HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 20 August 1998

The SPEAKER (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald) took the Chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

SCHOOLS, PUBLIC

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I move:

That a select committee be established to inquire into the funding of public school operating costs, and in particular:

(a) The adequacy of Government operating grants paid to public schools;
(b) Those cost items which should be met by Government and those costs which should be met from other sources, including payments by parents;
(c) Those cost items which fall into the category of material and services charges; and
(d) Existing arrangements including the current regulation for compulsory fees, the existing levels of voluntary contributions and schoolcard allowances.

I have called for this inquiry at this time because the State and Federal Liberal Governments are taking South Australian education down the wrong path and it is up to this Parliament to bring about the circumstances that can halt that slide for South Australian education.

By Australian standards, Adelaide is one of the cheapest Australian cities in which to live. We have a low cost of housing, cheaper food and low costs of entertainment but, when it comes to public education, we are the most expensive. While school fees for a public primary school in New South Wales are typically $25 or $30, our primary school fees typically start at about $110, and the Government's new cap on the compulsory element of these fees sits at $154 per student. Of course, many State primary school fees are currently well above even this, with some schools charging over $200 per student.

High schools in quite plush, well-to-do areas of other States such as New South Wales and Victoria will attract a school fee of about $100 as a voluntary levy, but in South Australia schools are typically paying $190 up to more than $300. When we take into consideration all the fees, levies or charges under whatever name they are given that parents are asked to pay at the beginning of the school year in South Australia, we see that some parents have to fork out about $600 per student each year.

I shall give members an idea of some of the fees charged in South Australia. For example, at primary schools in southern areas close to the city you might pay $180; further south you might pay $130; and in the northern suburbs, typically the fees are about $110. Prospect Primary, for example, charges $160. In the secondary area, high schools just south of the city and in the eastern suburbs may charge around $180 and can climb up past the $330 mark, before you take into consideration levies on books, computers and all the other charges that schools are about to pay and, as I say, some schools are charging much more than that.

Some schools in South Australia have increased their fees over the past two years by more than 30 per cent and this increase in the cost to parents who send their children to South Australian public schools has coincided with the withdrawal by the Government of funding to schools in real terms. As school costs have soared, the Liberal Government has not only failed to keep pace with these increased costs but has forced schools to shift these costs onto parents through increasing school fees.

In this context and against this background, the State Liberal Government in this year's budget has announced that it will freeze school operating grants over the next three years, even though schools will be facing the spiralling costs of technology. If that was not enough of a whammy, the Howard Government plans to hit parents with a 10 per cent GST on education costs. Members might think that that will not happen because John Howard has said that education is GST exempt, but Mr Howard's tax package specifically lists a whole number of education items that will attract a GST and those items—books, equipment and services—also happen to be listed in this State Government's new compulsory school fees regulations as the very items on which our State schools levy their materials and services charge.

John Howard's tax package specifically states that only tuition fees will not attract a GST and that—and I quote from his tax package documents—'goods (such as computers and books) and services sold or leased to students by any educational institution will be taxable'. Those goods and services are exactly what the Government has regulated to come under the compulsory materials and services charge that Government schools can now legally recover from parents through the South Australian courts. This Minister for Education (as well as the last) has repeatedly said that schools fees charged by South Australian Government schools are not tuition fees and are for materials and services used by students.

That is why, when I asked the Minister on Tuesday and again on Wednesday this week in Parliament whether school fees for South Australian Government schools would be taxed under the GST at 10 per cent, he said he did not know. When I questioned him yesterday about whether he had given the Parliament misleading information when he said that school books would not be taxed (which is in direct contradiction to Mr Howard's tax package document) our Minister said he was not sure. Yesterday morning on radio he said school fundraising would not be taxed but, again, chapter 2 of Mr Howard's tax package documents under the topic 'education' clearly states—and I quote—'activities that are not GST free include sales of goods and services for fundraising purposes'.

Schools have only three sources of revenue, Government grants, parental school fees and fundraising and sponsorships. Their operating costs are increasing, the State Liberals are cutting their funding and parental contributions and fundraising have been stretched to the limit as more and more South Australian families are struggling in their attempt to pay higher and higher school fees. The Federal Liberals want to slap a 10 per cent tax on top of a whole raft of expenses that will make it even harder for parents to maintain their fee contributions to schools and harder for those schools to meet even higher costs with the extra 10 per cent that they will also have to pay. My call to establish an inquiry to investigate the funding of public school operating costs comes at a most critical time for our public school system.

