State's finances, the Government also faces the challenge of introducing important reforms dictated by the adoption of the Hilmer competition principles. In short, the Government has had to consider new ways to deliver services which respond to the financial constraints faced by the State and a new national competition regime and at the same time maintain appropriate standards of service delivery.

The report of the Auditor-General rightly raises accountability issues which emerge as a result, including internal public sector processes and the ability of this Parliament to scrutinise the increasing use of competitive tendering and contracting out of Government services. The Government recognises the need to put in place new procedures to substitute for the checks and balances made redundant by a fundamental change in the nature of public administration. Internally we are developing a prudential management function, independent of the external audits and distinguished from the internal audit procedure. Prudential management is more than financial due diligence because it recognises the important interaction between commercial, legal and financial judgments. It lays down rules on the commercial negotiation process, especially when a sense of urgency might otherwise impact on probity.

The group of senior executives I have appointed to consider policy responses to the Auditor-General's Report have been asked to develop a more precisely defined prudential management framework and function within the public sector to ensure probity and integrity matters continue to be given proper consideration. This is particularly important in relation to the increasing use of competitive tendering and contracting out of Government services. In considering this matter, the Auditor-General has recognised the benefits of competitive tendering and contracting out, including (and I quote from his report) 'more cost effective delivery of services, access to specialised skills and resources and greater flexibility for management to respond to changing needs'. This is provided, of course, that due process and accountability mechanisms are built into the public administration of these new arrangements.

His report includes detailed comment on four major contracting out processes being undertaken by the Government in the areas of information technology, prison management, hospital management and delivery of water services. The Auditor-General recognises that his department has had full access to all documentation concerning various arrangements entered into between the Government and the private sector. The contracts being negotiated by the Government ensure right of access by the Auditor-General to all information required to monitor compliance with terms and conditions of contracting out arrangements.

In his report, the Auditor-General raises the issue of 'before the event' scrutiny of such contracts, that is, the ability of the Parliament to be informed before contracts are finalised. The Government recognises the importance of this matter and will give careful consideration to the adequacies of the legislative and administrative framework to ensure full accountability in these matters.

At the same time, I am sure all members will appreciate that Parliament itself cannot be involved directly in the contract negotiating process. That, quite clearly, is a responsibility for Executive Government. Nor, the Government notes, is the Auditor-General suggesting that negotiations now under way should be deferred pending further consideration of these accountability issues. The Auditor-General has also proposed for consideration arrangements to deal with issues of commercial confidentiality, including the establishment of a legal framework in which a summary of all substantial contracts could be tabled in Parliament. This matter will also be given urgent consideration by the group of senior executives that I have appointed.

In relation to general accountability issues, the Auditor-General has also raised executive remuneration and the

conduct of the parliamentary Estimates Committees. The Government endorses the proposal that the annual reports of all public sector agencies should include summaries of remuneration policies incorporating relevant details of executive remuneration. The Auditor-General recognises that the earlier introduction of the budget, before the beginning of a financial year 'has much to commend it'. Associated with this is the extent of information available to the Parliament on budget outcomes and from the annual reports of the Auditor-General and departments and agencies. To address this matter, the Government will give further consideration to the timing of the budget Estimates Committees.

I now turn to several specific issues raised by the Auditor-General. The first relates to credit cards. The use of credit cards within the public sector is governed by instructions issued by the Treasurer. It is the responsibility of chief executive officers to ensure that these instructions are in fact followed. Following comments in the report of the Auditor-General last year, the Treasurer instructed the Under Treasurer to write to all agencies reminding them of the requirements for the use of credit cards. In July this year the Auditor-General advised that, while an improvement in control and accountability was noted in respect of expenditure incurred through the use of these cards, problems continued to be encountered in some agencies. As a result, the Treasurer re-issued his directive on compliance with the instructions and asked all chief executive officers to provide copies of interim reports to the Auditor-General relating to their agencies. The Under Treasurer has reviewed these interim reports. As a matter of good management practice, following the review of credit card allocations, three chief executives have withdrawn credit cards because they are not necessary for the proper functioning of people within the agency.

The review has also revealed some inadequacies in management procedures in a small number of agencies. These include inadequate documentation, lack of proper authorisation of accounts and imperfect voucher records. Further action is being taken to address these inadequacies. Credit cards can provide substantial savings in administrative costs to the Government, provided that they are used properly.

The second issue is that of debt management. The Auditor-General has undertaken a detailed examination of debt management issues. He acknowledges that this is a 'complex matter' and that his analysis—and I use his words—'has the benefit of assessing performance with after the event analysis, a benefit that is, of course, not available to decision makers who are faced with imperfect knowledge of the future'. As a result, mainly of the failure of the former State Bank, interest costs met by the budget on an annual basis have more than doubled over the past five years, to more than \$700 million. When my Government came to office, it found the overall debt maturity profile was much shorter than for any other State or for the Commonwealth. That reflects the former Government's need to raise debt to support the State Bank.

The reliance on short-term rates left taxpayers massively exposed to increased borrowing costs through sudden and frequent rises in interest rates. This was a matter the Auditor-General commented on in his 1993 report, when he stated:

Short-term interest rates are subject to greater volatility, which can cause budgetary problems for highly indebted borrowers.

Then the Audit Commission, in April 1994, expressed concern about the Government's interest rate exposure, when it said:

In the current climate, it may be appropriate to consider a lengthening of the profile.

The Government adopted this advice. While the Auditor-General has pointed out that interest costs would have been lower over the past 18 months if borrowing had been maintained on shorter term rates or if there had been a quicker move to lengthen the portfolio, the Auditor-General has emphasised that he is not critical—and I stress the point that he himself has said that he is not critical—of the option chosen. His report states, and I quote—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Just listen to this.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will throw out the honourable member if he keeps interjecting.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The quote from the Auditor-General is as follows:

It is of importance to emphasise that the following is indicative of the possibilities and that it would be wrong to imply that this is presented as a criticism. It is included solely to illustrate this matter.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** They are the words of the Auditor-General. It should also be emphasised that, whilst this analysis covers an 18 month period, the Auditor-General comments as follows:

It is accepted that performance needs to be measured over the long term.

A similar point is made by the ratings agency, Standard and Poor's, in a letter that was sent to the Government this morning. Standard and Poor's recently visited the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA) and held detailed discussions as part of its broader South Australian rating review. I quote from the advice received from Standard and Poor's letter of this morning, as follows:

Standard and Poor's considers the operational direction and procedures currently adopted by SAFA as reasonable for an entity managing the debt portfolio of a State with a current AA rating. More specifically, Standard and Poor's considers that the strategic approach adopted by SAFA to gradually extend the portfolio duration at the end of 1993, rather than move quickly to lengthen the duration, was appropriate at the time.

While with hindsight this strategy may have resulted in a slightly higher cost of funds, few financial market commentators or analysts accurately predicted the sharp rise in interest rates that occurred in early 1994. Without the ability to forecast perfectly, a gradual approach to portfolio rebalancing is seen as appropriate for a borrower with SAFA's financial profile and market standing, and consistent with broader debt management objectives such as market liquidity, stock volatility and potential maturity profile.

As the Auditor-General recognises, management of funding risks is a very complex matter, and ongoing improvement of the Treasury management system and enhanced performance comparisons are very important parts of the Government's Treasury policies. In addition, a review of SAFA's debt management operating guidelines will now be accelerated.

The Auditor-General has commented on the presentation of some information in the financial statement tabled with the budget. In particular, he has disputed one of the 16 graphs included in the financial statement to demonstrate the impact of budget decisions on the State's financial position. The Government accepts that such information presented to Parliament must at all times be accurate, and action has been taken within Treasury to ensure that this does not happen again. To this end, Treasury and Finance has also published an 'erratum' in the Budget Outcome document tabled yesterday.

The thrust of the published commentary is unaffected in that current outlays restraint is making an important contribution to reducing the non-commercial sector's underlying deficit. In relation to an analysis of Government spending, the Auditor-General has encouraged a more detailed disclosure of items by disaggregation within relevant categories to ensure a more ready comparison of trends. The Government will consider the suggestions that the Auditor-General has made. In the meantime, based on forward estimates in the 1995-96 budget, overall spending is budgeted to fall by 5.5 per cent in real terms when compared with 1993-94 to enable the Government to eliminate the underlying deficit it then inherited.

I have given this initial response to the report of the Auditor-General to demonstrate that this Government recognises that we are in a period of fundamental change in the nature of public administration and takes very seriously indeed the important issues of accountability to the Parliament that these changes raise. The Government will make a further response when its approach to the policy issues raised in this report has been finalised.

#### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.J. Baker)

Information Technology, Office of—Report, 1994-95  
Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme—Report, 1994-95

By the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)

District Council of Elliston—By-laws—

- No. 1—Permits and Penalties
- No. 2—Camping and Caravans
- No. 3—Dogs and Cats
- No. 4—Signs—Permanent and Moveable
- No. 5—Animals and Birds
- No. 6—Bees
- No. 7—STED Scheme
- No. 8—Council Land

#### LEIGH CREEK COAL RAIL FREIGHT SERVICE

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement. Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The Government is determined to continue reforms within the Electricity Trust of South Australia and the South Australian power industry to provide a competitive base for the State's manufacturing industry. As we move into the twenty-first century, leading edge manufacturing will be further developed in South Australia on the foundation stone of the world's best practice in the provision of electricity. ETSA Corporation is already achieving world competitive targets in a number of areas. It is continuing to undergo rapid cultural change in preparation for the introduction of the national electricity market under the Hilmer competition policy reform package of the Federal Labor Government. I am pleased to announce that yesterday the Australian Industrial Relations Commission ratified an enterprise agreement for ETSA Corporation which recognises the very significant contribution made by ETSA's work force to the strong performance of the corporation.

However, we must further strengthen South Australia's position in the national electricity market and continue the process of productivity improvements. To maintain an

independent power generating capacity in South Australia is a necessity if we want to protect our regional economy against competition and interference from interstate. Failure to improve ETSA's performance will deliver South Australian industry into the hands of power generators in Victoria and New South Wales. On 26 July this year, I reported to the House:

ETSA has been placed in a nigh impossible position in its dealings with Australian National . . . on the coal freight issue involving the Leigh Creek to Port Augusta railway.

The monopoly pricing of the Federal Government-owned Australian National represents a major impediment to the effective positioning of ETSA as an efficient and low-cost electricity producer. Clearly, AN—like any other utility in Australia—must take the leap and start operating as a commercially competitive enterprise. We invite AN to join the growing number of South Australian companies prepared to take this State into the twenty-first century. But as long as AN remains hooked on monopoly pricing at the cost and to the detriment of the economic and social well-being of South Australia, we will challenge and severely test its commercial position.

The State Government has therefore agreed to ETSA's plan to tackle this competitive impediment head-on by moving to establish a long-term contract with a third party operator on the Leigh Creek to Port Augusta railway. Advertisements appeared in newspapers today opening up a public tender process designed to deliver the market-competitive freight charges and best practice service provision intended by the Federal Government's competition policy. In addition, the South Australian Government will support ETSA Corporation in challenging the grossly excessive rail access charges proposed by AN by bringing it before the Prices Surveillance Authority or its future replacement, the National Competition Tribunal, which will have the power to enforce a competitive charge.

For the past three years ETSA has endeavoured without success to negotiate with AN a fair and reasonable deal. It is about time AN recognised that it has an obligation to participate in the move towards a competitive operation of public enterprises. Of course, the easiest way to resolve the whole problem would be for the Federal Government to demonstrate some real commitment to its own competition policy, either by way of ministerial direction to AN or, better still, by transferring the single customer rail line to South Australia, so that ETSA can get on with its job of providing the State with electricity at competitive rates.

#### FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I wish to inform the House of the circumstances of a young mother, Ms Katrina Allen, who was admitted to Flinders Medical Centre and who gave birth to a baby there but who was not able immediately to be offered a bed in the post-natal ward. Whilst the media has highlighted the inadequacy of that fact, there are some other facts that were not reported by the media that put a different light on the matter. I should point out at the outset that this woman (Ms Allen) and her family have nothing but praise for the treatment they received at Flinders Medical Centre. The medical treatment she received I understand was exemplary; the personal treatment was exemplary: the only

issue is the failure to be provided with a bed in the post-natal ward of the hospital rather than somewhere else.

The first point to be clear about is that Ms Allen was offered a bed in the labour recovery ward but she did not choose to take up that offer preferring instead to sit in the visiting room. Any suggestion that there was not a bed available is incorrect. What was not available at that time was a bed in the post-natal ward. The second point is that short-term unavailability of beds in the post-natal ward, I am informed, has happened before under the previous Government and this is the first time it has happened under this one. Such occurrences are, I am advised, extremely infrequent: they do not even happen once a year, but have occurred from time to time over at least the past 18 years.

This has everything to do with the problem of managing a most unusual situation that resulted from the combination of a number of distinct factors. September is traditionally a peak month for babies—I observe it is nine months after Christmas and New Year—and this month, at the current rate, 240 babies will be born compared with last year's average of 210 a month. These births occur in peaks and troughs. So, not only did Flinders Medical Centre have a high number of women in the wards that day, it was also delivering their babies over a very short period of time rather than a more extended period.

The second important contributing factor was the unusually high number of caesarean sections performed, which require longer stays in hospital than normal deliveries by two to three days. The average is 40 a month, but by 25 September the hospital had already done 55 caesarean sections.

Ms Allen waited for a bed with four other women who had also just had babies. As beds became available in the post-natal wards, they were allocated to the women waiting. Had Ms Allen waited one extra hour, she would have been allocated a bed in the post-natal ward as she desired. It is unfortunate that any of those four women had to wait the time they did, and my office has had discussions with Flinders Medical Centre's new Chief Executive Officer and management team as to how the issue may be avoided in the future.

#### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Mr CUMMINS (Norwood):** I bring up the first report of the committee and move:

That the report be received and read.

Motion carried.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I bring up the second report of the committee and move:

That the report be received and read.

Motion carried.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I bring up the third report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

#### PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**Mr ASHENDEN (Wright):** I bring up the thirteenth report of the committee on the new Darlington police complex development and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

## QUESTION TIME

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** Given the Minister for Health's assurance yesterday that there is no crisis in health care, will he say why patient services are being cut at Queen Elizabeth Hospital to meet this year's funding shortfall of \$13.9 million? A memo dated 22 August 1995 from the Director of Finance at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital states:

The projected funding shortfall for 1995-96 is estimated at \$13.9 million.

Dr Mathew, the head of the division of medicine, said that bed closures at QEH would lead to waiting lists for diagnostic medical procedures, such as angiograms for heart disease and endoscopies for bowel disease and cancer. The Vice President of the Australian Medical Association has warned that cuts may cost lives. He said:

I think we have reached the point where mortality is at risk.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member is commenting. The Minister for Health.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** As I said yesterday, the hospital system is clearly not in crisis, because the article acknowledges, if the member for Elizabeth had bothered to read this into the record, statements by people such as Professor Guy Maddern and the patients who are now receiving a better service; their conditions are being treated acutely in the hospitals and they are then being sent home. If the honourable member had bothered to read that, she would have seen that we are actually performing better services more cost effectively.

The member for Elizabeth has been told on a number of occasions before, but I am going to repeat it for her, that last year there was 4 per cent greater activity in the hospitals than in any other year, and we removed \$35 million for the taxpayers of South Australia. I would suggest to the member for Elizabeth—

*Ms Stevens interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Elizabeth has had a fair go.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I suggest that the member for Elizabeth might put out a newsletter and ask the people in her electorate if they are actually keen on an extra \$35 million being wasted, because that is categorically what was happening. The simple fact of the matter is that we returned a \$35 million dividend to the taxpayers, and we performed 4 per cent extra work.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** Let us just take one particular example that the member for Elizabeth quoted. It was something to do with heart disease—and I could not get it down; she was so excited reading it out. Within the past few days I have actually signed an equipment order to replace the cardiac catheter laboratory at Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the tune of \$1.3 million. I will show the member for Elizabeth the paragraph that was in the bid from the hospital for this. It went along the lines of, 'This equipment is 13 years old. It has been running down dramatically. It is now at the stage where it is so old that we cannot even get people to service it and lives are at risk.'

We have been in government for 18 months, and we have made the commitment to fix up the cardiac area at Queen

Elizabeth Hospital. We are not prepared to let it run down. We are not prepared to see this sort of thing go on. A large amount of capital equipment is being replaced which, quite frankly, will redress the balance of the previous Government's neglect.

A number of finance directors, chief executives and even some board members of hospitals seem not to understand that the budget is the budget and not the total amount of money spent last year. If a hospital has a budget of, let us say, \$100 million and it then gets money for extra throughput, money from Commonwealth pools, and so on, taking its total expenditure up to \$105 million, its budget is still \$100 million. Quite legitimately, in an attempt to apply pressure for the good of their patients (which I understand) and for the ease of their industrial relations—because the budget cuts mean having to address difficult issues which they have not addressed for many years—the budget for last year in that hospital was \$100 million and not \$105 million. That is just one example, but I repeat—

**Ms Stevens:** It isn't as simple as that.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** It is as simple as that. Maybe that is the problem: it is too simple for her to understand. The fact remains that there are all sorts of pools that the hospitals will access during the year, and we are pleased for that to occur as we have specifically set up these pools to be accessed in an efficient way that will see their budgets go up. Next year, when they look backwards, millions of dollars more will be added into the budget. As I have said before, this year will be a difficult year for the health sector, but that will be because of the State Bank debt that is being repaid. With everything we have done and everything we are doing as a Government, it allows this Government and the health sector to address South Australia's health needs cost effectively.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! When members stop their conversations across the Chamber, we will continue with Question Time. The member for Norwood.

### MURRAY RIVER

**Mr CUMMINS (Norwood):** Will the Premier say what plans the Government has to improve the quality of water from the River Murray to irrigators and South Australia's domestic consumers?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The River Murray system faces three very fundamental problems: first, the river itself has rising salinity levels which have been going on for a number of years and which are projected to increase unless dramatic action is taken; secondly, more frequent algal blooms in the river are posing a threat not only to humans but also to stock drinking the water; and, thirdly, there has been serious over-use of water from the River Murray system, particularly in New South Wales where, in the summer of last year, some areas ran out of water and could not irrigate.

The cleaning up of the River Murray is an issue I have raised on a number of occasions. I have put it forward as the leading project from South Australia for the centenary of Federation. It is a matter I have raised on numerous occasions with the Prime Minister in calling for a national action plan, particularly leading up to the year 2001. So, it is the national project for the centenary of Federation in Australia. I cannot think of a more appropriate project than the clean-up of the River Murray. It involves the Federal Government and at

least State Governments from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

Last Tuesday whilst in Sydney I met with the Premier of New South Wales, Bob Carr, and put a proposal to him that he be part of a national project for the year 2001. I had previously put it to John Fahey, the former Premier of New South Wales, and he had agreed. I raised the issue with the Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, who also agrees that there is a need for a national program. We now have three State Governments moving to implement similar measures. It is part of what will need to be a \$300 million clean-up program over a five-year period, \$150 million of that responsibility lying with the Federal Government and \$150 million with the State Governments, South Australia's share being about \$35 million over the five-year period.

State Cabinet has discussed this in broad principle. It agrees with the concept of a national project to clean up the Murray River for the year 2001. It also agrees that we need to spend about \$35 million over that five year period. We have not yet finalised how that money will be raised, but one option would be to impose a levy on every unit of water used out of the Murray River system. For people in Adelaide, the Murray River is absolutely a fundamental lifeblood. Approximately half the water we use comes from the Murray River.

For people along the Murray River towns, it is absolutely crucial in terms of economic development in maintaining the irrigation schemes. For people in the Iron Triangle, it is absolutely crucial as, in many cases, it is the only supply of water for those towns. For towns in the South-East and the upper South-East, equally the Murray River is the main source of water supply. There could be no more valuable resource in South Australia, which is the driest State in what is the driest continent on earth, so we must ensure that we all move to protect the quality and the long-term supply of water down the Murray River system. This Government is determined to bring that about.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I refer to the following statement to the House yesterday by the Minister for Health:

There is no suggestion that any of the care is suffering.

Does the Minister know how many patients will be turned away from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital this year following the closure of at least 50 beds? I refer to a minute by the Director of Finance at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, dated 22 August, in which he said:

The hospital will reduce its non-same day bed stock by 50 beds, by no later than 30 September 1995.

On 20 September, the Chief Executive of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital warned that it would have to turn away about 5 000 patients this financial year.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** First, it is a hypothetical question, but I am pleased to answer it. Of course, I cannot say what will happen in the future, other than that the changes we have brought in will help everyone to run the system more effectively. When the member for Elizabeth talks about patients at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I ask her one thing. I ask her to read the story at the top of page 2 of last Friday's *Advertiser*. The story is about a patient who has been going to the hospital for acute care for many years. In this instance what happened was just as I indicated in the answer to the previous question: because of the new way of thinking

about things, people are no longer put into hospital for such long periods.

The effect of the patient's words were, 'This is fantastic. I am getting care at home. Why didn't this happen before?' Well may we ask. The reason it did not happen before was that the previous Government was caught in a time warp. We are prepared to adopt new strategies of looking after patients, because it is what patients want. Patients do not want to be in hospital. They want to be looked after in the comfort of their own home, surrounded by social supports, in areas which they know and understand. That is good for the patients, it saves the taxpayers dollars and it is beneficial.

I will quote an example. Quite a few years ago, when I was a medical student, if someone had a cataract operation, they would lie in hospital for two to three weeks with sandbags on either side of their head so that their head did not move after the operation. At the end of that time, they would spend a number of days becoming mobile before they were discharged from the hospital. Nowadays, you enter hospital in the morning and you go home in the afternoon. So that just shows how things are changing all the time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Elizabeth has at least four more calls on the list. If she wants those calls, she will not continue to ask supplementary questions by way of interjection or she will not be here to get the call.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I am looking forward to the other questions, Mr Speaker. The other thing is that those patients are sent home on the same day. So there is no need to regard the health sector as static. Things change, and that is what patients want. That is why we are able to manage things differently, and it is why we are able to turn to same-day surgery. I repeat: it is what everybody wants.

### STATE FINANCES

**Mr BECKER (Peake):** Is the Treasurer satisfied that the budget information provided to Parliament for the 1995-96 year is a true and proper reflection of the State's financial position? In his overview document of his annual report released to Parliament yesterday, the Auditor-General deals with interpretive data included in the budget documentation. He is critical of some of the information provided in the budget document and the response from Treasury and finance officers to his inquiries.

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** That matter certainly received some attention in the audit report, and I responded yesterday by saying that a mistake had been made and that it should be corrected. Of course, that was the first time that Treasury had indulged in charts, and a mistake was made. If members read the material contained in the report, they will see that that does not change. The chart itself changes—one out of 16 of the charts that were provided.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I heard the Leader make one criticism of the offending chart on the steps of Parliament House when he said, 'They are bodgie figures and it is a bodgie budget.' I find that amazing, because I could not find the Auditor-General saying anything of the sort.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** Well, I have had a very close look, and obviously—and all South Australians will be pleased about this—we came in \$36 million under budget. Of course, they would also be pleased that the budget strategy is on target. He does not reflect on that whatsoever. The issue

of one box in a whole report, with thousands of pieces of information, was a matter about which I was concerned, simply because the Auditor-General asked Treasury for some information. For a variety of reasons, that was not responded to quickly, despite the fact that I had said that, if the Auditor-General asks a question, and he wants you to jump, the question is, 'How high?' Then you make sure that you jump 10 feet higher. On this occasion, that did not happen, and everybody can confirm my instructions to my officers. Of course, they were under enormous pressure at the time with all the other tasks I had given them. That is no excuse.

The fact is that the chart was wrong. It was fixed up. It was not misleading, because the material that was in the report was in no way changed by the chart. We have corrected that—we have put in a new chart. I ask members to compare the old chart with the new chart, because I do not believe anyone could pick the difference with the detail that was provided. I am happy to have matters brought to my attention. If there are issues of importance, whether they involve the Auditor-General or whoever, it may well be—and I will discuss this with the Auditor-General—if the Ministers can get copies of that material, it would assist immensely to make sure that they are answered promptly. I will take up that issue with the Auditor-General so we do not have any confusion in the future. If there is any misinterpretation, lack of data or wrong information provided, it can be readily fixed up. We have learnt a lesson from this graph, and I would hope that my officers can concentrate on ensuring that, whenever the Auditor-General asks for information, he is provided with it very promptly.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Florey is out of order. The member for Giles has addressed the House for long enough.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** Will the Minister for Health confirm that 90 nurses will be cut at Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a result of this year's \$13.9 million budget shortfall? On 22 August, the Director of Finance at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital informed the hospital's finance and audit committee as follows:

The nursing service was also reviewed as part of the business planning and opportunities for savings identified. Subsequently the assessments have been reviewed and adjustments made to earlier findings.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I will not confirm that because it is not my job to confirm it. The Minister's job is to give hospitals their budget and then allow them to manage that budget. I would be only too happy to go into a long and detailed argument about whether a central body—for example, the Health Commission—and the Minister ought to make these decisions. In fact, in the recent South Australian Health Services Bill dealt with in the previous session of Parliament the major bone of contention from the member for Elizabeth was that it gave me as Minister too much power. That was the argument: it gave me too much power. However, the minute a management decision is taken, the member for Elizabeth wishes to sheet it home to me. The member for Elizabeth cannot have it both ways. The simple fact is that the hospital has a budget. Last year it coped perfectly well within that budget. I hear the member for Giles in particular saying, 'Come on.' The member for Giles yesterday was probably having one of his periodic naps when I read from the annual

report of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that it was \$200 000 over budget despite predictions on 21 September 1994 that it would be \$7.5 million over budget. In fact, it increased its activity by 7.3 per cent.

I can see that the member for Giles is awake now and I know he has heard those figures. I expect that he will not interject in that fashion again. The simple fact is that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital coped perfectly well under the management team last year, and I expect that it will cope perfectly well this year.

### WATER, OUTSOURCING

**Mr WADE (Elder):** Can the Minister for Infrastructure report to the House on South Australia's water contracting out plans and compare them with contracting out projects in the United Kingdom and dozens of other countries throughout the world? There have been reports that residents of the United Kingdom are experiencing their first drought since the 1600s. It is also reported that these residents are not well prepared for water conservation and better water management, having had an over supply of water over the past 400 years. The media has reported some harsh criticisms of the new United Kingdom water management companies because of this drought.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** It is important to put on the record that since the late 1980s more than 140 public utilities in more than 140 public infrastructure projects in over 30 countries around the world have been opened up to partnership with the private sector. All developed economies of the world are taking this approach, and to suggest that what we are doing has been rejected by our major trading partners—as alleged by the Opposition—is plainly false. Private participation in most countries extends to the so called essential services of power, natural gas, telecommunications, roads and water. Currently, over 1 000 new private infrastructure projects are under consideration worldwide. Clearly, by focusing on the experience in the United Kingdom the Opposition is taking a very restricted and uninformed perspective for the purpose of misinforming the public of South Australia.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition constantly goes out and says, 'What the Government is going to do is sell the infrastructure'. We are not going to do that at all. The Leader of the Opposition constantly goes out and says, 'Water prices will go through the roof—67 per cent—like the United Kingdom'. That will not occur. The position is different in Australia. What we are proposing in Australia is different to what has been put in place in the United Kingdom, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that.

