

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 25 March 1998

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

URBAN BUSHLAND

A petition signed by 24 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to pass legislation for the protection of urban and bushland trees was presented by Mr Hill.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 61 and 68.

PLAYFORD POWER STATION

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: Optima Energy's Playford Power Station at Port Augusta was commissioned in the early 1960s with a capacity of 240 megawatts in four generating units. Since 1990 the power station has primarily had a peaking role on stand-by for high load days, and its current capacity is 180 megawatts, with three of the four units operating. Over the past winter Optima Energy spent \$700 000 to bring one unit that had been out of operation back to operational status. This provided an additional 60 megawatts to meet the high demand for electricity in South Australia during this last summer.

Depending on the level of output, approximately 12 to 15 employees based at the adjacent Northern Power Station operate Playford during times of peak load, which occur approximately 15 days each year. The power station has a licence, issued by the Environment Protection Authority under the Environment Protection Act, to operate until 31 August in the year 2000. It meets the licence conditions, which include some exemptions in relation to particulate emissions.

While Playford Power Station has mechanisms to minimise these dust emissions, the age of the power station means that these do not meet the best modern practice which could be expected and indeed would be expected for newer plant. Recognising this situation, the EPA has granted a licence which provides limited term exemptions. To meet legislative requirements beyond the year 2000, action would need to be taken to reduce particulate emissions, otherwise the power station would need to close.

Optima's board has endorsed a business plan which envisages that Playford B will close. As part of the State's overall capacity options, further short term extensions to Playford's operating life may be considered by the board on business grounds.

When the station is closed there will be little or no impact on employment in the region, because of a multi-skilling initiative which has been under way for several years. A small team of employees operates and maintains Playford Power Station during times of peak load, and if Playford B is closed the team will no longer be called upon to perform special duties at Playford; most of them will continue normal duties at the Northern Power Station. The Government is committed to providing South Australians with power which is secure, affordable and environmentally responsible; and the stance of the Opposition and the Democrats apparently opposes these values.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: On 17 February 1998, the Premier announced a number of initiatives regarding investigation into the potential sale of Government assets. Those investigations, or scoping reviews, are performed primarily to identify the financial and commercial risks to Government of ownership and operation of the businesses concerned and to identify the best means of maximising the value of those assets to the Government. This may include sale if the financial and commercial benefits outweigh the risks of continued ownership. To assist in the reviews the Government has sought the aid of expert consultants. Over 50 consultancy proposals were received in response to a national call inviting expressions of interest to assist in the reviews of Ports Corp, Lotteries and the TAB.

Final selections were made following short listing and interview processes. Consistent selection criteria were employed in the selection process, with emphasis placed on the extent of direct experience in the restructure and reform of similar industries elsewhere in Australia. This process has resulted in the appointment of lead advisers in the scoping process, as follows:

- Bankers Trust Investment Bank for the Lotteries Commission of South Australia.
- SBC Warburg Dillon Reid together with Fay Richwhite for Ports Corporation.
- Macquarie Corporate Finance for the SA Totalizator Agency Board.

The Office for Government Enterprises will manage each of the scoping studies with the support of the consultants. Where practicable, representatives of the Government businesses will be seconded to the review teams. The Government will ensure that key stakeholders are consulted during the scoping studies. The scoping reviews will be undertaken in a time frame to allow the financial implications to be factored into the State budget. In a competitive market environment, where ongoing business investment and expansion is required to maintain market share and to manage market and operating risks, the Government must view its various business enterprises against the background of the level of debt the community can afford to support, the range of business risks that the taxpayer can afford to bear and the

need to direct scarce resources to improving the level and standard of core Government services.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I bring up the annual report of the committee for the year ended 30 June 1997 and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr CONDOUS: I bring up the eighth report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: Before calling on questions, I advise that any questions directed to the Minister for Youth will be taken by the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the importance to South Australia of the Premier's relationship with the Prime Minister, has the Premier spoken today with Mr Howard about his comments yesterday to the Coalition Party Room in Canberra that the South Australian Premier and the former Premier were persisting in a 'war that was hurting the Party', and does the Premier categorically reject Mr Howard's accusation that the former Premier is seeking to undermine his leadership?

It was reported before and during the State election last year that the Premier had a special relationship with the Prime Minister which gave South Australia clout with the Howard Federal Government for projects and in Federal/State financial arrangements. Yesterday, the Prime Minister told the Coalition Party room that there was 'no good reason' to dump the former Premier. It is reported that Mr Howard accused both the former Premier and the present Premier of persisting in a war which was hurting the Party. The Prime Minister is reported as saying that this war continues unabated and that he thought less of both of them because of it. Is Dean Brown loyal or disloyal to the Premier?

The SPEAKER: The last part of the member's question is comment.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The only war we are engaged in is with the Commonwealth Government over health funding. We will consistently take up the case for the health services of South Australia and the next Medicare agreement for the next five years to lock in a deal that meets the requirements of South Australians for the provision of their health services. We are as one in the way in which we are approaching this with the Commonwealth Government. I detailed to the House yesterday clearly, specifically and concisely the reasons why the offer on the table from the Commonwealth needs to be rejected. The Prime Minister can give me a wack if he likes, but it will not divert us from the issue, that is, health funding for South Australians in the next quarter.

Had the former Labor Government taken on the Keating Labor Government and put in place a Medicare agreement that contained provisions for compensation as people dropped out of private health insurance, we would not be having a

debate with the Commonwealth for the next Medicare agreement, because the funding base would be locked in. The funding base would not have been eroded. As I indicated to the House yesterday, the funding base under the Keating agreement, signed by the former Labor Administration in South Australia, effectively with other States of Australia, has been eroded by \$622.5 million.

The Commonwealth Government and the Prime Minister can say for as long as they want that they are applying a real term increase in health funding in their offer to the States, but that is totally irrelevant if you collapse the base upon which the percentage is placed. They can adopt a scrooge mentality in Canberra if they want, and the Prime Minister can put on the public agenda any other distraction he chooses, but it will not distract us from what we want to get—a decent deal for health funding for South Australians.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. On the question of relevance, I asked the Premier whether he rejected Mr Howard's accusation that the former Premier is seeking to undermine his leadership. It is interesting that he will not say 'Yes' or 'No'.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader will resume his seat and, in future, will not shout over the Chair.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Will the Premier advise the House of discussions he has had with the successful bidder for the Adelaide and Parafield airports? Last Friday, the Federal Government announced that the Macquarie Bank consortium had secured a 50 year lease with an option for a further 49 years at a cost of some \$362 million.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling on the Premier, I remind the member for Ross Smith of the Standing Order that requires members to remain silent while questions are asked.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I appreciate the question from the honourable member, because it is an important question based on new infrastructure to be put in place in South Australia to take us into the next millennium. I would seriously advise the Leader and the Deputy Leader to get better research assistants, because the suggestions and imputations they incorporated into the Deputy Leader's question yesterday were fundamentally wrong. If she does not understand the substance of the matter, I ask her to at least do a bit of homework, because she has been set up by the Leader with regard to the quality of the questions she has been given to ask.

The question was in relation to the passenger facilitation charge. I indicated to the House that we would support a passenger facilitation charge. However, the Deputy Leader did not understand that passenger facilitation charges are already in place in many locations around Australia, including Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln airports. That shows how far the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is out of touch with reality. In fact, the member for Gordon took over negotiations with the former Labor Government in respect of the airport. A new terminal is in place, and they have reserves as a result of the \$5 or thereabouts impost included in every ticket issued through that airport for the upgrading of the airstrip and tarmac facility. Other areas that have a PFC are Cairns, Broome, Ayers Rock, Norfolk Island, Hamilton

Island and, of course, Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln, just to name a few.

In discussions with the consortium, I was pleased to receive an assurance—as had been the case in our earlier negotiations with it—that it would comply with all planning and environmental State laws on this property, although it is a federal property and therefore exempt in effect from those laws. In spirit, the application will be applied so that State planning and environmental laws will apply to the facility at Adelaide Airport. That is a very important factor, I might add.

In addition to that, a commitment was given by the consortium that it would proceed with the multi-user international terminal facility on a greenfield site that will be located between the current Qantas freight forwarding facility and the current international terminal. It is hoping to put through all the necessary planning approvals, and I have indicated to it that the Government will facilitate that. We will put together the range of Government agencies that will have a responsibility legislatively to look at aspects of building construction and the like, and we will assist and facilitate the consortium so that it can start work on that new facility in November this year.

That will mean that towards the end of calendar year 2000 we will have a three level terminal facility which will feature between 10 and 13 aero bridges—a far cry from the current wind-swept walk across the tarmac. In other words, after two and a half to three years of solid negotiation and work with Qantas, Ansett and the Federal Airports Corporation, now with the potential bidders to the airport facility, and finally with the successful bidder, a deal is locked away that is a great deal for South Australia.

HEALTH AGREEMENT

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the reported comments of the Prime Minister in this morning's press, does the Premier believe that South Australia would be most likely to receive a satisfactory outcome in terms of federal health funding if the Minister for Human Services were to conduct all negotiations with the Prime Minister, and can the Premier now explain to the House why he moved against the then Premier in 1996?

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Premier, I point out that that is starting to stray into the area of hypothetical questions. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: This 'no policy' Opposition has no substantive questions to ask about the direction of South Australia. This is the level of substance that we are getting from the Opposition, portrayed by the would-be power broker, the member for Elder, when he was asked about the Labor Party policy on gun laws: he actually admitted that members opposite did not have one but would have to wait until we put one on the table and then they would make up their mind about it. What we see yet again in the Deputy Leader's question is not only a lack of substance and direction but also a lack of really starting to seek out the real questions of importance for South Australia.

The Minister for Human Services and I have been working closely together for some time in relation to this health issue, and we will continue to do so. Officials from the Minister's department are conferring with officials, with their counterparts, in the other States of Australia. In addition, at head of Government level, my officers and I have been having discussions with Premiers' officers and Chief Ministers'

officers in other States in a coordinated approach to ensure that there is a basis for getting the Commonwealth back to negotiate a reasonable, rational Medicare agreement for the next five years.

We will not lie down on the issue. We will pursue this issue, because it is fundamentally important not only to the finances of South Australia but, more importantly, as a social responsibility to South Australians requiring health services—as my ministerial statement clearly indicated yesterday. I would have thought that the Commonwealth Government, with three budget surpluses forecast over the course of the next three years, would commit some of those funds to an urgent, crisis need in the provision of health services, as every State and Territory in Australia is telling the Prime Minister that the Commonwealth Government is out of touch with reality.

The States are the providers of the essential services. They are at the coal face and interacting with the boards of the hospitals and the staff, knowing the requirements, the demand and the escalation of demand, putting in extra State funds far in excess of that which the Commonwealth has put in in recent times. Our track record with regard to allocation of health funding compared with the Commonwealth is exemplary. We will continue to argue the case.

The diversions that the Leader and Deputy Leader, with smirks on their faces, want to throw across the Chamber are fine. Put your diversionary tactics in place, play your petty politics, but it will not divert us from the main game, namely, an outcome for health for South Australians.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

VIRGINIA PIPELINE

Mr MEIER (Goyder): Will the Premier advise this House of the benefits of the long awaited Virginia pipeline, construction of which I believe started this morning?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am interested to hear the groans from the Opposition. Here is a new investment in South Australia that will create \$50 million worth of further economic activity, job certainty, positioning South Australia so that we have an environmental advantage, whereas in the past—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith has made his point.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In the past we have discharged out of Bolivar into Gulf St Vincent, with seagrass dieback and environmental degradation. We are cleaning up the gulf with no environmental degradation and moving to take that water to the northern Adelaide Plains. I will be delighted to tell Mayor Baker and a few of the other regional development boards in the north how the member for Hart and the Deputy Leader laugh: they scoff at this project. The Labor Party scoffs at this project that will bring jobs to the northern Adelaide Plains. Okay, you can laugh, you can scoff, be that as it may: we will demonstrate to the people up there the Opposition's attitude to it.

After some three solid years of negotiation, working with the Virginia market gardeners—occasionally a difficult and diverse group to work through—a deal has been struck whereby some 120 kilometres of pipeline will be laid and we will be taking the discharge from Bolivar to the northern Adelaide Plains. That will have a beneficial effect on the

environment and an economic benefit for South Australia, in particular for the northern Adelaide Plains.

RIVERLINK

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Why did Cabinet give in-principle support to the \$100 million Riverlink electricity transmission line on 22 December, given the serious concerns expressed by Optima Energy about Riverlink, and will the Government consider other options to increase generation capacity and power jobs in South Australia rather than import more electricity from interstate?

The Opposition has been given a submission by Optima Energy to the NEMMCO on the proposed Riverlink transmission line, which would see South Australia import more electricity from New South Wales? The Optima submission describes reports by ETSA and consultants supporting Riverlink as having 'a greater number of major factual inaccuracies, inappropriate assumptions and incomplete assessment of alternatives'.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Deputy Leader is just absolutely ignorant on these factors. If she wants a briefing, which she cancelled the other day, we will give her a briefing so that she does not ask stupid, inane questions. The Deputy Leader went on radio this morning: let me quote how far out of touch with facts she is. The Deputy Leader was asked about Riverlink this morning on the ABC. The Deputy Leader said in reply:

If we have a hot day here and a hot day in Victoria and we ask Victoria for power to come in and top up our base load, it may well be they say, 'No, we need it. We'll charge you four times the usual rate if you really want that power.'

The only problem is that Riverlink goes into New South Wales, not Victoria. If the honourable member is going on radio to make comments—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I know that the member for Ross Smith would not have made that mistake; he would have done his homework.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier does not need assistance from his right.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Deputy Leader foolishly takes any piece of paper given to her by the researchers. It is about time that the Deputy Leader started to read the questions she asks and the statements she gives. Before she goes on radio, she should at least get her facts right.

Riverlink dovetails into New South Wales, not Victoria: that is the first point. The second and important point—and this illustrates the way in which the Opposition has its head in the sand—is that the national electricity market cannot be ignored: you cannot build a border around South Australia and ignore it. Even Tom Sheridan, appointed by a Labor Administration as Auditor-General, said as much in his report, which was released the other day by the Australian Democrats. That report clearly indicates that the choice is gone. So, I say to the Deputy Leader of the 'no policy zone' Labor Opposition in South Australia: you cannot ignore the facts; you cannot ignore the circumstances; and you cannot ignore the reality.

The Deputy Leader also ignores the fact that we have increased generating capacity in South Australia. Just before last Christmas, we installed additional generating capacity in the South-East and Port Lincoln to assist with the demand.

In addition, South Australia was the first State to make an agreement with a private sector operator (a cogeneration plant) in which no State Government funds are being invested—and that is being constructed at the moment. If the Deputy Leader wants to be involved, I simply tell her to get her fundamental facts right before she embarks upon this debate.

FIREARMS

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. Following the Premier's ministerial statement on firearms legislation yesterday, will the Minister inform the House whether the Government has the support of the Opposition for uniform national gun laws?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Who would know what is the Opposition's policy on guns? One simply would not know. From listening to the Opposition spokesperson last night on Channel 10, whatever was happening about the Opposition's gun law policy was very unclear.