Specifically I am calling for the inquiry to investigate: first, the adequacy of Government operating grants paid to public schools; secondly, those cost items which should be met by Government and those cost items which it is fair to ask other sources, including parents, to pay for; and, thirdly, those cost items which fall into the category of materials and services charges; and, finally, the existing arrangements, including the current regulation for compulsory school fees

that is in force, and the existing levels of voluntary contribution and School Card allowances.

It has been reported in the media that the Government will not support this inquiry. I therefore appeal to the Liberal, Independent and National Party members of this Chamber who represent schools to support this inquiry. These are schools that are suffering from a loss of funding and increasing costs and who despair at their lack of capacity to meet this shortfall from other sources such as parental contributions and fundraising. I refer to schools such as those in the electorate of MacKillop that have had their country assistance program funding slashed this year; schools in the Riverland that are facing losing their school bus services; and schools in the electorate of Gordon that are continually writing to me about their concerns about increasing class sizes.

The umbrella parent organisations for our State schools and a number of other representative public education bodies have all pledged their support for this inquiry into the funding of public schools. This Government has refused to address the issue of which costs of public education should be borne by Government and which costs it is fair for parents to cover. Instead, the Government has shut its eyes and left it to schools to struggle with this question to the point where, today, we have public schools that are charging parents for support staff salaries and the cost of building works. With the progressive devolution of utility costs and temporary relief teacher salary costs being put onto schools, it is no wonder that the Minister has not been able this week to answer the question of whether public school fees will be taxed under a GST, because the Government no longer knows whether schools are charging fees for tuition or materials and services.

If members read their local school newsletter they will be able to confirm that schools are charging not only for such things as materials and services but computers. Many high schools in Adelaide are putting a computer levy on parents and asking parents to pay for the upgrade of their car parks and buildings, and they can now be taken to court for the payment of those costs for which the Government should be responsible. The Government is not monitoring the situation to see which schools are charging school fees. That is why the Minister cannot answer questions about whether a GST will apply to South Australian public school fees. The tax package implies that it will.

With our high unemployment rate and our continuous struggle to keep our head above the economic gloom of this State, we cannot afford to allow our public education system to slip further. We used to have the best quality education in the nation. Now, only 57 per cent of our public school students even finish high school. There has been a decline from a near perfect percentage in the high 90s in 1992 to 57 per cent in 1998. That is a disgrace. Class sizes are climbing and school fees are soaring, and the Government's only response is to close a further 30 schools and to cut 100 more teacher positions. For the second year, the Government's solution to the problem of increasing school operating costs has been to attempt to make school fees compulsory, so that parents who are already struggling to pay can be taken to court to recover the money that, after all, the Government should be providing.

In its 1997 election policy, the Liberal Party promised to increase the 1998-99 education budget without selling ETSA. That is what the Liberal Party took to the election: a promise to increase the priority for education. However, what happened was that education received the harshest of all the cuts: tens of millions of dollars have been cut out of the education budget this year, and this will rise over the next three years. The priority for education has taken a dive. Members should not believe the con of the Minister if he tries to convince them that his department will fix the problem. We have seen the Liberal agenda, and it is forcing a funding crisis for our schools.

I appeal to members opposite not to exacerbate the funding problem for our public schools by becoming part of that problem. I ask them not to shut their eyes as well to the confused mess in our public school system about what is a State funding responsibility and what is parental responsibility. Instead, I urge members to become part of the solution by setting up this tripartite inquiry to fix a problem that is escalating in our South Australian public schools.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): 'Two-thirds of the wealth of the world is human resources capital and the rest is natural resources capital, according to the World Bank. . . whilst 80 per cent of the wealth of Singapore is a result of human resources capital, just 20 per cent of the wealth of Australia comes from human resources capital.' That quote appears in *Quality* magazine of October 1996 when commenting on the dawn of the knowledge era and its implications for Australia.

It seems to me that we are not doing very well in South Australia in coping with the dawn of the knowledge era, and we are certainly not doing very well in harnessing and releasing the skills of many children across the State who come from families that do not have the ability personally to invest heavily in the education of their children. It is the responsibility of this House, this Government and this Parliament to ensure that every child in our State is provided with the education that enables every one of their natural abilities to be identified and released. Only then can this State look to be truly great, influential and leading Australia once again.