This is a situation where the Leader does not let the facts get in the way of starting to create fear in the community as to what we propose to do. Well the Leader might laugh because he knows the political tactics that he is attempting to put in place. It is important for the House to note—and I will continue to comment on this and reinforce the point—that, first, we are not selling any assets of SA Water. Secondly, we are not abdicating responsibility for setting the price of water and sewerage because the Government will continue to set the price of water and sewerage. In addition, the Government will continue to control the environmental improvement program for water and sewerage infrastructure in South Australia.

In addition, the Government of South Australia will continue to control the asset management and replacement program for water and sewerage infrastructure in South Australia. So, it has nothing to do with the United Kingdom experience. The Leader of the Opposition ought to get the facts out first and not try to frighten the public of South Australia, because we are not selling anything. The Leader ought to delete the word 'sell' from his vocabulary when talking about this, and he ought to delete the word 'privatisation' because we are not privatising any component of SA Water, and he well knows it. That is why the Leader is putting out letters into the electorate trying to create this false impression, perpetuating a myth that is wrong—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The true global picture according to the World Bank is that in many cases public provision has led to service deterioration throughout the world. The World Bank states:

All socially desirable goals for infrastructure provision can be achieved by the private sector [in partnership with Government].

Last but not least: there are many ways in which the private sector can participate. It is not a case of either privatising or public ownership. The World Bank is telling us that the South Australian approach of retaining ownership, responsibility and control and partnering with a reputable, globally recognised private firm to deliver water services overseas is the best possible arrangement for the cost effective provision of high quality water and sewerage services. The result will be cost savings for consumers in South Australia and new jobs from an export focused water industry in South Australia.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will people who are 80 and who live on their own with serious medical problems be those most disadvantaged as a result of cuts to patient services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

*The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Sir, I seek your concurrence and that of the House to explain my question without the help of the Deputy Premier.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are too many interjections on my right.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** On 21 September the Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Medical Staff Society said ward and bed closures meant hundreds and possibly thousands of people could not be admitted for treatment. Dr Pridmore said:

If you are 80, live on your own, have heart failure, diabetes and a couple of other things and need a long hospital stay, where are you going to be cared for?

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** The answer to Dr Pridmore's question is: 'You will be treated in the hospital.'

### ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Will the Minister for Industrial Affairs inform the House of what progress is being made in South Australia with the adoption of enterprise bargaining?

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON:** It's going along very well, very quietly. Mr Speaker, 104 enterprise agreements have now been registered under the new industrial relations system in this State. They are made up of 8 per cent in the public sector, which covers nearly 8 000 employees, with a further 17 public sector draft agreements currently with the commission—they have been approved and now just have to be ratified by the members of the public sector, and that will give us a total of 11 000 public sector employees; and 92 per cent, obviously, comprise private sector agreements covering 8 000 employees.

The interesting fact about the private sector is that 80 per cent of the agreements are in small to medium sized enterprises, and it is in that area where most of the flexibility changes have occurred. Some 35 per cent of the agreements have been struck directly with employees, something that could not have occurred and did not occur under the previous Government and, of course, the balance involve the unions. As far as we are concerned, it is good that the unions are prepared to recognise that change is needed.

Some of the changes that the unions have supported are very interesting. First, 60 per cent of the agreements have made changes to the overtime penalty rates; 32 per cent have incorporated strategies to address absenteeism—in other words, they have included some incentives to try to reduce absenteeism; and 21 per cent have made changes to Saturday and Sunday work. It is fascinating to think back to the shop trading hours dispute where one of the major objections from members opposite was that we should not have these changes in the Saturday-Sunday work pattern. A further 28 per cent involve a change in historical demarcation areas; 66 per cent have introduced family care leave; 71 per cent have brought in a brand new flexible arrangement in terms of how people can work; and probably the most important of all is that 61 per cent have included specific training issues. The whole enterprise agreement area in this State has changed. The union movement as well as non-unionised labour now have the chance to manage their work place opportunities under this new Industrial Relations Act.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Will the Premier visit all major public hospitals and talk to doctors, nurses and patients to see at first hand the crisis that has been caused by his Government's budget cuts? On 20 September, it was reported that the Royal Adelaide Hospital budget had been cut by \$12 million, Flinders by \$10 million, the Women's and Children's Hospital by \$6.9 million; and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by \$8 million. We have heard today that the shortfall at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is actually \$13.9 million. In Victoria, Premier Jeff Kennett spent a month visiting hospitals to see at first hand the effects of his cuts and, after admitting that they had increasingly put the system under stress, he announced that he would stop the cuts and inject \$89 million in cash back into the system.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** First, there is no crisis. Look at the Leader of the Opposition: he doesn't even want to listen to the answer. He's down—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Immediately, he's gone down the road checking on where the factions are sitting.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** What do they call it: the centre left or the centre right—it's all over the place. First, there is no crisis in our hospitals. Last year, the public hospitals in South Australia achieved an 8 per cent across the board improvement in patient service delivery in the metropolitan area. The Royal Adelaide Hospital, the biggest public hospital of them all, turned in a surplus for the year. There has been an 8 per cent across the board improvement in patient service delivery in the metropolitan area. We know the extent to which waiting lists have come down. We know the extent to which those who have waited for surgery—

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The Leader of the Opposition has had his say. Why does he not listen to the facts for once instead of trying to distort the truth?

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition for the first time. The Premier.

*Mr Ashenden interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wright is out of order.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I point out to the Leader that as I move around the metropolitan area and in the country I invariably visit the large public hospitals in those areas, as I have done on a number of occasions over the past 18 months, something which I suspect the former Premier did not do, but I have. I have visited some of those hospitals twice.

#### MODBURY HOSPITAL

**Mr BASS (Florey):** Will the Minister for Health inform the House of any information that he may have on the service delivery of the Modbury Public Hospital since it came under private management? I have been contacted by elderly members of my electorate who are concerned and frightened by the continual circulation of incorrect information about the Modbury Hospital, especially by a small group of persons who continually write inaccurate letters to the local newspaper.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I acknowledge the member for Florey's ongoing interest in the Modbury Hospital as I acknowledge the interest of the member for Newland and the member for Wright. The Labor Party seems fixated on who owns or who runs what: in other words, the politics of envy. However, since the Modbury Hospital came under the private management of Healthscope, the team of workers at the hospital have not merely been abandoned by Labor but also become the victims of a vicious, carping campaign of misinformation. In the face of this campaign, as Minister I have continually assured the people of South Australia—in particular, the people of the north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide—that services at Modbury will be maintained or improved.

It gives me considerable pleasure to inform the member for Florey and the House that I am advised that in the first six months of Healthscope's management Modbury Public Hospital has performed over 400 more elective surgical procedures than for the same period last year. I will repeat that: over 400 more elective surgical services than in the previous period last year. Services have been expanded in ear, nose and throat surgery, radiology, hospice care and anaesthesia.

Yesterday, I received an assessment of the impact of Healthscope's management on the services provided by



Modbury Hospital, and this assessment again puts paid to many of the lies which have been spread about Modbury Public Hospital. Amongst other things which the member for Elizabeth and the Modbury Hospital action group and various other people who write to the newspapers are saying is that Modbury Hospital is providing a lower level of service both in terms of quantity and severity of care. That is wrong: there has been no significant change in the types of cases treated and the occasions of service. In other words, there is no suggestion of a lower level of service and there is no suggestion of decreasing severity. The report to me states:

The monthly differences which are observed can only be explained by random variations and do not indicate systematic change.

A number of people, including the member for Elizabeth, have indicated that Modbury Hospital is pushing patients out early. Wrong. There has been no significant difference in the length of stay. The report further states:

The bi-modal distribution is maintained over a three year period.

Critics have further implied that Modbury is not admitting people, particularly if they come in from casualty. Wrong. There has been no significant change. The report further states:

There has been a small fall in total admission rates—

because it has moved to day surgery—

over the three years but the emergency admissions have been consistent over 1994-95.

The summary of the assessment states:

There is no evidence in the in-patient data to suggest that there had been a systematic change in clinical practices and decision making in the period February 1995 till 30 June 95. Healthscope took over the management of Modbury Hospital in February 1995. Variations are seen but these do not indicate a systematic change in practice, rather they indicate random fluctuations seen from year to year and month to month. It is not possible to attribute these variations to anything but random changes in the clinical activity.

The bottom line is that Healthscope is, quite frankly, continuing the tradition of great service at the Modbury Public Hospital. Services have not been reduced: indeed, in many areas they have been enhanced. I repeat: that is occurring with a \$6 million annual—over the life of the contract—dividend to the taxpayers. I repeat: 400 extra surgical procedures were performed in the period and exactly the same type and severity of cases. Let us be quite clear on Labor's campaign of misinformation. It is not merely reckless with the truth: it is, in fact, reckless with the lives of people in the north-east. Doctor Geoffrey Williamson, Director of the Emergency Department at Modbury Public Hospital since 1976, recently responded to an allegation—I think in one of the letters to which the member for Florey referred—that the hospital does not provide after hours casualty work by saying:

The level of patient care that we are providing at this time is no less than it has ever been . . . We would be most concerned if a member of our local community were to suffer harm because they believe this inaccurate statement.

That is the bottom line. Modbury Public Hospital is performing fabulously. It is a credit to everyone involved; it is attending to more cases of the same severity, and it is about time the Labor Party got off the back of Modbury Public Hospital and gave credit where it is due for a fantastic exercise.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FINANCING AUTHORITY

**Mr QUIRKE (Playford):** Does the Treasurer agree with the Auditor-General's assessment that the Government's policy decision to lengthen gradually the loan profile of the South Australian Financing Authority actually cost South Australians an additional \$160 million in interest charges over the Government's first 18 months—an amount exceeding the Government's cuts to schools, hospitals and community services?

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I was going to keep my answer short, as the Premier suggested, but I am now going to make it long and explain to this House what actually happens. The answer is, 'No, I do not accept it at all.' I must give credit to the member for Giles, who found the right page and brought it to the attention of one of his friends in the media. I heard some outrageous claims on one television channel last night. At the outset it is important that this House understand one or two things: the State went very short during the 1992-93 period. Indeed, what has not been revealed—and I am hoping it will be revealed, so I will do it anyway—is that, during this period of going short, SAFA borrowed \$2.5 billion. It went short in the market on that borrowing and invested long at the lowest returns in the history of South Australia for at least the past 20 years.

That was the strategy pursued at that time. It has not come out in the Auditor-General's Report, and he may be forgiven for not understanding that that had happened.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I am just saying that the Auditor-General might not have understood that the Labor Party—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:**—played the market, and I will talk about interest rates in a moment. The Labor Party says that when you go down the charts you stay short. That is fine but, of course, what we did not know was that it had borrowed this enormous amount of money mixed up with the State Bank bail-out. Its excuse to the market was, 'We were funding State Bank', and at the same time it was getting all this money to play with. One could say that it was probably a pretty wise policy if one looked at the spreads that existed at the time, that is, if one believes in playing markets. I do not believe in playing markets but some people do. If one looks at the spreads that existed at the time, one finds about a 3 per cent spread between the 90 day bill rate and the 10 year bond rate. In January 1993, the short—

*The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** Sir, I would like to respond to this question in the shortest time possible and, if the member for Giles can be quiet for just a minute—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Giles has had a pretty fair go.

*The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I do not think the Minister needs any help.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Leader will need some.

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** The 90 day bill was 5.85 per cent and, of course, the 10 year bond rate was 8.6 per cent. There was a huge spread. So, Treasury or, I should say, SAFA, or the decision makers—and we all know who the decision makers were at the time, including the Minister—said, 'We are going to have fun with the market. We will borrow all this

money and play the markets.' Of course, there was a decent spread at that time. They never pulled out, and we came into government and wore it. In December 1993, it is useful to observe, the spread had decreased, so there were warning signs—4.85 per cent and 6.7 per cent on the 10 year bonds.

By December 1994, the rates were 8.15 per cent on the short and 10.05 per cent on the long. Regarding those rates, the interest cost to South Australia, due to good management through SAFA, has increased 27 per cent over that time, yet the short-term rates have gone up nearly 100 per cent and, of course, the long-term rates have gone up over 50 per cent. If that is not prudent management, I ask the question. The Auditor-General in 1992-93 expressed concerns about the shortness of the portfolio. The Audit Commission in 1994 said, 'You are too short: you must be longer.' I took the advice of the Auditor-General; I took the advice of the Audit Commission; and I took—

*The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** The member for Giles—

**The SPEAKER:** He is right out of order.

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I will deal with the member for Giles in a minute.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** We had the Auditor-General expressing concern; we had the Audit Commission expressing concern; we had financial agencies—which the then Minister knew about—asking, 'What was the strategy?'; and we had questions being asked by the rating agencies when we were at AA minus. The former Minister knows that all those things happened. All the advice was, 'You must lengthen your portfolio.' That was clear advice given by the Auditor-General and the Audit Commission. In retrospect, we have been given a tick by the rating agencies, as has been read out by the Premier—and if any member would like a copy, it will be made available. Indeed, we have been given a tick by the financial press—an absolute tick. I remind members that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** —in December 1985 the short rate was 19.75 per cent and the long rate on the 10 year bonds was 14.85 per cent. In October 1989—just under five years before we came to government—for 90-day bills it was 18.35 per cent and 13.55 per cent. If we had kept to the strategy adopted by the previous Government, under those conditions we would be facing another \$1 000 million or \$800 million. Would that have been responsible? Of course not.

I shall now deal with the hypotheses put forward by the Auditor-General. The first hypothesis was: what would have happened if we had stayed short? How could we have stayed short with the Auditor-General and the Audit Commission saying we had to lengthen portfolios, and with the ratings agency also asking us questions?

*The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** No; just be quiet. I will come to the member for Giles in a minute. How could we possibly stay short in those circumstances, and how could we stay short given the amount of money that was slushing around the system? It was because the former Treasurer decided to play the markets, and we had to clean up another mess. In terms of the first hypothesis, if we had left everything short, we would have had two problems. First, we would have been exposed to risk; and, secondly, our securities would have had to be written down by some extraordinary value. It was quite simple: looking at the rates that prevailed at the time, within

one year the interest cost on the short-term rate was greater than the return that we would have been getting on our long-term equities. It is simple mathematics: you were blowing it. So the first hypothesis is wrong.

The second hypothesis is: could we have launched ourselves in the market and obliterated all our securities? Anyone who wished to examine the markets would see that it was an impossibility. If we had extinguished \$3 billion of equities and instruments in the process, not only would SAFA's ratings in the world market have gone down dramatically, but people would also wonder about the way that SAFA was operating. It is a complicated and extensive answer, but, given the misinformation that abounded—and I notice it was not the first question—I believe it deserves a considered response.

The member for Giles has been circulating something from the Estimates Committee of 1992. Of course, in 1992 interest rates were coming down. He has given the—

*The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I am giving you a free kick. It might be his backside that gets kicked in the process.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** As it was coming down the curve, in the Estimates Committee I made the observation that, given that it had gone below 10 per cent after a long term—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I am not wrong. After a long term above 10 per cent, I asked, 'Are you considering locking in?' That was the question. The next year the Treasurer said that it would have cost us \$120 million if we had locked in on the way down. Well, he is wrong, because the rate that prevailed at that time was the same rate as is prevailing now. We would have had the advantage of that movement down the chart as we rolled over our securities and, indeed, we would have been in a far more secure situation; we would not have had to sell off those assets that had been falsely created by the former Treasurer. If the sorts of things that the Labor Government did previously had continued, we would have had another State Bank disaster.

## TRAINING

**Mrs KOTZ (Newland):** With an international panel recently having compared more than 200 training institutions from 12 APEC countries, can the Minister say how South Australia rates in comparison with other nations as regards training?

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** Recently, members of the Asia Pacific Economic Conference assessed training provision in terms of IT electronics in the 12 member countries—the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia, China and others—and the only Australian institute to be selected to win exemplary status was the Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE. It is a wonderful achievement for one of our local TAFE institutes. It was the only Australian program selected and accorded that status. It is a very innovative program, operating day and part of the night for students to access training with a qualified tutor and lecturer on hand. It is more responsive to the needs of students and it is meeting the needs of industry. Last night industry leaders who helped to celebrate the achievements of the TAFE institutes were made aware of further developments in relation to that program.

Again, TAFE in South Australia is leading the world in the delivery of programs. I congratulate all the staff involved and endorse the activities taking place within the Torrens Valley Institute as being of world standard and helping to keep South Australia in the forefront of training in the world.

#### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

**Mr QUIRKE (Playford):** Given the criticisms by the Auditor-General in his latest report, will the Premier discipline Ministers and CEOs whose departments have failed to comply with the statutory accounting obligations? The Auditor-General states:

During the course of the execution of the audit for 1994-95, instances were noted where there had been a failure to appreciate the need for compliance with statutory requirements.

The Auditor-General gave examples, including concerns about the integrity of Government tendering and Government-controlled charitable funds being kept in unauthorised accounts.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** My recollection of the Auditor-General's Report is that he clearly said that there had been no breach of the law, although he was concerned about some procedures. In my ministerial statement today I have already said that three or four senior CEOs will be putting in place practices to attend to some of those matters highlighted by the Auditor-General. One of those areas will involve looking at the procedures. I stress that the Auditor-General did not say that there had been any breach of the law; he was concerned that the procedures followed in relation to certain aspects of the law were properly followed.

#### CREDIT CARDS

**Mr LEGGETT (Hanson):** Can the Treasurer inform the House of the action he is taking to ensure that the use of Government credit cards is appropriately monitored? I note that in his report, which has just been tabled in this House, the Auditor-General has commented that there is an unsatisfactory position concerning the use of credit cards in a number of agencies.

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** Quite rightly, the Auditor-General pointed to the inadequacy of certain agencies meeting their responsibilities. It is important to understand that the Auditor-General did not allude to fraud; he simply said that the following procedures were insufficient. Indeed, a large number—too many—were not complying with the Treasurer's instructions, despite the fact that after the Auditor-General's Report was presented last year I reissued those instructions. When these matters arose, we went back to the departments concerned, and not only have they rapidly put in place new procedures but we are looking at the instructions. Importantly, in instances where we believe there have been serious and ongoing breaches, the question will be whether a credit card should be issued to those persons.

I note that a number of credit cards have already been withdrawn, and I congratulate the Ministers concerned for those initiatives. It is important that credit cards be used properly. It is important that the documentation be exact, so that there is no misinterpretation of the reasons for that purchase in the original instance.

Treasury has been very active since the Auditor-General presented his report. It is the responsibility of the CEOs to monitor the situation, but I assure members that if there is not

dramatic improvement there may be departments that find themselves without any cards at all.

#### STATE ASSETS

**Mr QUIRKE (Playford):** Does the Treasurer accept the Auditor-General's criticism of the Government's failure to provide a comprehensive balance sheet—State liabilities and assets—in its two budgets, and what will the Treasurer do to address these concerns? The two Liberal budgets so far have not included any data on the value of State assets. Last year the Auditor-General stated:

Urgent attention needs to be given to resolution of the issues that are seen to be a barrier to reporting the position of all the State's assets and liabilities.

On 8 March the Treasurer assured the House such information would be presented in the 1995-96 budget papers. In his latest report the Auditor-General states the decision to again defer publication of this data is 'a backward step compared with earlier approaches' and 'preparation of this information is an important issue'.

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER:** I agree that it is an important issue. The important issue for me as Treasurer is to get the values right. I explained to the honourable member that an asset register is being prepared, and I believe that we now know virtually what the Government's assets are. The second thing to do is go out and value the assets according to certain standards. The last thing that this House will accept is my determining a value of those assets and those valuations then being subject to a dramatic change. We have just gone through three of the major agencies and, from the point where the original asset value was determined to where we are today at an acceptable value, there has been considerable change. The Auditor-General understands that and suggests that we should not be quite so conservative but, having read the Auditor-General's report, I think we will be conservative; we will get the values right. When we present the asset register, indicating the value of the assets and the net asset capability of the Government, I would like to think it will be correct, not some approximation that can change by 10 or 20 per cent.

We are talking about billions and billions of dollars. The Opposition and the Auditor-General would be quite critical if I said that the total value of Government assets was \$40 billion and in the next report said that we have done a complete valuation and it is now \$30 billion. People cannot have their cake and eat it too.

From that point of view, Treasury is working hard on preparing a comprehensive list of all those valuations, and I am hopeful that the Auditor-General's concerns will be met in next year's budget. That is my intention, and if there is any alteration to that I will inform the House.

#### MOUNT GAMBIER PRISON

**The Hon. H. ALLISON (Gordon):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Correctional Services. Can the Minister advise the House as to the nature of the Auditor-General's reporting with regard to the contracting out of management of the new Mount Gambier Prison?

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** As members would be aware, the new Mount Gambier Prison, opened on 26 June this year, is the first in the State to be operated by the Department for Correctional Services in partnership with the private sector. The Auditor-General undertook a review of the contracting out procedures concentrating on ensuring that

'proper procedures were in place in respect of the tendering process; probity and equity matters were addressed during the process; and appropriate financial analysis had been undertaken by the department'.

The Auditor-General's Report covers some 2½ pages on the Mount Gambier private prison. After the noise made by the Public Service Association, by the Labor Party through its shadow Minister in another place and by the Australian Democrats, members would probably have expected a very negative finding from the Auditor-General. But, in fact, the reverse is true. There are no negative findings on the outsourcing process in respect of the Mount Gambier prison in that 2½ page report by the Auditor-General. Indeed, in his report the Auditor-General also indicates that the Department for Correctional Services has made significant savings in the past 12 months with a \$2.2 million decrease in its expenditure. He also highlights that staff numbers in the department decreased by 177 people and that the net cost per prisoner has decreased by \$7 000 per annum to \$38 000.

I remind members that that record is now in place after this Government inherited the highest cost per prisoner in Australia under the previous Government. None of those changes could have been possible without the impending threat of the private sector management contract and without the ultimate delivery of that contract. The township of Mount Gambier has gained considerably from this contract for it now has an international company working from Mount Gambier—a company which now employs 44 staff at that prison—and a prison that accommodates up to 110 prisoners. It is worth also noting that the 44 staff to manage 110 prisoners compares with 22 staff managing 29 prisoners under the previous Labor Administration. I am sure all would agree that it is a significant step forward in prison management, and a significant demonstration of efficient prison management in this State.

#### NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** Will the Minister for Health advise what action he has taken to ensure that the 36 patients being denied ear surgery at the Noarlunga Hospital are not having their hearing permanently damaged, and does he believe that action taken by the Memorial Hospital to immediately operate on one patient was a case of over-servicing? Following a report last week that more than 36 patients were being denied ear surgery at the Noarlunga Hospital because of casemix quotas, the Memorial Hospital offered to immediately perform one operation at no cost on a child awaiting surgery, and this was done the next day. A spokesman for the Minister was quoted as saying that South Australia performed more grommet operations than the national average, which suggested that ear, nose and throat specialists were over servicing.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** The whole area of ear, nose and throat surgery in South Australia is an interesting question. The *Advertiser* highlighted a case where the private sector came to the rescue of a public patient and, if the Federal Labor Party was more amenable to what the 93 per cent of people in Australia want, according to the last report—namely, incentives to be privately insured—that would be seen much more often.

For children under 10 years, such as the case highlighted, South Australia has the highest rate of inserting grommets in the country—nearly 2½ times the rate of New South Wales and Queensland and more than three times the rate of

Tasmania. Overall South Australia does 80 per cent more of this type of operation than the national average. So, I suggest a reasonable question we might ask—and, indeed, it was being asked by the previous Government and previous Ministers for Health—is: why are we doing so many more of these operations than other States in Australia?

*Ms Stevens interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** The member for Elizabeth says that it is a complex question. Of course it is a complex question, but the previous Government did nothing about it. It kept saying, 'It's a complex question. We can't do anything about it, because it's too hard for us'. In fact, the Liberal Government has agreed, and it has done something about it. The figures indicate that we are far above the rest of Australia but, instead of saying that it is too difficult, we have appointed South Australia's first professor of ear, nose and throat surgery to look at these issues at an annual cost of more than \$300 000. So, rather than washing our hands like Pontius Pilate and saying that it is all too hard, we have done something about it. We have contributed \$300 000 a year to ensure that we can get the right answers as to why so many more of these operations are done.

Dr Close has been an agitator for a long time. When I was shadow Minister he used to send me a lot of things, too. The simple fact is that, if Noarlunga Hospital wants to do 40 more of these operations, it is free to do so. It is not a Government decision but a board and management decision. I have spoken with the people at Noarlunga Hospital and they agree that it is a management decision.

#### GAMBLING

**Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurana):** Will the Minister for Family and Community Services advise what initiatives are being undertaken to assess the prevalence of poker machine gambling addiction in South Australia? There are wide spread reports about the prevalence of the problem of addiction to poker machines and gambling. Has any work been done to compile accurate figures and to compare the addiction to poker machines with that of other forms of gambling addiction?

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** The question asked by the member for Kaurana is important. I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer the question. There is no doubt at all that the introduction of poker machines has brought a totally new set of issues to this State. The extent of these issues is still being monitored, and the Premier's recently announced gaming inquiry will go a long way towards addressing many issues being raised by the public. There seems to be conflicting evidence about poker machines, and much of the information upon which we rely is anecdotal. While some people say that the problems of addiction or abuse of the machines may decline over the longer term, further advice suggests that it is more likely that the problem will grow.

I will be in a position soon to announce the successful tenderer for the research component under the \$3.5 million Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund. The component will ensure that we have soundly researched and documented facts and figures that target the specifics in this area. It will give us the true story behind the trends and allow us to be more finely tuned in making important decisions. The fund is also planning the development of a preventative media campaign to guard against addiction. A range of other modules such as self-help programs will be available for people with non-English speaking backgrounds, with the development of

brochures and pamphlets to guard against the problem. I hope to announce further details in a few weeks. I am sure these efforts will be welcomed, especially as they will complement a range of other very good initiatives currently under way through the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund.

The current approach has been endorsed by the head of the Australian Institute for Gambling Research, Associate Professor Mark Dickerson, who has been very complimentary of the way South Australia has handled this problem. Finally, I inform the House that already nine organisations have received funding for a number of programs in metropolitan and country areas to assist in the important part of financial counselling, addiction counselling, family support and community education. A considerable amount has been done in this area, and a lot more needs to be done to combat this significant problem.

### HEALTH BUDGET

**Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Why did the South Australian Health Commission take 11 weeks to advise health units of their budget allocations tabled in this Parliament on 1 June 1995? Why is a hospitals administrator expected to manage the State's billion dollar budget without accurate information, and what action has been taken to address this mismanagement? A memo dated 22 August, from the Director of Finance at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the hospital finance committee, says:

The hospital did not receive details of its allocations until 16 August, 11 weeks after the State budget was tabled in this House. The memo says:

The South Australian Health Commission advised health units of their budget allocations on 16 August 1995.

It continues:

Given that the process was not bilateral and there are a large range of detailed casemix calculations and other adjustments not previously advised, it has taken some time to fully understand the final impact of the budget allocation advised. It is still possible that there may be some more undetected surprises.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** The member for Ross Smith is right: there may well be some more surprises, because there is some more money in the pools, which is what I said before. When the hospitals access all these pools, they may well have many millions more dollars in their budgets. In answer to the question, the important thing to acknowledge is that the budget letters went out at approximately the same time as they have in every year of the past decade.

I note that the member for Ross Smith is diving for the letter. Where does it say in there that it was later than it has been in other years? It does not, because every year the data has to be collected from all the hospitals, and that takes quite some time, given the complexity of the system. There are several hundred health units throughout the system, and that information has to be collected, collated and then a decision made. So the data was presented at roughly the same time as it has been every other year.