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question concerns the Government's responsibility to the Parliament for the policy of the Opposition. Will you rule on whether that is a legitimate question in Question Time?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair does not uphold the point of order, because if the honourable member reads *Hansard* he will find that the matter to which he refers was not the matter raised in the actual question. The question that was asked does come within the responsibility of the Minister to reply. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Yesterday's ministerial statement by the Premier made quite clear the Government's position on uniform national gun laws: that is, that this Government has always argued for a uniform outcome. We have always gone to the public arguing that uniformity is in the interests of the Australian public. Unlike the Opposition, we have always clearly and concisely put down our position on gun laws. We have been out in the public arena for weeks outlining our position.

The question we must ask ourselves is: what is the Opposition's policy and stance in this regard? In fairness to the Opposition, I can confirm that it has taken a uniform stance in relation to gun laws: that is, it has no policy. If you analyse the Opposition's uniform policy, it is that it has no policy on tax reform or debt reduction, and now it has no policy on firearms. The Opposition should be aware that we will keep digging. We know that someone on the opposite side must have a policy, and we will keep digging until eventually we find who that person is. We have to ask ourselves, ultimately, who will have the policy. We know that it is not the Leader of the Opposition: he has already confirmed no policy on tax.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is starting to debate his reply. I would like him to start to wind up.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Fair comment, Mr Speaker, I accept the ruling. On Channel 10 last night, the spokesman for the Opposition, the so-called Leader of the Left, was, I understand, asked if he could rule out support for any changes, and the answer was, 'I cannot say that forever, can I?' So, he told Channel 10 last night that, essentially, the Opposition has no policy and no stand on firearms. It is a repeated theme of the Opposition to have no policy. The only

thing the Leader of the Left lacks as a natural leader are natural followers.

ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Government Enterprises. Was Optima Energy wrong in stating to NEMMCO that upgrade of the Torrens Island power station is the most cost-effective option for increasing supply of electricity; that Riverlink only defers an upgrade of South Australia's generation facilities; and that in about five years time the electricity prices charged to South Australians will rise?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: First, let us deal with the last of the snide remarks. Clearly, I have identified to the House on a number of occasions what has been the experience in Victoria when the electricity assets have been privatised. Those benefits are considerable to businesses and to consumers in households. In fact, on the day that we identified that we were selling our electricity assets in South Australia, the Treasurer of Victoria was signing off on a deal which saw a huge dividend from the privatisation of their assets coming to every single consumer of electricity in households, and that was a benefit of their privatisation.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Easy. As the Deputy Leader refuses to acknowledge, but as she knows, we have put in place a policy which will see prices increasing by no more than CPI between now and the year 2002. After that, with the competitive regime in place because of the national market, we will presumably see exactly what has happened in Victoria—which is prices decreasing.

It is all very well for the Deputy Leader to quote hypothetical examples but, factually, in Victoria, which is the State that has privatised its assets, the prices fall. Perhaps the question that the Government might ask the Deputy Leader is whether she wants the prices to fall and, if so, whether she will actually support the Government's policy—which is to avoid the risk of another State Bank to South Australia.

GOVERNMENT TENDERS AND CONTRACTS

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises advise the House on the use of the Internet to assist the Government with both tenders and contracts?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the member for Mawson for his question about a most important initiative of the Government which, indeed, indicates the way the Government is progressing into the third millennium. We are doing that not with a concern about information technology for information technology's sake only: we are interested in providing real benefits to the South Australian community from the advantages that can accrue from the best use of information technology. Access to tender documents via the Internet is a classic example where benefits can accrue to business, to the processes of Government and to the wider community.

The South Australian tenders and contracts web site was established in August 1997 to provide a one-stop shop for Government agencies' tender information. The site contains information on tenders and other bidding opportunities currently on call and advertised normally in the press by all Government agencies. The site clearly reduces the time and cost for private sector companies to obtain information about

dealing with the Government because information can be downloaded at any time and is not restricted to the office hours of Government departments.

As I note the member for Elder and the member for Hart jesting about this initiative, we can only conclude that they in fact do not want to advance—and that would be typical, because in a number of initiatives the Labor Party has demonstrated only too well that it is actually well and truly in the Luddite tradition.

With regard to the scoping reviews, Supply SA in the Department for Administrative and Information Services reports that in the short period between 21 February and 4 March 1998, in other words for the duration of the call period in relation to the initiatives for the lead negotiators which I announced earlier, 334 documents were downloaded by people who had completed an on-line registration form before they progressed to download the information. The average length of the relevant downloadable document was 30 pages. This meant that the tenderers downloaded a total of 10 020 pages from our web site.

Traditionally, significant Government resources would obviously have been needed to print the documents into hard copy to distribute to the tenderers, all of which takes time and is not in the best interests of the tenderer. By comparison with the 334 documents that were downloaded from the net, only 69 information packs were sent out in hard copy form. On average, DAIS staff took 10 minutes to assist each caller requiring a full set of papers—completing the telephone call and making up the information package, and so on. So, the total time to deal with the calls was around 11.5 hours. In comparison, if all the information provided through the web site downloads had been handled manually, it would have taken approximately another 56 hours. This represents a direct saving—

Mr Hill interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Well, I can be longer. I do assure the member for Kaurna that if he wishes me to go on at length about the advances that the Government is making, I am very happy to do so. I also note that here we have a concrete example of information technology providing benefits to the private sector, and all the Opposition can do is laugh and make snide remarks. It just indicates how rooted they are in the past but, of course, the member for Kaurna quite likes that because, the more that is likely to occur, the quicker he will get to the other end of the seat.

The money that the taxpayer has saved is a direct saving of about \$2 000 in direct staff and administration costs or, if temporary staff had been engaged to cope with the people concerned, it would have been \$3 000. Here we see direct daily benefit accruing to the private sector through the Government's use of information technology.

RIVERLINK

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's policy of selling ETSA and Optima, why has the Cabinet given in-principle approval for the Riverlink electricity transmission line, and by how much will this decision reduce the price at which Optima could be sold? Under Riverlink, South Australia will import electricity from New South Wales rather than increase electricity generation carried out in South Australia. Optima Energy has described this as leading to 'a reduction in the business value of Optima Energy'. The

Optima report also refers to the rise in electricity imports as a result—

Mr MEIER: I rise on a point of order, Sir. As you are aware, Mr Speaker, we have a Bill before us for the proposed sale of ETSA and Optima. The key part of this question relates to the possible sale price that can be obtained, and I believe that that is an inherent part of the Bill before us. Therefore, I ask you to rule whether the question is in order.

The SPEAKER: The Chair does not at this stage uphold that point of order. At this stage, the Chair is of the view that the Bill canvasses the methods by which the utility can be sold and many administrative arrangements associated with that. As long as the line of the question is followed very clinically, the member asking the question will have the protection of the Chair.

Ms HURLEY: The Optima report also refers to the rise in electricity imports as resulting in 'Torrens Island Power Station A becoming a stranded asset'.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: What the Deputy Leader ignores and overlooks is the growing demand as identified in South Australia in the year 2001 and beyond. It is a fundamental point that we will not have sufficient generating capacity in the future, and that is one of the reasons why there is value adding for a sale of the assets at this time and prior to New South Wales moving to sell its assets in the latter part of this year. With the position of the co-generation power plant meeting some of the short term needs in the next 18 months to two years, there will be further peak load demand in South Australia in the future.

The other point that the Deputy Leader overlooks is that a significant loss of power occurs over any transmission line—an interconnector—coming in from interstate. There will always be a built in 10 to 15 per cent advantage on generation within the regional economy of South Australia over shipping in from interstate. The simple fact is that, whether you have Riverlink to meet peak load demand in 2001 and 2002—and that is a better option than further generating capacity in South Australia, or adds to it—there is a built in advantage for generators within the South Australian economy.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTRES

Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey): Will the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services advise the rural communities of the Riverland, the South-East and Port Pirie whether the Government is considering the option of closing the emergency communications centres in these districts? Recent media reports in the Riverland refer to a report prepared by the Ambulance Board of South Australia about future statewide communications options. The media reported that one option recommended by the board was to close the regional communications centres in Berri, Mount Gambier and Port Pirie and relocate these services to Adelaide.

In response to these articles my office has received many complaints objecting to the withdrawal of yet another Government service from regional South Australia to Adelaide. Riverland constituents are also concerned that centralising this vital service will have life threatening implications for the service provided as, unlike cities, rural areas often do not have reference to street names or house numbers. The officers who provide this service in rural districts know the areas they are working in, and at times

local knowledge can mean the difference between life and death when emergency services are required.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is beginning to stray into debate.

Mrs MAYWALD: Okay; sorry, Mr Speaker. Aside from the concerns of constituents that an Adelaide based service would not provide the level of service currently provided by regional operations, each of these services employs five people, supporting five families in each community.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: There has been a lot of regional media comment regarding this issue, and I thank the member for Chaffey for her question. Members are well aware that the Government is considering implementing a computer aided dispatch system and also a Government radio network system in the future. We have already announced a review into emergency services funding that may in part assist these projects. The final configuration of the Government radio network has not yet been determined. Some proposals I understand suggest that the roll-out into regional areas may take as long as two or three years from the date of the contract; therefore, any decision is certainly some way off. As are all emergency services agencies, the Ambulance Board is reviewing the possible impacts of the Government radio network on its operations. I am advised that the board has adopted an approach to examine all possible options in the first instance. This does not mean they will be recommended to or indeed adopted by the Government.

I confirm to the member for Chaffey and the House that I have not requested, initiated nor seen a business case in relation to the regional communications centres. I am aware of the concern of regional communities about service delivery and employment in relation to the communications centres. I am aware of the concern raised by the professional paid employees as well as the volunteers about the importance of local knowledge in service delivery. All these matters will need to be taken into consideration when the Government radio network decision is finally undertaken.

ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I direct my question to the Premier. Given the requirement under national competition policy for deregulated pricing in the electricity market after the year 2001, and the Premier's statement that the Government will lose control of prices, does this mean the end of statewide common tariffs, and will some South Australians be forced to pay more for their electricity than others?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I ask the Deputy Leader simply to read the ministerial statement of 17 February that canvassed these issues.

MEASLES

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I direct my question to the Minister for Human Services. Will the South Australian Government cooperate with the Federal Government and the Federal Minister for Health in a national immunisation plan to head off a looming measles epidemic? The Federal Minister for Health today announced a program to offer all primary school aged children in Australia a second dose of measles vaccine to contain the size and impact of a measles epidemic.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I thank the member for Waite for that question; it is a very key issue out in the

community at present. There is the threat across the whole of Australia of a very significant measles epidemic. The Federal Minister, Michael Wooldridge, has come out today with a \$30 million program to ensure that every child in Australia receives their first vaccine between the ages of two and five and then a booster vaccine while they are in primary school. Another component to the campaign is to ensure that every secondary school child understands the need for a booster vaccine and, therefore, if they have not had that booster, the need to get it from their GP as quickly as possible.

The Federal Government is offering \$695 000 to South Australia. We estimate the cost of the total vaccination program to be about \$1.5 million. I will commit the \$800 000 from South Australia to that campaign because we think it is absolutely essential to provide protection for children in South Australia from a possible very severe epidemic of measles throughout Australia in 1999. I point out to the Federal Government that it has underestimated its contribution to the costs here in South Australia. In fact, a much larger number of students here in this State need to be vaccinated than so far calculated by the Federal Government. Only about 77 per cent of the State's children have received the first vaccination, and the objective is to achieve at least a 95 per cent level for the whole of Australia. Although it is costing us more than we anticipated, we are prepared to make that commitment of \$800 000, because we think the children of South Australia deserve that protection and I will not argue with the Federal Minister over the costs involved.

RIVERLINK

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Does the Minister for Environment and Heritage agree with Optima Energy that the Riverlink electricity transmission line approved in principle by Cabinet on 22 December will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions? The Optima submission to the National Electricity Market Management Company states that the Riverlink interconnector will increase the use of black and brown coal, causing an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and a lowering of the activity of South Australia's more environmentally friendly natural gas fired plant.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am extremely pleased to hear that the member for Kaurna is interested in greenhouse gas emissions. I believe that in times past the honourable member has not had any questions to ask on greenhouse gas emissions, and I am extremely interested to see where the background information which I have not seen and which the honourable member presents to the House today contemplates the increase in emissions. I remind the honourable member that the national body which looks after environment protection and which sits through ministerial councils takes into consideration that a reduction in greenhouse gases is essential throughout the whole of Australia. That is an imperative that we will continue to follow.

South Australia has taken a great part in those ministerial councils and has indicated its support to reduce emissions. The answer is exactly that. The answer is that, in looking after greenhouse gas emissions, it will be taken into consideration on a national level and, therefore, we will not increase greenhouse gas emissions.

HELPMANN ACADEMY

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Will the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training advise the House of the most recent activities and initiatives of the Helpmann Academy?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I thank the member for Hartley for his question, because it is one that will require a good performance. The aim of the Helpmann Academy is to establish South Australia as a focal point for education, training and research in the arts in the South-East Asian region. The academy has four partners in this operation: TAFE SA, the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia. In 1997 the academy awarded some 400 grants to young people to cover their travel and production costs elsewhere in the world or within Australia so that they could extend their research and ability in the arts. The costs involved ranged between \$100 and \$14 000. Two highlights of the trips—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: It is better than listening to you. Two highlights included a trip to Guangzhou in China by a group of Adelaide University dancers and the Centre for Performing Arts and a visit by jazz singers and instrumentalists from Adelaide to the New York Jazz Education Conference. This was the first time that any group had ever been invited to that festival, and a high quality one it is in terms of world jazz. There have been other successes, and the academy clearly is establishing a firm foundation for the promotion of the arts.

During the Adelaide Festival I visited an art gallery in Synagogue Place showing the work of young people exhibiting under the academy. An exciting range of arts was presented by those young people, and the winner of that competition was awarded an around the world trip to visit Spain and Greece to look at art of her form in those countries. The Government is committed to a vibrant and innovative arts industry and, furthermore, we are looking at ways to extend the Helpmann Academy into secondary schooling and forming some links between secondary schooling and the Helpmann Arts Academy.

RIVERLINK

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Given that the Cabinet has already supported the construction of the Riverlink transmission line, what action has the Minister for Environment and Heritage taken to ensure that the environmental impact study to be undertaken on the proposal will properly, fully and adequately address the serious environmental consequences of Riverlink? Both the northern and southern options for the Riverlink transmission line would cross Chowilla and Calperum stations, both of which are part of the Unesco Bookmark Biosphere Reserve. Chowilla is a designated State regional reserve and Calperum is a declared Commonwealth nature conservation park. Both options for Riverlink contain significant populations of endangered species, as well as the chopping down of significant old growth mallee.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The honourable member would be aware that any environmental impact statement conducted on any of these issues has a strength of procedures that have to be undertaken to determine outcomes. All the issues the member has raised are part of what the environmental impact statement will consider. It will be at the end of that procedure that we will have an indication of whether the issues that the

member has addressed have any real impact, and then decisions will be taken at the end of that process.