There are major barriers to us achieving that, and I see many of them in my electorate, where schools are really struggling to provide children with the type of education that they need to be able to address the world of the twenty-first century. Many of these children come from families where education has not been highly valued—their parents had jobs which required a lower level of formal education than is required today. These parents are often not in a position to provide their children with the informal education opportunities that occur in a home where the parents are rich in educational opportunities and have so much to give their children and give them such an advantage. We must look to an education system that provides children from all different areas and backgrounds with the opportunity to use their skills. We do not have that at the moment, and that is why this motion for a select committee is so important. We do not believe that this Government is spending more on education than was spent during the 1980s and 1990s on a *per capita* basis, although some members opposite seem to want to believe that that is the case.

But I do not really want to talk about the history of who spent what on education. I want to talk about the future and what is needed to enable our children not only to learn but to enjoy learning, to enjoy learning to be part of a supportive community, and to enjoy prospering together in this wonderful State of ours. I sit through many school council meetings where parents look at the level of fees that are charged, at the needs in the school for information technology, at curriculum support materials and at opportunities to take the children out

into the wider world to see what it is all about and what might be their place in it, now and in the future.

All these initiatives cost money. They are usually funded by the parents from school fees, and the parents are struggling more and more to be able to pay. The level of fees is such that many parents have to make major sacrifices to pay and they become very resentful when they see other parents who are not in that position. This once again is promoting disharmony and discord in our schools when it is just not required.

Last Wednesday night I was sitting through such a meeting at the Morphett Vale High School where they were looking at the level of fees charged and the needs in the school, knowing that they could not charge the parents 1¢ more. It was simply unfair, particularly when there were two or even three children from the one family in the school and the fees would then amount to thousands of dollars. Many families do not have that money available. They are already paying to produce our wealth for the future. It is the Government's responsibility to assist them in that environment.

What upsets me is that the lack of appropriate funding for education is increasing the inequalities in our community. We have always prided ourselves on being a fair go community yet, if parents are not able to pay for the education that enables all their children's skills to be developed, they lack the opportunities to compete equally in the work force and in life. I speak here of the wide range of opportunities that are available to children in some schools. In some schools in wealthier areas, almost two-thirds of the children participate in music education, and we know that this offers an opportunity for children to develop a sense of accomplishment, of discipline and of contributing with others to form something very beautiful. In schools in my area, there are as few as three or four children who are able to enjoy musical education.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will keep their voices down. The honourable member.

Ms THOMPSON: This means they are not able to develop their skills. The same thing happens with sporting opportunities. It costs money to enable children to participate in sport these days. Many families do not have that money on top of the high level of school fees that they are now expected to pay. Again, at the Morphett Vale High School recently, students participated in Australian Business Week, an opportunity for children to undergo development of skills that they will require in commerce and to develop many entrepreneurial skills. The week was highly successful but the cost of putting on that week meant that the school had to search around to find the money and sponsors. In many cases, parents were simply not able to pay the additional money required to enable their children to participate in Australian Business Week.

So, I urge the Independents, if the Government has its mind closed to this select committee, to seriously consider the need to look comprehensively at what is happening in the education system in our State, to affirm the values of a fair go for every child to develop their potential no matter what their family background, to cease whipping parents the way we are at the moment, and to provide more and more for children in what they believe is a system that provides a free education.

This select committee offers a real opportunity for us to take stock of the slippery slide that we have gone down in terms of asking parents to contribute in an unfair manner to the development of their children. It would enable us to develop the skills of all children, hence the wealth of our State, so that, once again, we can thrive and prosper.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I support this motion. It is a very important motion that this House should consider, and I hope that the Independent members of this House support us in the establishment of this committee. Many motions come before the Parliament which are politically driven or which aim to score particular points, but this motion goes beyond that. It is trying to establish what is going on in all schools in this State when school fees are being set. Clearly, at present great pressure is being put on school communities and parents, in particular, as a result of the transfer of effort from Government to individual parents.