### KANGAROOS

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources. What is the current status of the kangaroo population in South Australia? The outbreak of kangaroo blindness syndrome in

South Australia was predicted to have a devastating effect on kangaroo stocks, and I am concerned that this is monitored.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I would rather be a Minister than where you are.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Well, I could say something, too. I thank the member for Flinders for the question, because it is an important one, and there is a lot of interest in this subject, particularly in country areas. Surveys have been undertaken, and they reveal the South Australian population, particularly of western grey kangaroos, to be at the highest level for 18 years. Aerial surveys over the sheep pastoral areas of South Australia by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have revealed that the number of red kangaroos has increased by 25 per cent to 1.7 million animals in the past 12 months. The number of western grey kangaroos is up by 28 per cent to around 700 000 animals. The size of this increase is unexpected, first, because of the dry conditions which existed for 18 months prior to the survey and, secondly, because of the outbreak of the kangaroo blindness disease earlier this year, to which the honourable member referred.

It can be seen that the deaths resulting from the recent kangaroo blindness syndrome were more than compensated for by natural population increase, which was rather surprising. These results are good news for the kangaroo industry, because kangaroo harvesting quotas, which take into account population figures and rainfall statistics, are not likely to decline in 1996. The 1996 quota will be set later this year, and I know that there will be particular interest in the quota. It is an important issue, and I am pleased to be able to provide that information to the member for Flinders.

### PAWN BROKERS AND SECOND-HAND DEALERS

**The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier):** I lay on the table a ministerial statement, made in the other place by the Attorney-General (Hon. K.T. Griffin), on pawn brokers and second-hand dealers.

### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The question before the Chair is that the House note grievances.

**Mr BRINDAL (Unley):** Briefly, I wish to draw the House's attention to the answer to a question by the Minister with respect to poker machines and the problem they seem to be causing in the South Australian community. It is of great concern to me—and I am sure to other members of this House—that they appear to have a social welfare impact and perhaps a business impact that goes far beyond that which was envisaged by members when they voted for the introduction of poker machines in this Chamber in the last Government.

It is a matter of public record that church welfare organisations and many people concerned with welfare have noted what they describe as an increase in addictive gambling, in different patterns of social behaviour, and the loss of revenue that thereby results. Of course, that is to be regretted, and it

is to this Government's credit that it is in some measure attempting now to redress the matter by making up the shortfall. It is to be wondered whether this or any Government, which is, after all, taking only 3 per cent of the revenue that is being generated by poker machines, can make up the shortfall of money that is being siphoned from the economy as a result of these machines.

We can also wonder at the effect these machines are having on small businesses. I can share with members of this House some experiences of small businesses in Unley, and I am sure that those experiences are shared in other electorates. It is not the Tom the Cheaps who are coming to me and saying that their turnover is down; after all, people have to eat. I also suggest that people have to clothe themselves and buy the basic necessities of life. If we talk to people, to the small traders who run the garden shops, those shops that deal perhaps not in necessity goods but in small luxury goods, we find that time and again those people have experienced a real and significant downturn since poker machines have come into South Australia.

Those who would argue for poker machines say, 'Yes, but you can now go to the pub and get a meal for \$3, and 4 500 people are employed because of poker machines.' For all those things, I would have to say that that is a counter argument. If the money is circulating in the community, if it is providing employment, then it is a good thing. However, one has to wonder whether that money which is funnelling through poker machines is being circulated in the best possible way. I went to a craft store on the weekend, and the person running the craft store said, as I just said in relation to gardening stores, 'Look, we've lost a fortune. The downturn since poker machines came in has been remarkable. We have virtually lost a great deal of our trading revenue.' She said, 'But the other day a publican's wife came in and spent \$300 in the store without even blinking.' The argument was that, if a few publicans' wives come in and spend \$300 at a time, they might get back on track. I put to the House that in our economy it is much better and healthier for us as a society for 10 people to each spend \$20 than for one publican's wife to have \$200 in her pocket and nothing much else happening.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr BRINDAL:** The member for Ross Smith says that is socialist.

*The Hon. D.S. Baker interjecting:*

**Mr BRINDAL:** And the member for McKillop believes that as well. The member for McKillop thinks anything right of Attila the Hun is socialist. It is not socialist but it is a concern about being fair to people in our society and about what is happening to them. That concern was expressed not only by me but by many members in this Chamber when the issue of poker machines was debated. I, for one, would be pleased to see the Government increase taxation revenue from poker machine profits and reapply some of that money. I do not believe any member in this Chamber foresaw the amount of revenue that was going to go through those poker machines. The Government is not getting its fair share of this revenue and I think it should get more.

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

**Mr QUIRKE (Playford):** During Question Time today we were given a long and I would like think a full answer on the question of interest rates from the Deputy Premier. Unfortunately, it did not live up to the rhetoric of what was

promised. The Deputy Premier said he would give a short reply but then said he would give us an education on the question of interest rates. Unfortunately, I am none the wiser and I can understand the scepticism of members. I have done a quick tally around the place and I do not think anyone else is any the wiser. Unfortunately, we do not think the Deputy Premier is much wiser about it because, alas, he is a slow learner. Indeed, I was given a press release which indicates that. Dated 15 September 1993, the press release was put out by the Hon. Frank Blevins, then Treasurer, and it states:

Opposition advice would have lost \$120 million.

It continues:

If SAFA had followed the advice of the Opposition, it would have lost \$120 million, according to Treasurer Frank Blevins. Shadow Treasurer, Stephen Baker's advice to SAFA during last year's Estimates Committee hearings (16 September 1992)[was]: 'Without going on with it there is a big difference in where one locks in and for what term. I take note of the previous statement by Dr Bethune when he was talking about going short in the market. I trust that we are now going long in the domestic market because of the present state of interest rates.'

'Had SAFA followed this advice, SAFA would have locked in long-term interest rates at about 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent higher than those available now,' Mr Blevins said. 'That would have led to additional interest costs of at least \$120 million in a full year. Thankfully, SAFA took the opposite view and, by increasing its exposure to short term interest rates over the last two years, has been able to reduce significantly the interest costs to government and semi-government authorities.'

This historic document is now two years old. The problem that has emerged through the Auditor-General about which we were made well aware yesterday and today was alluded to in this document of two years ago. The press release quoted statements from the present Deputy Premier that were made to the Estimates Committee the year before, and I hope that the Deputy Premier is learning his lesson. Unfortunately, it has been an expensive lesson, and there are at least 160 million reasons why. People are saying that, had a more appropriate policy been pursued, that figure could have been as high as \$400 million. Certainly, if there had been no policy change at all there would have been \$160 million in savings.

All the pain in the hospitals and the schools, all the pain experienced by SSOs who unfortunately will soon no longer be part of the staffing formula, all those problems and their costs do not add up to this colossal amount that has just been splashed up against the wall. It needs to be said that, had the Government continued the employment of Treasury officials, particularly Mr Emery, the Deputy Premier would have been given much better advice and this money would not have been lost. The sale of the Myer-Remm site last week has now been wiped out because of the interest rate policy change—in one go. We might as well have kept the building, but it is now gone.

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

**Mr LEGGETT (Hanson):** I, for one, am very proud of this nation's achievements in the world of sport. I refer to cricket, tennis, athletics, hockey and netball, just to name a few. South Australia, too, has honoured its champions in the past and it certainly will in the future. As a sporting enthusiast with a deep interest in statistics, which I think cost me dearly at school, I can recall many outstanding feats and achievements. For example, I can recall when one of this Sunday's football grand finalists, Central Districts, entered the competition in 1964 and the coach was a former Pultney Grammar School parent whom I knew quite well, Ken

Eustice. I hope that, 31 years after entering the South Australian National Football League, Central Districts can create history on Sunday by winning the premiership and putting a temporary halt to Port Power. Unfortunately, a better equipped club of which I am a member, through circumstances beyond their control and mine, missed out on the grand final this year, but next year it will indeed be the year of West Adelaide.

I would like to commend two groups of athletes to the House. First, I congratulate South Australia's highly successful girls drill marching team, which last month won its fourteenth world championship in a row. This was an outstanding achievement. This campaign was achieved in Nagoya, Japan, at the Miss Dance Drill International Competition. It involved a group of high disciplined dancers who performed at the championship spectacular dance pieces (hopefully as Central Districts will perform on Sunday against Port Adelaide).

All the emphasis was on team work but two individual highlights need to be emphasised. First, Rebecca Williams of Gilles Plains was judged the second best soloist in the world, just narrowly being beaten by an American dancer. Secondly, the manager-director of the Australian Drill Team lives in the Hanson electorate, which of course will be re-won at the next election, and her name is Mrs Jean Richards of Ashford. Mrs Richards is the wife of the West Torrens Deputy Mayor, Ken Richards, who has also had a long association with this marching team. Mrs Richards informed me that more than 50 teams from 10 countries participated, so this was an outstanding win. Each team was able to enter only three of the 11 sections and the girls won the dance precision section (which Central Districts will win on Sunday), and they also came second in the military precision (which Central Districts will win on Sunday) and the song leaders section (which the Central Districts' cheer squad will sing on Sunday). This overall aggregate gave them first place for the fourteenth time. To Kirsty Goldsworthy, Kirsti Roberts, Jessica Wise, Rebecca Williams and, of course, Jean Richards, it was a great effort: our congratulations, you have done South Australia proud.

Secondly, I would also like to applaud and acknowledge the South Australian Wheelies, the Australian men's national wheelchair basketball team, which includes four South Australian representatives. This national team had stunning victories recently in the Asian zone and the qualifying competition in Japan, and as a result the team has qualified for the Para-Olympics in Atlanta next year. They defeated powerful countries including China and Iran—a marvellous effort. These athletes are true champions, and their commitment and dedication is a great example to us all.

To the four basketballers concerned (Daryl Taylor, Richard Oliver, David Gould, who was the highest points scorer and captain of the team, and Tim Maloney), the team manager (Fred Heidt) and physiotherapist (Tania Jamieson), congratulations on a magnificent effort and performance and best wishes for the Australian titles, which will be held in Melbourne in November. Again, our best wishes for the Olympics next year in Atlanta. You are great champions and we know you will have success in November and bring back Olympic gold in 1996.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** It was incredible to hear the contribution from the shadow Treasurer, the member for Playford. Members would all be aware that the previous Government created the mess that we are in. What hide it has

now to try to cast aspersions on us for the way things are being managed. Surely the shadow Treasurer listened to the Treasurer during Question Time when he made it very clear that, if our Government continued to follow the policies that the Labor Party adopted of investing money or seeking to have interest rates adjusted, we would have had not just the debt that was incurred because of our policies but more than double that: an \$800 million to \$1 000 million debt in addition would have been created because of interest rate mismanagement. So I say to the shadow Treasurer, the member for Playford, 'You should be the last of all people to stand up here and criticise; you should be hanging your head in shame because of what your Government did to this State which our Government must now try to rectify.'

My main purpose during this grievance debate is to thank the Parliament of South Australia for allowing me to be one of two delegates to attend the Twenty-third Australian and Pacific Regional Conference. As members would be aware, the other delegate was the member for Price, the Opposition Whip, Mr Murray De Laine. We were both honoured to be the official representatives from South Australia. It was a very rewarding, thought provoking and positive conference. This was the first time that I had had the opportunity to represent Parliament at a CPA conference. I am sad that there are not more opportunities for members to attend CPA conferences more often than perhaps once in 13 years or, in some cases, once in 20 years.

I would like to pay tribute to the Cook Islands and their Administration. It is an absolutely wonderful place, one which takes us back to what living was like in earlier times before the pressures of western civilisation came to bear on society. I am not saying that the Cook Islands are underdeveloped: they are developed in the normal ways that one would expect, but it is an island nation well away from the general mainstream of the airline and shipping routes, and therefore the people of the Cook Islands maintain their culture, traditions and adherence to the Christian religion in a way which I have not before perceived in a society.

In particular, I would like to pay tribute to the Hon. Mr Taringa, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands, who officially welcomed the parliamentary delegates at I think almost 2 a.m. Mr Taringa was accompanied by the Clerk of the House, Mr Manuela Puna. They are two fine gentlemen, as I would say are all the Cook Islanders whom I met. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with them and to learn more about the way in which they run the affairs of Parliament in the Cook Islands. I hope to have the opportunity during this session to say more about aspects of what we debated in the Cook Islands during the CPA conference, but at this stage I will simply say a very sincere thank you to the Cook Island parliamentarians, the Queen's representative, the Speaker and all those who were involved in ensuring that the Twenty-third Australian and Pacific Regional Conference turned out to be an outstanding success.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** I, too, recently returned from overseas. During my visit to France, Italy and Greece, I also visited Cyprus. I think that we are all aware of the tragedy of Cyprus. In 1957, when Cyprus was in flames, Archbishop Makarios, the leader of the Cypriot people as well as the ethnarch of Cyprus, was in prison in the Seychelles. The former Labor Leader, Don Dunstan, was there as a negotiator and played a very constructive role in trying to secure the release of Archbishop Makarios; indeed, he had negotiations with the British about

human rights abuses and the rights of prisoners and he acted as a go-between at a very critical time—and that is remembered by the Cypriot people.

In 1974, Northern Cyprus was invaded by Turkish forces, and 36 per cent or more of the island, particularly in the north, is currently under Turkish control. There is a puppet state, but decisions that affect that area are made in Turkey. There are 35 000 Turkish troops and also, of course, waves of so-called settlers being brought into Cyprus by Turkey as a sort of quiet invasion. Anyone who is concerned about human rights should go to Cyprus and see the difference between what happens in free Cyprus and what happens on the so-called Turkish side of the green line.

My visit to Cyprus was arranged by Mr Con Marinos. Indeed, I was invited by the Cypriot Government and I was a guest of the President, Mr Clerides. During my time there I met with the Acting President, Mr Galanos; the Minister of Finance, Mr Christoudoulou, whom I met in Adelaide; and His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus, Mr Chrysostomos, who was, of course, the successor to Archbishop Makarios. I also went to the green line with the Mayor of Nicosia, Mr Lellos Demetriades. If you go to the demarcation line and see the Attila line there, you can look over and see the difference between tyranny and freedom and the scar of shame that cuts across Cyprus through Nicosia.

Later, after visiting the tomb of Archbishop Makarios and talking with the head of the United Nations delegation in Cyprus, I met with Opposition leaders such as Mr George Vassiliou, the former President. I talked to Mr Dinos Michaelides, the Minister of the Interior; with Vassos Lyssarides, who, of course, is the socialist leader; and also with others. The clear message from left, right and centre in Cyprus is that it needs the continuation of Australia's help.

We maintain a peace-keeping presence in Cyprus with Australian police, who are doing an outstanding job. We must continue to maintain pressure and continue to support Cyprus at international forums in order to achieve justice and the removal of Turkish troops. I believe this matter should be pressed within the British Commonwealth, which was so successful in brokering arrangements to secure the release of Nelson Mandela and, indeed, freedom for South Africa. I hope this matter will be raised at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland.

We should be pressing the issue in the United Nations; we should be supporting Cyprus in its campaign to enter the European union, because membership of the EEC will help provide security and greater leverage in order to ensure that all of Cyprus becomes free and democratic. It is an issue that is very important to Australia. We remember the support of the Cypriot people during the Second World War. They are our brothers and sisters in the Commonwealth and need our continued energetic support to ensure that the Cyprus issue is not put into the 'too hard' basket. I will be meeting shortly with the Turkish Ambassador and presenting him with a letter to take to the President of Turkey in terms of human rights abuses and other issues involving Cyprus.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass):** Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** I rise this afternoon to place on the record some history about a recent delegation I led to Minister Wotton comprising members of my electorate who are concerned about the current state of water in the Willunga Basin. Many people in South Australia are now aware that we have a sustainable discharge of only about

7 600 megalitres of water from the basin. To highlight one example, last year—and admittedly it was a drought year—11 500 to 12 000 megalitres of water was withdrawn from the basin.

Many members of the Southern Vales Water Resources Committee, who are my constituents, have shown due diligence over the past couple of years. They have worked in consultation with the community at large to come up with some sort of a solution to this major concern about the basin. The committee held a public meeting earlier this year, and its recommendation was that every property owner should be adopting 180 millimetres per property right across the board, whether it involves a grape grower, an almond grower, a horticulturalist or a strawberry grower. A lot of debate took place on the night following that announcement, and at that stage it appeared that perhaps the community was divided.

Since that night, I have attended many other meetings and spoken to a great number of my constituents. It appears to me that the absolute majority of constituents agree that, if we are going to be responsible, maintain sustainability and create jobs and economic opportunities in our basin region, we should seriously look at the recommendations of the Southern Vales Water Resources Committee. This recommendation was endorsed by the leaders of the delegation who visited the Minister, including John Harvey, Martin Lightfoot from the South Australian Farmers Federation, McLaren Vale branch, Alex Johnston, winegrower and winemaker, Scott Collett, Chairman of the Winemakers Association, McLaren Vale, Don Oliver, grapegrower, and a few other leading primary producers and agriculturalists in the region.

The delegation clearly indicated to the Minister that it believed this is the best way to go. If one looks at the growth of plantings in the basin, the potential for further plantings and the creation of extra job opportunities as a result, we must be responsible, whether or not we like it, when it comes to protecting that most valuable resource. I feel sorry for those growers who might have been using far in excess of 180 millimetres per annum. In fact, some of those growers were using around 500 millimetres per annum as supplementary irrigation to the natural rainfall.

Hopefully, some form of offset can be achieved, particularly for the specialist growers, such as strawberry growers and some of the other extraordinary horticulturalists in the area. I believe they have a fair case to argue but, as I say, by and large, if we are going to be responsible the recommendations endorsed by the Southern Vales Water Resources Committee, the Farmers Federation and the Winemakers Association seriously need to be considered by our community. In a nutshell, I am supporting the recommendations put forward by those three organisations.

One only has to look at what is happening with the Murray River system and, thank goodness, a great initiative has been put forward by our Premier and the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, David Wotton, provided we can enlist the support of the Federal Government to solve that problem before it becomes an absolutely intolerable situation and one that will not be able to be reversed. Clearly, we do not want that to happen in the basin. We should learn from the experiences in other areas where major damage had already occurred before controls could be put in place. I endorse what is happening right throughout the State, realising that water is an important resource and realising the prospects for job and economic growth opportunities.

I encourage the community in my electorate to look seriously at the problem from an environmental point of view



as well as an economic point of view, and to work as a whole to ensure that we maintain this resource and protect it for future generations.

### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Legislative Council intimated that it had appointed the Hon. P. Holloway to fill the vacancy on the Legislative Review Committee caused by the resignation of the Hon. B.J. Wiese.

### SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of sessional committees.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

**Mr KERIN (Frome):** I move:

That the following Address in Reply to Her Excellency's opening speech be adopted:

May it please Your Excellency—

1. We, the members of the House of Assembly, express our thanks for the speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to the matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

I congratulate Her Excellency on her efforts on behalf of all South Australians. Her Excellency is greatly respected within the community, and I know my constituents have very fond memories of her visits to the Mid North last year and at the recent blessing of the fleet ceremony at Port Pirie. Many members of the community spoke of their delight at the Governor's attending last year's celebrations. In October Her Excellency will again visit my electorate for Yacka's one hundred and twenty-fifth birthday celebrations. Together with the residents of Yacka, I look forward to that occasion.

In opening the third session of South Australia's forty-eighth Parliament, Her Excellency spoke not only of the Government's plans for this session but also of the Government's achievements. The major aims for this Government had to be debt reduction and increasing employment and economic activity. The targets set to achieve these aims are well on track. Public survey results certainly indicate a much higher level of confidence among South Australia's employers than has been seen for many years.

The belief of business people in South Australia is that we are about to enjoy a period of strong economic growth and that business conditions will improve in the next three to six months, resulting in more jobs. Employment at present is at its highest level for five years, with the creation of 27 400 jobs since January 1994.

We have also seen much movement on the debt reduction front. Of great importance to my electorate of Frome, and particularly Peterborough, was the sale of the Pipelines Authority of South Australia to the American company Teneco. I am grateful to the Treasurer and the Asset Management Task Force for the manner in which they transacted that business. Despite efforts to create fear among employees in the local community, the sale was achieved with the interests of employees being considered as paramount. I wish the new

owners success and hope that they and their excellent Peterborough work force enjoy mutual benefits from their association, and certainly the initial indications at Peterborough are most encouraging.

We have also achieved the sale of the Myer-Remm Centre. Like the Treasurer, I was amazed that the Opposition had the gall to criticise the sale. It is one of many issues on which it stretched the bounds of credibility by making any comment. It is one of those mistakes for which South Australians are still awaiting an apology. As Opposition members rise in this House over the next few weeks criticising the Government for difficult decisions, I ask them to consider what could be done within health and education with the \$1 billion that irresponsible decision making and union sweetheart deals cost this State and the taxpayers, and that is just the money that has been lost on the Myer-Remm Centre.

We are currently seeing the establishment of businesses attracted to South Australia by the change of Government and the new attitude to doing business in this State. Business investment in South Australia rose by 22 per cent last year. Investment in manufacturing grew at the rate of four times the national average as business changed its attitude towards South Australia. For some years we were given a wide berth by business and a significant change was required. The Government's policy of being proactive and not increasing taxes has seen business identify the benefits of the low cost of operating in South Australia compared with the Eastern States.

The Premier has only recently returned from the road show to the Eastern States, the reaction to which was excellent, and investors in Australia are being left in no doubt that South Australia means business. Likewise, the Premier's recent visit to the United States targeted international areas and industries. South Australians should not underestimate the possibilities for job creation and economic development as a result of these initiatives.

As elected representatives, it is our duty to support initiatives to improve the State's finances and job prospects. Criticisms of delays in signing the EDS deal are naive. The best deal for South Australia needs to be achieved, not just a quick signature for political purposes, of which we saw more than enough pre-1993.

In recent months we have heard much about the Government's plans for SA Water and the proposed water contract. However, much of what we have heard from the Opposition and the Public Service Association has been very misleading, as we heard earlier today in the House. They have deliberately chosen to attempt to confuse the electorate on this issue. One wonders whether they are scared of the magnitude of success possible for this proposal. We have heard absolutely nothing constructive from the Opposition on this issue. It has failed to acknowledge what is proposed. Deliberately misleading constituents is a dereliction of parliamentary duty. Opposition members leading the attack have decided to ignore the interests of their constituents and their right to be told the truth. We have heard all the irrelevant stories from countries where privatisation has occurred, even to the extent of wasting money on advertisements to scare people. The Public Service Association has picked up the misinformation campaign, and I find the articles in its September *Review* quite incredible. Surely, the paying members of this union who are left deserve better than that rubbish. I was quite taken by the statement on the front page, 'Cholera is spread through water.' It might be a wonderful medical revelation, but I do

not know what it has to do with the Government's plans for SA Water.

I will take this opportunity to reiterate the facts—facts which have been ignored by many. The Government will continue to set prices for water and waste water services; pensioners and State concession card holders will continue to receive current considerations; and SA Water will continue as it is in country areas. The proposed contract covers, first, the operation of the metropolitan water and waste water systems; secondly, the management of associated capital works projects; and, thirdly, an undertaking to lead the development of the South Australian water industry with a commitment to a specific volume of exports. We are not selling water pipelines or treatment plants. It is vital to an understanding of the proposal that people know that the ownership of assets and the control of prices are retained by the State Government.

Not only has the Labor Party tried to deprive South Australians of their right to know the truth, but it has forfeited the opportunity sensibly to debate the contract. This is not just my opinion or that of the Government: I quote the views of that wonderful respected journalist, Alex Kennedy, as published in the Adelaide *Messenger* in an article headed, 'Opponents to water contract are appearing like drips', as follows:

Through the most blatant political grandstanding and cynical posturing, South Australians are being denied a sensible debate about the State's water outsourcing contract. They are being denied it by the very people who insist they are helping the electorate tackle the Government on the issue. The fact is that they're doing no such thing. Instead, they have seen an issue which can get them media attention, and it's been a case of 'Bugger the real needs of the electorate.'

It's political fraud at its worst, because this is an important contract which should have merited intelligent discussion and research and debate well before it got to this point of near complete negotiations. Worst culprit is the Labor Party, in particular Opposition Leader Mike Rann, who continues to vent hysterical hyperbole every time he spies a microphone.

Ms Kennedy goes on:

In there in the shadows, too, are the Democrats worrying about we know not what; but they're worrying anyway. The PSA is also there with some grossly misleading statements and a series of public protest meetings. As a bunch they are screaming for the contract to be stopped, and insist on describing it as privatisation. It's a strange way to behave if they all have South Australia's interests at heart.

That covers the situation very well indeed. This Government has also tackled many issues which its predecessors found too difficult. The establishment of the authorities for the Patawalonga and River Torrens catchments is a necessary and overdue measure. Community support for these measures has been highly encouraging, and that level of support will be vital in the achievement of clean waterways.

I applaud the new campaign to address the massive problems of the River Murray. This river is vital to the State, and its current salinity and pollution levels should be of great concern to all South Australians and of even greater concern to the Federal, Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland Governments than they have been in the past.

Again, I was absolutely amazed at the Opposition Leader's reaction to the Premier's initiative. The Leader is obviously locked into such a negative mode that he no longer seems to be able to judge community reaction. His opposition was roundly condemned by many in the community. As the Opposition Leader is locked out from listening to our advice, I again draw on a media response—this time the *Sunday Mail*

editorial of 24 September—which, under the heading 'Don't bucket Murray plan, Mr Rann', states:

The public of South Australia is getting sick and tired of the negativity of the State Opposition Leader, Mr Rann. The Brown Government's brokerage of a multi-government funded plan to clean up the River Murray is exciting—deserving full support from all South Australians. It is crucial to the wellbeing of South Australia—to our industry, our rural sector, regional centres and everyone in metropolitan Adelaide.

Further, the article states:

To assert that Mr Brown should resign because the river levy is another tax is ludicrous. Stop pouring cold water on good ideas, Mr Rann. The electorate bucketed Labor at the last election and from the way you are performing it will do so again.

I think that the Opposition Leader would do well to take the *Sunday Mail's* advice. The Government is also making enormous strides in aquaculture. Considerable resources are being made available to prepare management plans and ensure that the expansion is not only orderly but sustainable. It will become not only a much greater export earner for South Australia but also an important regional employer. Other rural diversification projects are being assessed and expanded.

Mechanisation of farming saw times decline as fewer farmers were required to do the work and many more hectares were needed to make a living. Hopefully, some of the current alternatives will see this turn around and small towns benefit, as these enterprises are far more intensive and require far fewer hectares to make a living. Consideration of the recommendations of the Eyre Peninsula Task Force will be closely watched by Eyre Peninsula residents. While this year promised so much earlier, that promise was unfortunately greatly reduced by dry conditions in July and August. Whilst many areas of the State, and a large part of Eyre Peninsula, are still promising good returns, once again we will see some of the most needy miss out, and that is a tragedy.

Yesterday in this House the Member for Custance spoke in a grievance debate about the most unfortunate death of Allan Glover, who was the Chairman of the grains section of the South Australian Farmers Federation. Allan was a very successful and large farmer who cared greatly for those less fortunate than himself, and he had enormous feeling for Eyre Peninsula's battling farmers. I endorse the comments made by my colleague yesterday and add my condolences to the Glover family.