SOUTHERN RACING FESTIVAL

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister responsible for racing matters advise the House of increased stake money for the Southern Racing Festival, which began at the weekend and which runs through to May?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: We are very proud of the announcement of the Southern Racing Festival and the magnificent brochure and program that went out in the *Advertiser* at the weekend. It has been praised by many interstate people and also by people from other codes in South Australia. There will be a \$500 000 increase in stake money for the Southern Racing Festival, and that will principally come out of the increased turnover and consequently the profitability of the TAB. Already, there has been a significant contribution from the turn around in the performance of the TAB and its effect on racing in particular. The additional \$500 000 being spent on promoting the festival has also come out of the Racing Industry Development Authority's fund, which is funded out of the old Racing Development Fund, which also is from the TAB.

So, there is no reduction in distribution to any of the codes as a result of the promotion of this new festival. It is tremendous to note that the three codes will come together over the next three months to promote individual events within each of the codes. The codes are working together so that we can get an industry outcome of a 30 per cent increase in visitation to courses. It is a big ask but with good promotion and better encouragement I believe we can get there. There is absolutely no doubt that better stake money brings better horses and greyhounds, and there is no doubt that then the crowds come. It is also important to note that Toyota, through Lexus, has become the major sponsor for the program. It will brand the whole program and we will now see, for the first time, a significant motor industry person involved in the promotion of the racing industry.

Also, we have three new events in country areas. It is pleasing to see that there will be one at Port Pirie and a significant event at Gawler in greyhounds and also in harness racing. There is a significant increase in activity in country areas. Some \$460 000 is going into the pool for racing, of which \$100 000 will go to the Adelaide Cup. The stake money for harness racing is increased by \$43 000, and for greyhounds it is increased by \$46 000. This is an important opportunity for us to expand the racing industry in the community in South Australia because it is a significant employer. The industry could do with a boost in terms of community interest and generally.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Given the reported comments of the Prime Minister about the leadership of the South Australian Liberal Government, does the Minister for Human Services have total confidence in the Premier's leadership both now and in the future, or does the Minister believe he would do a better job?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am amazed that the Labor Opposition in South Australia would want to join with the Federal Government in trying to create a diversion to the fight

over health care for South Australians. Here we have achieved a level of unification amongst the States, first, at ministerial level and now at the Premiers' and Leaders' level, and we are effectively running a national campaign to get more money for the Medicare agreement. The Premier was part of that campaign on Friday, and I very much appreciate the support he has given to me personally as Minister. I assure the House that our target is clearly to get more money for health care here in South Australia, and we will not be diverted either by the Federal Government or the Labor Opposition in South Australia.

FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Minister for Primary Industries advise the House of recent Government initiatives to develop South Australia's food industry?

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Ross Smith.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I thank the member for Schubert and acknowledge his love for food. As the member for Schubert well knows, the food industry in South Australia holds a major key to increasing exports from the State and, through additional production and value adding and the ancillary industries that hang off that, it really holds a major key to regional development and jobs in regional areas of the State. One of the Government's recent initiatives as far as food goes is the Premier's Food Advisory Council, which met for the first time a couple of weeks ago. This council comprises industry leaders from all sectors of the food industry in South Australia, as well as experts from interstate who make a valuable contribution to this State and who will also give us that focus to coordinate what we do in relation to food with the Federal Government and other States.

The council is charged with identifying ways to expand the food industry in South Australia from a current value of around \$5 billion to \$15 billion by the year 2010, in the process creating many jobs. That focus has to be on increasing not only production but also the amount of value adding we get from what we have produced. Members of the Food Advisory Council have two things in common: first, there is a strong belief in the enormous potential of the South Australian food industry, and, secondly there is a strong desire to achieve the potential that is obviously there. It is an important example of industry and Government working together to make the economy grow. The vision is to create an industry that is innovative, vigorous and responsive to market demands for higher quality products, which is becoming obvious on the world market.

Issues that are being tackled by the council include safe quality food—what we do with quality assurance and the range of measures that growers need to embrace to get to that safe quality food standard; information and marketing—how we market the produce as South Australian and Australian; and the important issue of what we do about water for industry development. Certainly, what the Premier mentioned before about the water at Virginia is one of those steps whereby we can increase production quite markedly. We all realise that there is no absolute overnight solutions. Certainly, by working together, we can maximise the successful development of the food industry in the State, because it is really one of our big opportunities.

Some of South Australia's top business leaders are members of the council, and that is a testament to the desire

and the commitment of industry to work in partnership with the Government. The Premier's Food Advisory Council is part of the State Government's Food for the Future plan, and I am thrilled that the Premier has endorsed this vision and has brought together such a high-powered group of people to form the council. It will help identify the high level impediments and opportunities for industry growth through its linkages with both industry and Government. The Premier chairs the council, demonstrating a commitment to the food sector at the highest level of Government, and is joined on the council by the Deputy Premier and me.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Excuse me: this is pretty important, Ralph. The chairs of my industry development boards are members of a council providing a direct link to value chain development and industry level. During this strategic planning process and through normal operations the industry development boards will identify issues to be put up for consideration by the council. Links are also established through shared membership with the Prime Minister's Supermarket to Asia Council and Victorian Premier Kennett's Food Industry Advisory Committee. That acknowledges that it is essential to have national coordination and that there is a real synergy in the States working together.

The council comprises successful industry leaders, including some successful South Australians. I will mention just a few: Maggie Beer, Roger Cook, Glen Cooper, Maurice Crotti, Perry Gunner and others who have had success in getting South Australian produce onto world markets, much of which they have done with a good value added component. I am sure that the Premier shared my pride that at the council meeting we had a group of successful South Australians who expressed a real commitment to use their experience, their expertise and their own successes to help other South Australian companies and individuals emulate that success onto the international market. There was a real will shown to work together with Government to accelerate South Australia's produce—

Mr CLARKE: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. My point of order is that this windbag of a Minister has been going for five minutes. It is an abuse of Question Time, and he should use the avenue of a ministerial statement.

The SPEAKER: Order! I presume the honourable member is raising a point of order relating to Standing Order 98. Standing Order 98 really applies to Ministers' introducing debate in their replies: they can be pulled up for that. However, nothing in Standing Orders relates specifically to the length of a reply, although I ask Ministers to have regard to the fact that other members want to ask questions and also that there is an opportunity through ministerial statements to give lengthy replies. I ask the Minister to wind up.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I would have thought that this question was of a lot more relevance and importance to the State than a few of the others we have heard from members opposite today. It is an important matter, and I do not feel overly guilty about using a bit of time on it. Food exports—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has suggested that the Minister has had a fair go and should start to draw his reply to a conclusion.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I will wind up my reply. I would like to say that, after being taken for granted for a lot of years in this State, food exports have been a big improver over the past couple of years. I have no

doubt that the Premier's Food Advisory Council will play a major part in helping South Australia accelerate food exports at an increasing rate, inevitably delivering economic and employment outcomes to South Australians and in particular to those in country areas.

HOME CARE

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Is the Minister for Human Services satisfied with the level of home care and support available for frail aged and disabled persons and, if not, what action is to be taken by the Minister to fix what is now being called a hidden crisis? The Opposition has been informed that there has been a 30 per cent increase in demand for home care and support from Domiciliary Care and the Royal District Nursing Service over the past six months. The nursing service has reduced the services offered; Southern and Western Domiciliary Care Services now turns away 50 per cent of new referrals; and Northern Domiciliary Care has reduced services to current clients and stopped taking new referrals. Some frail aged people are receiving only one shower per fortnight and home help only once a month.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Mawson!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The honourable member knows very well indeed that I raised this issue in Sydney at the health summit on Monday morning. She knows that I have raised it on numerous other occasions over the past few weeks. She herself has raised this issue. Today, she has simply repeated what she asked last week and the week before. I make the point again that there has been a significant jump in home care services particularly as a result of the uncertainty to do with nursing home beds, the proposal for an accommodation bond, the proposal for an increase in fees for nursing beds as a result of the abolition of that bond, and the proposed increase, based on a means test, of fees to go into a nursing bed.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The honourable member asked the question; surely she can have the decency to listen to the answer.

The Hon. M.H. Armitage: That's a big ask.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I'm sorry; it is too much, particularly when she has raised this issue before. She knows that I have been a very strong advocate in arguing for more money from the Federal Government for home care services. In fact, the Government in South Australia has put in additional money. In some of those areas that the honourable member mentioned, the State Government will be allocating additional money from reserves held to those home care services throughout the State over the next few months of this financial year. So there will be additional funds—about \$1.7 million extra—allocated for home care services throughout the whole of the State. About half that will go to country areas, and the rest will go to the metropolitan area. It was money set aside at the beginning of the financial year, and this Government will honour its commitment to make sure that those funds are allocated out there.

I understand the problems that have been caused by the increase in demand. I have highlighted that, and I am delighted to be able to say that we have an extra \$1.7 million because this Government has made an additional allocation of funds for home care services. What I would like to see is much more in the way of additional funds from the Federal

Government as well.

GREENHOUSE GASES

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr HILL: Today in Question Time the Minister for Environment claimed that I had not asked any questions in relation to the greenhouse gas issue. In fact, question on notice No. 65 in my name states:

1. Does the Minister support the Federal Government's submission to the Kyoto Environment Conference that an acceptable reduction in greenhouse gases is in fact an increase in such gases by 18 per cent over 1990 levels?

2. What is the State's strategy to reduce greenhouse gases?

Those questions remain unanswered.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith!

CRIME PREVENTION

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): On behalf of the Minister for Transport in another place, I table a ministerial statement concerning a crime prevention plan.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I draw to the attention of the House two matters where poor official communication has caused considerable distress to two of my constituents. The first relates to the Victorian Transport Accident Commission—and in this regard I want to warn people who might be thinking about travelling to Victoria over Easter—and the second relates to people who are paying off expiation fees on an instalment basis.

The first matter involves a family from my electorate who travelled to Victoria last year to attend a family wedding. While there, they were involved in a rear end collision, which resulted in injury to the young mother, the father and their two year old baby. Fortunately, the injuries were not severe but did require physiotherapy treatment for all three. They rang the Transport Accident Commission, as the other driver had no comprehensive insurance, and were told they would be covered under the third party provisions. They returned to South Australia and sought medical treatment.

This family is currently experiencing unemployment and therefore has a health care card. Normally they would go to the public hospital to receive any medical treatment required. In this case, having been told they were covered and to go ahead and organise treatment, they went to the local GP and then to the local physiotherapist, had treatment and incurred bills of approximately \$900. They sent these bills to the Transport Accident Commission and received a refund for the amount minus \$416. On inquiry, they found out that there was an excess of \$416 for anybody injured in a transport accident in Victoria whether or not they were at fault. This differs significantly from the South Australian system where an excess is incurred only if you are at fault in the accident.

This family was left with a bill for \$416 that they could ill afford to pay; they are paying instalments to the local physiotherapist. Given that Easter is fast approaching and that many South Australian families might be foolishly thinking of travelling to Victoria, I would point out to them that they need to be very careful indeed if they are involved in an accident resulting in injury. I point out that the family did ask whether they were covered and were told they were, and went ahead in good faith. I have not been able to convince the Victorian authorities to refund the money.

The second case involves expiation fees being repaid in instalments. Again, the communication to people about their obligations is unclear. The Dungey family were due to pay \$10 of their expiation fee of \$117 on Christmas Day. They had been paying \$10 a fortnight instalments regularly since the beginning of September, and the fact that the court allowed that amount of repayment indicates they also were very severely financially stretched.

They knew that the court was not open on Christmas Day so they thought that, if they went in in a couple of weeks to pay off double the amount, they would be all right. Instead, they incurred a fine of \$94 because they were late in the payment of the expiation fee. On the notice issued to the Dungey family there is no warning whatsoever of the effect of a late payment, and it does not indicate what late payment means. A warning has been added to the notice since that time so that a mock notice I received from the court on 24 March does warn people reasonably clearly that, if they are late by more than 14 days, they will incur significant fines. The Dungey family did not have the benefit of this notice, and there are probably many families in South Australia at the moment who do not have the benefit of that warning and who may miss instalments over Easter and again incur a \$94 fine for the late payment of \$37.

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I take this opportunity at the commencement of another Glendi Greek Festival to congratulate the Glendi board on its success last Saturday with respect to the twenty-first Glendi. I am also proud that back in 1976 both Michael Taliangis and I sat down to look at the feasibility of conducting a Greek festival, and the first festival was held in 1977 after consultation with the Adelaide Hellenic Lions Club. The original intention of the Glendi Greek Festival—and it continues to this day—was to raise money for the Adelaide Hellenic Lions Club to be able to make major donations to Adelaide's charities through that one major function.

At the time of the first festival in 1977, I would never have thought that the festival would continue to be held until 1998, but it has developed into the largest ethnic community festival anywhere in the southern hemisphere. It is a great festival, because it promotes Greek food, music, culture and art, and it involves school children in drawings and other art works. Also, it displays the handiwork of Greek men and women. The festival is an enormous success.

I also refer to another major issue, and that is this Government's commitment to all Greeks in South Australia. Through our efforts of lobbying very strongly with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, we have been successful in the appointment of an Honorary Consul for Australia in Thessaloniki. This Government has already financed two trips for South Australian manufacturers to the Thessaloniki Trade Fair, which is now recognised as being the largest trade fair in the whole of Europe. More importantly, our consistent pressuring and lobbying of the Minister for

Foreign Affairs and the appointment of the consul will further the establishment of trade relations between Greece and Australia.

What is even more significant is that the Honorary Consul will be able to assist Australian manufacturers in getting their goods to Thessaloniki, which is the gateway to the Balkans and the Black Sea and beyond, and further to the countries beyond the Balkans and the Black Sea, exposing the State of South Australia to a market in excess of 100 million potential customers.

The South Australian Government and those manufacturers involved took a risk in going to Thessaloniki, in the first instance, to promote products grown and manufactured in South Australia, but they have met with enormous success. The businesses of some of these manufacturers to whom I was speaking at the Glendi last Saturday are now bringing in millions of dollars. One told me that he had an order each year for 30 000 doors and 60 000 hinges out of South Australia into Greece and that that market was growing rapidly. I reiterate my congratulations to members of the Glendi Board, the Premier and the South Australian Government in at last being able to achieve the appointment of an Honorary Consul in Thessaloniki who will represent the interests of Australia and South Australia.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): In his answer to me today in Question Time, the Minister for Human Services wanted to ridicule me for continuing to press him on issues of home care and support for frail aged people and people with disabilities. I will continue to push this issue, no matter how long it takes. It will not disappear, as much as the Minister would like it to. I will refer to some of the things he said. He is fond of saying that the reason for this unprecedented interest relates solely to nursing home uncertainty. While the debacle involving nursing home arrangements is certainly one of the factors, the other very important factor that has caused this unprecedented increase in demand is this Government's policy of early discharge from hospital. This is an interesting thing for the Minister conveniently to ignore.