Over the past four years that this Government has been in power, it has squeezed education and schools in our State in every possible way. It has reduced the number of teachers working in our schools; it has reduced the number of school assistants working in our schools; it has reduced the amount of grants given to schools to pay for goods and services that schools need in order to deliver an education; it has restricted the availability of School Card to parents; and it has closed schools. This Government could be seen, I believe, by the community as mounting a full frontal attack on the education system—on the public school system.

The reason it does that is that it wants to transfer effort from the public sector into the private sector. It wants to see private schools grow, because that means the Government has to put less money into the system. It does not mind seeing the public system being broken down and reduced. It is quite happy to see the private sector grow and the public sector diminish, and it is happy to see effort being put on individual people. It wants to see a user-pays process. It is quite happy for school fees to go up, because that means the user-pays principle applies.

That might be okay in the leafier suburbs that some members opposite represent, but in the areas that some members on this side represent there is not the capacity to pay and all sorts of trouble is being created in school communities—and I withdraw the reference in relation to the member for Norwood. But there is a reduction in the ability of parents in the communities that many on this side of the House represent to pay increased fees. As a result, the school holds back the increase in school fees and reduces the services in which the children can be involved. That means we end up with a reduced public education system and, in fact, we are creating in South Australia a bipolar education system. Schools which have wealthy communities are able to require higher fees and get big contributions by way of donations and sponsorships, and schools which are in poor areas are having to make do with very little. This is an absolute disgrace.

The motion moved by the shadow Minister for Education would help to address that situation by exploring what is really going on. We would have some hard data before us so that any Government in the future, when it is attempting to cut expenditure from schools, would be reminded of the impact of those decisions. Some schools are starting to charge very high fees for public education. I understand that some schools in the eastern suburbs are charging between $400 and $600 a student per year for access to public education. That is a prohibitive level that would exclude many families from being involved in those schools. Certainly, parents on high incomes could afford to send their children to those schools, but parents on lower incomes—perhaps not low enough to get School Card—moderate to low incomes, would not be able

to send their children there, so they would not be able to take advantage of the education provided in those schools.

That is an elitist system that has been created: a two level system, one for the wealthy and one for the poor. That is something to which this side of the House is deeply opposed. There should be a public education system which is available and accessible to all the children of this State and which provides the same standard of education for all schools in the State. This Government's funding programs and policies are undermining that basic principle. It is extremely important that we get back to a system where everybody who participates in public education gets the same standard, and the member for Taylor's motion attempts to do that.

In fact, the increase in school fees is an additional tax being imposed by the Government on families in this State in the same behind the scenes way that the water levy, emergency services levy and increases in motor vehicle registrations have been imposed. I think that is an unfair impost on ordinary working and lower income people. It may be one of the reasons why the drop out rate is increasing. Families who have to pay school fees amounting to several hundred dollars may say to their son or daughter, 'Well, you've had enough education; it's time to get out of the school and start looking for work well before you may be ready or before you want to.' That is one of the interesting things in this motion: we should be looking at the impact of school fees on parents and on the participation rate. If parents are telling their children to leave school because they cannot afford to pay the school fees, it is a disgrace and an outrage.

As the member for Taylor said, we did have a very high participation rate of over 90 per cent, but it is now down in the 50 per cent range. There is perhaps a whole range of reasons why the participation rate has fallen by 40 per cent—it may relate, for instance, to the school certificate or to the reduction in courses that schools can now run—but I am sure that some of that is driven by the excessively high school fees. I urge members of the House to support this motion.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I support my colleague the shadow Minister for Education in her move to establish this committee, and I hope that all members will give this motion proper consideration. I appeal to the members for MacKillop, Gordon and Chaffey—the fiercely independent members—to give this matter serious consideration.

Mr Hill: What about the member for Hartley?

Mr FOLEY: I will come to the member for Hartley. I always keep open in my speeches a special slot for the member for Hartley. Very few committees could be more important in this Parliament than a committee that inquires into the educational needs of our children. I say to the member for Hartley, the honourable member who as I have said previously nearly lost this Government government at the last election and who now holds the most marginal seat in Parliament, that if he wants to mount any decent attempt to hold the seat of Hartley at the next State election he had better put his community first and not the interests of his own political Party, because at the next—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Sorry Graham, I missed that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to his speech.