Agreement has been reached with the Commonwealth for the establishment of AusIndustry, which is to simplify the range of State and Federal business assistance programs. Hopefully, this will be extended in future to produce a real one-stop shop for business.

The State's mineral potential is attracting an increased exploration effort. This will lead to exciting opportunities in northern South Australia. There is also much excitement about the results of surveys in the Broken Hill to Yunta area. Hopefully, this will play an important part in the future of Port Pirie and its long-term partner, Broken Hill.

In respect of the future of Port Pirie, I should also applaud the commitment of Pasminco BHAS to Port Pirie. Enormous sheds are currently being erected on the wharves to cover the concentrates and, with other projects it has in line, Pasminco has a \$50 million commitment to Port Pirie. That has been a terrific boost for the confidence of the town and the region.

Agreement has been reached with the Commonwealth to extend Adelaide Airport's main runway. The preparation of the environmental impact assessment statement will start

soon, and the extension is due for completion in the second half of 1998. This move is welcomed by existing exporters and is an important incentive to others to look to Asian and other overseas markets.

On the road scene, there is the sealing of the South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island which will attract new tourist facilities to the island. Substantial developments there, and at Wilpena Pound, will hopefully lift our profile internationally in the way that the current Wirrina Cove project is doing. In this year's budget considerable finance was allocated for the Burra to Morgan Road, about which much has been said for many years in this place. It has had a terrible history of neglect. I look forward to seeing that completed in the not too distant future.

Not far south of that road, people are very happy about the Government's plans for the construction of 11 filtration plants, which will serve the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa, the Mid North and towns along the Murray itself. These projects will be under the build, own and operate scheme. The successful tenderers for the scheme will be announced in the middle of 1996. That will result in many more South Australians receiving water of a reasonable standard.

One of the greatest challenges that the Government inherited in December 1993 was a health system in desperate need of change. This necessary change has been gradually brought about, but the benefits have been somewhat restricted by certain sections of the community who are not prepared to assist in changing for the good of South Australia's health system. Despite this, the achievements of the Minister for Health and many dedicated people in the system are considerable.

The financial mismanagement of the late 1980s and early 1990s ensured that we do not have the finance we need to meet all expectations. This has been further assured by the Federal Government, which seems to put its philosophy ahead of the health needs and expectations of Australians. The South Australian health system is delivering more health care for less money, with 4 per cent more people being treated in South Australian hospitals in 1994 than in the previous year. There have been reductions in waiting lists and significant beneficial changes in the manner in which we deliver medical care. Changes to the health system were absolutely necessary for the delivery of better services. However, once again some people have chosen to misrepresent the changes and their impact. It is reasonably easy to scare people in an emotional area like health.

It was reported that 700 people from the western suburbs turned out for a protest meeting on competitive tendering of services at the QEH. Former Premier Dunstan was rolled out again, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition shared his wisdom with the 700 people present. Whilst I noticed in Question Time today that the Deputy Leader seems to have become an instant expert on health and hospitals, I doubt that a great deal of wisdom was imparted. They could not have been all that convincing as the reaction was timid, to say the least.

An interesting article in the Messenger Press looked at community concerns that were put to local members in the western suburbs. Despite a standard letter being handed out at the protest meeting, there was little response. I quote from the article in the Messenger as follows:

Five of the region's six State parliamentarians have reported minimal concern among constituents about the future of the QEH. Hart MP Kevin Foley was the only member who said he had been inundated with queries. The responses follow last month's launch of

the campaign by union officials, hospital staff, Labor and Democrat politicians and residents to stop private operators taking control of the QEH.

At that meeting residents were urged to send their local politician the standard letter of protest, which was distributed. Two of those letters were sent to Spence MP Michael Atkinson, one of which was from a constituent in the neighbouring Lee electorate. Mr Atkinson said he also had been approached by voters in the lead-up to that 30 August public meeting. 'It's not an overwhelming response. People are concerned about it, but are just waiting to see what happens' he said. Hanson MP Stewart Leggett said he received more comments about the rollerblade legislation. He had been sent three letters from people who live outside his electorate, which must be sitting back and waiting. Lee MP Joe Rossi said he had received a telephone call and a letter faxed from Mr Atkinson's electorate office.

We are all aware of the cooperation that goes on between the electorates of Lee and Spence, which is great to see between neighbouring members. The article continues:

Peake MP Heini Becker said he had received one letter and no telephone calls.

It comes back to the fact that Hart MP Kevin Foley said that a stream of people approached him over the issue and many people raised it as a concern in a recent electorate survey. It is interesting that, while other MPs received only a couple of constituent concerns each, the member for Hart was inundated. While it may appear strange on the surface, if you take into account that he is a Port Adelaide barracker we may be able to understand; they have always been well known for their exaggeration. Just as the member for Hart was inundated with constituent protests over the QEH proposals, I hope Port Adelaide is similarly inundated with wins next year, which may just push it ahead of Fitzroy.

It was interesting to see the mild and candid response of the member for Spence that 'there was not an overwhelming response'. I suspect that he analysed what the changes will mean for his constituents, and I urge his colleague the member for Hart to do the same.

On the northern side of Adelaide we have also witnessed many misleading statements on the activities of the Modbury Hospital. Again this is against the interests of the people of the north-east and only serves to scare them. It harms the reputation of the Modbury Hospital and the staff who work there. I can understand their frustration at what is going on. I applaud the efforts of the Minister and his initiatives to provide better health care for South Australians. However, no amount of effort on his part, however brilliant his initiatives may be, will see us being able to meet all expectations of the public for health care. The Federal Government has to get its act together and properly fund health care and, even more fundamentally, Australia needs to become far more productive if it is to fully fund all expectations, because the cost of meeting all demands for equipment and care is beyond our current levels of productivity in this country. It is about time all Governments and Oppositions of whatever persuasion acknowledged that fundamental problem.

During this session we will also be looking at legislation to bring South Australia into line with other States on a national road transport charge scheme for heavy vehicles. This is to ensure that each State's registration charges are the same to stop road users in one State taking out cheaper registration in another State. The principle of that is correct and I support it. I commend the work done on this issue by the Minister and her staff as they are under threat of financial penalty if South Australia does not implement the charges. While I support the principle, I am disturbed at the manner in which the charges have been arrived at at the national level.

It appears that the scale of fees has been drawn up to meet the criteria of administrative simplicity rather than fairness and equity. Whilst the State revenue in South Australia will not be greatly impacted by the change, in the quest for simplicity there will be many winners and losers and the charges do not reflect a true user pays philosophy. I appreciate the Minister's efforts to reduce the impact on some of the disadvantaged, but her hands are tied and flexibility is severely limited. I will have more to say on this when we debate the legislation.

Also this session legislation will be put before us on local government reform. Presently in the community there are many and varied views on the degree of reform needed and how it is best achieved. Underlying local government reform is the desire to achieve improved efficiencies, which can be returned to ratepayers as either better services or reduced rates, or a mix of the two. As with State Government reform and much needed Federal Government reform, the reform of local government is needed to improve our competitiveness and contain costs to South Australians. There is at present a very pro-active attitude within local government in South Australia, and it is hoped that the next reform achieved will not only put local government into a position to tackle the next couple of decades but also that the immediate needs and concerns of all South Australians are taken into account. Local government requires clear direction as to expectations which the State has of it and, with the establishment of the Local Government Board and the introduction of this legislation, this direction should now be provided.

We will also again consider legislation relevant to WorkCover. Whilst we have achieved some gains in this area, it is still not the scheme best suited to the needs of employers and employees in South Australia. Largely this is the result of compromise in another place. However, this session will see us tackle a new statutory framework for the resolution of disputed workers compensation claims and issues of workers health, safety and welfare.

Much other legislation is to come before us emanating from the various portfolio areas. All of this will contribute to making South Australia a more efficient economy and a better place to live. I am convinced that South Australia is fighting back. Whilst business confidence is growing rapidly, I still feel that many South Australians are a bit reluctant to be confident in sharing this prosperity. This is almost totally because of the lessons they learnt in the 1980s. So often they were told of how terrific it was around the corner and not only were they delivered disappointments instead but we had to suffer the absolute tragedy of the State Bank. To see 150 years of a State's accumulation of wealth virtually wiped out in such a short time has had an enormous impact on the psyche of South Australians.

Despite this we are a resilient people. For groups in the community and the Opposition to use such negative and misleading tactics to keep down South Australia is not acceptable. This should not be about politics but about the people of this State, and I urge the Opposition to become more positive. Sure, the Opposition should question the Government on every move it makes, but it should at least respect the electorate by giving it the facts. I again take this opportunity to thank Her Excellency for her speech at yesterday's opening and to congratulate her on her efforts for this State and its people.

**Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna):** I have much pleasure in seconding the Address in Reply and reconfirming my

allegiance to the Westminster system of government, to Queen Elizabeth II and to the Australian flag. I do so in the face of increasing subtle efforts by the Federal Labor Government to change our Constitution gradually and to interfere with this country's right to choose by which method of government we are ruled. I hope that the silent majority who do not agree with the Prime Minister's method of dictating our allegiance voice their opinions loud and clear at the next Federal election. I congratulate Dame Roma Mitchell, Governor of South Australia, on her continued dedication to the position she holds as the Queen's representative in South Australia, and for her valuable contribution to our State.

As from the first day of the Brown Liberal Government, the targets continue to be debt reduction and control of Government spending. This Government has a clear strategy for the rebuilding of South Australia. If this strategy fails, this State will continue to lag behind other States of Australia, leaving our children and grandchildren to carry the burden created by an inept Labor Administration. Failure is not what the people of South Australia elected this Government for: in fact, it was elected because of Labor's failures. However, the people of South Australia have been very quick to forget the down side of Labor's lack of management skills and are already calling for this Government to start throwing money at every issue. Politically this is a very easy option: morally it condemns the future generations to the debt we have not controlled. Hence our strategy has been clear and maintained. We all look forward to the good times ahead when the pain of the last two budgets has had the desired successes. Clearly, those aims are already taking place.

The debt left to us by Labor was approaching \$9 billion, with no strategy for control. In fact, they saw so clearly that they were on the skids that they went into debt even further—quite purposefully I believe—without regret, and now they come into this House, day in and day out, asking this Government what it will do about it. I am pleased to say that we have done quite a bit about their problems. Debt is coming down by \$1.3 billion in 1995. The underlying deficit for the non-commercial sector in 1994-95 was \$239 million, \$36 million better than our original estimate. The underlying deficit forecast for 1995-96 of \$114 million is on target. Asset sales have been managed by the Asset Management Task Force, which has been crucial to the proper functioning and execution of these sales.

There is much talk in the community about this Government's selling assets, but I reiterate that this platform was very clearly set out as a key election policy to overcome the debt. Also, I point out that the Government has very little reason or business being involved in owning shopping centres or, indeed, being in competition in business with private enterprise. The logic of an asset sales register is clearly enunciated to the community and has included the \$28 million for the Elizabeth shopping centre, with proceeds from this shopping centre being put towards the massive \$1.2 billion debt of the Housing Trust.

The other Labor white elephant, the Myer-Remm Centre, which had a sale of \$151 million, was a centre the Government should never have built, owned or lost so much money on. However, under Labor's philosophy of, 'If it's someone else's money, it really doesn't matter,' we saw the Myer-Remm Centre built. The net sales of assets is \$361 million towards debt reduction. The State Bank has been sold as per the agreement with Keating and Bannon hopefully to buy off the election in 1993, which was obviously unsuccessful.

Preparation for the sale of SGIC, State Clothing and State Print is a logical process. Government has no right to be involved in the business of competition with our local business and should not use taxpayers' money to compete against our own community. This Government has indicated the importance of budgetary restraint to ensure the recovery will be sustainable. My only disappointment is that, according to history, the electorate tends to give Liberal Governments enough time to fix all the problems and then re-elects the also-rans on the other side to turn it all around again. I guess that indicates the whims of democracy at work.

Two recent events have shown that South Australia is now becoming regarded as a State with a real competitive edge for business. I refer to the IT 2000 Vision and the South Australian road show exhibit in Sydney and Melbourne. The road show demonstrated that South Australia was in the top five when benchmarked against developed westernised countries in the following: low cost accommodation, abundant resources, life style, literacy, low inflation, low labour costs and high computing skills. South Australia rated first in affordable housing and quality of life and this, coupled with its being rated second lowest unit cost of manufacturing, indicates that South Australia does have a real competitive edge.

In terms of the IT 2000 Vision, the Premier's recent visit to Japan and the USA indicates that the Government's strategy to introduce and develop an IT industry in South Australia was right. South Australia is situated ideally in terms of location and lifestyle, and the opportunity of this growth industry is now ours for the taking. The initiative and foresight of this Government must be recognised in this accomplishment. CEOs of six of the largest IT companies in the world recognise our advances in contracting out whole-of-Government electronic services for public and private sectors and say it is world's best practice. The importance of this industry is that we can build on the excellent companies that are already here and give support to the local industries that already exist. The vision in South Australia is to incorporate educational institutions into the IT industry development strategy. Additional IT places in TAFE already have been made available.

This strategy is particularly exciting for my electorate, because the new Seaford six to 12 school, which is to be opened for its first intake in February 1996, will have a high technology base. I believe it will have the most advanced technology available, and the advantage of this for the students in my electorate will be immeasurable. The impact of IT into the next decade will be greater than that of the car industry. Year 11 and 12 students would be very wise to start thinking about IT pathways. As part of the outsourcing program, the Government invites tenders to manage the telecommunications business as part of the IT Strategy. This removes taxpayer risk of ownership of assets while ensuring that latest technology is always available and efficiencies are maintained.

Whilst focusing on debt reduction, this Government has overseen the creation of 23 800 jobs in 18 months. We must continue to develop strategies to protect and promote small business in South Australia. A recent publication of *Business Bulletin* indicated that small business represented the stronger employment growth area over the past 10 years. During that 10 year period, jobs were lost from Governments at a rate of 132 000, while small business increased its share of employment to 46 per cent; big business, indeed, had its share fall slightly to 34 per cent. The increase over that 10 years was

almost exclusively in the service sector. Most importantly in South Australia, the 23 800 job growth was without the tax hikes of the previous Government.

An important initiative to be concluded by 1 January 1996 is the contracting out of SA Water management in South Australia. The Opposition is making much of the word 'privatisation' with regard to SA Water, even though we know that it is totally misleading. South Australian Water will outsource the operation and maintenance of Adelaide metropolitan water and waste water plants, while remaining responsible for water pricing and quality and the long-term planning of the system—all this with savings to the taxpayer of South Australia. Honestly, only Labor members could not see the advantages of such a system to South Australia. In fact, the Opposition and the member for Kingston have become totally hung-up on the French component of the bidding companies and suggest that we should not include them in the process. I wonder whether those comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kingston would pass their own test of inciting racial hatred and racial violence.

The Kickstart for Youth projects are very successful and important initiatives for the Minister for Youth Affairs. These programs are giving long-term unemployed youth the ability to gain appropriate skills through industry contact. I am also pleased to see that the Minister for Youth Affairs has picked up my initiative of work for the dole, which was introduced by me into this Parliament as a notice of motion over 12 months ago. I hope to see the value of my initiative taken even further. I am surprised that this initiative has not been implemented to a greater degree considering that youth themselves want such a scheme in place.

This has been a particularly busy time in terms of the environment. Harsher penalties were announced for people not heeding the new codes of practice for stormwater drainage. Job creation programs will be instigated linking DENR's \$19.2 million capital works to other agencies such as HUD and DETAFE.

Areas such as the State's 20 million hectares of national parks will be targeted to implement weed control, revegetation, fencing, walking trails and fire management. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has been appointed as the consultant to develop the management plan for the marine park in the Great Australian Bight. The water catchment authorities for the Patawalonga and Torrens are up and running and, in my electorate, the inaugural meeting of the Onkaparinga Catchment Authority was held recently with the establishment of an interim committee.

Mobile outback work camps will see the continuation of low security prisoner work gangs undertaking work in parts of our national parks. In my electorate, people with community service orders will continue to erect board walks along cliff faces to protect the fragile Aldinga Beach dunes.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** This will also include fencing and weed control and, as the Minister for Correctional Services said, eradicate graffiti, which is an important matter in my electorate. The coastline review will include in its terms of reference the conservation management of the flora and fauna of the Noarlunga reef. The development of the treated waste water pipeline from Bolivar Treatment Works, with that water being used on crops in the Virginia and Two Wells area, is highly commendable.

In my electorate, the Christies Beach and the proposed Aldinga Beach treatment works will also eventually have a

role to play in this reuse of treated water. A feasibility study was recently let to examine the reuse of Christies Beach water and the study was recently extended to include the feasibility of pumping raw sewage from Seaford back to the new treatment works at Aldinga Beach, thus producing water on site where it is actually needed. That gets rid of the need actually to transport water through high population areas: the Aldinga treatment plant will be built on rural land next to vacant rural land which, we hope, will be used entirely for agriculture. I hope that water reuse will be directed to a variety of areas in the Willunga Basin, including vines, fruit trees, hemp and aquaculture. The aquaculture process at Aldinga is an exciting project with huge potential in the basin. It is an on-land aquaculture program growing yabbies for export sale.

The education portfolio has an emphasis on early intervention for literacy and numeracy. It has seen the introduction of the Chair of Early Childhood Research at the University of South Australia. The successful early intervention program is to be extended to include home based programs for nought to three year olds. It is obvious to me in my electorate that many young parents in particular need to learn proper parenting skills. It has come to my attention on many occasions that many of the problems encountered by students in schools and in later years result from the fact that they have not picked up basic skills in the first three years of life, and this is extremely important.

Basic skills testing went through its first introduction with the usual complaints from SAIT, which tends to complain about anything except wage rises. It has been reported that 80 per cent of year 3 and year 5 students undertook basic skills tests. SAIT made a great deal about boycotting basic skills tests in all South Australian schools. There was a massive media campaign but, in the end, SAIT agreed not to boycott the tests on one condition—that, if teachers refused to supervise basic skills testing and did other duties in the schools on that day, they would not lose pay. As always, the dollar formed SAIT's bottom line in this propaganda program.

There are major issues in education that we have to face over the coming years. Most importantly, we must monitor carefully the success of the EDSAS system in each school, particularly with regard to time saving capabilities. We need to examine carefully how children can complete education without being able to read and write, and the early intervention program will identify those in need of added attention. Strategies must be resolved to handle those extra numbers and the resources must be there when those numbers are found.

Further, I would like the school counsellors examined carefully, because, quite honestly, I am losing faith given some of the assessments that I have seen recently in our southern schools. This area needs to be urgently examined. Gifted students must be recognised as indeed must the under achievers. I believe that every child in our schools has a particular talent and my hope is that the early programs will identify them and allow their development, whether they be academic, sporting or otherwise, rather than our accepting the lowest common denominator effect.

In my electorate, the O'Sullivan Beach primary schools have just amalgamated and relocated into a refurbished building. The lower primary building has been sold to the Montessori school. I believe this amalgamation has gone smoothly and that the two schools are working well at the same location. Certainly, I appreciate the work of the teachers

and the principals, in particular, for getting together and working so well in that area. The building program for the Seaford six to 12 school is now well advanced, and the principal has been appointed and is already working closely with the school council.

Also, I am extremely pleased to say that the provision of pedestrian lights on the Tiller Drive, Commercial Road and Main Street intersection will occur prior to the opening of the school. Here I need to make reference to the work done by the students and parents of the Seaford Catholic School. Every student wrote an individual letter to both the Minister and me and even the reception students had their say: although they could not write, they drew pictures of what they thought they needed. That was effective, because the Minister has seen the wisdom of their requirements, has met on site and has agreed to the installation of pedestrian lights.

The Aldinga police station has been an extremely successful program for the southern part of my electorate and work has now begun to prepare reports to present to the Minister for Correctional Services regarding the expansion of this police station to operate for 24 hours a day. Although it is true that the existence of a 24 hour station will not prevent crime, it will add a degree of security and the possibility of detection of crime. The very success of the current station speaks volumes for the dedication of the four officers located there. They are accepted well in the community and the project has worked extremely well.

The Colonnades Shopping Centre also will now be covered by a shop front police response unit. This unit is about to be opened and will be staffed by three officers from the Christies Beach Police Station who have relocated. I believe eight officers applied for the three positions and that there was stiff competition for this job, which most Christies Beach officers were keen to take up. I congratulate the three successful police officers. This shop front police unit has the support of local business and, in particular, the management of Colonnades, AMP. It also has the support of local police both at Christies Beach and in the broader southern area. It is another success story in my electorate and I believe we should think carefully about the types of successes that these sorts of developments achieve when we think about the problems that the community blames us for in instigating a pay dispute because, when one talks to individual police officers about such successes, one finds that they are 100 per cent behind the policy of shop front community policing.

The successful tenderer for the southern metropolitan transport system is soon to be announced. There are some major issues facing the PTB with regard to the supply of adequate transport to the far southern section of my electorate and cross suburb transport. There will be a push to finalise the zoning of my whole electorate so that the southern section is finally determined to be metropolitan or country. We need to know which it is. The idea of its being STD for telephone, metropolitan for planning, country for transport and half and half for motor registration is simply not good enough. Although the argument is raised that the population is thin, a very good argument could be made that a better transport service should be offered to this community, in particular a system comparable in cost with the cost to those who travel from Gawler, which is roughly an equal distance from the other side of town. Serious consideration will have to be given to the multi-trip ticket for our southern area, as applies in Gawler.

Developments continue in my electorate, such as the success of the Beach Road Main Street program, which is

now being funded (\$3 000). Hopefully that will mean that a consultant can draw up plans in negotiation with both business and the community. We have begun construction of the new joint Seaford community-Education Department library. Approval has been given for a new indoor recreation centre at Seaford, and I believe that construction work is about to start. We have also approved a new child-care centre facility at Seaford to be constructed alongside the recreation centre. Approval has also been given for a new kindergarten to be constructed at Aldinga Beach.

My argument has been constantly that the new kindergarten ought to be located at Sellicks Beach rather than Aldinga Beach. The temporary location at Aldinga Beach is really to take the pressure off the current Aldinga kindy, which basically is servicing an extra 30 or so students who really are students from Sellicks Beach. My logic tells me that in basic budgeting, if you are going to build something for \$500 000, you might as well construct the final building in the right place in the first instance. I will continue to lobby for the decision to be made that that kindergarten be located at Sellicks Beach. Surveys and plans are being drawn up for the bypass of the Port Noarlunga township. This is being done in conjunction with the Noarlunga council, which has very exciting plans for the upgrade of the Port Noarlunga township. It will add a considerable amount of tourism and business potential to that township.

The upgrade of Commercial Road is being surveyed and planned at the moment, and we hope to have the plans for that upgrade on display by November this year. We will then call for public comment so that we can decide on the best method of upgrade. New wetlands areas are being constructed in the Onkaparinga River and to service the stormwater emanating from the southern sports complex. The Noarlunga council has approved the construction of two taverns side by side at Seaford. The Licensing Commission is making its decision at the moment as to which tavern will receive the licence—this has not yet been finalised. The slogan 'South Australia going all the way' is extremely appropriate for my electorate of Kaurana.

**Mr BUCKBY (Light):** I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Frome and, in doing so, affirm my allegiance to this State, the country of Australia and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. At the outset I would like to congratulate Her Excellency Dame Roma Mitchell on her speech at the opening of Parliament. She is becoming well known for her enthusiasm in her role as Governor and particularly for her ability to carry out that job in a very eloquent way. We particularly look forward to seeing her each year at the Gawler three day event. At the horse jumping on the Monday, often it is quite cold and wet, but her enthusiasm in staying and congratulating the winners is appreciated by all the people in Gawler, and we hope this will continue.

I turn now to Her Excellency's speech, and I wish to comment on some of the issues upon which she touched. Her Excellency noted that the State's budget estimate is \$36 million less than the estimate for the year 1994-95. It is a particular feather in the cap of the Government that it has come in under budget and that the savings to this State have been \$36 million greater than estimated. Of course, this Government took over at a particularly difficult time bearing in mind the State Bank debt, a Public Service that had reached the stage where it needed to be trimmed, and the

difficult decisions that needed to be faced in addressing both those impacts.

I would also like to add my congratulations to the Public Service and the South Australian public for their acceptance of these difficult decisions regarding the cuts that have had to be made. In 1993, when we came to office everyone in South Australia recognised that difficult decisions would have to be made by this Government, and that was reflected in the vote: the Government won 37 out of 47 seats in this House. As a result, we have faced the issues, we have made the difficult decisions, and one of those has been to address the recurrent budget deficit basically within two or a maximum of three years of our coming to Government. We were faced with a \$350 million recurrent debt. Given the size of this State and its population, that is quite a significant amount.

There were two ways in which this debt could be addressed. One was to look at a real reduction in public sector outlays of perhaps 2.5 per cent or 3 per cent each year for a period of five, six or seven years, or we could attack the debt in the way that we have by looking at short-term restructuring. The problem with the first avenue was that, if you were working for the Public Service or a Government instrumentality, each year you would know that there would be a 3 per cent cut, and as a result you would constantly be looking over your shoulder thinking, 'Will it be me next year who is not sitting in this office and who does not have a job?' As a result, the Public Service would tend to become somewhat dismayed and disorientated and you would end up with decisions not coming forth because people would always be looking over their shoulder wondering when it would be their turn.

Instead, this Government has looked at reducing the debt very quickly so that the South Australian public knows exactly where it stands within a very short period. From that base, once we balance this budget we can continue with the restructuring of South Australia and ensure that we get back on the track that we were on prior to the State Bank disaster and the 10 years of Labor Government. As all members know, the sale of Remm was announced the other day. It was a sale which had to happen. It saw the State lose about \$900 million because of the poor performance and management of the previous Government. The Myer-Remm Centre, as previous members have said and as the member for Kaurana has just reiterated, was something which the former Government should never have contemplated entering into. Unions took particular advantage of the Government in some of the benefits they received while undertaking the building of the centre. It was a complete disaster right from the start.

The Government has also managed to sell the State Bank at, I think, a particularly good price for South Australia. It is a pity to see that happen, but unfortunately we had no choice as the reduction of our long-term debt of \$8.5 billion now is of paramount importance. We have to laugh at the hypocrisy of Opposition members when they criticise the Government because it is forced to make cuts as a result of the recurrent deficit and the long-term debt. We hear cries from the Opposition about the cutting of this budget and about how hard it is on the community. We must remember that it is because of the previous Government's policies and lack of management that we are having to undertake this process.

No member on the Government side enjoys having to cut back in areas of education, health or any other area of Government, but unfortunately there is no choice. You cannot keep on adding to the Bankcard: eventually the day comes

when you must face the music and reduce the debt. Our debt is no different from a household budget. If you spend more than you are earning, that can continue for a period, but at some stage you must face up to your responsibilities, to the fact that you are not managing your household budget (in this case, the State's budget) well, and you must restructure and address that debt, because if you do not there is only one way you can go and that is down the drain into a rust bucket of a State.

This Government is addressing that issue. It was given a mandate to do that by the public of South Australia in 1993. I can assure members that we will continue to address that debt until this State has a balanced budget. We can then say we are setting the State back on the track set by Sir Thomas Playford in the 1950s and 1960s when South Australia was a growing manufacturing base; a place to which businesses were attracted, unlike the 1970s and the 1980s under the Labor administration. It is particularly important that we continue to attract businesses back to South Australia.