The Royal District Nursing Service, in getting its facts and figures together to present to the Minister so that he understands the situation, I understand has found that nearly half of all referrals they receive in this area of need come from people being discharged from hospital—from people straight out of the acute care system. This is the responsibility of the State Government and a direct consequence of casemix funding and this Government's use of casemix funding in order to discharge people early from hospital.

The fact, which the Minister conveniently ignores, is that, while the present State Government made enforced large savings and large cuts in connection with hospitals, it failed to put that money back into community services. Combining this factor with the nursing home factor, we have the unprecedented blow out that is now occurring. All members in this House would know that this is happening. They sit there quietly on the other side while their Minister conveniently tries to blame the Federal Government for this, but we all know that there is a State Government responsibility as well.

I noted the Minister's answer about \$1.7 million extra, but I realised when he finished speaking that this was money allocated in the last budget and it will not take into account the unprecedented demand. I understand from the agencies concerned that they have no expectation that the State Government will do anything to alleviate the present crisis in

respect of these funds. At this very moment there is an opportunity to put up \$1.3 million of State funds to be matched by Commonwealth funds, but it seems unlikely that the State Government through the Health Commission will put up any money at all for this. I will continue to press this matter and will not give up on behalf of all those thousands of people who cannot speak for themselves in this matter.

I will read a letter I received from the daughter of a woman in Golden Grove illustrating the point. She states:

Mum is 92 years old, suffers with bad arthritis, is diabetic and needs help to be able to remain independent in her unit. At the moment DomCare have her on their list to clean her floors, toilet and bathroom and change her bed and wash her sheets. This week she has been notified that they will no longer be coming once a fortnight and future visits will be monthly. Obviously an elderly lady with her disabilities, including deafness and poor vision, needs help more often than once a month. Hygiene is so important for a diabetic as they are notoriously slow to heal if they become ill or have cuts or abrasions of any kind. Her bed certainly needs to be changed regularly and her bathroom and kitchen need to be cleaned at least fortnightly.

I am her only relative in Australia and have problems which prevent me being able to take on this task. I do go to her when she needs help and she comes to me every Sunday. Other than this she manages alone. I feel that once more those most in need and most easily squashed because of their inability to respond are being victimised. This year the elderly infirm have been subjected to the nursing home changes, increased costs for their medication and now a reduction in necessary services. If we want the elderly to be able to remain in their own home, services must be in place to assist them. With a rapidly ageing population, Government needs to be aware and be planning for these services to increase and not decrease. Many of the elderly have been taxpayers all their lives and have a right to expect consideration from those in power.

That is why I will not be quiet on this issue.

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

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise on behalf of an elderly man in my constituency of Waite whose name is Herbert Burnard. He is 100 years old and resides at Resthaven at Mitcham in the care of Sister-in-Charge Marilyn Paris. Resthaven is one of several undertakings providing excellent aged care services in Waite. But in 1918, on the morning of 25 April, Herbert Burnard stood exhausted, along with others who remained standing, at the approach to the French village of Villers-Bretonneux. Of the South Australians who were the first 50th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, in that night of battle, 14 officers and 240 other ranks were dead or seriously wounded from shrapnel from the bullet, bayonet or gas. Sergeant Herbie Burnard was 20 years old that day.

As this House will rise before Anzac Day, I stand on behalf of the 6 300 officers and 153 000 other ranks who were physical casualties of the Great War. The psychological casualties went unnumbered, except by those who loved them. The 50th Battalion were local boys. Their battalion colours have long since been laid up. They are not remembered in today's Order of Battle, although the Royal South Australian Regiment lives on. The battle they fought against four German divisions as part of the 13th Brigade at Villers-Bretonneux in Northern France was a feat that very possibly denied Germany victory in the Great War. The people of Picardy in France have been saying '*N'oublions jamais l'Australie*' ('Let us never forget Australia') ever since. They hold a simple view about the battle on 24-25 April 1918: Australia saved France.

The Great War was fought on a scale which no film could possibly depict and to which perhaps no book could do full

justice. The complexities, the motives, the blind insistence on frontal brutality are as baffling today as they were in the years of turmoil themselves. The Australians were slowed by large areas of mustard gas and lost the advantage of moonlight. Thus they attacked two hours late in darkness. By all the standards of warfare this attack should have flopped, but in another audacious Australian display of raw-nerve guts and ferocity, as soon as the Germans opened fire the Australians charged, cheering, and overwhelmed the enemy. They overwhelmed them in half an hour of unforgettable violence, largely with the bayonet.

The charge of the 15th Brigade is held to rank with the Gallipoli landing and the assault at Mont St Quentin as the wildest and bravest in the experience of the Australian infantry. There is no doubt Villers-Bretonneux was a great Australian victory won in typical no-nonsense Australian style. The price, however, was inevitably high: 1 200 Australians were dead after the heroic deeds of that night. Curiously—one may say, sadly—it is not well known to the Australian public, despite Villers-Bretonneux being the site of the Australian War Memorial in France.

Sergeant Herbie Burnard is probably the last of the South Australians of the 50th Battalion. Of the others there remains only the whispering wind in the trees of France and the rain which seeps through the softened earth to the bones of those South Australians who are still officially missing. I encourage my constituent, Mr Brian Barry, in his efforts to lift our public commemoration of this battle and the sacrifice that was made. We would do well to remember Villers Bretonneux on the night of 24-25 April. I look forward to visiting Herbie Burnard on that day because it is as the anonymous war poet claimed:

To you from failing hands we throw the torch
Be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): Last week, the *Today Tonight* program on Channel 7 ran a story about youth gangs in the suburb of Royal Park. This was a significant report, as it was run on three consecutive nights: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I will stay away from the report in respect of certain individuals, but I feel compelled to talk about the inferences that were made about the suburb of Royal Park. During the running of those three programs and since, many constituents of Royal Park and the surrounding suburbs have contacted my office and me personally expressing their concern and anger about the inferences and comments made about Royal Park.

On Friday of last week, I spoke with Chief Inspector Barry Lewis of the North-Western Region and asked him a number of questions regarding this program. Inspector Barry Lewis informed me that Royal Park has a very good record in respect of crime and law and order. He went on to say that Royal Park does not have a problem with youth gangs, as was stated during those three televised segments. He said that the suburb of Royal Park has a very low crime rate and that, on average, the crime rate is much smaller than in not only suburbs in the western area but other suburbs through metropolitan Adelaide.

That comes as no surprise to me, because Royal Park is well credentialled. It has a large number of people who take crime and law and order seriously. It has an active and successful Neighbourhood Watch group which meets

regularly and which plays an active role in supporting the police and the local community. Inspector Lewis went to great lengths to tell me that despite this information about youth gangs the police have an excellent arrangement with Seaton High School, which is the only high school in that area servicing the suburbs of Royal Park, Hendon, West Lakes, Woodville West, and so on. He said that the police have a cooperative intervention arrangement with the Principal of that school and that, as in all suburbs, there are problems from time to time, but that the inferences that were made on that program regarding youth gangs were incorrect and without foundation. This has been very upsetting for residents of the suburb of Royal Park.

I also draw attention to the fact that a very good crime prevention committee is working in the local area. This committee is based at the Charles Sturt council, and it has the support of the Government through the Attorney-General, who makes available funds for a staff officer. That committee functions very well. It has a good range of members of the local community who are working actively on environmental issues and local projects throughout the area and, as in many other areas, taking on board one of the great challenges that exist throughout the community of trying to overcome the problem of graffiti.

On behalf of the residents of Royal Park and the surrounding suburbs, I would like to say that this area has much of which it can be proud. It does not have the problems that were universally discussed last week on the *Today Tonight* program.

Mr Atkinson: A great multicultural suburb.

Mr WRIGHT: As the member for Spence indicates correctly, this area has a broad range of ethnic communities. It is a very fine area indeed.

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

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): For some time, March has been recognised as Red Cross month. This afternoon, I want to acknowledge the work of the Red Cross and the importance of this fine organisation in South Australia. Most members would be familiar with their local branch of the Red Cross. I particularly want to thank the branches of Bridgewater, Mylor and Mount Lofty for the wonderful work they do in the electorate of Heysen.

When we think of the Red Cross we often think of giving blood. We do not always think of the Red Cross being involved in day care programs, health screenings, telecross, transport, or emergency welfare assistance. The list of services provided by this volunteer agency is endless. There are hospital services, disaster services, and a tracing agency, which aims at reuniting families separated by war, civil disturbance or natural disasters. It is linked with the ICRC Central Tracing Agency in Geneva and parallel national agencies in many other countries where Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies are established. It would be remiss of me not to mention the homebound library service, infant restraint rental, emergency roadside aid, the blood transfusion service, first aid kits and first aid and home care training, and medical equipment loans. I am sure that we all agree on the significance of this very valuable volunteer service.

Of exceptional interest to me is the work of the Australian Red Cross in international humanitarian law. The Australian Red Cross is the appointed agent of the Australian Government to disseminate information about the Geneva Conventions—the law on war. It maintains close liaison with the

defence forces and disaster, health, legal and media personnel to promote awareness of their obligations to the Geneva Conventions in armed conflict situations.

The Red Cross is established in 163 countries around the world. At any one time, Red Cross volunteers are working on their international Red Cross committee missions in 60 countries. Alongside of this, assistance is provided in 30 to 40 countries to refugees, displaced persons, and victims of war and natural disasters. Elsewhere, Red Cross could be providing training on disaster preparedness, first aid or home care. Closer to home, we acknowledge the work of the Red Cross in times of flood, bush fires and other disasters. We know that we have the Red Cross to turn to at those times, and we appreciate the way in which it efficiently provides relief without fuss.

In acknowledging the Red Cross, I think it is important to mention a man who as a young Swiss banker on a hot day in June 1859 witnessed a fierce battle involving more than 300 000 soldiers near the northern Italian town of Solferino. After 15 hours of bitter fighting and suffering from hunger and pure exhaustion, those who still had life in them were begging for help, food and shelter. Henry Dunant gathered together local people, mainly women, to assist him in caring for as many injured soldiers as possible. The women involved went about their work of assisting all people, keeping in mind their belief that 'all men are brothers'.

In 1901, Henry Dunant was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize for his outstanding contribution to humanity, founding what is now the largest non-discriminatory aid organisation in the world. Henry Dunant and the village women and girls of that area were, in essence, the world's first Red Cross volunteers.

Before I finish, I point out that there is something we can all do to assist Red Cross, and that is to show we care and give blood. There is a huge demand for blood and blood products but, unfortunately, only 6 per cent of the population are donors. Blood supplies are always needed as, at times, it becomes difficult for the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service to maintain supplies to those in need. I congratulate Red Cross in this its month, its many volunteers and those who give freely of their time, their money and their blood to ensure that this valuable service is available to us all in South Australia and throughout the world.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIVE TITLE) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 24 March. Page 775.)

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I rise on behalf of the Opposition to support the second reading. The Bill basically tidies up some aspects which were not adequately covered when the South Australian native title legislation was passed. When I refer to the native title legislation in South Australia, I refer to the related amendments to the Opal Mining Act and the Mining Act which were passed two or three years ago.

Certainly, the Opposition has no objection to encouraging mediation in the Environment, Resources and Development Court, which this amending Bill facilitates. There is no opposition to the extension of the sunset clause, which means that the Part 9B provisions in the principal Act will be taken

advantage of by native title claimants and, hopefully, used appropriately by mining companies and so on. I note that the sunset provision is extended to 17 June 2000.

It is important to keep the 'right to negotiate' provisions in the South Australian Act pending review of the whole issue at Commonwealth level. The Opposition's position is that we are better off having the current Part 9 provisions, rather than having no 'right to negotiate' provisions at all, and certainly that has been mooted by some people at the Commonwealth level. The Opposition supports the continuation of those current provisions until at least 17 June 2000, and we will have to wait to see what transpires in the Commonwealth Parliament.

During the Committee stage, I will ask some questions in relation to clause 11. I note that the Attorney has already made some specific comments about the exclusion of certain types of questions from the 'notice of hearing' provisions, which are currently contained in section 16 of the Native Title (South Australia) Act. However, I will ask some questions today of the Minister to clarify what the Attorney has said in another place.

Before concluding, I would like to make some general remarks about the operation of the legislation in South Australia. Unfortunately, although the Native Title (South Australia) Act 1994 is a reasonably coherent, compromise Act, what is happening on the ground is not living up to the theory which is set out in the Act. A lot of illegal behaviour has occurred in various parts of the State by mining companies which are not using the 'right to negotiate' provisions. I would like the Minister to address the question of whether any kind of record is being kept of where mining companies are encroaching onto native title or potential native title areas, and to what extent the Part 9B provisions are being utilised.

I have received information which suggests that they have been woefully under-utilised and before Wik they were virtually being ignored. I am pleased to say that there has been an increase in the number of notices to potential claimants since the Wik decision, but the fact remains that there are probably hundreds of examples of illegal exploration or mining activities which have been carried on since our native title legislation was passed into law. I would like to know from the Government what is being done about that, what is the extent of it, who is policing it, who is enforcing it, and what will be done to rectify that problem?

I agree that that issue is not covered in a specific clause of this Bill, but it is a Bill which seeks to rectify some of the shortcomings of our native title legislation. There are clearly shortcomings in the legislation, or at least in the enforcement of the legislation, if we have, as I suggest, hundreds of examples of illegal exploration and mining in this State. I leave it to the Minister to respond and look forward to making some comments in Committee in relation to clause 11.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied the Bill most carefully to ensure that it has the effect which the Government claims. We are now satisfied that it does and, accordingly, we support the Bill. The Bill extends the right to negotiate over mining tenements on land that is the subject of a native title claim. The 'right to negotiate' clause in our State Act had a sunset rider that would have put the clause out of action by 17 June 1998. It was thought that the clause would be picked up in amendments to the Commonwealth Act, but this did not happen because the most recent

Commonwealth Native Title Bill has been held up in the Senate.

The Bill before us extends the operation of the 'right to negotiate' clause until 17 June 2000. The Bill amends both the Mining Act and the Opal Mining Act on this point. The Bill also allow the judges of the State's Environment, Resources and Development Court to take part in compulsory mediation that precedes a court hearing. It is nice to see the Government finding work for the Environment, Resources and Development Court to do since the Government's attempt during the last Parliament to downgrade the court.

I also notice that the Minister lapsed from his usual high standards of grammar in his second reading contribution where he used the combination 'different to' instead of 'different from', and I notice that on one occasion he used 'who' when he should have used 'whom'.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): I would like to apologise to the House for that appalling lapse in grammar. As my staff would know, I regard myself as a stickler, while they regard me as a pedant. Nevertheless, I do apologise because I understand only too well that, like split infinitives and finishing sentences with prepositions, one should use the correct grammar and everything is, of course, 'different from' rather than 'different to'. The member for Spence and I, once again, see eye to eye on an important issue in the Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to return to the Bill.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In relation to the member for Mitchell's comments, I am informed that there is a register of all mining claims. I am informed that the difficulty is that there has been quite a backlog of potential mining claims and of course we do not know where they will be. I am also informed that quite recently there has been a rush to identify exploration claims and, accordingly, the procedures would apply when we find out where they are. I thank the Opposition for its support.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

Mr HANNA: I ask the Minister, after concurring in the comments of my colleague the member for Spence in relation to the work being transferred to the operation of the ERD Court, about the current workload of the court and in particular the extent to which the time of the court is occupied in native title matters.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am informed that at this stage most of the matters which may have been part of the purview of the ERD Court have been lodged nationally. In fact, only one determination in this area has been made by the ERD Court. However, it is anticipated that, because of the backlog or the rush of new applications I mentioned a minute ago, if there is no agreement between the relevant parties there may be an increased workload. That workload could increase significantly.