Mr FOLEY: If the member for Hartley wants to make any attempt at the next State election to try to hold the confidence of the people of Hartley, he will support this committee of inquiry into education, because the member for Hartley is rapidly losing votes in his electorate and will continue to do so if he continues to back the policies of this heartless Liberal Government. There is no doubt that both the Liberal Party in South Australia and the Liberal Party nationally do not believe that public education requires the full support of Government. It is a Party that much prefers to see assistance go towards the private educational system at the expense of public education. At the next State election the people of South Australia will remember, as they did at the last State election, how they feel about this Government's quite regressive approach to issues relating to the funding of education in this State.

At present, we are seeing our State education system under enormous pressure. That pressure will only continue under this heartless and quite vicious policy of the national Liberal Party, strongly supported by the State Liberal Party. Even if members of the State Liberal Party do not understand the GST, they are supporting it. They are not quite sure what they are supporting, but they know that they are supporting it. We saw the pathetic performance of the Education Minister in this Chamber who was unable to tell us whether or not school fees and the school tuckshop would be GST exempt.

The Education Minister has been all at sea in terms of the GST. He is simply unable to give this House a proper explanation. Indeed, no Government Minister, including the Minister we have in the Chamber with us at present in respect of the EDS contract, has a clue about what the impact of the GST will do—most of all, the Education Minister, the member for Light, who no doubt will have his own pressures come the next State election. If he is not going to get serious about education now that he is sitting on 1.4 per cent, he will go down the same path as the member for Hartley at the next State election and very quickly become an ex-member of this place.

Yesterday morning I did a radio spot on 5AN with Mr John Fahey, the Federal Finance Minister. I do not know where the Liberal Party finds these people, and I am not quite sure how this guy was the Premier of New South Wales for three or four years. However, as I said yesterday morning, if the Liberal Party wants to roll John Fahey into Adelaide every week to sell the Howard-Costello GST, good luck to them, because it will not take long for the Labor Party to put the matter into perspective and ensure that the people of South Australia do not support a GST. As we are saying, a GST will have significant financial impact on the cost of education in this State. I noted yesterday that the hapless John Fahey, when he was talking about the GST—and cop this for a quote from the man who actually devised the tax package—said this:

> Unashamedly the benefits are not there for the wealthy. You do not get any relief when you get to a certain level of income.

This is the GST compensation package.

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Members opposite, including the hapless member for Goyder, are saying that is right. Have a look! You pick up $90 a week, but a pensioner in my electorate picks up $2.68.

Mr Meier interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Goyder always wonders why he is not a front bencher. The member for Goyder has to get his facts right. The wealthy will benefit from this GST, not low income earners and not those parents in my electorate and those of my colleagues who have to pay the school fees

and have to pay the tuckshops for their kids' lunches, as well as having to pay for other services.

Mr Meier interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: We have the hapless member for Goyder telling us that he agrees with John Fahey, and he is nodding there. He agrees with John Fahey's statement:

> Unashamedly the benefits are not there for the wealthy. You do not get any relief when you get to a certain level of income.

What a load of nonsense: the member for Goyder picks up $90 a week.

Mr Meier interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Goyder may not think that $90 a week is any relief. I know that the honourable member is a man of great means, but I reckon at $90 a week, compared to a pensioner in our electorates who picks up $2.68, you are being a bit rich.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Hammond—fair dinkum!

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Hartley says that we are trying to scare the people. You had better believe it, because they have every right to be scared about this GST package. Every elector in your .9 per cent marginal seat, including the 300 voters who kept you in office at the last election, will know what the fear of this GST is all about when the Federal election campaign is out of the way. We will go down every street and knock on every door to make sure that every elector in this State knows how vicious, expensive, aggressive and punitive this GST will be, particularly as it relates to education.

Mr Hill interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: My colleague the member for Kaurna is dead right: secretly the member for Hartley is hoping that the GST and Howard will fail.

Mr Scalzi: It's the best package we've ever had.

Mr FOLEY: The member for Hartley now goes on the public record as saying that the Howard GST is the 'best package we've ever had'. The member for Hartley, Joe Scalzi, has just said, 'It's the best package we've ever had.' In three years, I reckon the Labor Party candidate might just bring back to the attention of the electors of Hartley exactly what he said. A pensioner in the electorate of Hartley—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right have had a fair go.