I was talking to the Evanston Primary School staff and parents on Monday about SSO cuts, and I mentioned the number of businesses that left South Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, due to the previous Government's policy of increasing taxes without worrying about whether or not businesses could withstand them. South Australian businesses became uncompetitive because of the high levels of tax. Of course, South Australia has a transportation problem: about 95 per cent of goods produced in South Australia must be transported to the Eastern States and, as a result, our production costs are much higher than in the Eastern States.

Therefore, South Australia's tax regime must be less so that businesses are encouraged to establish and provide employment here rather than setting up in the Eastern States. The Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development, John Olsen, has done and is continuing to do a particularly good job in attracting business back to South Australia. It is very difficult once businesses have left the State because they make capital investment decisions on a long-term basis. If businesses decide to move out of this State they will not return for at least five to 10 years because they will have committed capital to a manufacturing plant, or whatever, in another State.

We will have a hard job getting business back to South Australia, taking into account the State's debt and the shackles this Government has in maintaining the tax base to pay for the Public Service facilities offered in South Australia. The catch 22 is to say that we want to reduce those taxes so that we can attract business back to South Australia. It is a difficult job and one to which I know the ministry and every Government backbencher in this place is committed. This Government will continue to attempt to attract business back to South Australia as long as it is in power.

Her Excellency the Governor also touched on employment in South Australia and mentioned that it is at its highest level since pre-recession times. Since 1994, 27 400 jobs have been created in South Australia. That is a particularly good effort on behalf of the Government. Of course, one cannot be complacent, and I would not say that that is good enough—far from it. The pressure is on us to continue to create jobs. A great deal still needs to be done, particularly in the area of youth unemployment, which is very high. It is in this area that the Kickstart program has been initiated by the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. It is an excellent program, under which an estimated 1 000 young

people under the age of 19 years will receive training and employment.

In my experience, about 75 to 80 per cent of people involved in LEAP projects in the electorate of Light gained employment prior to the completion of their projects. This Kickstart program will deliver the same sorts of training outcomes as LEAP, and I am sure the vast majority of young people who undertake that program will have employment prior to or immediately following the completion of their training. Kickstart allows employers to see that a young person is committed to turning up to a job at 8.30 or 9 o'clock in the morning, day in and day out. It gives those young people some additional skills they did not have previously, and generally improves their confidence getting back into a regular system and pattern of living. It gives them something to do during their day rather than looking around and wondering what they can do when no jobs are available.

A further initiative of this Government has been the offer of a 50 per cent reduction in payroll tax associated with new export production. There is a push for South Australian companies to look to the broader market system and to the broader market opportunities overseas, particularly in South-East Asia. The Asia Conference, conducted by the Minister, was popular and opened up opportunities for South Australia. South Australia was put up as a show place to Asian business: a place in which to invest and conduct business and from which to buy products, and it was very successful.

I turn now to infrastructure projects, in particular the extension of the Adelaide Airport runway and the construction of a tunnel in the Mount Barker Road and the realigning of the Mount Barker highway. The implications of both projects is extremely good for South Australia because of the multiplier effect of money being spent in South Australia. The cost of both projects exceeds \$100 million. While working for the Centre for South Australian Economic Studies, I undertook to produce an economic impact study on the construction of the Mount Barker highway and the benefits to South Australia, and the supply of materials for that road surface and the supply of labour into that project will be quite immense. Construction of the project will take time. The State will benefit significantly from the construction of that highway, not only in monetary terms but also in the actual improved safety of the road.

The extension of the runway will allow jumbo jets to take off from Adelaide Airport fully laden, which they cannot do at the moment. As a result, produce from South Australia will be able to be sent direct from Adelaide rather than, as in many cases at the moment, being shipped to and sent from Melbourne, which adds an additional cost to the producers in South Australia.

In her speech the Governor also mentioned the Sydney Olympics. I believe an opportunity exists for South Australia to accommodate teams, as well as constructing facilities to attract teams to practise here, prior to the Olympics. The Olympics, as we have seen from Barcelona and other places in the world, attracts not only a large television audience but also a large spectator audience. Tourism in Australia, I am sure, will increase radically in the year of the Olympics. If this State can attract many of the teams that will want to practise in the southern hemisphere prior to those Olympics, there will be definite benefits for South Australia in terms of providing accommodation for those teams and the money they would spend, not to mention the people they will attract who will want to watch them undertake their training prior to the Olympics.



I note that the Minister for Infrastructure has again confirmed the construction of a water filtration plant for the Barossa Valley. We are very pleased about that. Having approached successive Labor Governments over a long period to no avail, the commissioning of this plant in December 1997 will be an amazing benefit to the local population and to tourists who visit the Barossa Valley. The member for Culance distributed some 1995 vintage bottled water from the Barossa Valley. It showed what people of the valley and the area north of Gawler have to put up with in respect of the state of that water. Unfortunately, in the short term nothing much can be done. All we can say is that we are moving towards the commissioning of this plant in 1997. It will happen, which is good news. We shall just have to wait a further 2½ years for that to happen. It will be put out to private industry as a build, own and operate scheme. As I said, we look forward to the commissioning of that plant in December 1997.

While on the subject of water, I should like to comment on a few things that I picked up when I was in the United Kingdom recently. The Opposition is being scurrilous in putting forward a particular view of the contract that is currently being undertaken by SA Water. Painting it as privatisation and saying that water rates in South Australia will rise similar to those in the United Kingdom is nothing less than misleading. My discussions with a representative company of the 10 private water companies in England reveal that the system cannot be compared to what is being promoted in South Australia. Prior to the privatisation—and it is privatisation of water in the United Kingdom—10 Government water boards were responsible for the delivery of water. Upon the Government deciding to sell off that infrastructure and capital investment, 10 private water companies, which covered the same areas as the water boards, were initiated in the United Kingdom. They were set up like any other private company in which people could buy shares. As a result, those shareholders obviously expect a dividend to be returned on their investment.

The price of water in the United Kingdom is set by the Director-General. In the setting of that price he has to take into account a number of things, one of which is the level of profit to the company that runs the water in a particular region. Another thing is the level of spending by that company on improving the infrastructure. In the United Kingdom not much money has been spent on restructuring pipelines and sewers and unfortunately, as in South Australia, they were or are still in not very good repair. In the United Kingdom they are perhaps worse than in South Australia. As a result, the private companies have had to spend millions of pounds upgrading that system. As they are private companies, the cost to the consumer has risen. For instance, in Cornwall the average water bill per year is £300 to the consumer whereas in one of the London boroughs a resident will pay only £200. This is where criticism of privatisation has come from.

One of the other things that is particularly important, as mentioned by the member for Elder, is that, there being a particularly bad drought in England, leakages in these pipes have really come into play only this year. My discussions with representatives there suggest that, unless the leakage in a pipe or a main rose above 20 per cent, the water boards previously did not consider it was worth repairing. As a result of the drought, there has been a greater than 20 per cent leakage, and the private companies have had to take this on board because of the shortage of water in England at the

moment. Along with privatisation, consumer committees were set up which have direct representation to the Director-General. This enables the effect on the consumer to be communicated to the Director-General, and he can take that into account when deciding upon the price of water for a particular year.

This is not even comparable with what will occur in South Australia. The State Government will still control the price of water. As it is not privatised, the Government does not have to consider the profits of the company which undertakes the tender. The tender is for a set price and the company must operate within that tender. That is different from a year by year assessment of a company's profits, as in England, and also the price of water as set in England. One of the disadvantages in England is that the level of remuneration for executives in these private water companies has risen substantially over what was offered by the water boards. Therefore, privatisation in the United Kingdom has some benefits in terms of the infrastructure being addressed, but it also has some disadvantages, although those disadvantages do not relate in any way to the contract which is about to be undertaken by the South Australian Government.

I should like to mention a couple of other points in the Governor's speech. One is the Virginia pipeline. I was pleased to see that that is moving forward. The initiative undertaken at Andrews Farm and the Hickinbotham estate of putting water back into the aquifer is helping, but the amount of water that is being drawn from that aquifer is serious. The use of water from the Bolivar plant will be of great advantage to market gardeners in the Virginia and Two Wells areas.

I turn now to a few matters relating to the Light electorate. The MAG report on council amalgamations has been released. The majority of councils within the Light electorate are in favour of the recommendations in the report. The Barossa, Angaston and Tanunda councils are undertaking discussions with a view to amalgamating. The Gawler council is looking at the realignment of its boundaries and having discussions with Mallala council as well. The Light and Kapunda councils are continuing on their path of amalgamation, but some boundary issues will have to be addressed.

I still await the report from the Department of Road Transport in respect of the intersection used by Trinity College parents. I have raised this matter with the Minister for Transport. The department has undertaken a study, and the results should be available within the next two to three weeks as to the preferred option for either lights or a roundabout at this intersection. The issue is of particular concern as a number of accidents have occurred there. We are looking to get the problem at that intersection solved as quickly as possible.

Lights are currently being installed at the Lyndoch Road and Murray Street intersection. This will assist traffic turning north from Lyndoch Road into Murray Street, and it will enable a better flow of traffic in the area. However, it does not solve the long-term problem and the consideration of an eastern bypass for Gawler, about which both myself and Gawler council will be having continuing discussions with the Department of Road Transport.

One thing that has happened recently is the attraction of Federal and State funds by the Roseworthy campus for an Agricultural Interpretation Centre. I congratulate Mr John Rothwell, the farm manager, and Ms Karen Shepherd, the tourist officer at Roseworthy campus, who have been very diligent and entrepreneurial in plans for an interpretation centre at Roseworthy. Roseworthy is particularly well

situated for this—being 20 minutes away from the Barossa Valley—and will add to the tourist facilities and tourist potential for the area. There is a similar interpretation centre in New Zealand which is popular with tourists, and I expect that the Roseworthy campus will gradually build to similar heights.

The last issue I address is the proposed stockyards at Mallala. I was very pleased to see the District Council of Mallala take up this initiative. The future of the Gepps Cross abattoir yards has been of particular concern to all farmers in South Australia, and I look forward to a positive response from Mallala.

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

**Mr ASHENDEN (Wright):** I wholeheartedly support the Governor on the speech she presented at the opening of this session of Parliament. I commend the Government not only for what it has already done in its short time in office but also for the sound planning that has obviously been put in place not only for the balance of the life of this Parliament but for the long-term future of South Australia.

It is still an absolute indictment of the previous Government that South Australia was left in such a financial mess. Thank goodness a Government has now been elected which has already taken substantial steps towards overcoming the remaining horrendous debt. I commend the present Government for the plans it has in place to make South Australia, once again, a State in which business will be prepared to invest, while at the same time ensuring the social welfare of all South Australians. I do not believe that anybody who heard the speech yesterday could have missed the emphasis that the Government is going to place in the area of social welfare, as well as in attracting business.

Sir Thomas Playford left South Australia with a strong industrial base, and it is alarming to note how the Dunstan Labor Government so quickly destroyed that sound base. Unfortunately Dunstan and co. used South Australia as a social experiment with the result that, over the period of Labor Governments, South Australia became a branch State. Industry left, head offices left, and this Government now has to pick up the pieces following a succession of Labor Governments, starting with Dunstan and ending with Bannon and Arnold.

I can only compare what has happened to South Australia under those Labor Governments, which were hell-bent on destroying the economy, with the Whitlam years federally, where, once again, we saw a man who wanted to play with social experiments and who led Australia—just like Dunstan and Bannon in South Australia—to financial disaster.

I can remember when private health insurance was very cheap indeed, and everybody could afford it. Whitlam came to power, wages and inflation blew out, and Australia will never be the same again. What a legacy Labor Governments have left—the Whitlam Government federally and now the Keating Government, and the Dunstan and Bannon State Governments. It makes you shake your head and wonder how Labor was ever elected to any office, and let us hope it is never elected to govern again.

For some reason, probably because he is in his dotage, Mr Dunstan is prattling on and putting himself to the fore but, if I were he, I would remember the pitiful handful which turned up to the demonstration which he led at Modbury Hospital. Dunstan is a has-been and, if I had his record, I would stay in hiding. I have only one thing to say to Mr Dunstan: the

State wants to forget you, so for goodness sake disappear as gracefully as your pink shorts will allow you to do so.

I now address the protest that I recently undertook by travelling to French Polynesia to record my personal concern at the actions of the French Government in renewing nuclear weapons testing at Mururoa Atoll. I was first advised by the Hon. Anne Levy that a group of parliamentarians from Australia was to undertake a bipartisan protest. As soon as I received her letter seeking expressions of interest from members of Parliament in South Australia, I wrote back and indicated my interest. There was then a considerable period of silence, but finally I was contacted by the Hon. Franca Arena, a member of the Legislative Council in New South Wales, advising me that a protest involving members of Parliament from the Liberal, National and Labor Parties, the Australian Democrats, the Greens and an Independent was to take place, and that a vessel had been arranged to take the Australian parliamentarians from Papeete to the 12-mile exclusion zone adjacent to Mururoa Atoll.

I immediately indicated that I wished to be part of that protest and that I wished, accordingly, to be included as a member of that group. I then received notification that the vessel to be chartered was unseaworthy and there was doubt that another charter vessel could be obtained. However, I received a further letter which indicated that a second vessel had been found, that it was quite suitable, and that those who wished to take part in the protest should forward \$2 000 to cover the cost of transport on that vessel. I immediately forwarded my \$2 000 to ensure that I would have a berth on that vessel. Then, just before we were due to leave for Papeete, I was advised that the second vessel was also unseaworthy, and that accordingly we would be refunded the amounts we had paid. I was advised that, although no alternative vessel had been obtained, it was hoped that we might be able to sail from Papeete to Mururoa after arrival in Papeete.

I was also advised that various forms of protest had been arranged, including a march and public meetings in Papeete. I therefore gave consideration to the situation and determined that I still wished to be part of the protest, and that I would travel to Papeete, not only to join in the protest march and meetings but also, hopefully, to fly to the outer islands and obtain a vessel which would take me to the protest zone. Accordingly, I made bookings which would enable me to have time in Papeete to make such arrangements.

Prior to my departure for Papeete I received a letter from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs advising me that there were a number of political Parties in Tahiti, and that there was a degree of instability in terms of the coalitions which formed between those various Parties. The letter warned particularly that there was a minority group which was very strongly separatist and was actively pursuing independence from France. This Party, led by the Mayor of Faa'a, is very much a minority party with little support in French Polynesia. Unfortunately, what I did not know before my departure, and was never advised by the Hon. Franca Arena, was that she had made arrangements with the Mayor of Faa'a for our group to be closely associated with him and his supporters. Had I been aware of this I can assure the House that I would still have gone to Papeete but I would have undertaken my own individual protest because, as it turned out, I was severely embarrassed by the actions of the Mayor of Faa'a and his supporters and also the overt support which was given to him by the Hon. Franca Arena and some other members of Parliament. What was supposed to be a

bipartisan protest at the resumption of nuclear testing by the French Government unfortunately became one which was associated with a violent minority group within French Polynesia.

I am additionally critical of the Hon. Franca Arena in that, as a Liberal, I was not provided with a lot of information which was given to other members of Parliament, and it did not take me long to realise that the so-called bipartisan protest had been organised by the Hon. Franca Arena mainly for her own glorification.

After arriving in Papeete at approximately two o'clock in the morning on Saturday 2 September, we came across the first example of what we thought was a protest against the resumption of nuclear testing. As we left the airport the road was blockaded and it appeared that we would not be able to get to our hotels. However, when the blockaders became aware that we were there to join with them in their protest, they allowed our bus to pass and, finally, we reached our hotel at approximately 5 a.m. We then had only a couple of hours before we met to be taken to the point at which the march would commence—at the offices of the Mayor of Faa'a.

This was the first time I became aware that we were being directly associated with this minority group, and that the Mayor of Faa'a had been arrested the night before—an arrest which had led to the erection of the blockade and which was not a protest at the nuclear testing at all. The Mayor of Faa'a was released by the French authorities on the Saturday morning and, after he had used the Australian and Japanese delegations—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will make her own address, thank you.

**Mr ASHENDEN:** —for his own personal benefit, particularly through the international media, the march commenced. The march itself, however, was a very moving experience, and the further we went towards Papeete the more local residents joined in. The vast majority of the marchers and those who were watching were supporting the march as a protest against the resumption of nuclear testing, and I was proud to be part of an extremely effective, peaceful protest. I will never forget the warmth of our welcome from the Tahitians, who deeply appreciated our concern and commitment on their behalf. It is to the everlasting shame of some MPs—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** —and I stress, despite the interjections, that this does not include the member opposite—that this rapport was later destroyed. It was very moving to have our hands shaken, our backs patted and to be applauded as we marched and showed our support for the local residents in their opposition to the resumption of nuclear testing. This more than made up for the very hot and humid conditions during the march, with a number of marchers suffering from the effects of the heat. However, the march concluded in the city of Papeete, and a public protest meeting was held. It then became patently obvious that the meeting was aimed not at protests at the resumption of nuclear testing but at the French Government and the demands of the minority group for independence.

As soon as I could see the tenor of the speeches, I and a number of other MPs immediately left the public meeting as in no way did we wish to be associated with such a protest. Under no circumstances was I going to give my imprimatur to the minority group with which we had unfortunately

become associated. After leaving the meeting a number of us moved to the French High Commissioner's residence to present to French authorities the letters of protest and petitions which I had taken with me, and at this point I wish to sincerely thank the thousands of schoolchildren and residents of Wright who forwarded their letters of protest and petitions against the resumption of nuclear testing by the French to me. I can assure them that their efforts were well and truly noted by the French authorities.

I was again bitterly disappointed that, despite the fact that the Hon. Franca Arena was well aware that I and many of my Liberal Colleagues had letters of protest and petitions that we wished to present to the French High Commissioner, she and a number of her supporters left without advising us that she had arranged a meeting with the French High Commissioner. We found this out only by accident because, when we went to the High Commission to leave our protest letters, we were advised that an Australian group was already meeting with the French High Commissioner, and we were invited to join that group. I was then able to present the letters of protest and petitions directly to the French High Commissioner, the most senior French authority in French Polynesia. For that I am pleased on behalf of all of those who took the trouble to write their letters. However, I cannot remember when I have been more severely embarrassed in all my life at the behaviour of some of the members of Parliament in the presence of the High Commissioner.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** I wish to point out at this stage that my comments do not refer to either of the South Australian Labor members of Parliament who also travelled to Tahiti to make their protest, as they were not present at this meeting. However, some of their interstate colleagues were, and they behaved appallingly. The French Commissioner provided us all with the opportunity to explain our concerns to him about the resumption of the French nuclear testing, and he listened in silence, acknowledging the points we were making. After we had all had the opportunity to make our point of view known to him, the French High Commissioner then responded.

Naturally, he put forward his Government's view but, unlike the French High Commissioner who had listened so politely and carefully to us, some members of Parliament argued and interrupted him as he was trying to speak. Two of the Labor members of Parliament then became quite aggressive in attacking the French for not providing independence to the local Tahitians. Again, unfortunately, an agenda in which I had no intention of taking part became part of the official protest to the French Government. The dress, the manner of speaking, and the way in which some of the members of Parliament behaved and presented themselves at this meeting can only be described as gauche and embarrassing.

The waters had now been well and truly muddied, and the French High Commissioner could have no alternative but to believe that the Australian contingent was there not only to protest at the French nuclear testing but also to support the Mayor of Faa'a and his minority group in their drive for independence—a drive not supported by the vast majority of Tahitians.

On Sunday a very large public meeting was held at a basketball stadium, a meeting which again had been called purportedly as a protest against the French nuclear testing. However, it very quickly became obvious that once again this was a meeting for pro-independence, and as I had no wish to

be associated with that I left because I had travelled to Tahiti to protest at the nuclear tests, not to become involved in local politics.

It had now become perfectly obvious that, particularly as the Hon. Franca Arena had chaired this public meeting, there was a deliberate attempt to align if not just herself then certainly the Australian group with the pro-independence movement in French Polynesia. I resent this totally, as at no time had it been indicated to me that all the arrangements she had made were with the Mayor of Faa'a and his minority group and that we were to be so closely associated with him and the radical independence group in French Polynesia.

As it had now become obvious that there were far more political implications in the plans made before we left Australia, I determined that I would no longer be a part of the full delegation but that I would make my protests against the nuclear testing only and that I would do this in my own way. Accordingly, I and some of my colleagues travelled to other islands, where we met with locals to again provide our support to them. It had also been my intention on Wednesday morning to fly to the outer islands—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Torrens can make her own Address in Reply. Whether it is to the Governor or to the member for Wright is irrelevant to the Chair, but I advise her to be quiet for the evening.

**Mr ASHENDEN:**—obtain a vessel and travel to the protest zone. However, on Monday evening most of the international members of Parliament, including most of the Australians, left Papeete by air to return to their home countries. Not without coincidence, I believe, the first nuclear test occurred on Tuesday. On the Tuesday I made bookings to obtain a flight to the outer islands and was all ready for an early morning departure on Wednesday. I arose from bed at approximately 4.30 a.m. and was picked up by a taxi at 5 a.m. to be taken to the airport. On arrival at the airport there was a blockade and what appeared to be a peaceful demonstration against the first of the nuclear tests and, unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I was not able to get to the airport to board the aircraft which was to take me to the outer islands. I was told the airport was closed to all aircraft.

I returned to my hotel and an hour or two later noticed huge plumes of smoke rising from the direction of the airport. I soon became aware that rioting had commenced at the airport and that cars had been burnt and destroyed and airport buildings set on fire. Additionally, protesters damaged aircraft on the tarmac area, including an Air New Zealand 747, despite the fact that New Zealand was providing such strong support in the anti-nuclear protest. It was also perfectly obvious that the rioting was extremely well planned. The rioters and their supporters cannot claim that they went to the airport to undertake a peaceful protest, because large stones had been placed in strategic positions the night before, and they had also arrived at the airport with Molotov cocktails—hardly a sign that they intended the protest to be peaceful!

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** Appallingly, the protesters, who had women and children with them, had placed those women and children in a situation of extreme danger.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** I do not know whether this was done deliberately or not to try to avoid any problems with the French police. All I know is that those women and children were placed at risk, and I do not believe that anything but the blame for the riots can be laid at the feet of those who were

present at that time. I again point out that there was too much pre-planning in terms of the way in which the riot was conducted for this to be seen as spontaneous.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** The intentions were obvious, and frankly I wish that the police had been much stronger in their protection of both the airport and the city.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Torrens. I think the member for Wright has been extremely patient. The honourable member will stay seated, please, while the Chair is addressing her. I warned the member; I did not give her the right to stand and protest. The Chair's next action will be to name the honourable member, as she would be well aware. The member for Wright has the floor. We will resume after the adjournment.

*[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** Before dinner I said this twice, and I want to say it again, because the member for Torrens interjected: I want to make quite clear that the criticisms I am making are not directed at her or her colleague in another place. For the third time, I wish to place that firmly on the record. I am giving an outline of what I saw and of my interpretations of my visit to French Polynesia. As I said, I make very clear that there is absolutely no inclusion of the member for Torrens or her colleague in another place in the criticisms I am making.

As the day went on, I was advised that the rioters would be moving into Papeete and that I should remain in my hotel. I stress that that advice was given to me by the Polynesian people themselves: I was also contacted by the Australian Consul, who was posted to Papeete and who confirmed that I should remain in my hotel. As the evening turned into night, I could see fires starting in Papeete. Some of these fires became very large, and I saw at least two explosions. I was advised that the rioters had moved into the city and were setting buildings on fire, causing considerable damage, and that looting had commenced. From my hotel it was an extremely frightening sight. I had linked with a Qantas crew who were also staying at the hotel. On advice, we packed our cases should we need to leave the hotel quickly, as the hotel at which I was then staying is one which, during riots some years ago, was attacked and trashed.

Fortunately, at approximately midnight the rioting started to die down, the fires were under control and it appeared that it would be safe for us to go to bed, which we did at approximately 1 a.m. On Thursday, I was able to see at first-hand the damage that had been done in Papeete. It was far worse than I had anticipated, and the destruction was appalling. It is important for all members to note that the rioting and looting had been undertaken by—again, as I saw it—a minority group within the area, and a group that unfortunately for the reasons I have already outlined—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Torrens has been warned. The Chair does not wish to have to speak to the member for Torrens.

**Mr ASHENDEN:** Unfortunately, Australia had been closely associated with these rioters. All the rioting did was to detract from the trouble and effort so many of us had taken to show our support for the local population and our abhorrence at the French Government's resumption of nuclear testing.

All this was wasted, I believe, because the world became aware not of that protest but of the violence and rioting that had occurred in Papeete. Subsequently, the President of French Polynesia strongly attacked the actions of those involved in the rioting, and I support his attack. He placed the blame for this on the support which Australians—and unfortunately we were all put in the same category—had given to the minority group that had undertaken this rioting. Therefore, Australians have been painted as radicals who caused and led the riots. Of course, this is untrue but, unfortunately, because we had been so closely associated this group—in sharing the public meetings, in doing so many things associated with that group, by being associated with the Mayor of Faa'a and the attacks that he made—the presence of the Australians, and particularly the Japanese, provided a reason for the blame to be placed on Australians.

This I resent very much indeed, and I wish to put on the public record that, as soon as I became aware of the second agenda that was being undertaken, I immediately dissociated myself from remaining MPs in Papeete for the rest of the time. I express my total abhorrence at the use of violence and the rioting and looting which occurred and my profound disappointment that my trouble and effort to undertake a peaceful protest against nuclear testing has been very much negated. I wish to place on the public record that I went to French Polynesia with one aim only, and that was to protest at the French nuclear testing.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Torrens is warned for the second time. She knows the consequences.

**Mr ASHENDEN:** It is most unfortunate that a second issue was tied in with our visit. I publicly apologise now to the High Commissioner of France for the behaviour of some of the Australian contingent—and again I emphasise that this does not include any other South Australian MPs—and wish to make quite clear that I dissociate myself totally from anything but the protest against his Government's decision to resume nuclear testing. I went there for that and no other reason. I was determined that my protest would be legal. Under no circumstances would I have breached the 12 mile zone. Under no circumstances would I have done as did one other MP—not a South Australian—who attacked a gendarme and who was quite rightly arrested. All that gendarme was doing was arresting one of these rioters and looters. I believe it is important—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr ASHENDEN:** I am staggered.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair is most tolerant. I suggest to the member for Torrens that, if she wants to sit out the rest of the night's sitting, she do not interject again, or she will be named. She has the opportunity to make a contribution and she can refute anything with which she is unhappy in the current speaker's contribution. That does not give her the right to interrupt.

**Mr ASHENDEN:** I am surprised that the honourable member is defending so much the violence that occurred. I make the point that I went there to protest peacefully and legally. It is important to note that the vast majority of Tahitians do not want independence from France. They fully appreciate that their economy is heavily dependent upon the very strong financial support that France gives to French Polynesia. Additionally, Tahitians are by nature a peace loving and easy going people. I know from my discussions with many of them, both before and after the riots, that the group that was rioting is very much a minority, and this is

reflected in the fact that it has only a very few seats in the French Polynesian assembly. I have no idea why on earth the leader of the Australian contingent determined to tie us in with that group. I can only hope that it was political naivety, but I doubt that, having seen the way in which she paraded herself and took so much personal glory in being associated with the meetings, in fact, chairing one of the protest meetings for independence.

I have learnt a lot from this, and never again will I join in any form of protest until I am absolutely certain of its *bona fides*. I am bitterly disappointed that what I thought was to be a peaceful, bipartisan protest of Australian parliamentarians has been used and has been seen to be used for other political purposes. When we first arrived in French Polynesia, we were very well received, and the affection and warmth shown by the local Tahitians towards us was obvious, but just as obvious was the change that occurred after the rioting. The change in the feeling was palpable and it became extremely difficult to convince local Tahitians that I was there not to support the minority group that was causing all the rioting and the violence but to support the local population in their protests against nuclear testing.