Mr HANNA: Will the Minister enlighten the Committee as to the reasons identified by the Government for that rash of claims recently? Is it the impending Commonwealth legislation or possibly a change of Government or for some other reason?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: It is certainly not the Federal Government. Of course, one can only surmise about the reasons, but it is believed that it may be that the industry

has been concerned about the delay in the Federal legislation and has now decided that it will get on with the process and accordingly is lodging a number of applications.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5 to 10 passed.

Clause 11.

Mr HANNA: This provision caused some concern to stakeholders, because obviously it provides exclusion capacity to a Government so that by way of regulation certain native title questions could be exempted from the notice provisions which apply to the Registrar of the ERD court. That would be a serious undermining of the intention of the legislation if questions relating to determination of native title were to be the subject of regulations under that clause. Of course, a native title question is defined in section 3 of the Act to include not only questions about the existence of native title but also various other related matters.

I note that yesterday in the other place the Attorney did provide some reasons as to why that regulation power would not be abused, but I seek from the Minister two assurances. One is that the regulations anticipated will include an exclusion in relation to interlocutory injunctive applications, should a claimant seek to preserve entitlements in an area where mining is taking place on the ground, contrary to the provisions of the legislation. Secondly I seek an assurance on behalf of the Opposition and the stakeholders in this matter that questions concerning the existence or otherwise of native title will not be excluded by the regulations which should be made under the provision.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In relation to the first of the member for Mitchell's questions and concerns, I am informed that we would be prepared to look into the matter of an exclusion for interlocutory injunctions. I cannot guarantee a particular inclusion of that exclusion. I am happy to—

Mr Atkinson: An inclusion of an exclusion?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Absolutely; that is what I said, being a stickler for grammar. However, I am prepared to take it up with the Attorney-General and hear his view of the matter. In relation to stakeholders' objections and whether the existence of native title could be excluded by regulations, I am informed that we are obliged to conform with the Federal Native Title Act and also section 109 of the Constitution, which means that collectively we would be unable to exclude that via this mechanism.

Mr HANNA: I understand the Minister to mean that section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution simply provides that we could not have subordinate legislation that was in conflict with provisions of the Federal native title legislation. I am not just correcting the grammar in saying that. That provides some safeguard to potential native title claimants.

Why has the Government chosen not to specify a number of examples which should be, in the Government's view, the subject of an exclusion of the two month notice period that is set out in section 16? The Attorney and, I think, the Minister in his second reading speech referred to one example, that is, where expedited procedure is sought. It would make a nonsense of expedited procedure if a mining company wanted to clarify whether or not there was native title and a normal two month wait was compounded by the notice provisions to become a four month waiting period before the matter could begin to be addressed. Given that there are only a limited number of possible native title types of questions, why has not the Government done the hard

work and specified those matters which it now says it will have to think about in the fullness of time and make the subject of regulations?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: A number of matters come to mind in this regard. First, there may well be a necessity in this area in further legislation for things such as the Petroleum Act, for argument's sake. The Government has made a decision that it is better not to have to amend this legislation every time another Act were to impinge on matters for which we have legislated under this Act. Another indication is that, as the scheme is more utilised, we are becoming aware of a number of nuances which might be better covered by a rather broad regulatory scheme rather than a specific legislated condition. And, lastly, it is not particularly unusual to have regulations which have a reasonably broad sphere of action. I know that they are not all like that but it is not particularly unusual for that to occur.

Clause passed.

Clause 12 passed.

Clause 13.

Mr HANNA: I come back to a question I raised in my second reading contribution as to the many examples of illegal behaviour that have taken place over the past couple of years with scant regard for part 9B of the native title legislation. In his summing up at the second reading stage the Minister really skated over the issue, with respect. Does the Minister concede that in fact there have been hundreds of examples of illegal behaviour occurring, rather than the mining companies concerned having taken up the part 9B provisions and given notice to potential native title claimants?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: No evidence has been provided to the Government of that occurring.

Mr HANNA: Have you looked for it? Is there any sort of enforcement mechanism through Mines SA to ensure that mining companies are doing the right thing?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In a State such as South Australia, which is so diverse and geographically large, a decision to police these sorts of things, to the extent that the member for Mitchell is implying in his question, is impractical. However, the member for Mitchell identifies that there are hundreds of these cases where things have occurred illegally. If any of those cases were identified to the Director, he would be only too happy to take action. If there are hundreds of cases, tell us.

Mr HANNA: Is the Minister saying that, in fact, there has not been any illegal mining in the past couple of years? Is he saying that every time native title potentially has been threatened by exploration by mining companies, part 9B provisions have been taken up? I wish the Minister to put that answer on the record and state what personnel within the department actually have the task of ensuring that the native title provisions in respect of the right to negotiate are being adhered to.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I can only repeat what I indicated before: the Government has no evidence. It would be a brave Minister who said there was no illegality in any particular area.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am a brave Minister, but I am not brave enough to put on record that there have been none when you are telling me that there have been hundreds of examples. I am willing to put on record that the Government has no evidence of that. There are mechanisms through the department, with normal inspectors. I am informed that there are no 'native title' inspectors but there is a normal

inspectorate. As I have identified before, there are provisions whereby, when cases of illegality are brought to the Government's attention, we would be more than happy to take appropriate action, but we are not of a mind to ensure that there are inspectors behind every tree, looking for every possible mining infringement.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES (CHILD CARE) AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's amendment.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

The amendment clarifies that, if an additional child is allowed into the family for the family day carer, there is not acknowledgment of the registration of eight children for that family day carer. It acknowledges only that the family day carer has an additional child. It recognises only that child and does not allow that family day carer to care for eight children on a full-time basis. Once that child or another child leaves the family day carer's care, the carer is then again allowed to have only seven children. If they request permission to care for any further children because of exceptional circumstances, the child must be approved by Children's Services. We agree to this amendment.

Ms WHITE: I thank the Minister for accepting the Labor Opposition's amendment made in the Upper House, the significance of which the Minister has explained. It was moved by the Opposition to make sure that, at the commencement of this legislation or at any other time, there is no unfair treatment of family day care providers regarding the Director, under special circumstances, granting special exemptions in relation to the total number of children one care provider can accommodate. We appreciate that the amendment has been accepted by the Government.

After the Bill had been passed in this place, the Minister provided answers to questions that I had put to him on behalf of the Opposition in Committee. The Minister indicated that, as at 9 March, 1 878 family day care providers were approved in South Australia. Those providers cared for 14 344 children. It is clear from those figures that, on average, a child-care provider in South Australia cares for more than eight children in total at certain times of the day—certainly more than the seven children they are allowed to care for under this legislation. I was not provided with information relating to how many children are cared for at what time of the day, so I cannot comment on that.

I have been a little disappointed with the extent of the debate in both Houses. In the Lower House, a number of issues of great importance on the matter of child care in South Australia were raised: the care of children around the State in services that do not seem to come under any legislation; the fact that there are no regulations in South Australia governing the number of children under the age of six years—and they are defined as young children—for whom family day care workers can provide care; and the quality of training for family day care providers. In Committee in this House the Minister explained that a six week training course was available. It became clear in the debate that, while it was

an accredited course, completion of that course did not make a person an accredited family day care provider.

There has been a tremendous change in the child-care sector generally over the last couple of years, with \$820 million being cut from child care in the last two Federal budgets, and only a proportion of that has been cuts to subsidies to child-care centres. Given that structural change in the industry and that there is a Senate inquiry into child care around the country dealing with a number of concerns—and a lot of that concern is coming from South Australia because of the way we are situated in this State in terms of child care—the debate has largely been completed, yet these issues remain as major structural problems.

I am a little disappointed in that I was hoping that we might have heard some comment from the member for Waite, who does, as we know, have some experience in the operation of child-care centres in this State. I for one am a member who is always interested to hear from other members who have direct industry experiences in areas that we are debating. I would have been interested to hear the honourable member's views over and above his implicit support for this Bill. He has an opportunity to make a contribution now, and I hope he will find this issue worth commenting on.

One final issue that did not quite raise its head in this debate is the monitoring of the quality of child care provided in the family day care sector. A few years ago, as members would recall, there was a case on Kangaroo Island of a child wandering off from a carer and sustaining brain damage. I am not overly familiar with this case, but it was often cited to me as one of the problem areas, that is, insurance for family day care providers. I understand—and the Minister may have further details on this matter—that in that case the family day care provider was found not to be covered by insurance. That brings in another realm of significance in this sector that is not being considered appropriately. I would hope that, even though these issues were not dealt with satisfactorily during debate, the Minister would give some undertaking to review these matters, and I refer directly to the issue of regulations in the family day care sector, the services that are not covered by legislation—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member that this is not the third reading stage. Members should be concentrating purely on the amendment before the Committee at present.

Ms WHITE: The amendment is virtually to the single clause of this Bill, to the crux of this Bill. I am pleased that the Government has supported this amendment. It provides some assurance that the intention of this Bill will have some better chance of being enforced. I trust that the Minister will take on board my comments and that they will lead to some improvement within the sector.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I support the amendment. As I have said before, I have an interest in this industry and, as a consequence, I decided not to contribute to the debate on the Bill earlier, but I feel free to comment on this amendment. I congratulate the Opposition on moving the amendment because, it does help ensure that another measure of control is implemented in the conduct of family day care. I also congratulate the Minister on his support for the amendment, which also goes one step further towards providing a higher quality of family day care in this State. Noting that family day care at present provides approximately 52 per cent of children's services within the State, I think it is very important that we have arrangements in place to provide for the best of quality in family day care for the children of this State.

I note and agree with the Opposition's observations about family day care being different from other forms of care. The member for Taylor pointed out that family day carers are not required to be qualified as are some other child care providers. There is at present no form of licensing and there are no regulations under the Act, as indeed there are concerning other forms of care. This amendment seeks to take action to remedy that matter to a degree and in so doing will enable a better quality of care to be provided in family day care. We have an obligation to ensure that all children in this State receive the very best of care, regardless of the particular type of child care in which they are placed.

I agree with the member for Taylor on the depth and veracity of debate on this Bill. As I said, I therefore welcome the amendment as a step forward and, in a philosophical sense, would say that all members need to bear in mind that child care in all its forms is for children: it is not for parents alone, and it is not for care providers. At the end of the day, it is for the benefit of the children who experience it. Therefore, we have an obligation to ensure that in all forms of care standards are met and quality measures are provided for the protection of children.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I thank members for their contributions to this debate. I take the point of the member for Taylor regarding insurance on family day carers while children are under their care, and I will seek to provide an answer for her. I am not familiar with the case that she mentioned. In addition, I have asked for a copy of regulations that currently apply to family day care in Queensland, to see whether or not they are applicable.

Ms White: I have a copy here.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Perhaps the honourable member can supply me with a copy, as it will save me from writing away. We will see what regulations are contained therein and whether they are applicable to South Australia. I am happy to look at that matter for the honourable member. A family day carer can look after only seven children at any one time of the day. If those children came to the centre in the morning and another group came in mid-morning, for instance, the maximum the day carer can have at any one time is seven. I believe that that stands this amendment in good stead.

Motion carried.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS REGULATION (LICENCE FEES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 24 March. Page 767.)

Mr FOLEY (Hart): This Bill, which originated in another place, is one of a number of Bills bouncing between the two Chambers in response to the High Court challenge to franchise fees. I commence by acknowledging that there has been a reasonable amount of debate on this Bill in another place by the shadow Minister for Finance and the Treasurer.

I raise the point again that the process of Government is not best served, I believe, by having a Treasurer in another place. There is much about this Bill on which I would have liked to have the opportunity to question the Treasurer, but such is the decision of the Premier that he has nobody in the Lower House capable of holding down the portfolio of Treasurer and has had to give it to the Leader in another place. As I have said many times previously, that is not a reflection on the abilities of the present Treasurer: it is a

reflection on the lack of abilities of all Ministers here in the Lower House that the Premier did not have faith in any of them to carry out and hold down the role of Treasurer.

As we have seen with the High Court case that went against the States in respect of tobacco, petrol and alcohol franchise fees, we now have a rather complicated and complex set of arrangements whereby the Federal Government is now the collection agency, and moneys are distributed back to the States in a complicated way, taking into account the peculiarities of the respective areas of tobacco, alcohol and petrol. The issue on which I would have liked to question the Treasurer, had he been in this place, is the \$50 million shortfall that the Premier and the Treasurer have made much of.

I would like to have the opportunity to question the Premier and the Treasurer further on that, and perhaps that will occur during the budget process, to find out how much of that \$50 million is thrown out as a figure that the State is being duded, for want of a better word, by the Commonwealth in the process. I stand to be corrected, but I think we may find that it is not all as a result of the collection method and that in fact there was an issue at the change-over from the States to the Federal Government involving the timing of the collection and the matter of whether the money was collected at the beginning of the period or in arrears. That issue will be smoothed out as we go into the operation of a full financial year under this regime, where we may see that \$50 million so-called shortfall in fact decrease somewhat. I would have liked the opportunity to question the Government on that issue. Unfortunately, I do not have the opportunity to take the Treasurer on about it in this Chamber. Perhaps we will deal with that more in the Estimates Committee process, to find out exactly what money we are losing in respect of the current collection process and how much of it is a one-off shortfall. It will be smoothed once we are collecting for a full year.

The issue of the collection of these fees is significant and highlights the very fact that we have in place a temporary measure whereby the Commonwealth is now collecting our taxes on our behalf and reimbursing the States. That clearly cannot go on. As to the events of last Friday at the Premiers' Conference, whilst it is not for me to pass judgment as to whether or not the Premiers should have walked out on the Prime Minister, one of the disappointing features was that we missed an opportunity for the Premiers to sit down with the Commonwealth and have dialogue on the issue of Commonwealth-State financial relations which, from a State parochial point of view—putting aside the very important issue of health funding—is part of a significant debate occurring at a Federal level that we must be plugged into.

As Peter Costello and John Howard debate internally the make-up of the future taxation regime in the country, should they be re-elected (which is no absolute certainty), they will be going to the Australian people seeking a mandate to implement a GST which may well suit what they see as being their agenda. However, it does not address the issue of Commonwealth-State financial relations which, whilst separate to the GST debate, is still caught up in that whole issue because of the interrelation between the various taxes and charges, etc., between the States and the Commonwealth. I would have hoped that last Friday would provide an opportunity for debate to take place involving State Premiers, the Prime Minister and Peter Costello to see where there is common ground. At this point I am not prepared to state the preferred position of the State Labor Party.