Mr FOLEY: —will pick up $2.68 a week, if they are lucky, when Joe Scalzi will pick up $90 a week. No wonder he says that it is the best package he has ever seen—because Joe Scalzi, the member for Hartley, will get $90 a week, and the poor old pensioners in Hartley will get $2.68 a week. It is no wonder the member for Hartley thinks it is a great package, and it is no wonder the members for Bright and Light think it is a great package. The member for Adelaide also thinks it is a great package. Why would they not, because they are all greedy?

The Liberal Party has in neon lights above its name 'The greedy party. The Party of privilege, wealth and advantage that does not worry about the low income earners or the pensioners but only the wealthy and the rich'. We should support this motion as it relates to education and to all other services. We should support the motion and oppose the GST. If the greedy member for Hartley wants to pick up his $90 a week when a poor pensioner family will pick up only $2.68 a week, he should be ashamed of himself.

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

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

EDUCATION FEES

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I move:

> That the regulations under the Education Act 1972 relating to material and services charges, made on 28 May 1998 and laid on the table of this House on 2 June 1998, be disallowed.

In moving this motion, I note that Labor is not the only Party in this House to propose a motion to disallow the Minister's regulations. The Liberal member for Colton has placed the exact same motion on the Notice Paper on behalf of the Parliament's tripartisan Legislative Review Committee. I understand the reason for that parliamentary committee's desire to disallow these regulations is the serious concern that, under the Education Act, the Minister does not have the power to make a regulation for compulsory fees and, of course, the Legislative Review Committee is chartered with the responsibility of ensuring that all regulations are, indeed, in accordance with the relevant Act of Parliament.

That committee has clearly seen that there is a problem with these regulations. Indeed, the Opposition raised this very issue with the Minister in the education Estimates Committee hearing in June, when we presented the Minister with legal opinion that the Education Act did not allow for regulations to be made for levying compulsory school fees in public schools—in other words, a tax on all public school parents.

The Minister has not come back to the Parliament, as he indicated he would, to clarify that situation. However, my sources within the Education Department tell me that this Minister knows that he is on shaky legal ground in making these regulations. One assumes, therefore, that the Minister would be aware of the potential for costly taxpayer funded legal battles played out through the courts as a result of these regulations. Indeed, earlier this year we had a taste of what is to come when the Government took a parent to court for non-payment of Government school fees under last year's very similar regulation. The outcome of that case was that the Government lost, and I believe (and the Minister will correct me if I am wrong) that the Government had to pay court costs using taxpayer funds in that instance. So, perhaps that is an indication of what we as taxpayers are in for now that the Government has from 28 May legalised this tax on every public school parent.

Why would the Government persist with this back door way of bluffing the enforcement of compulsory school fees? Perhaps the fact that not many parents who struggle to pay the school fees will be able to afford the expense of defending themselves in court will act as an incentive for them to pay those fees; or perhaps it could be that, by using regulations that can only be vetoed but not changed by Parliament, the Government can once again avoid the real issue of which school operating costs should be met by Government and what costs it is reasonable to ask parents to pay.

South Australia is now the only State or Territory in the country for which public school fees are compulsory. It is a new tax in South Australia, in the sense that it can now be recouped through the courts. Indeed, the South Australian Minister is moving in the opposite direction in this matter from that of his interstate Liberal counterparts. For example, in January this year when the Victorian Liberal Education Minister was asked about school fees in that State—and

remember that in Victoria a number of schools have been closed and a significant amount of the education budget has been cut—the Minister still told schools and the public of Victoria that any levies in Victoria will remain voluntary and that this must be made clear to parents. I have the Minister's reported comments here, if anybody is interested.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Ms WHITE: Closing schools and redistributing resources! That is clearly the lead that the South Australian Minister seems to be following, because he is indeed about to close an additional 30 schools. Even the Federal Liberal Government does not appear to support South Australia's move to compulsory fees for Government schools. In fact, in a key plank of its coming election policy—its GST package—the Howard Government states:

> Public primary and secondary education is provided free of charge.

I have quoted from chapter 2 under the subheading 'Education' of the tax package document 'Tax reform—not a new tax: a new tax system' that was released last week. Perhaps Mr Howard should visit South Australia, because the law in this State introduced by the Liberal State Government in May this year is that South Australian Government schools are not free.