I again apologise to all the people of French Polynesia for the close association that some members of the Australian contingent had with that minority group and the violence that was associated with it. I assure the people of French Polynesia that my intentions before, throughout and now are entirely to support French Polynesians and the rest of the world in their opposition to French nuclear testing. As to independence, I will leave that to the local population to make up its own mind.

**Mr BASS (Florey):** I support the motion for adoption of the Address in Reply and I congratulate Her Excellency the Governor, Dame Roma Mitchell, not only for her speech in opening Parliament but for her continued work representing the Queen in South Australia. I will feel sad the day that I cannot stand in this place and speak of the Governor of South Australia representing the Queen in this State. Nevertheless, I congratulate Dame Roma Mitchell on her performance over the past 12 months and for opening Parliament, and I thank her for what will be her continuing work in South Australia over the next few months.

We have heard much over the past two days in this Chamber from the Opposition, but I cannot recall one good speech or compliment about what this Government has done over the past nearly two years. This Government took over what was nearly a bankrupt State and I would have thought that the Opposition, which caused that terrible situation, would at least acknowledge some of the benefits that the South Australian public will receive as a result of the difficult decisions that the Premier and the Cabinet have made. We can look not only at what we have achieved in the past two years but at what is planned by the Government for the future, and I believe that the Opposition is doing South Australia a disservice by its continual carping about everything we achieve or attempt to achieve.

Yes, the Brown Government has adopted a different strategy and taken on different tasks from what has happened in South Australia over the past two decades. But what has happened in South Australia over the past two decades? What have we got to show for the past two decades, with the majority of that time under a Labor Government? We have a \$3 million a day interest bill. We have unprecedented debt, the like of which has never been seen before in this State. The

Brown Government is looking to the future. At present we have the highest level of economic growth or employment level experienced over the past five years. Indeed, it now exceeds the pre-recession peak with the creation of 27 400 jobs, and that is just since January 1994. When we have rising employment in South Australia it helps not only older unemployed but the youth of this State, the youth who at present have nothing to look forward to when they leave school.

I have two children: one has left school and one is about to leave school and they have their friends around and they believe they have no future at all. I have spoken to these young people and all they want is the opportunity to leave school, use the skills they learnt at school, learn new skills and get a job. But there was no future for them. However, with the Brown Liberal Government strategy we are improving the conditions in South Australia and, of course, the employment opportunity for youth. When I talk about young people I always like to think that they are no different to the youth of 20 or 40 years ago.

When I left school I was only 15 years old and had the choice of probably five jobs. I took the job that I thought suited me. After six months I decided that it was not really what I wanted so I changed jobs and had the opportunity to choose from two or three. The people who were at the school with me and the people who left school in the years after me all had a job. In those days we never realised how lucky we were. The youth of today are not that lucky. This Government is working towards making sure that they have the opportunities we did and not the lack of opportunities that the Labor Party created for the youth of today with a decade of mismanagement.

Some of the initiatives that this Government introduced are now coming to fruition. For example, ETSA Corporation's operating expenditure is at its lowest level on record. As a result, there have been substantial reductions in prices across all customer segments including the small business sector which received a 22 per cent cut in nominal tariffs. You would think that the Opposition, which did nothing for small business over the past 10 years, would have said to the Liberal Government, 'Well done, you have done something to help small business in South Australia.' But do you hear that from members opposite? I know there are only 11 of them but they have a voice when they want to criticise. Members opposite do not want to give a little bit of credit to a Government which is succeeding in taking on a monster problem caused by them.

The recent employment growth recognises that the rebuilding of the South Australian economy for the longer term requires the establishment of new industries with a focus on innovation and export growth. This has been encouraged by the policy to offer a 50 per cent reduction in payroll tax associated with the new export production. Again, we have to give a little bit to get a little bit but it is good business. Aquaculture is another new industry in the State with high growth and export potential. I am sure that the member for Flinders is very pleased that aquaculture is becoming a high growth industry, because it will at least give the constituents in her electorate some future.

The State's mineral potential is attracting an increased exploration effort. Again, the Department of Mines and Energy is cooperating with private companies to investigate the feasibility of establishing a new smelting industry in the north of South Australia based on the local iron, ore and coal deposits. You would think that the member for Giles would

stand up and say, 'Well done; I encourage the Government to do that.' But do we hear a word from the other side? No, if we hear any words they are critical and members opposite simply want to lay the blame. You get sick of listening to it, I can tell you.

An agreement has been reached with the Commonwealth on the extension of Adelaide Airport's main runway. Something that we have known in this State for a long time is that if we are to be competitive overseas, especially to the north of Australia with Asian countries such as China and Japan, provision must be made for fully laden jumbo jets to land at and depart from Adelaide Airport. Again, we are doing something and not just talking about it; we are doing it—and this, of course, is something that should have been done a long time ago.

The Adelaide to Crafers highway project will begin in mid-1966. Again, we have known for years that this project had to be undertaken. Almost every week you pick up the newspaper and see that another semitrailer has turned upside down. I do not entirely blame the drivers: on a road such as Mount Barker Road, which becomes a freeway, and with sections such as Devil's Elbow to contend with, accidents will happen. The present situation should not have been allowed to continue for as long as it has. However, we are now looking at commencing the proposed highway.

Construction on another major road work will commence in December involving stage one of the Southern Expressway, from Darlington to Reynella. This is another project that was talked about by the Opposition: that was all, just talked about, but at least now something is being done.

I am pleased to see that the Liberal Government has endorsed the construction of new facilities for netball, athletics and soccer, to be funded in partnership with those sporting bodies. These facilities will be completed in time for South Australia to play a major role in the preparation by local and international athletes for the Sydney Olympics. Of course, it will be a boost for South Australia, because we have one of the best soccer teams in Australia: Adelaide City.

Solving the problem involving Adelaide's main waterways (the Patawalonga and the Torrens River) is long overdue. I must congratulate the MFP on what is happening in relation to the Barker Inlet wetlands, which we are informed will catch about 30 per cent of the inner metropolitan stormwater run-off. I have participated in a tour of that undertaking, and it is great to see what is taking place on what has been recognised as a dump for as long as I can remember. When I lived in the Port Adelaide district as an 11-year-old I used to roam at the back of that area. Even in those days it was a horrible eyesore: it was a dumping area for rubbish, and nothing was looked after. I think that many of the factories dumped their waste in that area. It really was a disgrace, but at least we are now seeing something done to improve that area.

Our plan is to have 11 water filtration plants to serve the Adelaide Hills and the Barossa Valley, the Mid-North and along the Murray River. We are doing something new in this regard, with these projects proceeding under the build-own-operate scheme and the successful tenderers being announced by mid-1996. Again, we are doing things a little differently, but we are at least doing them.

When I left the Port Adelaide area I spent six years living on the Murray River just above Murray Bridge. I remember that in those days we used to swim and fish in the river and we used to drink river water. It was not the cleanest water but it did you no harm. It was a little muddy, you might say, but

it was all right. Now, it is absolutely disgraceful. However, South Australia is taking the lead in this matter and putting forward a proposal to the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian Governments not only to return Murray River water to its former quality but to improve it to what it should be in the future.

We have many initiatives involving education, notwithstanding the carping from across the other side of the Chamber. Although we have made reductions in some funding areas, we are still helping education in areas that really need it, such as early intervention with literacy and numeracy problems. This year we started to attack this area, and we will continue to ensure that no students leave year 7 to commence high school without the ability to further their education because they have not learnt—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr BASS:** The member for Ross Smith is here: he is living proof that there is life after death. Indeed, no-one could be that stupid in one life: he must have been reincarnated. He is a clown of the first degree. However, let me proceed; I do not want to be led astray. The basic skills test for students in years 3 and 5 will be refined, and those tests will definitely help children in their later years. I am pleased to see an update on the school discipline policy, which I believe has gone in the wrong direction over the past 10 years. If a student is disrupting the classroom there needs to be discipline so that the rest of the class is not affected. I will be very pleased to see that policy introduced in the next few months.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr BASS:** The member for Ross Smith says that class sizes are 30-plus. I have two high schools in my electorate and when I visit them I see classes of 17; I see classes of 19; I see some classes of 25. Occasionally—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr BASS:** I will get to that in a minute. The member for Ross Smith chortles on about classes of 31. Obviously there must have been classes of 40 when he was a student and they forgot about him because he does not have many brains, but let me go on.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the member for Florey that those comments are not particularly appropriate or necessary.

**Mr BASS:** They are very accurate, Mr Speaker, but I will not be led astray. Let me go on. Information technology will be the way to go in the future, and I look forward to seeing the IT companies establishing in South Australia. I am sure that students already studying computer courses, even as early as in years 6 and 7, will become the experts in information technology in the future. I now turn a little bit to health, because I believe that we—

**Mr Clarke:** It would be a little bit. What do you say about the Modbury Hospital?

**Mr BASS:** Shall we talk about the Modbury Hospital? It was an innovation in South Australia: we put in private managers to run Modbury Hospital. We had the Labor organised Modbury Hospital support group running around spreading untruths, saying that we were going to sell the hospital; that we were going to close the emergency department; that we would not treat public patients. We have heard all the lies—and they are lies—but what has happened? This afternoon I asked the Minister for Health to tell us what is happening, and he did so. He told us that the number of people going through the hospital has increased; that the

service is still being maintained. There has been very little change within Modbury Hospital, but we are saving money.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are enough interjections. The member for Florey does not need any assistance.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Norwood is not to continue in that vein.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Florey has the call and I suggest that other members contain themselves.

**Mr BASS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. The Government is determined to improve the health status of Aboriginal people, and I must say that I am a great supporter of the Aboriginal people. I sat alongside an Aborigine by the name of Les Kropinyeri at the Murray Bridge High School, and he was a fine example of an Aboriginal youth. He studied with us, he was one of us, and he was a very good footballer. He showed that the Aboriginal people can study and make something of their life.

Before I make my next comment, let me say that I am not a racist and I do not give a damn who says what: I am not a racist. However, I must make this point about the Aboriginal community. I believe that some of them are doing damage to their race through their behaviour in Victoria Square and in North Terrace near the Casino and in front of Parliament House. I believe that these people are doing nothing for the Aboriginal cause in South Australia. The sooner these areas are cleaned up, the better it will be for all South Australians and for the tourists staying at places such as the Hilton who are not game to walk across Victoria Square because of groups of drunken Aborigines. It is time that that area was cleaned up so that the Aboriginal race can have the standing in the community that the majority of them want and deserve.

I turn now to community safety, particularly correctional services and the improvements that have been made in that area. Over 24 months, the cost of keeping a prisoner at any of the State's eight correctional institutions has been reduced by more than 25 per cent in real terms. That is a great achievement. That could have been done by the Labor Government but, unfortunately, its union bosses would not allow it to do so.

**Mr Clarke:** You were a union boss.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BASS:** I very proudly acknowledge that I was a union boss. I was a Liberal union member, but I was apolitical while I was the Police Association secretary. I was always apolitical. Gail Gago and several others are very strong Labor union members, and they controlled the Labor Government. I was very proud of my achievements when I was secretary of the Police Association, and I was very proud that I remained apolitical. I never used my Liberal membership when I did anything for the Police Association.

Mobile work camps for sentenced prisoners have proved to be highly successful, and we should introduce as many of those programs as we can. A lot of the people who have been incarcerated find that it is a lot better to be out doing meaningful work than sitting in prisons doing nothing. Having been a policeman for 33 years, I have had a lot of experience with prisoners. I put a lot of gentlemen and ladies into those establishments. They look forward to being released and being able to do some meaningful work. The quicker we implement these types of camps and employment opportunities the better for them. My learned friend opposite, whom I will be most kind about—

**Mr Clarke:** I am not a lawyer.

**Mr BASS:** No, you are definitely not that. That was a mistake on my part. He said in relation to the police—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr BASS:** Well, I support the police getting a pay raise: I always have and I always will.

**Mr Clarke:** Their claim?

**Mr BASS:** No, I think a fair claim.

**Mr Clarke:** They have got a fair claim?

**Mr BASS:** I think they have got a fair claim and I encourage them to come together with the Government and, if there are any sticking points, then negotiate with the Government so they can receive their pay increase which is very justified. In finishing my contribution, I note that in her address the Governor made comment about three former members of this Parliament who have recently passed away: the Hon. Gordon Bruce, Mr Jack Jennings and Mr Howard Venning. Unfortunately, I did not ever meet any of these three people but, from talking to members opposite and to my colleagues who knew them, they all made a great contribution to this Parliament, and I agree with the comments made by Dame Roma. Again, I congratulate the Governor on the work she has done and I support the motion.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles):** I, too, support the motion. In the Address in Reply it is traditional to roam far and wide in this debate and not necessarily take your topic from the Governor's speech. The Governor delivered her speech in her usual superb manner. It is no reflection on the Governor at all that the speech was so abysmal. There was nothing in that speech to inspire South Australia. It was probably the most boring speech I have heard at the opening of Parliament. In fact, I felt sorry for the Governor in having to deliver—

**Mr Clarke:** It was embarrassing.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** It was embarrassing—such a pitiful document. In my experience, it is unusual for a Government to run out of ideas so early in its term. Having sat on the Opposition benches for 11 years, one would have thought that in that 11 years it would have enough momentum on coming to office to carry it past the 18 month mark, but apparently not. I have listened to the Address in Reply speeches from members opposite tonight and I will be listening to a few more tonight and tomorrow. I challenge members opposite to pick out of the speech that was delivered by Her Excellency on behalf of the Government anything of any consequence. There was absolutely nothing. I was surprised and disappointed.

The previous speaker, the member for Florey, made some mention of being proud to be a union secretary. I agree with him, he ought to be proud: it is a very honourable calling. During his period of office, amongst others, the police in this State finished up being the highest paid police in Australia and there were more of them per capita than any other State in Australia.

*Mr Leggett interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** This is the police officers, the ones who are looking after you—that is what we are talking about. We are talking about the people who are protecting us. They were the highest paid police officers in Australia 18 months ago. There were more of them than in any other State per capita. They had the best superannuation scheme of any police force in Australia. They also had the best conditions of any police officers in Australia: for example, rents when they served in the country, and so on.

I will tell members why that was so. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that it had nothing to do with the member for Florey. It was because the Government had enormous respect for the work that the police did. As individuals, we all had the opportunity to join the Police Force. None of us chose to do that, with the exception of the member for Florey. We can go quietly about our business, live peacefully in our homes, generally speaking, and walk the streets because people are willing to take on those who want to disrupt our lives or damage us. They stand between us and the forces that none of us like. That is why the previous Government treated police officers seriously as a special case.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** There was not a single vote in it for us. Until this Government came to office, accepted wisdom that probably 75 per cent of police officers were conservative voters was probably accurate. There were not a lot of swinging voters in the Police Force; the majority of police officers were conservative voters. The previous Government did not give police officers the best wages and conditions in Australia with any expectation of getting a vote out of it, because we had been around too long to realise that. We gave it to the police because it was the correct thing to do. It was the right thing to do, and that is why we did it.

This Government has treated the Police Force with absolute contempt and it should be ashamed of itself. For the member for Florey to say that he supports the Police Force is the biggest load of hypocrisy that I have heard. At the next mass meeting of the Police Force, let the member for Florey attend and explain to 3 000 police officers the Government's position and why they are no longer the best paid and why their country housing rents will go sky high. The Libs do not have the brains to treat the police any differently from other workers. The Libs hate workers. If they had any brains, they would learn to differentiate between those workers who are on their side and those who are not. They are too thick, and they will pay a price.

*Mr Condous interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** The member for Colton is also free to go to the next stop-work meeting of the police and tell them, with a dismissive wave of the arm, to go to arbitration. During Question Time today the Minister for Industrial Affairs praised his own enterprise bargaining legislation. He told us how wonderful it was. However, what was the cry from the Minister for Industrial Affairs and the Member for Colton? They said, 'Let them go to arbitration.' What is wrong with enterprise bargaining?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Giles has the call.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I did not particularly want to speak about the Police Force. However, the one thing I cannot stand in this Parliament is hypocrisy. That is what was oozing out of the member for Florey, and it sickened me. Nevertheless, I will now turn to what I intended to say. I refer to this morning's *Advertiser*. I had a bet with myself yesterday when the Auditor-General's Report came down. I thought, 'Front page of the *Advertiser* here; this is front page stuff.' There were some really hot topics, including the fact that the Treasurer had cost the State in just one year—it will accumulate over time—\$440 million according to the Auditor-General, not according to me. It is not my rhetoric—not at all. The Auditor-General has said—

*Members interjecting:*



**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn both the member for Mawson and the Deputy Leader. They have had a fair go. If they want to continue the discussion, they might have the opportunity to do so outside the Chamber.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Thank you for your protection, Sir. The Auditor-General has made it clear, and he stated it—do you want me to read it out?

**Ms Stevens:** Yes, read it out.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** He stated quite clearly that had the policies of the previous Government continued—that is what he said—this State would have been about \$440 million better off in one year.

**Mr Leggett:** Rubbish!

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** The member for Hanson says it is rubbish. During Question Time the Premier said it was rubbish. Of course, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer would obviously say it is rubbish—he is the goose who created it. He says it is rubbish. They all say that the Auditor-General does not know what he is talking about. The Auditor-General does not know what he is talking about, according to all these people. It really does not wash, does it? Everybody knows that the Auditor-General knows exactly what he is talking about. One could see it on the faces of members opposite during Question Time—not all of them, because there was a bit of glee on the faces of one or two members on the front bench who were enjoying the discomfort of the Premier, and particularly the discomfort of the Treasurer. So, there was a bit of glee for one or two of them but, generally speaking, the Party was somewhat subdued.

That is one item—and I went through them one by one—that I thought could be the lead item in today's *Advertiser*. In response to requests from me during an Economic and Finance Committee hearing and the Estimates Committee, the Auditor-General provided very detailed thoughts on how there has to be more accountability and less of this commercial confidentiality nonsense.

I thought that that was pretty sharp, that it was a good issue and that we could see it as the lead story in the *Advertiser*. However, the more I thought about it, the more I thought that there would be something in there that I had not yet read, something that was utter trivia and that that would be the lead story in the *Advertiser*. I was dead right. We have this daily Liberal Party newsletter for which we are charged 70¢. Its circulation, quite properly and obviously, is plummeting, because who wants to pay 70¢ for a daily Liberal Party newsletter, where all they read is not the big story of the day, unless they finally get down to a little corner on page 4, but utter trivia?

I have no criticism of the journalists who work for the *Advertiser*—they have to eat. They write up their stories as they think appropriate, given for whom they work. They have no say in what is printed. I am not in any way critical of the journalists. Some of my best friends are journalists, but you could guarantee that all that the daily Liberal Party news-sheet would put in was something utterly banal and of very minor consequence.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** The thing that absolutely finished me with the *Advertiser* occurred the day after South Australia hit the top of the table in Australia for having the highest level of unemployment.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I thought, 'Ah, big story!' It was only two months ago. I thought, 'Ah, we've got the *Advertiser* now; it will be buried, but we will see in the

*Advertiser* that we have now in South Australia, under this miserable Government, the highest unemployment in the whole of Australia—not just the mainland but the whole of Australia.' There it was, on the front page: a story on the unemployment figures. What did it say? It said that there was a huge boost in employment, that Minister Bob Such was absolutely thrilled with the increase, with about half a dozen part-timers having been picked up, or something like that. The real story was nowhere.

Because these people produce a news-sheet for the Liberals daily, one would think that members opposite would be grateful, but when you get the likes of the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing costing the *Advertiser* \$2 million when it prints for nothing the Liberal Party news-sheet on a daily basis, one really has to wonder. If I were running the *Advertiser*, I would be absolutely appalled that, with all I do for these clowns, they do not have the brains to see that at least they do not cost me money. They cannot do it.

The Auditor-General had some very serious points to make and, unlike members opposite, I have a great deal of respect for the Auditor-General. He does know what he is talking about and I believe he is right. In particular, I appreciated what the Auditor-General said regarding public accountability.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** For the benefit of the member for Mawson, I will repeat it: public accountability.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Obviously three members are not interested.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Only two, Sir; I have dropped out.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member has the protection of the Chair. I do not want any further interruptions.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Thank you, Sir. The member for Mawson clearly was not listening. I said that I particularly appreciated what the Auditor-General said on the question of public accountability.

*The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Not on debt management, but on public accountability. I will come to debt management another day. Some terrific things are to be said about it. The thing that interested me particularly in this Auditor-General's Report was the question of public accountability. My colleagues on the Public Accounts Committee would know that it is something that has been exercising my mind and the committee for many months. We have had some good discussions with the Auditor-General about the whole issue. To an unprecedented degree we have vast amounts of public money being spent or given away as straight out gifts without any possibility of the Parliament and the public having any scrutiny of it whatsoever. I argued for years in the Cabinet of which I was a member that this ought not to continue. I got short shrift. This Auditor-General's Report on that topic is the first glimmer of a victory that I have had in about 15 years that the issue has been giving me some concern.

My basic philosophy has always been this: anybody who deals with the Government and who takes taxpayers' money for whatever purpose must expect parliamentary scrutiny of that transaction. Unless there is a statutory requirement, as there is, for example, in the case of a State Bank depositor—not that that matters now, but there were secrecy provisions just for the ordinary depositors of the State Bank; there is

some overall Commonwealth banking legislation also, but I do not want to be sidetracked by that—anybody who deals with the Government, who wants to pick up the taxpayers' dollar, for whatever reason—and they are usually very good reasons; I am not saying that people are stealing or anything like that—must expect that it will be here on the floor of the Parliament, and members of Parliament are entitled to scrutinise that, as are the public through their members of Parliament.

That is not the case now, and that is quite wrong. It was wrong under our Government, as far as I am concerned. I did not have a chance of winning it there. I lost it repeatedly, but the Auditor-General has given me a glimmer of light. If you do not want the public scrutiny of any of your business affairs, do not deal with the Government. If you are dealing with the taxpayer, you have absolutely no rights to privacy whatsoever when it involves the taxpayers' dollar.

I am not saying that the Government cannot govern, that the Government has to come to Parliament before it makes any financial decisions, whether it is contracting out, awarding tenders or whatever. That is not my argument. I think the Government is quite entitled to do that. But after the contract is signed, I believe that the Parliament has the right to scrutinise it. I believe that the public has the right to know and, if the public does not like the way the Government is governing, that is why we have elections. The elections will determine obviously who the public prefers, if there is an argument about any particular transaction. So, I really object strongly to being misrepresented with the suggestion that I believe the Government ought not to be allowed to govern without bringing every tender and every contract, etc., to Parliament.

I notice in response to the Auditor-General's report that that is in effect what the Deputy Premier said. What nonsense! That is not what the Auditor-General is saying, and that is not what I am saying. Once the contract is signed, it is in the public arena, and it ought to be in the public arena. So, I am very pleased that the Auditor-General is coming around to that way of thinking. We will have further discussions with him in the Economic and Finance Committee, and I am sure we will come up with something with which the Parliament ought to agree.

I will change tack slightly. Yesterday in Question Time, I was surprised at the answer to a clear question of the member for Kaurua:

What was the outcome of the South Australian road show the Premier led to Sydney and Melbourne last week?

That was a simple, serious and legitimate question. The Premier responded at great length, beginning as follows:

The road show was a stunning success in promoting South Australia, particularly to key decision makers in Melbourne and Sydney.

He said not that it had been useful but that it was a stunning success. I have been on these road shows—millions of them.

*Mr Leggett interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** A lot of them are pretty well sideshows; the member for Hanson is right. The Premier said it was a stunning success. Could we accuse this man of over-statement? Or is it a very different road show from those I have been on. Usually what happens is that you have a lunch for all the business people (incidentally, it costs the State a fortune) and by and large businesses send a third secretary or something like that. You get thousands there, and you give a slide show with fancy pointers. Everybody is

polite: they eat your food, drink your grog, there is a round of applause and off they go. You hope that maybe you have made one or two points. I thought, 'Well, that's a brave thing.' Then I thought, 'We'd better have a look at this and see whether we can get any authentication of this'—according to the Premier—'stunning success'. I would have thought the *Financial Review* was a newspaper with a reasonable reputation and with no particular axe to grind. It would not care one way or another about South Australia or about Dean Brown. The *Financial Review* of 20 September stated:

South Australian Premier, Dean Brown, was in Sydney yesterday trumpeting a revival in his State's economy.

We have had three quarters of negative growth and the highest unemployment rate in the whole of Australia. Never mind, you have to put on a brave face in relation to these things. I understand that. You have to be positive.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I didn't lie about it—even in the courts.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I just want to cite part of the *Financial Review*, when we have time. I will start again for the benefit of the *Hansard* staff. They must be having an awfully difficult time with members opposite, particularly the member for Hanson, who is behaving like a complete hooligan tonight. That surprises and disappoints me, as I know it will you, Mr Speaker. The *Financial Review* stated (and I repeat):

South Australian Premier, Dean Brown, was in Sydney yesterday trumpeting a revival in his State's economy.

'Pause for laughter', it says here. The article continues:

'We are a State that has undergone fundamental change,' he told the media briefing.

That was certainly true. None of us can remember when we have had three quarters of negative growth before, or when we have had the highest unemployment level of any State in Australia. The article continues:

But the few journalists attracted to his press conference—six in all—

Six turned up at the press conference. I have it on good authority that four of them were cadets and two were on work experience. Nevertheless, these six journalists turned up. It is a wonderful article; I commend it to the House. I will not read all the article, but it is there for all to see. I am only too happy to give members a copy. It concludes as follows:

It is all very well to want to be a high technology State and Brown's recent successes have been an important confidence booster for the State.

I am being fair. It continues:

But the type of companies being attracted by low costs, contracts and subsidies are, almost by definition, likely to be footloose and lack a long-term commitment to South Australia.

That is absolutely correct. We all experience that. It goes on to say:

Sophisticated economies compete on skills, design, quality, management, networking and operational excellence and there is precious little of this flavour in Dean Brown's vision for South Australia. What we have in SA is a modern cargo cult. What is still missing is a strategy for becoming a high-wage, sophisticated and technologically advanced economy and a plan to develop the institutions to support it.

I have never heard of this commentator in the *Financial Review*; I am quite sure he is no particular friend of the Labor Party. His name is Peter Roberts. It is an excellent article and

it really does put in some perspective the nonsense that was spoken by the Premier yesterday when he said that his road show was a stunning success. Six journos turned up—that is pathetic. On another occasion I will go on at greater length about the matter of attracting industry to South Australia, because there is no doubt that at the moment this Government is buying work. It is buying employment at \$30 000 a job. I can tell you, Sir, that, if we were prepared to go on doing that, at \$30 000 a job eventually we would employ everybody in Australia here in South Australia. They would be mugs not to come at \$30 000 a job, but of course we cannot go on doing that.

All the Motorolas and all the other people who have been paid \$30 000 a job to come here are nothing more than a very expensive press release for the Premier. It is always the Premier, never the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development: he never gets the guernsey. It is very short-sighted and expensive. Clearly, it is not working, because page 26 of the *Advertiser* tells us all the jobs that are going, and far more are going than are coming. That is a great pity. There has to be a rethink over there. The days of the \$30 000 a job press release have to come to an end and something more meaningful put in their place. One or two people on the other side realise this. I do not know why they do not come to the fore; I do not know why the back bench does not support them and get some decent, effective people in the leadership rather than the incompetence we have at the moment.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brokenshire):** Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Elder.