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The Premier himself has not put a preferred position because the debate is a very fluid one as we work between issues such as fixed share of Commonwealth income. Clearly any arrangement must have a growth component in it. Various models are being discussed. I understand that Bob Carr, our Labor colleague in New South Wales, had a plan to address this issue. From what I read in the paper, his preferred model was a fixed share of Commonwealth income tax, but exactly what that meant I do not know as I was not party to those plans.

I hope the Premier, Treasurer and officers of the Treasury are working, as I am sure they are, at a level with the Commonwealth, although I suspect that John Howard is probably not taking too many calls from John Olsen at the moment, and perhaps John Olsen is not taking too many from John Howard. There needs to be dialogue between the two levels of Government, as all of us in this Chamber should be mindful of the fact that the High Court decision removed a significant component of our own ability as a State to raise our own source revenue. I do not have the exact percentages in front of me, but probably in the order of 25 per cent of our own State revenue is reflected in those franchise fees taken from us, and the more we lose control the more we lose the ability to raise our own revenue and the more dependent we become on Canberra.

I am under no illusion that a Federal Labor Government would be any more or less generous with the States than is a Liberal Government: it is always a battle between the States and the Commonwealth. Our respective colleagues in our Federal Parties take a more federalist view to life when it comes to money than we take at the State level, and I am under no illusion that dealing with Gareth Evans on this issue would be any easier, but the reality is that we have to strike a deal with the Commonwealth very soon to sort out the financial relations between the States and the Commonwealth for the future. The continuation of this messy way in which we are dealing with it now simply cannot continue, because it makes the job of the Treasurer and Ministers of this State all the more difficult to carry out with certainty.

I am not criticising the Premiers' walk-out last Friday, but echoing the view that it was a lost opportunity in terms of discussing Commonwealth-State financial relations. On that score I suspect that Peter Costello was happy to see the back of the Premiers, because that is one issue that he can put to one side. At the end of the day he would like that, because the more control he has over the States the better he would feel about it.

In respect of tobacco, most of the provisions involved are obviously necessary. Many of the changes are consequential. Whilst still having a role, the Office of the State Taxation Commissioner clearly is dwindling. My colleague the shadow Minister for Health has a number of issues she wishes to raise in respect of Living Health and the \$2.5 million of franchise fees allocated when, following debate on the relevant Bill, we increased the tax on the tar level. What is happening to the \$2.5 million?

Up until the High Court challenge Living Health was receiving a percentage of the turnover on cigarette sales. That is now a decision related to the budget process of Government. I assume that the future funding of Living Health would be linked into the previous 12 months, but I would not have thought that it would not have any guarantee of its level of funding into the future. That will now be a policy decision of the Government of the day, and I assume

that Living Health will have to bid for its dollars as every other Government agency has to bid for its dollars in the budget process.

There is no way I can see around that, and from the shadow Treasurer's viewpoint—I may not have the support of all my colleagues on this—I am not sure it is a bad thing that Living Health be put under the same disciplines, structures and processes as those involving other Government agencies seeking access to taxpayer funds. There is nothing inherently wrong with that, but I would be interested if the Minister could indicate the Government's views on future funding of Living Health. I will leave my comments at this stage and will not take the Bill into Committee unless my colleagues feel that it is necessary.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): As my colleague the shadow Treasurer mentioned, I want clarification on the situation concerning Living Health and on the undertaking given by the former Minister for Health in this House in relation to the \$2.5 million to be collected annually from the tar tax. I noted in *Hansard* from the other place that the Treasurer said that the Government 'is currently considering its position in relation to Living Health and how its functions might continue to be provided in coming financial years'. I would like an answer from the Minister on the level of funding for Living Health. As we all know, in the current Act the level of funding for Living Health is that it will receive not less than 5.5 per cent of revenue collected under the present Act. That generally comes to around \$10 million to \$12 million per annum.

I noted that the Treasurer in another place did not confirm that that level would be maintained: the Government was merely considering its position in relation to Living Health. I know of a number of concerns about Living Health that have been expressed by members on both sides of the House. However, there would be quite a lot of concern in the community, certainly from arts and sports groups funded by Living Health, if there was a suggestion that that level of funding would no longer be supported by the Government. So, I would like an answer on that score.

Following last year's debate on the Bill, it was announced on Thursday 20 March 1997 that the Government undertook, following an agreement by all Parties in this House, that it would commit the first \$2.5 million of any additional revenue raised by the legislation on an annual basis to a fund to be administered by the South Australian Health Commission. This fund was to be directly targeting education and publicity programs designed to reduce the incidence of smoking among young people.

I note from *Hansard* that the Treasurer said that it could be argued that there were no additional funds at all and that, in fact, we were looking at a \$50 million shortfall this year from the Commonwealth. Again, I would like some indication of the Government's commitment. I understand that the \$2.5 million which was allocated in last year's budget by the State Government has not been spent. I ask the Minister whether he can confirm that. I also note from *Hansard* that the Treasurer could not answer that question, but it is my understanding that that money has not been spent and is still sitting in the Health Commission's coffers.

According to the annual report of Living Health, a major priority for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 financial years is the development of a comprehensive five-year program drawing on the expertise and lessons of other major international tobacco control programs such as the Californian and

Massachusetts models. Increased funding of up to \$1.49 million from Living Health has been announced towards reducing the incidence of smoking amongst young people. If we take the \$1.4 million from Living Health and add to that the \$2.5 million from the additional tar tax, that gives us about \$3.9 million from this State specifically directed towards reducing the incidence of smoking amongst young people. The target was to reduce smoking amongst young people by 20 per cent over five years.

When this funding of \$2.5 million was announced last year, the health community of South Australia gave considerable acclaim to the fact that we were approaching a level of funding that would put us in front of the rest of Australia and probably give us the potential to be the second best in the world (after California) at being able to tackle directly, and almost certainly successfully, the reduction of smoking in young people. I would be very concerned—in fact, dismayed—if the strong commitment given by the Government last year in this House in respect of the \$2.5 million annual allocation (combined with the increase that Living Health has now allocated) was no longer to be honoured. I seek assurance from the Minister in that regard.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I thank members for their contribution. First, I will refer to the member for Elizabeth's concerns. To my knowledge, the Minister for Human Services has not yet come to a decision regarding the future of Living Health: whether it will be funded from the money that we receive from the Commonwealth or exactly what will happen, but I will seek an answer for the honourable member. In addition, I will seek an answer regarding the \$2.5 million that is supposed to be raised from the tar tax.

I have not read Living Health's annual report, but when the Economic and Finance Committee of the last Parliament reviewed Living Health one criticism that it made of that body concerned the amount of money that it was spending on anti-smoking campaigns, as that amounted to only 7 per cent of its total budget when the reason Living Health (formerly Foundation SA) was formed was to promote anti-smoking campaigns. So, I am pleased to see that Living Health has picked up on the committee's suggestion and that it will now undertake a five-year program on tobacco control worth \$1.49 million. I will seek answers to those questions for the honourable member and ask the Treasurer to provide her with a reply in due course.

As has been mentioned by the member for Hart, this Bill repeals the provision of the Tobacco Products Act that relates to the granting of *ad valorem* licence fees. As has been said, in 1997 the High Court held that New South Wales fees were invalid under section 90 of the Australian Constitution. It was recognised that, whilst South Australian legislation may not necessarily be invalid, enough doubt existed to cause the Government to cease collecting the tobacco tax. About \$5 billion was previously collected Australia-wide by State Governments, and we had no alternative other than to ask the Commonwealth to use its taxation powers to collect that revenue.

As the member for Hart has indicated, we are reliant on the Commonwealth Government to pass those fees back to the States. It would appear at the moment that the State of South Australia may be \$50 million short of what it would have collected through its own collection agency. The Treasurer is taking up this matter with the Federal Treasurer, and we will await the outcome.

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

**POLICE SUPERANNUATION (MISCELLANEOUS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 24 March. Page 768.)

Mr FOLEY (Hart): This is the first of three superannuation Bills with which we will deal today. As I indicated earlier during the debate on the tobacco legislation, my colleague in another place, the shadow Minister for Finance (Hon. Paul Holloway), has dealt with this matter extensively. That has reduced the amount of scrutiny one must apply to the Bill in this House.

Mr Venning: Not necessarily.

Mr FOLEY: That is true, but from my perspective as the shadow Treasurer my workload is a little easier when the Hon. Paul Holloway has gone head to head with the Treasurer on this matter. Clearly, this Bill is of an administrative nature. It reflects the changed employment circumstances of senior commissioned officers in terms of the way in which the legislation takes account of contract officers. It also deals with serving police officers who serve in another police force or with another Government armoured service, whether it be the Australian Federal Police or the National Crime Authority or, as the member for Waite would know only too well, on peace keeping missions overseas in the Middle East or wherever. If that happens for a certain time, the officer involved pays a contribution comparable with their increased salary if that officer remains working on a higher salary for another service.

I have discussed the two minor amendments to the Bill with the Police Association, which has indicated that it is satisfied with these changes. The Opposition, equally, supports that, and I am happy for the Bill to proceed to the third reading stage.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I thank the member for Hart for his contribution and also for his Party's support for the amendments. As stated within the second reading explanation, the Bill repeals the provision of the Act which relates to the interpretation of those police officers who are in contract situations, so that they are not disadvantaged as a result of being on that contract. In addition, there is no disadvantage to those police officers who may be seconded to another police force in another State or in another country, which does apparently happen quite often, in terms of their superannuation benefits. With those few comments, I support the Bill.

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

**SUPERANNUATION (MISCELLANEOUS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 24 March. Page 769.)

Mr FOLEY: This is the second of the three superannuation Bills we are dealing with this afternoon. I had better ensure that I have the right Bill, and that I do not start debating the wrong Bill—which I have done from time to time. No-one noticed, except me, because everyone was so

riveted to my contribution. It did happen once that I was giving a second reading speech on the wrong Bill for about three minutes and no-one had a clue until I realised.

This Bill involves a number of issues. In this changing world of superannuation, there are always surprises. They just pop out of anywhere, and we all find out about them along the way. But these changes, Mr Deputy Speaker, of which you are no doubt aware, require us to move quickly to legislate to finetune the existing arrangements to take account of changing circumstances and, as is the case with this legislation, to fix potential loopholes if and when they become obvious to us.

As I said earlier, perhaps some changes to superannuation cannot be easily fixed, much to the disappointment of some people. This Bill has a number of components, but the main issue concerns the closed pension and lump sum scheme. I understand that a small number of members, I think some 570 at this stage, are paying a contribution of approximately 1.5 per cent towards their defined benefit scheme. As a result of changes to superannuation law at the national level, the employer contribution is required to be 7 per cent from 1 July. Those members are not sufficiently funding their superannuation scheme and are required under this amendment to increase their contribution from 1.5 per cent to 3 per cent. Of course, with that comes the commensurate benefit, so there is a real incentive for members to do that. Whilst they are being asked to increase their contribution, it is not as if it is without significant benefit.

Should that cause financial hardship to some members of the scheme, options are available to them. If in the short term members cannot afford to make the extra contributions, members have the ability to stop their payments into the lump sum scheme or pension scheme, to fall back to the State super scheme for non-contributors and then to go back into the pension scheme when they feel able to do that.

I understand that the Public Service Association is aware of these changes. It has had discussions with Treasury and the Government and is supportive of them. I understand the PSA together with State superannuation officers will be discussing this measure with the affected members, and that seminars or discussion sessions for members will be conducted to ensure that those 570 members are counselled and given advice as to their options and perhaps given encouragement to contribute more.

Of the 19 000 members, 18 500 are paying somewhere between 3 per cent and 6 per cent. Indeed, some may be paying more, I do not know. Clearly, there is an opportunity for members to better provide for their retirement through this scheme. We do not believe that this is an onerous obligation on members. We have no choice of course—it is Federal law and members are required to comply with it. Another important issue in the legislation relates to invalidity or retrenchment packages where members have been retrenched or are on invalid pensions.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart has the floor.

Mr FOLEY: I understand that some members who have retired or who have been retrenched, for example, have taken two-thirds of their salary. They have the capacity to earn a further third of their salary, but anything above that figure will result in a dollar for dollar reduction in their pension. That is standard and appropriate. It has been brought to the attention of Government officers that some people have been availing themselves of avoidance measures by having some

salary paid to spouses, partners or trusts, and also used in other ways in which diversion from the Australian Taxation Office has occurred from the principal income earner and which has meant unfair advantage could be, and perhaps has been, obtained by some members.

That clearly is an avoidance measure and members should not be able to do that. Some members should not be able to advantage themselves while others cannot. The Opposition supports that closing-up of the loophole. It clearly broadens the definition. I point out that we will need to go into Committee because one or two of my colleagues wish to raise some issues in relation to retrenchment packages.

A clause to change the board membership will allow for more flexibility in the appointment of board members, where their term shall not exceed three years. Also, the legislation will provide for the board to conduct business by way of conference calls. I must admit that I am somewhat amused or surprised that we need that in legislation; I would have thought there was provision for that to happen anyway. But, given that such provisions are required in legislation, I accept that it has to be there. An adjustment is also to be made in respect of the sale of the State Bank to Advance Bank, where an issue arose related to the preservation of benefits of some employees of the old State Bank. It would appear that one person slipped through the net, and this legislation will tidy that up.

The Opposition supports all these measures, as we do with all measures related to superannuation; we deal with them in a constructive and appropriate manner. I know that all members of this House have a particular interest in superannuation changes, and it would be fair to say that members of the Parliament are now more aware of what can happen in superannuation changes. That provides for better understanding and more scrutiny of superannuation legislation as it comes before this Parliament. Whilst we are in the process of a bit of Commonwealth bashing, with John Olsen and John Howard engaging in a bit of fisticuffs at present, it would be nice if some of our Labor and Liberal Federal colleagues scrutinised superannuation legislation as diligently as we are doing in the State Parliaments. If we do not do that, all sorts of things slip through and sometimes the consequences are not known until after the laws have come into effect.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: No; I will give no particular example, but it is important for good government for us to give a little advice to our Federal colleagues that, when you deal with superannuation law, you must look at it very closely, because you never know what will go through Parliament if you are not paying close attention.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I will make a brief contribution on an issue which I intend to raise in Committee and which I now flag to the Minister. I have informally notified the Minister that I will be raising this issue. It is an issue that my colleague the Hon. Paul Holloway in another place raised with the Treasurer in debate last night, and in response the Treasurer indicated that an answer would be given today in debate in this House. The issue concerns a small number of workers—I believe about half a dozen—formerly employed by Australian National who have been retrenched. The problem for this group of AN workers is that at the time of retrenchment they are just that little bit under the age of 45 years that would prevent them from serving time to their formal retrenchment in the form of annual leave, sick leave and long service leave.

The current legislation does not allow this group of workers to take advantage of a retirement benefit, because they have been retrenched under the age of 45 years. However, this group to which I refer are long-term contributors to the superannuation scheme. I believe that some of these workers have been contributing to their superannuation scheme for 25 or 30 years. Their 300 months of qualifying period under the State Superannuation Scheme have accrued, so it is not a question of their having to contribute more: it is purely and simply a question of their being under the age of 45.