In debate on the previous motion I urged members to set up an inquiry into school fees and the problems currently facing our under-funded Government schools. But I want to raise one aspect of these regulations before us that is most inequitable. The Government has chosen to list in the regulations a scheduled fee for the amount that can be charged and compulsorily recouped from parents by way of a school fee. However if members care to look at those regulations they will find that the Government has listed all 640 public schools we have in this State and assigned a different tax to each of them. I do not know whether members appreciate that, but every school in this State lists a different compulsory school fee that can be recouped through the courts.

It is our contention that we want to provide the same basic quality of education in all our public schools, yet we charge parents different compulsory taxes. Let us just think about that for a moment. I ask members to recall that in this State many of our public schools are zoned. Zones are a necessary mechanism for controlling enrolments at individual schools in a public education system, but members should think about the implications of this list of different school fees for different public schools. We now have the situation of every child being compelled to attend school—which we support—and perhaps being denied access to a particular school because they do not live in the required zone; and also, by law, parents must now pay the fee of whichever school to which they are granted access. Let me spell out the very real scenario that from 28 May this year has now become reality in South Australia.

Let us take two neighbouring families living on either side of the very street that happens to be the zone boundary for, say, school A. Family 1 is within school A's boundaries and they are very happy to send their children to that school because it has a good reputation, it is close and the compulsory school fees are $60 per student cheaper than all the surrounding schools. Family 2 would also like to send their children to school A, but they live outside that zone; they live across the road from family 1. Family 2's choices are to pay that additional $60 per child to send their children to another school in the area, or they can fork out the bus fare for each of their (say) four children to travel across to the other side of town to attend a cheaper school whose compulsory fees they can afford. But family 2 does not believe it is fair that family 1 can avoid all that expense because they are able to send their children where they want and avoid being taken to court because they cannot find the extra money they need to send their children to the more expensive school with the higher compulsory fees. They find it especially hard to understand after they read in last week's tax package document that Mr Howard says that public primary and secondary education in South Australia is now free.

What the Government is doing with this regulation is imposing a partial user-pays system without user choice. Under South Australia's zone system this means that compulsory fees for some users are more than fees for other users, but parents will not necessarily have the option of sending their children to schools that they can better afford. What the Government is essentially doing is applying a tax. Let us face it: a compulsory fee is a tax. It is applying an inequitable tax of different amounts on different parents according to which school zone they live in. Further, they are applying a tax blindly, without knowing what those schools are charging that tax for.

It is quite clear from his inability to answer my questions in Parliament this week that the Minister does not know whether schools are charging for tuition or for goods and services. If they are charging for goods and services, as the Minister and the previous Minister have claimed, under the tax package school fees will attract the full 10 per cent. However, a week after the release of the tax package, the Minister still cannot tell the people of South Australia on which education costs they will have to pay 10 per cent and on which costs they will not.

This is in the light of a Federal Liberal policy which states that education will not be taxed. Of course, education will be taxed. If parents in South Australia are to be taxed 10 per cent on school fees, that impost will be greater than in other areas of Australia which, according to the Federal Government's tax package, have 'a free primary and secondary school education system'. This is a backdoor way of bringing about a new tax by the State Liberal Government, and it will be compounded by a Federal Liberal Government tax.

The previous motion to set up a parliamentary inquiry into school fees is a sensible course of action for this Government, which has got itself into a mess in respect of school fees, particularly in light of what its Federal colleagues are doing with the imposition of a GST on materials and services. This Government has just made its own State tax applicable only to materials and services, and the Federal Government intends to slap an additional 10 per cent onto the school fees of South Australian public school students.

The Minister must clarify the position, because we are heading for an election. Do the Liberals, both State and Federal, expect parents to vote on a GST without knowing what education costs they will face? We are told that the official campaign will begin shortly, so we are running out of time. I urge members to support this motion—it must be supported because it is the only sensible way to deal with this matter—and the previous motion to sort out this mess and determine what is fair for parents to pay and what is the Government's responsibility in respect of funding our public school system.

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

EMPLOYMENT AGENTS REGISTRATION (FEES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 2 July. Page 1256.)

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): This Bill, which I believe was originated by the member for Ross Smith, seeks to ensure that job seekers who wish to obtain employment through an employment agent—the number of which has escalated since the closure of CES offices—are not charged fees and, if a fee is charged in contravention of the Bill, there will be an avenue for recovery of that fee.