**Mr WADE (Elder):** I commend Her Excellency on her presentation of a positive, future oriented speech. There are ample signs in our State that South Australia is back in business. In my travels throughout my electorate I have found a new confidence and determination from my electors to ensure that the final years of our second millennium will close on a new high of pride in our State and satisfaction in the direction in which we have chosen to travel. Our State is undergoing a fundamental change in how we do business. We are well on our way to achieving sustained economic growth and prosperity. We are in an ideal geographic, social and economic position to take full advantage of the opportunities that await us in Asia.

As the Premier has already stated, the world competitive report took into account the 41 developed nations of the world and ranked them on competitive features. In comparison with these 41 developed nations, South Australia ranked among the top five for low cost of accommodation, abundant natural resources, low population density, high life expectancy and high labour participation. We also ranked in the top five for our very high literacy rates (I guess the Opposition would be an exception), our openness to other cultures, our high quality of life generally, our low inflation and our low labour costs, which have been our traditional advantage over our interstate competitors. We ranked third in the world in terms of our use of computers and the availability of personal computers to the average Australian.

Over 60 per cent of State Government clerical positions require computer competency. Few non-government agencies and private organisations carry out their business without the use of a computer. Those that do rely on the computing power of their suppliers or customers in maintaining and creating new business. In fact, in 1994 the Julia Farr Centre intro-

duced the first touch screen information system in the health system. Computers are an integral part of the lives of South Australians.

South Australia rates second in the world for the lowest unit labour cost for the manufacturing industry. We have already the competitive edge and this Liberal Government is doing what Labor should have done 10 years ago: we are grasping the future with firm hands and moulding it to our liking for the benefit of all South Australians. Amongst these 41 developed nations South Australia ranked No. 1 in affordability of housing and quality of living. It is about time that the Opposition realised and actually advertised that we are the best and are better than all the rest. We are backed by a strong post secondary and tertiary training system that is gearing itself to the needs of a burgeoning software development industry and associated activities.

This Government has met with six of the largest information technology companies in the world: IBM, Fujitsu, Tandem, EDS, Silicone Graphics and Oracle. This Government has developed closer working relationships with them all because we know they are looking for suitable locations from which to penetrate the Asian markets. We know they are looking for a location with a time zone compatible with those markets and we know that that location is South Australia. For example, Austin, Texas, our sister city, has about the same population as Adelaide yet it employs over 85 000 people in the information technology industry and its employment is growing at 7 per cent per annum.

We are ideally located to be the Austin of Australia and the opportunities for employment and growth are truly staggering. For example, one of the fastest growing manufacturers of boats in the United States relies solely on orders received through the Internet. The 1995 Adelaide Grand Prix was advertised on the Internet from June this year and over 20 000 people accessed the information on a worldwide basis. The Liberal State Government is forming an electronic services business to link Government and private sector services so that people can pay their electricity bills, arrange their motor registration, book a seat for their favourite artist and so on from public information technology kiosks, from their personal computers or from community facilities such as libraries.

It is this vision and the commitment of this Government to achieve it that will create new and secure existing jobs for South Australia in computing, programming, marketing and management. We do not plan to jump into this future blindfolded with our hands tied behind our backs. The Premier has signed a memorandum of understanding with Joint Venture, Silicon Valley (a first for this organisation), and we can now draw on the immense experience of Silicon Valley companies in developing our information technology industries. South Australia will lead the rest of Australia firmly and decisively into the information age for the benefit of all South Australians.

Small business will play a vital role in our emerging ascendancy. The EDA, in consultation with the Small Business Advisory Council, has developed a new package of initiatives to assist small business. One such initiative, which will be welcomed by small business, requires Government agencies to pay their bills by the due date or within 30 days. In the last six months of 1994, Government departments were late paying their bills in over 73 per cent of cases. On average, this payment was nearly three weeks late. For a small business this can be totally destructive. Agencies are

now required to report quarterly to Cabinet through the Treasury on their account payment performance.

The South Australian Centre for Manufacturing has piloted a program to establish better working relationships between banks and their small business clients which will therefore encourage enterprise improvement. Small businesses in crisis will be able to access a grant of up to \$250 towards a bookkeeper to establish a clear picture of their financial position. This service will give small businesses in crisis a realistic assessment of their options. The business centre can offer a subsidy to employ a professional business adviser to assist those businesses who can and wish to continue operating.

The business centre will also deliver a series of workshops on applying for bank finance. This will be done in conjunction with the Australian Bankers Association. As we are all aware, small business owners and single operators go to the bank seeking a loan to commence or expand their business but do not know what the bank wants from them. These loans fail, the business cannot expand and jobs are lost. We will ensure that this vicious cycle is broken. South Australian small businesses will have access to planned skill development programs that will give them a leading, competitive edge.

There are detractors in our struggle to shake off the choking legacy of Labor's decade of disaster. There are those who fear this challenge of change perhaps because it may strip them of their traditional power and influence or perhaps because they are conditioned to Labor's failures over the past decade and are jaundiced to all Government initiatives. Sometimes the noise and clatter of these detractors drown out the truth of what this Liberal Government is saying and doing. These detractors believe the pamphlets of opinion. Sometimes they even write these pamphlets of opinion circulated by self-seeking vested interests rather than the few objective journals of truth. We are in continuous danger from those scheming how to cheat their way back to power to satisfy their own egos and craving for unwarranted recognition. I provide a quote by Robert Lowe and Henry Reave to those in the press who seek sensationalism rather than the truth:

The first duty of the press is to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the events of the time, and instantly, by disclosing them to make them the common property of the nation.

This is not a modern quote because it was printed in *The Times* on 2 February 1852. Perhaps one day the press will start to listen and understand that the truth is good for people and good for the press.

We all know that local government reform is sought by everyone, and this Government is well on the way to facilitating such reform. However, this is a complex subject, not one which I wish to discuss today, but I would like to sound a warning that it would be a most disastrous situation for this State if South Australian taxpayers found themselves supporting four tiers of government in lieu of three. Perhaps we will have large regional centres with their own administration and their own well paid officers, which may be divided into smaller districts to make them more manageable with their own administrative officers (well paid, I assume), followed by a State Government, followed by a Federal Government. We need to learn from the experience of our overseas cousins in the UK and not fall into the trap of achieving exactly the opposite of what the people want. The people want good government but do not want to be over-

governed, and we must ensure that by working towards an amalgamation of councils we achieve what the people want.

It is imperative that our vision of the future is not obscured by the industrial pollution that is destroying the quality of life of my constituents in Edwardstown, Melrose Park and parts of St Marys. Years of neglect by the former Labor Government has given local industries the view that they have a licence to pollute—not all of them but, unfortunately, the worst offenders. They do not have a licence to pollute. My constituents have drawn the line, and we shall ensure that those industries do not obscure our future nor the future of our children through their unthinking or ignorant actions. The old rules no longer apply: existing use no longer applies when each day businesses are using kilograms of noxious and toxic chemicals which a few years before were being used by the gram.

Pouring chemicals into gutters that carry green noxious slime to the Patawalonga was never acceptable but, unlike the previous Labor failures, this Government will not tolerate such abuse of our environment and our people by those who do not know or just do not care. We will educate these people. If they are slow to learn, we will put them on notice. If they still choose to abuse the air that people breathe and the earth on which they walk, we will fine them, and if they still choose to ignore the realities of life we will close them down. I cannot think of a more contemptuous or despicable person than someone who exploits the people.

I commend the Governor for her speech and the Liberal Government for having the courage to initiate an innovative and creative direction for our State that will bring new opportunities and fresh challenges to us all. Under a decade of Labor we suffered from a band of self-seekers who had no vision—betrayed by their own stubbornness to shrug off materialism, and by their own total incompetence. Without vision the people will perish, and I give an assurance here that South Australia will not perish.

**Mr ANDREW (Chaffey):** I am pleased to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. First, I reaffirm my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to Her Excellency the Governor of this State. I commend Her Excellency for the excellent manner in which she continues to fulfil her position as Governor of this State. I also congratulate Her Excellency on her speech in opening this third session of the forty-eighth Parliament—a speech which outlines a continuing vision and plan for growth and prosperity in South Australia under this Liberal Government.

I had the opportunity and pleasure after the opening of the second session of the forty-eighth Parliament to move the adoption of the Address in Reply. In doing so, I concentrated on providing an overview, from a statewide perspective, of the successful strategy this Government was providing in rebuilding the State's economy and in turning around its direction with foresight and vision, with responsible financial management, increasing economic activity and job creation while at the same time providing fair and enviable Government services.

Tonight, because of the limited time, I want to focus more specifically on how over recent months the Government's initiatives in responsible leadership and management have impacted positively on my electorate of Chaffey. Naturally, I am proud to say that many of these aspects will be making a valuable contribution to this State. I briefly want to make some comments on the Government's financial performance statewide, because the recent release of the 1994-95 financial

result compels me to reiterate the success of this State Government's economic strategy. It has clearly been working.

First, I note that the underlying deficit of the non-commercial sector for 1994-95 was recognised and recorded as being \$239 million, a full \$36 million improvement on the original estimate. Secondly, the debt is recognised to be further under control with the public sector debt at 30 June this year amounting to \$8.5 billion, an improvement on the forecast and a reduction in real terms. Thirdly, the State's contingent liabilities have decreased to \$6.5 million during 1994-95. Over and above this specific financial performance there is recent wider verification and evidence of this continuing State Government success.

I comment, of course, on the Premier's recent visits to Melbourne and Sydney, described publicly as a 'road show'. Its purpose was to make the necessary change, as it surely did, in the perception of South Australia by the people of the Eastern States; to demonstrate the economic climate in South Australia, as managed by this State Government; to prove that its strategies are supportive of business; and to illustrate that new opportunities are available and happening in South Australia. In doing so, to put this information in terms that would make business people and decision makers in the Eastern States and overseas sit up and take notice, a very effective comparative picture was presented.

Many of these figures have been conveyed by my colleagues today, but I note particularly that South Australia's ranking with respect to competitiveness against 41 other developed nations was very significant and very favourable in a number of areas, and I will mention a couple.

The world competitiveness report as presented by the Premier in the Eastern States gave a clear indication of the importance that this Government places on the State's achieving a lower cost structure. In the important performance criteria, we are first in housing affordability, second in per unit labour costs for the manufacturing industry and first in quality of living out of 41 developed nations.

Further evidence of this statewide performance can be found in the recent Morgan & Banks job index survey, which shows intentions for the period October to December this year. That survey revealed that South Australia is improving at a faster rate than the other States. This nationwide survey indicated that we were leading in technology, advertising, engineering and transport, and the only sector in which South Australia showed any decrease in employment was in the government sector, and that is entirely consistent with the Government's strategy with respect to outsourcing and improving Government efficiencies on the basis that the best people to do business in this State are business people, not bureaucrats.

The survey also recognised that South Australia has a well-trained and effective work force and that technology is a major driving force for change in this State. With technology likely to be an area of improving job prospects in the next few months, that can only enhance the work that has been done by the Government and the Premier, particularly with respect to his recent overseas trip to America and Japan to promote this State. That trip highlighted the opportunities available here and our ability to be a leader in and to adapt information technology and its associated industries. In addition, the broad economic indicators for the month of August were supported by the Morgan & Banks job index survey. As an example, I indicate that full-time job equivalents increased by 3 900 in August, and South Australia was

one of only two States to record job growth in its total employment. We also recorded a rise of 2.5 per cent in job advertisements. That was in contrast to the national decline.

I turn now to some specific issues that have been important to my electorate over the recent recess. I make special mention of the very positive and well-received decision that was made by State Cabinet in the past few weeks to maintain and reinvest in the Cadell Training Centre. As my colleagues and members opposite would be aware, there has been considerable uncertainty in recent months about the future options for Cadell Training Centre, and Cabinet's decision has been tremendous news for the Riverland and the western area of my electorate. It has instilled a wave of confidence in the business community, in the wider community and amongst the staff of the Cadell Training Centre, who are determined to make the most of the centre's potential. The community will be a major beneficiary of this decision. Not only will it benefit from the retention of the more than 60 jobs at the centre but it will also benefit from the direct capital injection that will result from the further upgrade of the facility in the next year or two.

Other indirect spin-offs and opportunities will grow from this decision for reinvestment, for example, the irrigation rehabilitation that will now surely take place in the Cadell government irrigation area in that region. Therefore, further production and further economic facilitation will also result from this decision. The community has been heartened by this decision that fully recognises and reflects the Liberal Party policy for encouraging regional growth and regional activity. Also, it appreciates the specific but fundamental importance of the Cadell Training Centre to the Riverland. I note that, while the investigations and the study did take place—and they were intense—I put on record that at all times it is always easier for a given Government department to look in isolation at its own operation and to more readily identify the savings of that department at a functional level.

However, in a broader sense, as has happened in this case, a fairer and a more effective decision has been based on the fact that the State, as a whole, and the region in particular in this case, will be a major and more appropriate beneficiary. On behalf of the community I thank Cabinet for this decision. I also thank my fellow colleagues, in particular those directly affected, the member for Custance and the member for Eyre, for the very major contribution they have made over recent months on behalf of the community, and also my backbench colleagues who were supportive in recognising the importance of the retention of this facility. I also put on record my congratulations to all of those concerned—the community, the respective district councils of Waikerie and Morgan, the Riverland Development Corporation, and the staff and the inmates of the centre, many of whom came forward with information to help the case.

I also thank the press for its contribution because generally it was a rational presentation. It certainly helped to maintain the pressure and, at the majority of times, to keep the facts before the Government. It is an example of what can be achieved with a commitment from local members and the community working with resolve and sticking with the facts and winning the day on the basis that the facts illustrated that the community and the State as a whole would be a total beneficiary. I know all involved with the centre now want to put the past few months behind them. They want to get on with the job and make the best for the future and to maximise the benefit not only for the region but also for the State with

the existing facility and the redevelopment that now will surely take place.

I want to continue with what I would call a brief snapshot or overview of some of the other aspects that have occurred in my electorate in the past couple of months, particularly during the recess period and, chiefly, in relation to infrastructure provisions by this Government, because this has played a major role in providing for a very positive future in my electorate of Chaffey. The first aspect I refer to is that of the very recent commitment by the Federal Government to confirm its support for the State Government's case in relation to the extension of the Adelaide Airport runway and the upgrading of Adelaide Airport. I understand this announcement was only confirmed by the Federal Government in the middle of August.

This decision by the Federal Government has certainly been the result of a very determined and a very committed campaign by the State Government, and in particular the Liberal Government, which even before coming to Government had a very strong policy to ensure that the achievement of the upgrading of Adelaide Airport and its runway would remain as one of its highest infrastructure priorities. I congratulate and commend the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Infrastructure and the Premier for their commitment and their work with the Federal Government to get this to happen. It will provide a statewide stimulus to the economy for exports and tourism, but more particularly it will be of benefit to my electorate of Chaffey because it will raise the opportunity for export growth, particularly with regard to fresh fruit and vegetables.

As I have stated in this place before, it is a cost impediment for producers in my region to transport that form of produce by road transport to Melbourne to get the benefit of air freight services there, which unfortunately cannot be provided out of Adelaide because 747s cannot be laden as required and do not have the timetables required to meet market schedules for such produce. Not only will the cost impediment be reduced but, more importantly, because the schedules will be more accurate and better suit the market requirements, produce will arrive in better condition and be of higher quality, thereby enhancing the opportunity to make those markets grow.

Next, I refer to the Berri bridge. Further to the Premier's announcement towards the end of June that the Government would enter into detailed negotiations with Built Environs and its associated consortium for the funding and construction of the Berri bridge under its Building a Better Future Program, which reflects the Government's commitment, with private participation, to allocate \$300 million for important and prioritised infrastructure in this State, I understand that negotiations are continuing. Although fine tuning is still required, the region continues to be extremely appreciative of this issue and eagerly awaits formal commencement of this project.

Similarly, I point to the agreement in recent times of the Federal Government for the Loxton to Tailem Bend rail standardisation. This is another illustration of this Government's tremendous commitment and the lobbying and the case that it put to the Federal Government to make sure that country areas where there was significant infrastructure would not, with the standardisation of the interstate railway line, be left to wither and be unable to take advantage of this opportunity. It will be a boon to our cereal growers. It will improve their access to port facilities, particularly this year when the cereal harvest in the Mallee is looking so positive.

It will also be an indirect boost to local councils which will now not have to fund out of their ratepayers' pockets the serious degradation that was taking place on rural arterial roads in response to extra heavy road transport being forced to take the grain that will now be able to be taken by this upgraded rail facility.

A further section of 25 kilometres of the Morgan-Burra road will be sealed at a cost of \$3.3 million as part of our rural arterial roads program. This will upgrade the transport link with Western Australia and highlight the fact that the Riverland will be centralised as a hub for the road transport link for both freight and tourism between Perth and Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, Perth and Brisbane and Adelaide and Darwin.

I congratulate all who were involved on 13 August in the ride from Morgan to Burra. I know that the member for Custance promised to ride the Morgan to Burra road, but in his case it was Burra to Morgan. That was to highlight the need for the upgrading. I congratulate Ruth Strachan from The Gums, the station between Morgan and Burra, who effectively organised the bike riding in which a number of people participated, including the Minister for Transport. Indeed, I congratulate her on her involvement that day in highlighting the need for the upgrading and riding over 40 kilometres. I also extend my congratulations to those from the Department of Transport and the Distance Education Centre who contributed to the fund raising.

In terms of this important infrastructure provision, I now turn to the issue of irrigation. Members would be aware, from the recent budget provision, that the State Government has continued to fund and support the rehabilitation of the Government highland irrigation, the major areas of which are contained in the Riverland in my electorate of Chaffey. Expenditure of \$4.9 million has been allocated in this budget for stage 3 in the Loveday region of the Cobdogla irrigation area. Stage 2 was completed more than two months ahead of schedule and is under budget. The overall program is in the order of \$40 million, with Federal Government assistance and grower assistance in the ratio of 40 per cent Federal, 40 per cent State and 20 per cent grower contribution.

It now appears that total savings will be in the order of \$5 million out of this \$40 million project. The successful outcome has been achieved because of successful tendering. It has been achieved because of high performance and quality project management with SA Water and new technology and design in pipelining. The only frustration has been that the Federal Government is still stalling and is yet to give its commitment for the final triennium in terms of the funding. The Riverland community and the State Government are very eagerly and formally becoming very impatient with the Federal Government to continue with this commitment.

Notwithstanding this, there has been very close cooperation between growers and the State Government. An agreement has been reached in the past couple of months, leading to the adoption of a business plan for highland Government irrigators. The approval has given a boost to development opportunities in the Riverland. It reaffirms the State Government's long-term commitment to rehabilitation, and it gives the Irrigation Board and growers a clear and predictable plan for future operation of irrigation water delivery in the Riverland.

The confirmation of this business plan now opens the path for local self-management of Government irrigation schemes. Not only will this improve the efficiency of service delivery but self-management will provide for private allocations

between Government schemes, all of which dovetails with the new Irrigation Act passed by the Government last year. This plan, largely developed by the Growers Board, and now with the support and endorsement of the State Government, will reinforce the region as a world leader in terms of the provision of irrigation development, with further opportunities in the Riverland incorporating the current water and drainage soil limitations.

I congratulate the local Riverland Highland Irrigation Board for its commitment and perseverance to the plan. I look forward to a continuing and close liaison with the board, and the Minister for Infrastructure, to maximise the benefits to the region from this plan. Also significant is the recent provision of a project officer by the Government to assist with this self-management project.

I place on record the situation at Loxton. The Loxton Government Irrigation Area, which is unique to the Riverland in that it is a Federal scheme under the War Service Land Settlement Agreement, has not yet been given a commitment regarding the rehabilitation of the area. I put on record that I am continuing to work towards this with my Federal colleague the member for Wakefield. We continue to make deputations to the Minister for Infrastructure, who is currently making Federal representations to ensure that the rehabilitation at Loxton continues to be a priority.

New developments and confidence in the irrigation area in the region are evidenced, most clearly, by growth and expansion in the wine grape industry and the redevelopment of vineyards in the area. The risks associated with viticulture are all too evident. Earlier this month, when the lowest September temperatures were recorded in 49 years, frost caused severe damage to new buds and potential wine crops in the Riverland, as well as apricots, stone fruit crops and vegetable seedlings. The wine industry damage has yet to be fully assessed, although the assessment is taking place. The impact is yet to be fully recognised because further shooting of the existing buds may occur.

The damage in Sunraysia was significant and, on behalf of the local community, I am in coordination and cooperation with my interstate colleagues on the basis that, if the damage proves to be as significant as it is projected to be, a tri-State approach will be made through our State Minister for exceptional circumstances compensation under the Rural Adjustment Fund.

The development of the wine industry continues to offer a very major significant economic growth in the Riverland. It is estimated that for every 25 hectares of new vines one full-time vineyard job is created. The indications in 1994 were that, by 1996, a further 8 000 hectares of wine grapes were to be planted in South Australia, and that is 40 per cent of the planned national expansion.

In the Riverland currently five new corporate vineyards are being developed, and this will create in excess of an additional 1 500 hectares to be planted to premium wine grape varieties. Existing properties are being redeveloped at the rate of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent per annum, which is important for achieving the adjustment to premium varieties. Modern trellising is used for mechanical harvesting and pruning and an efficient irrigation system. It is required to meet the billion dollar export focus for which we are on target in the wine industry in this country.

The most recently available figures show that the percentage growth in South Australian vineyards exceeds that of any other State. The State Government recognises the importance of this industry and was prompt earlier this year in respond-

ing to the draft report of the Commonwealth wine grape and wine industry inquiry, pointing out that any change to the current tax status or options would result in negative impacts to the Riverland and to the State and national wine industries. The current taxation system distorts production decisions, particularly through discouraging wine producers from value adding in Australia. The wine industry must be assured that it can develop its products and practices that enhance the industry with the full support of the Government.

The major impediment to maximising the current wine industry expansion is the refusal of the Federal Government to come out and respond to the Federal wine and grape industry inquiry and, in particular, immediately to quash any likelihood of any increase in wine tax. Already the recent increases imposed by the Federal Government have had a negative effect on this growth.

It is also being appreciated more and more that to identify problems, manage resources, restructure practices, facilitate development and grasp opportunities there needs to be a regional focus. I put on record that the Riverland Development Corporation is helping to facilitate this development and is establishing a high profile through its support of local businesses and organisations. The State Government, through the Economic Development Authority and its business development agency, is making an annual contribution of \$150 000 towards the Riverland Development Corporation. This is part of a five-year resource agreement with the five local councils, and it continues to provide cooperation between State Government and regional economic development organisations through a flexible structure. The process continues to be a model for that economic growth.

I refer now to the importance of the Murray River and to the recent activities as referred to in Her Excellency the Governor's address. By way of background, I state that a recent international study made an assessment of national wealth by examining the available resource base contributing to economic activity in this country.

Australia, with its land, minerals, resources, people and industrial capital, was ranked number one in the world. For some time we have seen Australia's standard of living ranking slipping compared with that of other nations. It is a timely reminder to us that we are indeed fortunate where we live. However, we are all too well aware that the misuse of resources, the failure of policies and inefficient practices can cause the community to lose confidence in future prosperity, to see opportunities elsewhere and to see economic gloom in the local area.

This State Government is very actively seeking to counter this perception of inferiority. 'South Australia: Going all the Way' brought headlines and the Premier's recent overseas visit to the United States and Japan, and also the recent APAC conference in Adelaide, gave this State the opportunity to present the alternative image. I want to highlight that in terms of our priorities with respect to protecting and enhancing our resources.

I refer now specifically to the issue of the Murray River. I understand that the State Government's water plan will be released very soon, setting forth the Government's more detailed options and strategies to make this plan happen.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass):** Order! I ask the member for Chaffey to resume his seat. The clock has been showing nine minutes left for some three or four minutes, so I will put up three minutes and ask him to wind up.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, you said it had been on nine minutes for four

minutes. Taking four from nine, I suggest that the member for Chaffey be given five minutes to complete this fantastic speech.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I understand, Minister: five minutes.

**Mr CONDOUS:** Mr Acting Speaker, it is not the fault of the member for Chaffey that the clock has broken down.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The member for Colton will resume his seat. I have already ruled that the honourable member has five minutes to complete his speech.

**Mr ANDREW:** I thank the member for Adelaide for his tolerance, understanding and support in this endeavour. I was referring to the significance to this State of the Murray River and its water. In doing so, I continue by referring to the Premier's announcement this week regarding the further fostering of the Murray River clean-up initiative in which he indicated that this State, through his announcement, would continue to lead the national campaign for that clean-up.

Naturally, South Australia has the most to lose with respect to the future of its water resources, but the Premier's success in winning interstate support through the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria is a great achievement that needs to be recognised and congratulated. The Premier's announcement included the need for requiring a national expenditure of approximately \$300 million over five years with a contribution of \$150 million from the Federal Government. The South Australian State Cabinet, as the Premier indicated, has approved in principle approximately \$35 million over five years on the proviso that other State and Federal support is forthcoming.

One option is a levy on all Murray River water users to finance South Australia's contribution. In conjunction with the current consultation that is going on with respect to plans for the establishment of the Murray River Catchment Management Board later next year—and I understand that a steering committee is currently working through the options in this regard—this recent announcement is very timely and appropriate, and it is being very effective in raising public awareness on Murray River issues.

I personally believe there is general acceptance and understanding by all in the community and by all Murray River water users, whether they live in the city or use Murray River water on Yorke Peninsula or the West Coast, and whether it involves industrial or domestic use, that we all need to contribute to the future sustainability of the Murray River system. It will really come down to what is the fairest and most appropriate mechanism to achieve this contribution, and how much that contribution should be. Nobody wants to pay more money for anything, but we must use this initiative to invest in our future.

I also put on record that, from an irrigation perspective, both New South Wales and Victoria do in some form contribute a resource factor to part of the water charges in terms of what they pay, and South Australia, at least from the irrigation perspective, does not do this. Even though we, as South Australian irrigators, can argue and prove that we are the most efficient irrigators of those in all three States, we cannot hope to negotiate successfully and argue for interstate water transfers without having an equal footing with which to start.

I refer briefly to another area in terms of value and contribution from the Government's initiatives to my electorate over the recent parliamentary recess—and this is detailed and exemplified in the Governor's speech—that is, Kickstart for Youth by DETAFE. That has made a real

impact on employment opportunities in the Riverland, one of 14 centres to be included in this program. It is having a real and effective impact on bringing about employment and training of the unemployed. Through the program 41 trainees recently have been offered full-time employment through Almond Co., the Renmark factory, and a further 52 and 39 quality controllers and citrus packers have been snapped up in employment opportunities.

In the past month there has been restructuring in the Department of Primary Industries to deliver more effective services in my region. The effect of the changes in the horticultural group will see the addition of two manager industry development positions instead of that of general manager, and the key evidence of PISA's intention to improve its performance in the Riverland will be the appointment of a manager for industry development, grape and citrus, and two supporting consultants to this role. This will focus more effort on industry development, planning and service delivery in the Riverland, and I am confident that, with the rigorous selection process that is under way now, with team support and with strengthened support from local industries, services will continue to improve from the PISA area.