However, if you happen to be in their situation but over the age of 45 at the time of retrenchment, even if you have served only five years or much less than these workers (and I believe them to be mostly engine drivers, who started employment with the railways at a very young age) you are entitled to take a proportional pension. This group of workers feel quite aggrieved that they are so close and yet so far, so I will be appealing to the Minister to do something for them, and it may be necessary to negotiate with the Federal Government to come up with a better deal for this group of workers than is currently being afforded them. I will address this matter further in Committee, but the Minister may like to give me an early indication of his attitude towards this small group of former AN workers.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I will make a very brief contribution to this Bill in support of both my colleagues. A constituent of mine has also raised with me the issue the member for Taylor has just highlighted, and I will briefly echo the member for Taylor's comments. This very small group of AN workers has accrued the qualifying period and unfortunately they have been caught out in two areas; it is really a double whammy for them, because not only were they retrenched but also on being retrenched they find that they are caught out regarding superannuation with respect to changes to the legislation. As the member for Taylor very correctly points out, it is a very small number of people—about half a dozen—and I know it is sometimes difficult to make changes for a very small number of people, but it would appear that unique circumstances exist for the six AN workers who have been working in an industry which I think has been very shabbily treated at a national Government level.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that far too much conversation is taking place in the Chamber; it is very difficult to hear the honourable member.

Mr WRIGHT: You are right, Sir; the member for Elder just cannot help himself, and I thank you for your protection.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest that the member for Lee get on with it.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lee has the floor—for the present time.

Mr WRIGHT: The member for Mawson interrupts and says that he is a very good member—and indeed he is. He is an excellent member; there is no doubt about that whatsoever. I will return to the thrust of the debate. In addition to my great sympathy for the small number of AN workers who are caught in this very unfortunate predicament, I would also echo the comments of the member for Hart—another very good member, if the member for Mawson would listen to what I am saying. He used to listen much more intently when I was talking, but now he takes no notice whatsoever, hidden behind that pillar as he is. I am very surprised that he has moved from where he was, because he was in a very advanta-

geous position there. He not only had the ear of his Whip but also he was in a very good position, where he could advise a new member coming into the House, and he also had the member for Hammond on the other side. What more could you ask for?

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WRIGHT: The member for Mawson was in a superb position and now he hides behind the pillar.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chair would like to have the member for Lee get back to the content of the Bill.

Mr WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As to superannuation, the member for Hart is right again. We will always be constructive and very positive when it comes to Bills of this nature. Members do not need reminding, but it took a Federal Labor Government to bring superannuation onto the agenda in Australia and to take us into the next millennium. I remind the Chamber that it was a Federal Labor Government that brought Australia into the next millennium with regard to superannuation. Who did the Federal Labor Government do that with? It did it with the trade union movement and it put in place something which a Federal Liberal Government had ignored for 50 years. I commend the trade union movement for its great role in going about that. I support the member for Taylor in her views and I welcome the questions that she will be raising in Committee.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): As has been mentioned, this Bill includes a number of technical changes to the SA Superannuation Board. The board has been set for three years and there was the potential for a major departure, which would have created some problems. This amendment ensures that there is continuity and flexibility of membership as it will allow members of the board to serve for up to three years, thereby ensuring that a major departure does not occur.

As the member for Hart said, it also picks up that the contributions from those members towards the scheme will be 3 per cent. As well, an amendment changes the definition of 'income' used in determining any reduction in invalidity or retrenchment pensions for people in receipt of a benefit under the age of 60 years. Apparently, some people have been trying to manipulate the system somewhat and this just tidies up that anomaly and ensures that there is no disadvantage to the system. The provision now incorporates income that is received in a non-cash form and income paid in respect to remunerative activities but also paid to a third person, as the member for Hart has said, in relation to a trust.

As to the comments about Commonwealth members of Parliament and their duty to scrutinise Bills on superannuation, I have to agree that it is a very serious subject and one where scrutiny should ensure that no anomalies slip through and that all are treated fairly under the system.

The member for Taylor raised the issue of Australian National employees. Knowing that she was going to raise some questions on this, I sought answers from the Treasurer, who has informed me that former Australian National employees who were members of the State pension scheme and under the age of 45 years at the date of retrenchment are entitled to preserve their accrued pension benefit as a result of retrenchment. On transferring to AN from the South Australian Railways in the mid-1970s, those employees were promised the ability to remain in the State scheme as though they were State Government employees but, in terms of the

Superannuation Act and the benefit structures that apply to members of the scheme, members are only entitled to the immediate payment of a pension where, as the member for Taylor has already stated, they are retrenched, are over the age of 45 years and have been a member of that State superannuation scheme for at least five years.

I am advised by the Treasurer that the retrenched AN members of the State scheme who were under the age of 45 years at retrenchment are entitled to a much more attractive benefit than a simple refund of employee contributions, as has been stated. Whilst they are not entitled to an immediate payment of pension, these members are entitled to preserve a valuable accrued pension, which will be paid at the age of 55 years. They are the rules of the current scheme, and I indicate to the member for Taylor and other members opposite that the Government is not prepared to vary the rules to accommodate the payment of retrenchment pensions earlier than the age of 45 years to a special group of members in this scheme. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2.

Ms WHITE: The second part of this clause amends the date for commencement of section 18(h) to 1 July 1994. Will the Minister explain the change of commencement date? If it is intended that this amendment is for the purpose of helping existing workers in relation to benefits, will the Minister explain which workers they are and how many there are?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The reason for changing the date is that there were a number of former State Bank workers who, because they had not quite fulfilled 10 years in the scheme, would have been seriously disadvantaged. Only one worker would fall into that category.

Ms WHITE: The Minister is saying that he is amending the legislation to benefit one worker, and I do not disagree with that at all. However, the Minister is unwilling to consider amending the legislation to benefit a small group of AN workers—there might be six or eight, but it is a very small number—who were given assurances by the Government in the mid-1970s when they transferred from the South Australian Railways to Australian National that their entitlements would not be reduced as a consequence of that decision by the Government. When Australian National was sold, they were given further assurances that their benefits would not be diminished by that decision of the Government.

These workers have made choices and planned for their financial future in light of what they reasonably expected the Government would do, given its stated intentions at the time they had to make those choices. They acted on the reasonable information they had before them. At least on two occasions when the Government made changes to policy decisions, it gave them assurances that their benefits would be maintained. Today, the Minister is saying that he is willing to change this legislation for one former State Bank employee who was presumably just short of 10 years service. However, he is unwilling even to consider negotiating with Australian National workers for a better deal than they are getting from his Government. We must remember that it is Government decisions and not decisions made by these loyal employees that have caused their predicament. Not having access to this pension benefit means quite a bit of money to those workers. What is it about Australian National workers, who have been given these guarantees all along, that makes them less worthy

of the Minister's favourable consideration than this single State Bank employee for whom he is changing this legislation?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The two situations are quite different. The State Bank employee did not quite make 10 years of service, and moving the date back will only preserve, and not provide access to, the benefit that person will receive. However, the AN employees were given a guarantee in the mid-1970s, when the Commonwealth took over the State railways, that they would be able to continue in the State Government superannuation scheme. No other assurances were given except that they would be able to continue as though they were State Government employees, even though they were then being employed by the Commonwealth. If we make allowances for what may be only six people in AN—and it will not stop there—to access that benefit at, say, 43 or 44 years of age, the question is: where does it stop? Other superannuation recipients might also have been retrenched before the age of 45 years and been in a scheme for more than five years, and it would open up a large number of other claimants who would come forward. When I was with the centre, we looked at the number of people being retrenched by ETSA in Port Augusta at the time, and I refer to people who had at least 10 years worth of superannuation benefit but who were only 35 years old.

Ms WHITE: Is there anything I can say to convince the Minister to negotiate with the Federal Minister for a better deal for these workers?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Unfortunately, there is nothing that the honourable member can say, because it is not a Federal but a State matter. They are under the State superannuation scheme, so the Federal Government has no part of it.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (3 to 24) and titled passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (ADJUSTMENT OF SUPERANNUATION PENSIONS) BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This bill seeks to amend the pension adjustment provisions of the Judges' Pensions Act 1974, the Parliamentary Superannuation Act 1974, the Police Superannuation Act 1990, and the Superannuation Act 1988.

The pension adjustment provisions of these Acts provide that the payment of pensions shall be adjusted each year in October to reflect movement in the Consumer Price Index (all groups Adelaide) over the 12 months to the previous 30 June.

As Members will be aware, there was a movement of—0.08 per cent in the Consumer Price Index (all groups for Adelaide) for the 12 month period to 30 June 1997. In accordance with existing legislation, pensioners receiving a pension under the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, the Police Superannuation Act, and the Superannuation Act, should have had their pensions reduced. An adjustment to pensions under the Judges' Pensions Act is not made unless the movement is at least one per cent.

The Government decided however to maintain pensions at existing levels.

The legislation contained in this bill seeks to ratify that action and to amend the relevant Acts to provide that where a negative movement in the Consumer Price Index occurs, the Treasurer may

direct that no adjustment to pensions shall take place for the year commencing in the following October.

Explanation of Clauses

The provisions of the Bill are as follows:

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the Bill from 1 October 1997. This will validate the non adjustment of pensions in respect of the 1996-97 financial year.

Clause 3: Interpretation

Clause 3 explains the meaning of the term 'principal Act' in the various Parts of the Bill.

Clause 4: Substitution of s. 14A

Clause 4 replaces section 14A of the *Judges' Pensions Act 1971*. The new provision follows the form of the adjustment provisions in the other superannuation Acts that provide for pensions and is much simpler than the provision that it replaces. Subsection (3) enables the Treasurer to direct that subsection (1) (the provision for adjustment) will not apply in order to avoid a reduction in pensions. Subsection (4) ensures that in a subsequent year, when adjustments are again to be made, they are related to the existing level of pension and not to the previous year's CPI level.

Clause 5: Amendment of s. 35—Adjustment of pensions

Clause 6: Amendment of s. 42—Adjustment of pensions

Clause 7: Amendment of s. 47—Adjustment of pensions

Clauses 5, 6 and 7 make similar amendments to the *Parliamentary Superannuation Act 1974*, the *Police Superannuation Act 1990* and the *Superannuation Act 1988* respectively.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): This is another piece of legislation dealing with superannuation—a third in the series I spoke of earlier that originated in another place, where the Treasurer introduced the Bill. My colleague, the shadow finance Minister Paul Holloway, put down the Opposition's position on the matter. There are effectively two elements to this Bill, one of which was to amend the present superannuation legislation as it affects pensions in order to deal with negative CPI. If the formula existing in the present legislation applied as we entered into a period of negative CPI, the pension recipients would have had their pensions immediately reduced in line with the negative CPI.

At the time, the Treasurer took a decision that the State Treasury consolidated account would supplement from the budget that shortfall during the period of negative CPI. In this instance, I understand that figure was about \$220 000 and the negative CPI was .08 per cent, and that was an administrative decision of the Treasurer of the day to supplement the pension scheme from the budget. Clearly, something had to be done because, if we have further periods of negative CPI—and we are obviously in a very low inflation environment—an adjustment mechanism must be in place.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: I will let the member for Hammond speak on the Bill should he so choose, but I will finish my contribution. The decision was for the budget to support that issue, but we needed to correct the legislation. The Government's amendment provided for negative CPI to be passed on to the superannuation recipient not in the year in which it happened but in the following year, going into a period of positive CPI, when you would then be able to adjust the pension down in line with the negative CPI. Therefore, whilst the recipient would not receive the full CPI of the subsequent year, they would not suffer a reduction in pension in real dollars during the year in which the negative CPI occurred.

The other element of the Bill was what I call and many others have called the double-dip element. The Treasurer not only was able to adjust future pensions but also could levy the pension recipient to recover the money used by the State budget to support the fund during that period. So, using the

example of .08 per cent and assuming that there was positive CPI, pensions would be adjusted downwards in the following year, but the extra \$220 000 which in the eyes of the Treasurer of the day had been a windfall gain, would be required to be paid back. We felt that was double-dipping. We felt that was awfully mean. The Opposition took the view that it would oppose that double-dipping—the second element of that adjustment.

It is important that I put on the record that the Opposition was lobbied both by the PSA and the association representing retired Government employees, that is, the South Australian Government Superannuated Employees Association, who argued very strongly with the Opposition that we should oppose both elements. The Opposition did not accept that. Of course, the net effect of opposing it would have been that the original formula would stay and, if the original formula stayed, the negative CPI would automatically be passed on.

So, it was not a case of the Opposition's being able to oppose this legislation, for to oppose the legislation would have resulted in a worse outcome. Some may argue that we could have moved an amendment to arrive at the same result as the PSA and Superannuated Employees Association wanted. The Opposition did not believe that to be appropriate and therefore did not do that.

I notice that in the Upper House the Opposition's position, which I think was a fair and equitable one, was supported by both Nick Xenophon and, I understand, the Democrats. We were able to amend the legislation, and it has come to this place in an amended form. The Government has accepted the will of the Upper House and agreed with the Opposition to eliminate that element of the Bill that had a double-dipping component. I think it is a good win for the Opposition and a good win for the Parliament. It is to be acknowledged that the Government has realised that it was perhaps being a little mean spirited.

Whoever the Treasurer was at the time this decision was taken, who knows? Whatever motivation the Treasurer then may have had, we do not know, because that Treasurer now lives in Manilla, and this would be the least of his worries.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: I think he is taking advantage of the declining peso! The Opposition's position had received some criticism from the PSA but we believe that it was inappropriate for the budget—that is, taxpayer dollars that otherwise could be provided for the important services of Government—to be diverted to this scheme.

As politicians, we must declare an interest here: we are all affected by this. This is another of those hits, but it is important that this is not a piece of legislation being rushed through at midnight. The reality is that we accept that it does affect parliamentarians' superannuation as it affects that of the police, judges and many members of the Public Service.

As I said, it was the subject of spirited debate within the State Labor Party Caucus and Cabinet, but our Caucus and indeed the Cabinet were unanimous in the end (as all Cabinets are), and all members of the Labor Cabinet and Caucus now support this position. I indicate that we would be happy to progress this Bill through to the third reading unless, of course, any of my colleagues wish to make a contribution consistent with their Caucus position.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I have never made any secret of my view about this matter. I do not think the Bill ought to pass. I do not think that members of Parliament, or anyone else, when there is a deflationary period in our economy,

ought to be paid the additional just to hold the amount of money they receive. Their cost of living has gone down, and it is against the spirit of superannuation. I know that I am alone in that respect, and I will not delay the House unduly. I will find, in other ways and at other times, a remedy to the problem that I perceive this legislation creates. It is quite wrong. It is not morally defensible. It is about as bad as the Suharto family in Indonesia at present hanging onto its ill-gotten gains to the detriment of those starving and about to be killed in the civil war that will break out there. The measure has about as much morality as that.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): I want to make a couple of observations on the Bill. I support the comments made by our shadow Treasurer, who has responsibility for this piece of legislation. When we are dealing with the point made by the member for Hammond, that there has been a reduction in the CPI, why should superannuants receive any increase at all in their particular pension? That is one argument but, as we all recognise, the consumer price index is not a particularly perfect measurement for working out the actual cost of living in terms of pensioners and those on fixed incomes. For example, for a number of these superannuants, the mean average pension as I understand it is \$22 000 a year. We are not talking about the high fliers, such as politicians, judges, senior public servants or the like. The mean average pension paid out is \$22 000. Those people pay their taxes and miss out on some other concessions and things of this nature.