I have not had time to reflect on proposed changes in local government, which I will do when the Bill comes before Parliament. Undoubtedly, this State and my electorate are continuing to develop under the determined program and strategy of this Liberal Government. Although it is very easy for those opposite or those dissenters in the community to criticise and complain, they do not have to be responsible for and deliver Government policy. The vast majority of South Australians are supporting the economic development of this Government in this State.

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

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** Tonight I would like to comment regarding my constituents in the electorate of Mawson and put on record how much I appreciate the support they have given me over the past 12 months. It is getting busier and busier in my electorate, with a lot more work and involvement as we work through issues that are starting to develop in Mawson. As I have said to many of my constituents, frankly, I do not care whether they are Liberal, Labor, a Democrat or indifferent: the fact is that I am there to represent the whole lot of them. I take the politics out of it and work as their elected representative. It is important that we work together and represent all political beliefs. Obviously, I trust that I will get a minimum of 51 per cent of the vote each time so that I will be able to continue the work I have planned to make sure that we have a better future in Mawson and also in the south.

I want to talk about the capital works projects occurring in Mawson, and over the next 12 months we will see a lot of activity. I draw on issues such as the visitors centre at McLaren Vale. We all know that that is an absolutely focal point for tourism development and subsequent job opportunities for the whole of the Mawson electorate—something which we have been working on for some time and which I am proud to say will be called to tender in the next few weeks, thanks to the support for this project of the Minister, Graham Ingerson. We will start to see building work prior to Christmas.

The next stage of Panalatinga Road, from Bains Road to Wheatsheaf Road, will commence in the next few weeks.



That will complete a magnificent four-lane highway which will cost the taxpayers about \$24 million and which will have significant benefits for all those members of my electorate who live in the new developments of Woodcroft and Huntingdale in the Onkaparinga Hills.

The Harris Scarfe store is now an absolute reality, and I am delighted to say that recently I have noticed all the framework going up, and the tavern that was also part of the extension of Woodcroft is now open. I wish the owners every success. Harris Scarfe and the tavern involve a \$6 million project. I am delighted to say that 57 full-time equivalent jobs have already been created at the tavern and that in excess of 100 other new jobs will be created at Harris Scarfe in the Woodcroft shopping centre before the end of this year. Interestingly enough, and contrary to what people such as the member for Giles say (and I will deal with that later in my address), it is great to see the expansion and new confidence that is shown in the business sector in the electorate of Mawson.

As recently as last week, two constituents with whom I was in contact gave support through the State Government. One of those constituents is now exporting speaker systems not only through South Australia but also through China and is looking to spend an enormous amount of money on a major expansion of his business at Hackham. The other case is Aldinga Turkeys at McLaren Flat, and that is a major success story. That firm is the major exporter of processed turkey meat throughout the whole of Australia and, if it is successful in getting its stage 3 plans through, it will not be long before we see it doubling its work force and exporting its product throughout Asia. Currently that product is being sourced through America, and it shows what opportunities can be developed if the Government of this State and the business sector work together to create the right environment for expansion.

I was pleased to see what the Noarlunga city council is doing. We know that building approvals are down. I am not happy about that and neither is any member of the State Government, but frankly much of that has to do with the Federal Government and the lack of business planning for Australia. People see themselves as vulnerable with respect to the stability of interest rates, and I will also deal with that later in my address in regard to the Auditor-General's Report. It is interesting that the Noarlunga city council recently indicated that it has had one of the most active periods of building applications for commercial and industrial development in the Lonsdale industrial region of the City of Noarlunga for many a long day. In fact, it may be a precedent that more applications are being made and more building work is going on than ever before. Clearly, that indicates confidence in the Brown Government and the confidence that the business sector has in South Australia.

I am pleased to say that Hydro-Plan was recently appointed as the successful consultant on the feasibility study for the Willunga basin recycled water project, on which I have been working with the Premier for 18 months. I know how important that is to the south. Every part of my electorate, from the farthest part of Reynella to the southern part towards Willunga, will benefit if we can get this feasibility study to come up positive. We will then call for expressions of interest for development of this project, which will see another 1 600 hectares of horticulture and viticulture developed in the basin. The Southern Expressway, one of the major capital works projects for our Government in its first term in office, is now an absolute reality. Core drilling is well on the way, prelimi-

nary survey work is almost completed and before Christmas we will see the definite start of that construction.

I have also been interested to look at many social issues in the best interests of my electorate, including an endeavour to lift the amenity of the locality. That is where I have been pleased to work with other members of the Government to make sure that we start to address the devastating results of many years of neglect, with the emphasis on making sure that we do something about graffiti. The Off The Wall project, which the Attorney-General and Minister for Youth Affairs launched only last week, is a very positive step. There is still a lot more to be done, but I assure my electorate that I will do everything I can to make sure that we address issues such as graffiti, lift the amenity of the locality and make sure that no longer do we see house prices held back by several thousand dollars due to the frankly criminal activity of just a very small part of the electorate.

Most importantly of all, I also point out that, when we look at the budget with respect to commitments to the south, it is absolutely clear that the south is now finally recognised. It is even more important to have on record that we will continue to have representation from the highest level, where we have the Premier as one of the members of the southern seats, through to the rest of us in the south, to make sure that the south continues to get a fair go.

I want to talk about some of the work going on in education because, unfortunately, far too often we see only the negatives coming out in the paper. The pre-school centre that many of my constituents in Woodcroft have been waiting for, the Woodcroft Heights Centre, is now well under construction and will open and will offer a magnificent opportunity for our young people for pre-schooling from term one next year. I have been fortunate in seeing the amount of minor works and back to school grants funding that the Minister for Education has provided to Mawson schools over the past 12 months, although that does not mean that we are doing well enough on that yet. There is an enormous backlog of maintenance required there and I will continue to make representation on behalf of schools to ensure that Mawson gets at least its fair share of resources.

Some of the positive initiatives we are now seeing involve money that has been put forward for national statements and profiles, where thousands of dollars have been put back to schools to allow them some autonomy and flexibility in how they develop their statements and profiles. It allows some temporary replacement teacher time for teachers to do personal development and training with respect to this newly implemented policy. I would like to thank the staff, students and parents of my schools, because it has not necessarily been easy in the past 12 months. There have been some cuts made in education. Obviously, no Government wants to make cuts if they can be avoided but it is no good educating children for a future that is not in South Australia. We are not in the business of educating young people to see them literally leaving the State or country to try to find job opportunities and there has to be some balance in the equation.

We have to get a sustainable future for our young people and all South Australians. Even taking that into account, it is important to put on record that South Australia will still spend more per capita than any other State in Australia. It is not about pulling us back to an average. We still want to remain, and we intend to remain, an area of excellence in education in South Australia's profile, but people have to recognise that we have to get our basic house in order. Would it not be great in that regard if the Federal Government, and

particularly Paul Keating and Carmen Lawrence, started to make some real decisions about health care. It has been highlighted again in today's paper, as it was only last week—and wherever we go we hear more and more people saying it—that we have a major problem with health because the Federal Government is not prepared to do anything about getting people back into private health cover.

How can our Minister for Health be expected to continue to put more and more money into health when the Federal Government is doing everything except creating an incentive for people to get into the private health sector? I understand that the South Australian system had to do about 15 000 operations over the past 16 months simply to accommodate people who had dropped out of the private health system. Frankly, that is just not good enough. We should be aware that, despite the lack of support by Carmen Lawrence and Paul Keating, the South Australian health system is still the best in Australia. If members do not believe that, they can look at the latest true Flinders Medical Centre report that comes out in its own publication and not the propaganda we see in media, electronic and print. It shows the centre receiving national awards recently for excellence in health care over the past 12 months.

Members should look at the \$6 million now being put in by our Minister for Health (Dr Michael Armitage) to Flinders Medical Centre to give it state of the art casualty support, to give it a helipad to ensure that people can get to casualty, since it is an acute care hospital, as quickly as possible, and for once to give southern young people the opportunity of having an emergency section where they will be fully separate and looked after without having to be thrown into the middle of an adult ward. They are the sorts of good things going on day by day in health in the south in South Australia, yet we never read any of that. Why is that the Royal Adelaide Hospital can make a \$250 000 profit in the past 12 months yet Queen Elizabeth Hospital cannot, yet it is basically on a comparable budget line?

The fact is that it gets back to management. Instead of jumping on the front page of the paper, representatives from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital ought to have a damn good look at what is happening in the Royal Adelaide Hospital and assess the situation by getting out there and being proactive. If they want to get on the front page of the paper they ought to do something positive like telling Paul Keating and Carmen Lawrence to lift their game and help health services throughout Australia.

I now refer to the police because many members know that I strongly support what the police have done. I have been out on patrol with police officers from Christies Beach and understand that they have to put up with some pretty difficult situations. That is why the Government has supported a salary increase for the police even though we have had to take into account the very difficult area of balancing the budget. The police have been offered \$45 a week. When I talk to police officers in my electorate (in fact, I spoke to a police officer today) they say, 'Robert, this is not only about a rise in wages: it is about getting a new structure in the Police Force and about getting the force to head into the twenty-first century.' It is about allowing the rank and file to be involved in some form of continuous improvement program or a TQM (top quality management program) similar to the private sector so that the rank and file may once and for all have some input into the direction of the force. They were telling me that before I was elected, and they are still saying it.

On a positive note, a \$10 million state-of-the-art regional police station will be built at Darlington. It will be of absolute benefit to the whole of the police in relation to the law and order requirements in the south. That, tied in with the Aldinga police station and the extra detectives brought down last year, will make it even safer to live in the south. Of course, from the latest statistics we all know that Noarlunga is one of the safest council areas in which to live.

I do not like the fact that judges and, frankly, other high ranking people have been awarded some of these salary increases. It is interesting that a lot of these commissions that award these increases have been set up by the Federal Government. The Federal Government actually just approved a massive pay rise again to Federal senior public servants. Because this filters down through the States it makes it pretty difficult for us to defend the situation. We are well aware that we have to show leadership, and we will continue to fight for a fair go for all people be they blue collar workers, white collar workers, etc.

I now refer to information technology. The Premier has said a lot about this in the paper. It is a bright light. It is not a pipe dream: it is a fact. I have also been to Austin in Texas and have seen the turnaround there. I have also seen the turnaround in other parts of America and Canada. The Premier is right in what he is doing. It is important that we continue to support him, acknowledge those benefits and encourage companies to set up in South Australia which will become the IT capital of Asia.

Horticulture and the wine industry are doing very well in the electorate of Mawson. When that is tied in with tourism you will note that they are still the very best opportunities we have, which is why the Government continues to spend so much money and make such an effort in those areas. I make no apology to anyone in my electorate for the fact that I continue to push those areas. Right across the board, those areas will give the young and not so young in the south the best chance of gaining employment.

Many members touched on the environment, which I will talk about more in another debate. Those people who are interested in the environment ought to have a very close look at what the Brown Government is doing. I heard the other day that as soon as we announced the strategy for water improvement of the Murray River, which we all know is vital to the sustainability of South Australia, the Leader of the Opposition, Mike Rann, came out with his typical blurb, without even thinking about it for a moment, saying he would oppose it. That is fairly typical of the Opposition.

I also put on the record that that is about how much the Opposition really cares about the environment, notwithstanding the fact that if we look after the environment and clean up the river we will create a lot of jobs for South Australians. You never hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition talking for one minute about that. I ask the environmental groups in this State to think seriously about the real commitments to the environment. Those commitments are Brown Government commitments. Frankly, the Labor Party has no genuine commitment to the environment.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** It is interesting to note that the member for Torrens has now jumped back into her seat to comment because I have hit a raw nerve. Every time you hit a raw nerve when you speak the truth in this place, members opposite try to interject. The honourable member may interject, but the fact is that we care about the environment and the Labor Party has neglected it.

Let us now look at the Auditor-General's Report for a moment, and let us talk about what most of that report is about. Most of that report is about acknowledging the fact that we have to get back to basics and create an economically sustainable future. The report clearly gave a tick to the fact that we have come in \$35 million under budget in the financial year just ended and have not blown out the budget by \$150 million a year as members opposite did when they were in Government.

The then Treasurer (the member for Giles) did not even bother to tell then Premier Arnold that there was a \$100 million hole in the budget, because he did not think it was important. Until tonight, he and his Party have done nothing to support the police arguments in this House. The Minister for Emergency Services was asked no questions on this issue. So, members opposite should not pretend that they are looking after the police. We are doing so, and we will work through those difficult issues with them and continue to support them in the context of the holistic approach that we must take towards this State's recovery.

Let us also look at the \$1.7 billion worth of core debt that we will have reduced in South Australia by the end of this financial year. These are the sorts of things that the Auditor-General has acknowledged in his report as being important in this current budget, but we do not hear the Opposition or the media talking about that.

In 1993 the Auditor-General stated that short-term interest rates were subject to greater volatility which could cause budgetary problems for highly indebted borrowers. I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, where in Australia or, indeed, elsewhere in the world, including Mexico (when you consider the western industrialised world), would there be greater indebtedness on borrowings than there is in South Australia? And we know who caused it. It went from \$2.2 billion worth of sustainable debt in 1982 to about \$9 billion by 1993. In a situation such as that, just as in one's own household, care must be taken to lock into and budget the situation in order to avoid the volatility and the whims of the Paul Keatings of this world who do not have a blueprint for Australia, who could not care less about our long-term future, who spend beyond their means every day of the year, who tell a lot of lies that they say are law, who do not do anything constructive about our sustainable future, and who have scared the hell out of Australians when it comes to interest rates.

I back this Government, which has a sustainable debt recovery program and plan. It has started to reduce the recurrent budget deficit that has been ballooning out year in and year out. It knows what it is about, and it has locked in money in the way in which the Audit Commission recommended, the way in which the Cliff Walsh's of this world—sometimes known as the economic masochists—have said, namely, that we must get our house in order. We have heeded all those reports, and we have got on with the job. In conclusion on this point, I refer to the Auditor-General's comment that it is 'important to emphasise that the following is indicative of the possibilities and that it would be wrong to imply that this is presented as a criticism'. Why does the Opposition not tell the truth about that?

I would like now to touch on the Labor Party. What a joke is the Labor Party in South Australia. It is not even an Opposition. The member for Giles said only yesterday in the Upper House that he is finished with the House. He is taking home the same material as he was taking home the day before. He wants to get out, but they will not let him go, because they know the electorate of Giles will be rolled if the

ability of Frank Blevins is removed from that seat. Mike Rann has been running around the world spending our money, making out that he is Paul Keating—I think he was in a dream—going to France and saying that he will fix the nuclear mess, that he will fix things in Macedonia, and so on. He is a miracle worker! But what has he really done? He cannot even lead the Labor Party in Opposition.

The sooner the Labor Party recognises John Quirke, the member for Playford, who has a few brains, who has a heart for South Australia, and who has the ability to realise that now and again he must be bipartisan on crucial issues, the better Labor's chances. Mike Rann is not at all committed to South Australia. The member for Playford is the sort of person I believe people should look to as Leader of the Labor Party. He is not negative like his Leader; he does care about the future of South Australia.

Of course, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had a field day when the Leader of the Opposition was away. Following every positive piece of news that was announced, such as the 24 700 jobs we created in this State in just 18 months, the Westpac investments, and all the other positive announcements, Ralph Clarke responded with the standard negative Labor line, 'Oh yeah, but they are doing better interstate', or 'We are not doing well enough.'

When it comes to other key initiatives we need to introduce in this State, the Labor Party continues to oppose. Mr Deputy Speaker, the Labor Party is doing us a real favour out in the electorate, because the longer it continues to be negative, to carp and pull this State down and not show a genuine concern about getting us going again, the longer we will be in Government. I have said it before—and it is being reinforced to me day by day in my electorate: bearing in mind what Paul Keating has not done for the electorate of Mawson, I have to thank him for enhancing our electoral chances at the next election. However, he has caused a great deal of difficulty with respect to the very good economic development opportunities we have been trying to get going. We know what was going so well in the south—Mitsubishi Australia—but what did Paul Keating do? He increased the sales tax on motor vehicles by an average of \$1 300 to \$1 500 a car. What does that do for the massive youth unemployment we have in the south, for which the Federal Government is totally responsible?

We are doing our bit. We are restructuring and re-forming; we are getting on with the Hilmer report; we are doing things to set the basic foundation for South Australia, and Paul Keating is doing nothing for the young people in my electorate. As to the creation of jobs in the wine industry, I must point out that a very big question mark is now hanging over the heads of some people who were thinking about investing in that industry, because Paul Keating has already increased sales tax in that area.

I condemn him for that in the strongest possible terms and for the fact that he has not even had the guts to comment on the Scales report—a report that he manipulated. Both the major and the minor recommendations in that report will be absolutely devastating and make it very difficult for the wine industry to operate. Do members know what Paul Keating is doing now? He is going to sit on that report until after the next Federal election and if, heaven forbid, he happens to be re-elected and given the opportunity to totally destroy this country, I believe he will double the wine sales tax in Australia. I believe he will recommend and accept the minority recommendations of Bill Scales, which will throw another knife into the wine industry in South Australia.

In conclusion, it is now clear that South Australians have come out of the operating room. We are in the recovery room, where we will have to stay for a while yet. Certainly, our Government will not be perfect, but we are not far away from being the best Government, and in due course it may well be proven that we are the best. However, we need people to support us. We will take the vitamin pills and then see the health and prosperity towards which everyone on this side of the House in the Brown Government are committed to working, no matter what flak we have to take along the way, because we know what we have to do to support South Australia.

**Mr CONDOUS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health):** I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna):** Recently, some members of the Government met with John Dickie to discuss issues with respect to classification of—

**Mr Atkinson:** You met John Dickie: you did not meet with him.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** You have not learnt anything over the break, have you?

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Kaurna has the floor.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** We met with John Dickie to discuss issues regarding the classification of publication material. I raise the issue tonight because a number of members have received complaints from their electors with regard to the classification of some magazines that are currently on display in newsagents and service stations. One magazine, which is called *Picture*, has been of particular concern. Several letters about that magazine have been written to my office suggesting that it is inappropriate that it be displayed as an unrestricted magazine on newsagents' stands and at service stations. I have raised the issue with the Attorney-General and, for the purpose of this grievance debate, I will put his reply on the record.

Several of the letters that have come to my office indicated that Mr Gordon Bilney, who is the member for Kingston, has been contacted. Mr Bilney's response to those letters has been to refer the issue to the State member of Parliament, although the Office of Film and Literature Classification is a Commonwealth agency. The letter that I received in response to my contact with the Attorney-General's office reads as follows:

Dear Lorraine, I refer to your correspondence of 9 September 1995 following a letter from [a constituent] being referred to you from Mr Gordon Bilney, MP. [The constituent's] concerns relate to pornographic magazines. I appreciate and understand [your constituent's] concerns. I am aware that the South Australian Classification of Publications Board has previously considered and will continue to monitor the contents of publications such as those mentioned by [the constituent].

The classifications of films, videos and publications is performed by the Commonwealth Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) on behalf of South Australia. The OFLC also classifies material on behalf of the other States and Territories, thus ensuring uniformity of classification. At present, there is a voluntary classification scheme in place for publications. Under the present scheme, a publication may be classified 'unrestricted' (available to be sold and displayed without restriction), 'Category 1' (must be sold

to over 18-year-olds and displayed in a sealed plastic cover with an opaque cover), and 'Category 2' (must be sold and displayed in an area to which entry is restricted to over 18-year-olds).

A new, partially compulsory classification system for publications is to replace the existing voluntary scheme. Publications which straddle the Category 1 restricted classification, which is the lowest classification for restricted publications, and the upper end of the unrestricted category will be required to be submitted for classification, as will also those publications that would attract a higher classification. The new scheme will enable the OFLC to call in such a publication for classification. As you may be aware, the South Australian Classification of Publications Board (the board) also considers matters for classification and acts essentially as a board of review. The board has the ability to overturn the classification of the OFLC for South Australia. The board considers matters according to established guidelines but must achieve a responsible balance between the two principles that adults are entitled to read what they wish and that members of the community are entitled to protection (this principle extends to adult persons and also to those in their care) from material that they may find offensive.

The magazines *World*, *Picture* and *People with Pix* are classified as unrestricted under the Classification of Publications Act. Accordingly, there are no restrictions on their sale.

South Australia accepts the classifications given by the Office of Film and Literature Classification Board which is a Federal authority based in Sydney. The South Australian Classification of Publications Board would consider complaints about the classification of any publication submitted to it. The board has the power to alter or impose classifications.

[Your constituent] may wish to write to the Registrar of the Board. . .

The reason I have taken the time to read that letter into *Hansard* is in response to my constituents, and accepting what Dr Pfitzner, in the other place, moved during the time of the previous Government to instigate plastic, opaque covers on category one material. However, at that time the magazines called *Picture* and *People* were investigated by the board and were considered to be of an unrestricted category.

In particular, a recent magazine, *Picture Magazine*, was brought to my office by a gentleman in my electorate. He apologised and said, 'It is so offensive and demeaning to women, I ask whether you have a male member of staff who may wish to examine this article instead of it being viewed by you.' It is very important to take on board the types of demeaning photographs that are seen within those magazines. I raise that issue because that magazine is within an unrestricted category. It is for sale on newsagents' shelves next to surfing and motorbike magazines. Having a son of 12 years of age who is motorbike and surf mad, I am aware that he spends quite a lot of his time viewing magazines such as this as easily as he does magazines about motorbikes and surfing. Is it appropriate that this type of classification is in place for those types of magazines? Secondly, I object to them being readily available to young children and openly accessible.

First, I ask that those members of the community who have contacted me go one step further and contact Gordon Bilney, the member for Kingston, and remind him that the classification is a Commonwealth issue and ask him to do something for the salary he receives, that is, do some work with the classification board. Secondly, I ask constituents to write to the South Australian board requesting it to do what it can to put in place a review of the classification that is put in place by the Commonwealth board.

**Mr LEWIS (Ridley):** John Howard wants new arrangements; John Howard will throw out Keating; under John Howard we will be better off; John Howard will bring Australia back from the brink. That is part of a full page advertisement—of course with poetic licence permitted to me—occurring in today's *Advertiser* on page 18. I thought

one of the first lessons in politics was that you never mention your Opposition. This one is authorised by the Labor Party. I cannot believe my luck. I do not know what must be pushing the Labor Party, unless it is the fear that it will lose the next election and that week by week, as time goes by, it finds itself further and further away from the main stream of the Australian community.

Why else would they bother to attack the Leader of their political opponents? Why else would they be spending so much money at this point? I believe it will probably be in vain. I doubt whether they will claw back anything by approaching their fear of the consequences that they now face with this sort of campaign. Anyway, why would anyone want to write to Barry Jones to get information about what John Howard and the rest of the Coalition in Canberra think? I do not think that the average Australian will take much notice of this, other than to recognise the fear which there now is in the ALP of a massive wipe out. They will certainly not be shoring up much support in South Australia. They would probably do better to conserve their resources here and try to hang on to what they think they have in the Eastern States. Notwithstanding that, I welcome it because I am a Howard supporter, belonging to that side of politics that you and I do, Sir. So much for what I regard as political ineptitude.

I will further illustrate the point in the local scene, referred to by the member for Mawson in his remarks in the Address in Reply debate. I refer to the reaction of the Leader of the Opposition upon hearing a very positive and definite statement from the Premier showing leadership and courage in common terms—in the vernacular, showing guts—to deal with the problems we confront in the Murray Valley, a lot of which come from interstate. However, we must recognise the problems here with which we must deal to illustrate our good faith to our upstream neighbours that they, too, have some responsibility in this matter.

We need some 'mend the Murray' money. The Premier said that, if we are to mend the Murray, we have to look at ways to get the money, to make it a dedicated fund and to put it to work in the place and for the purpose for which it is raised. We must make it new money, not a substitute for money coming from other sources. That is the only way to address this problem with credibility. Therefore, we need to back the Premier's call for the collection of some 'mend the Murray' money. His suggestion was that we ought to look at a cent or so per kilolitre, which, when multiplied by the 700 000 megalitres of water that we divert for potable water purposes for our households as well as for industrial purposes and for irrigation, would provide us with about \$7 million a year.

Clearly, we cannot expect irrigators up front to start paying all that money straight away. However, they need to get used to the notion that it is the only way that we shall be able to sustain our use of the Murray Mallee and its associated irrigation enterprises and, furthermore, continue to provide ourselves with a reliable source of potable water especially as in some years, 90 per cent of our water comes from the Murray River. Therefore, we need to fix it.

For the Premier to have taken that courageous step of putting a stake in the ground so that everybody knows where we are coming from, deserves commendation and not the kind of kneejerk reaction of the Leader of the Opposition in opposing it. He is way out of step. All the comments that I have heard are that this must be done. Yet, instead of the Leader agreeing that we must do it and ensure that we get the Eastern States to put in a *quid pro quo* for their part, he said

the Premier was raising a new tax or something. The Leader of the Opposition further pointed out that, in his opinion, South Australians would reject it. If my sniff of the wind is in any way accurate—and it usually is—the Leader of the Opposition is way off beam and his colleagues might do well to consider his incumbency in that role.

**Mr Atkinson:** Got any ideas?

**Mr LEWIS:** Yes. In fact, the honourable member could probably do a better job; at least he has a reputation of not being a fabricator.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** I would say that virtually any one on that side of the outfit could do a better job. The public, in my judgment, would immediately begin to give them more favourable support now, and, be more likely to support them come election time.

It is not only people like myself who recognise the necessity to clean up the river to ensure that it is there forever, and at a price less than the cost currently paid for the same sort of purpose in our neighbouring State of Victoria, where they are paying about 1.8¢ a litre for this work to be undertaken, but there are other people. They are the indigenous people.

I compliment one of those people, who has been quite outstanding in his leadership over the years. Mr Henry Rankine has won a Churchill Scholarship to travel to North America to talk to indigenous people. He has been a prominent leader of the Point McLeay Community Council, or Raukn as it is known, as a Ngarrindjeri, and he has been awarded this Churchill Scholarship to study the way in which indigenous people have been able to find their niche in society in the American scene, to get first hand the pluses and minuses of approaching it in the same way they have, then come back here, better informed and able to share that information with other people—not only Ngarrindjeri but also other indigenous Australians, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. We should all applaud and support him.

I will go on from there and talk about another aspect of the river. Prior to our establishment of catchments, storages and the introduction of locks along the many channels of the Murray in the Murray-Darling Basin, we used to have a river system that would have an enormous variation in its flow to the point where, very often, there would be no flow. Of course, at other times it had a flow more than 160 times the normal amount down the valley if there were heavy snowfalls followed by snow melting at the same time as there were heavy falls of rain right across the catchments in spring, at the commencement of the monsoon season, starting early in the Darling Downs, as well as at the conclusion of the winter incidence of rainfall across the southern part of the Darling and Murray catchments, coinciding with south east trade winds bringing water from the Tasman Sea into the western watershed of the Great Australian Divide. That does not happen often, but when it does we get one hell of a flood, such as 1956.

At the estuary there were ephemeral lakes, and the main channel used to wander across the reed infested mud flats in no particular place at all. The lakes were not permanent as they are now in the land forms that exist there. They have been made permanent and appear very different as a result of the erection of the barrages which results in a static pond level in those lakes, along with the dredging of the main channel against the Goolwa shoreline for navigation purposes. People need to bear that in mind when they consider the implications of the statements that have been made about

that particular topography as it relates to the so-called secret women's business which has become the impediment for the construction of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope the honourable member is not raising matters that are currently before the royal

commission. The honourable member's time has expired.

Motion carried.

At 10.20 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 28 September at 10.30 a.m.