Many public servants have recently retired or taken voluntary separation packages, starting from the early 1990s. When I say 'voluntary', it is a bit of a moot point. If you do not take a package, you can sit in the transit lounge and play noughts and crosses for the next 25 years of your life, or you take the package and leave. Many people, not wishing to spend their life playing noughts and crosses in a shed somewhere, actually volunteer to take the package and leave. If they were in this place they would probably still elect to stay here and play noughts and crosses. In any event, they leave, and they have often left at a younger age than that at which they would otherwise have chosen to go. They have left in their late 40s or early 50s, rather than going through to age 60 or thereabouts and stepping off at a time basically of their choosing when they had their financial affairs in order as they had planned when they commenced in the superannuation scheme.

So, they have missed out on improvements in the superannuation fund in terms of the gradual increase in their pension entitlements and the increases in their salary that occur over time. The Treasurer's own recent statement showed that public servants were in receipt of a wage increase of approximately 6.9 per cent on average over the previous 12 months. So, you can see that those public servants who have been forced, in effect, to retire early have missed out on what they would have received had they stepped off at a higher salary.

In addition, the CPI basket used to include the housing interest component. As we all know, housing interest components have dropped dramatically over the last several years and have had a major impact on the CPI. Come 1 July this year when housing interest rates are removed, who is to say that housing interest rates will stay at historically low levels like this forever? Of course, they probably will not, and over time they will increase. So, this group of public servants has suffered the housing interest rate decline, which means nothing to them because many have paid off their homes already, and when they think they might get some money

back over time as housing interest rates gradually ease their way back up, because that has now been removed from the CPI, they will miss out on some improvement in that way.

We all know from the calculations made at various times that the cost of water rates, electricity and the like has not reduced, in absolute terms or as a percentage. They have all gone up. When you buy your groceries from time to time, the cost increases. Those are the normal day-to-day costs that people on fixed incomes have to meet. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government does recognise that and has done so for a number of years, commencing with the Whitlam Government, going back to the early 1970's, whereby the age pensioner receives the CPI increase, if there is one, or 25 per cent of the average weekly male earnings, whichever is the greater.

So, as I understand it, the age pensioner has had some benefit from the fact that there has been an increase in male earnings. I appreciate the fact that the type of scheme we are discussing here today basically falls into line with what other States have done with their State public servants and with what the Commonwealth has done with respect to its own Commonwealth public servants, but I make the point that age pensioners get the best of both worlds, if I can put it that way, although it is still not a great sum of money, and I do not pretend that it is. It is the principle to which I am referring.

My general observation with respect to this legislation is that we also need to take into account that any increase, if there is one, occurs 15 months after the price rises have taken effect. On the last occasion that there was an increase, there was a theoretical reduction in the CPI. We will find out what happens in June this year when we are told what the CPI is for the year, but any increase will not take effect until September this year. Come September, there may be another negative CPI—it may seem remote, but this time last year people thought a negative CPI would be remote. Housing interest rates or interest rates generally have not come down dramatically as they have in the past 12 months, but fuel prices have dropped considerably.

Other factors also may impact on the CPI to produce a negative result—I do not intend to speculate on that because I am not sufficiently well versed in it and therefore I am probably in the company of 90 per cent of economists in Australia. If there is another negative CPI, the State public servants who have retired on a median income of \$22 000 a year will have waited 30 months to get nothing and will have to wait another 15 months to see what the CPI is for the following year. If it happens to be a positive CPI, albeit a low positive, you will offset or average out the positive increase back to the time when you had your last positive, which will be something like 45 months previous.

These people, including our esteemed and former members of this Parliament, may not receive any increase in their superannuation—if there is another negative this year—for anything between 45 and 60 months, to take an extreme example. If anybody believes, using the CPI as a real measurement, that the cost of milk, bread and so on will not increase in terms of absolute dollars and cents over the next 45 months, we would be hard pressed to convince the people who pay the money, the superannuants.

I make those comments by way of observation in supporting the Bill, but this raises the issue—although this is not the debate to do it—of what is an appropriate measure in terms of the adjustment of incomes of people on pensions when they are tied to the CPI. It may have been okay when we were chortling along with 10 per cent CPI increases, but it is not

an appropriate measure in light of the deflation we are going through, which we are likely to experience for the next few years.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I thank the members for Hart, Ross Smith and Hammond for their contributions. The Treasurer in another place has accepted the amendments put forward by the Opposition Parties, so I will not go into discussion on that. As the member for Ross Smith indicated, the CPI was negative in this instance and housing interest rates will come out as of 1 July, but he has to remember that the CPI is a moving basket of goods, so there is no guarantee that the housing interest rates at some stage in the future, if they rapidly escalate, will not come back into the CPI again, because the Reserve Bank would recognise that there is an impact on people's disposable income as a result of such a rise. Over the years from when the CPI was first constructed a number of goods have moved in and out, particularly in relation to television sets, video recorders and so on, which were viewed once as a luxury but are now viewed basically as a necessity and therefore are included in the CPI.

The member for Ross Smith also indicated that other goods in that basket go down in price, and petrol is a classic example at the moment where there has been a reduction in the pump price of some 6¢ or 7¢ to consumers. As a result of that, as he also indicates, the price of bread, milk and other things may rise, but the disposable income consumers have resulting from that drop in petrol prices counterbalances the additional amounts they may be paying out on milk, bread and other things. That is why the CPI is set up. It is not the perfect system and does not cover everything, but it goes some way towards ensuring that those sorts of balances occur.

I thank him for his contribution to the debate. It is interesting to look at the CPI, the goods included in that basket and the sorts of changes that occur. As the honourable member said, I am sure that, whilst we are currently going through a stable time in respect of interest rates, there is no doubt that we will come out of this trough and interest rates will again rise. As a result I would expect them to again be included in the CPI and therefore taken into account. I support the Bill.

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

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I move:

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

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): This evening, I raise a very important issue to the electorate of Schubert and a large area of the Mid North, which I represented in my old electorate of Custance. It is a good news story. It is great to be able to report positively to the Parliament the appreciation of my constituents. In 1993, the Barossa Valley became part of my electorate. The previous member for that area, Dr Bruce Eastick (former Speaker and Leader of this House), handed

me a file full of newspaper clippings which dated back to the 1950s concerning the problem of the water supply to the Barossa Valley and surrounding regions. The water was a disgrace: it was dirty and smelly.

Previous Labor Governments promised to address the problem for many years. After the Myponga filtration plant was finished, that work was to be done in the Barossa. The Myponga filtration plant was completed in the mid 1980s and the gang of supervisors and workmen were then to go to the Barossa and start work on a new plant, but they never came. The member for Light would be well aware of this, because no doubt the Hon. Bruce Eastick has reminded him of this saga. Over three or four years during the time of the Labor Government, I worked tirelessly to help my constituents and to fix this problem in the then seat of Custance in the Mid North, but my efforts came to nothing. However, I am now proud to say that, as from early this month, the water is now clear. It is the same as Adelaide's water. Almost everyone in the State now has clear water. These are exceptions: Swan Reach town is one, and we will work to solve that. That is extremely positive, and the people are happy. The water in a white basin is so clear that you can see the bottom.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr VENNING: I will thank the Deputy Premier, because he played a big part. When you have a glass of water, it now looks inviting to drink. A constituent of mine wrote me a lovely letter in which she stated that she resides in a nursing home, she is arthritic, she has to have treatment in a spa, and she can now see her feet in the spa for the first time in 10 years. Stories like that are good to hear. When one has guests to one's home you can see that the toilet has been flushed because you can see the bottom of it. Of all the issues on which I have campaigned on behalf of my electors this has aroused the most response at my office. At last the Barossa has crystal clear water. I note that two of my constituents are seated in the Gallery.

Many members of this House would be aware of the campaign that I waged which earned the chagrin of some colleagues of mine, particularly the Premier when he was the Minister of Infrastructure. I refer to the bottles of dirty water which are still about the House. They have permeated not only offices in this building but high bureaucratic offices, and they are now collectors' items. If members still have them they should hang onto them. They are only four years old, and they contain some of the old dirty water. Some of those bottles have retained their greenish yellow colour, which I call 'Chateau le Murray', but some have been oxidised and have turned black.

Members can imagine what the water was like in a hot water service, particularly if it was unused for a few weeks. It was common for the heating element to burn out because of the water and the valves gave a lot of trouble. This added to the hassles and costs of my constituents, not just in the Barossa but right through the Mid North as far as Balaklava in the member for Goyder's electorate and right around Yorke Peninsula to Yorketown. Many visits were made to the Minister's office and many letters were written. There were many media campaigns (both local and State) and I never let an opportunity go by to remind the Parliament that most people had filtered water but that the people of the Barossa did not yet they were paying the same price.

The problem was exacerbated when the authorities chose to use a different source of water for the region and switched from Murray water to the Warren Reservoir. The water in the Warren Reservoir is stained by water trickling through

undergrowth and bark. It contains a grey pigmentation, and it cannot be filtered, and this material was dissolved where Murray River water material was in suspension. Those who installed their own filtration plant could not filter that water. So, there was further concern.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Yes, it was a pipedream, but now it is a 'pipe fact'. The file of newspaper clippings has grown, but the last ones are positive, and the file has now been closed. The Hon. Bruce Eastick said to me that it was an ongoing challenge and, like the Morgan-Burra road, a long time promised project. Many members before us tried to deliver. Both those projects have now been delivered. The Morgan-Burra road will open next Sunday. The total cost of that project was \$19.7 million. In these straitened times, I appreciate that. Clean water is now flowing in the Barossa and Mid North areas. One of my constituents in the Gallery can now wash his cars with clean water. Hopefully, the cars from—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not refer to people in the Gallery.

Mr VENNING: I should have known better, Sir. I apologise. Clean water is now flowing, certainly in the Mid North. I thank the Government for making a dream a reality. I thank Premier Olsen as Minister for water at that time—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr VENNING: —just wait for it—and also Minister Dean Brown, who was Premier at the time that the decision was made. The people are thankful, and so am I.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Last Wednesday I had the honour of attending the launch of a book entitled *The Flight of the Magical Paper Cranes*, which was launched by Elizabeth Mansutti in the courtyard of the Migrant Museum on North Terrace. The book is a compilation of stories by English-as-a-Second-Language students at Fremont-Elizabeth City High School. *The Flight of the Magical Paper Cranes* is the fourth book to be produced over the past 10 years by ESL students. But in their words and in the words of their teacher, Janice Madden Shephard, it is the first book which carries the students out of Australia and across the world. The other books tell of journeys into Australia.

The book centres around students' imaginings of a paper crane flying out from the English as a second language classroom at the school to various countries around the world that those students either came from themselves or experienced in some other way. The first 1 000 paper cranes hanging from the ceiling of a classroom were made at the Blair Athol Language Centre for New Arrivals. Janice Madden Shephard writes the first story in the book and describes why the first 1 000 paper cranes were assembled at the Blair Athol language centre. She writes in her story that the classroom had boys and girls from Serbia and Bosnia, straight from the war. She writes:

As we made the cranes, conversation began to flow, friendships were made. . . we were united by that single belief, a hope for the human spirit which can lift itself up and beyond the agony of despair.

Last year at Fremont-Elizabeth City High School, the ESL students made another 1 000 paper cranes, including a big golden one for wishing under. The 1 000 paper cranes were based on the book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. Janice Madden Shephard says that one night she was working late in the classroom and, as she was sitting there watching them move in the breeze, she thought about the idea of the cranes flying off across the world to various places. She and

her colleague, Peter Causby, talked to the students about this and got them to write many stories that became the book itself. She writes:

The short stories in this book came about as a result of 1 000 paper cranes which hung above our heads in the classroom. They gave us hope and insight in a myriad of ways, and we flew with them across the world.

They could only afford to print 13 of the stories by the students in the small book, but they are beautiful stories. An El Salvadorean student designed the front cover and the many illustrations that accompanied the short stories. Many of the writers were able to express feelings of loss and migration experiences through those stories. For example, on page 10 of the book, it states:

I see not only death: I see babies being born. It gives happiness. I see not only people lose each other: I see people find each other. I see not only bad things: I see good things.

The book is on sale for \$5 a copy, and it is a global experience from second language learners. Ms Madden Shephard has told me that some of the cranes have been overseas with students who have returned temporarily to their homelands: their paper cranes have gone with them and some have been returned creased and crumbled and now hang back in the classroom.

The original paper cranes still hang at Blair Athol, and the ESL students at Fremont-Elizabeth City High School have made another 1 000 which will hang over the exhibition on refugees entitled 'Twist of Fate', which will be officially opened in July this year. I congratulate all the students who put forward stories. I particularly congratulate the 13 who made it into the publication, and I congratulate Janice Madden Shephard and Peter Causby, teachers of the ESL program, who have made a huge difference in the lives of those students and their families.

The ESL program at Fremont-Elizabeth City High School has been extended to include adults, so not only does the program cater for 100 secondary adolescent students but also, because of the needs of parents of those students and other community members, the program has been run on one night of the week after school for the past four years. I have been present in a number of those classes and when certificates of achievement have been handed out to the participants.

The parent/adult class was started towards the end of 1994, and at that time it consisted of eight Armenian couples, some of whom were parents of students at the school. The group has changed over the past four years, apart from three parents who have stayed throughout: a Cambodian single mother whose daughter is now in year 11, a mother from Macedonia whose two children are also in the school and an Iranian mother whose two boys have been in the school. The Iranian mother and the Macedonian mother have improved in their English so much that they are both now serving in the Parents and Friends Association of the school and are both on the school council.

A Hungarian father with a son in year 11 attended the lessons for 18 months, and Janice Madden Shephard tells me they discovered that he was an expert builder. He started on a casual basis and is now working almost full-time hours at the school. The Iranian mother has been successful in part-time work for the interpreting service in Adelaide and still attends the lessons. All parents are now able to speak and advise their children in English. Many of the Armenian parents were able to get work following their lessons in English. She goes on to say that the oldest member of the group was an 82 year old Romanian grandmother and the youngest was 'in the tummy of a young Cambodian girl newly married to a Cambodian man who fetched her from her village in northern Cambodia'.

I have visited that class on many occasions and it is a very moving experience to see something so needed and working so well. It is very heartening to hear the stories of success of those people and to see the success of that class. Again, I pay tribute to Janice Madden Shephard and Peter Causby for their work. I also compliment the Principal of the school, Bev Rogers, because she has also supported that group and enabled the staffing to be set aside for it. I also mention Marlene and Colwyn Low, two strong supporters of the school who have put much of their time into it. Earlier today I spoke with the Minister about the group and suggested that he might like to visit the school and see it for himself. I hope the school will invite him to do just that, because it is a real success story, which should be made known throughout South Australia and farther.

Motion carried.

At 6.9 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 26 March at 10.30 a.m.