Whilst the Bill would prevent registered employment agents from charging fees to any job seeker, its particular impact would be to prevent registered employment agents from charging fees to workers in the following categories. The first category involves workers who are provided with employment by an employment agent who is a member of the Job Network but where the Commonwealth has not funded that employment agent to find jobs for those workers. These workers include some unemployed people who have a partner already in work; part-time or casual employees who are seeking full-time employment; people who are waiting to be declared eligible for the Newstart allowance or any other Social Security allowance—for example, some school leavers and those completing university; certain migrants who, after receiving approval to stay in Australia, must wait for a period of two years before receiving social security benefits; and the hidden unemployed, such as women returning to the work force. So, there is quite a range of people who are affected by this proposal.

Another category involves workers who are provided with employment by an employment agent who is not a member of the Job Network. The Government can see wisdom in some aspects of the proposal of the member for Ross Smith, but at this stage its position is to oppose the Bill. However, I emphasise that the Act is in the early stages of review, in line with COAG competition principles, and that, in respect of that review, it is quite clear that some aspects of the Act offend against competition policy principles.

These principles, as we know, allow for certain exemptions. The Government is saying that it may be appropriate to amend the Act following this review. It is not saying that there is not merit in the thrust of the honourable member's proposal but it suggests—and it will pursue this position—that it is more appropriate that the concerns raised by the honourable member be dealt with as part of a review of the Act in line with competition policy.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

EVIDENCE (SEXUAL OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 9 July. Page 1405.)

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I wish to make a contribution on this important Bill. It seeks to amend the Evidence Act to hinder substantially the admissibility in the trial of criminal allegations of sexual offence of what are called 'personal records'. 'Personal record' is defined in the Bill as:

> . . . a record that contains personal information relating to the alleged victim for which there is a reasonable expectation of privacy (such as medical, psychiatric, therapeutic, counselling, education, employment, child welfare, adoption or social services records or personal journals and diaries) but does not include records made by persons responsible for the investigation or prosecution of the alleged offence.

The legal effect of the Bill is to place personal records, as defined, in the same category as evidence of the sexual reputation and prior sexual history of the victim. No question may be asked and no evidence is admissible on these subjects without the leave of a judge. That leave should not be given unless the judge is satisfied that the evidence is of substantial probative value or would materially impair confidence in the credibility of the complainant. In addition, the judge is admonished to take into account the principle that the complainant should not be subjected to undue distress, humiliation or embarrassment.

In the past few years, there has been controversy about some of those accused of sexual offences attempting, via the legal device of a subpoena, to obtain access to the counselling records or treatment records of the complainant. In some cases, it is not hard to see why. There are controversial methods of treatment available which lead, for example, to the contamination of the memory of the complainant, so that the complainant firmly believes in the truth of his or her allegation, and which are, because of the way in which the complainant was treated, wholly unreliable. This is vital information for the defence and for the legal requirement of a fair trial.

On the other hand, those who have the care and management of, in particular, rape crisis centres see this legal technique as a threat to their existence and proper functioning and as another device by which to harass the victims of sexual attack. They have generally refused to produce records when required to do so by law. This legal impasse has produced legislation in New South Wales and a Bill before Parliament in Victoria. This is, therefore, a potent and difficult legal issue of current concern.

In November 1996, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) requested the Model Criminal Code Officers Committee (MCCOC) to examine the problem. It did so by issuing a discussion paper and receiving public comments on it. MCCOC believes that legislation is needed on the topic, and it is a fair assessment that the SCAG does too. The MCCOC has issued drafting instructions to Parliamentary Counsel. These have not been the subject of a final draft because of the pressure of business but, no doubt, they will be put forward.

While legislation on this topic is needed, it is not an easy subject on which to legislate, and this Bill does not represent the best way. The problem is that the right of the accused to a fair trial and to have access to material which may properly be used to assist him or her in his or her defence collides with the integrity of the counselling profession and, frankly, the fear that, if victims know that their counselling records could end up as evidence in court, the demise of effective rape counselling and a decrease in and continued under reporting of sexual assault. It is simply not possible for there to be a blanket exclusion of these records from evidence, although this is what some want and will argue for. There is every chance that the High Court would simply rule such an exclusion unconstitutional as breaching the right to a fair trial or, in the alternative, for very many good cases to fail to get before the jury because the court rules that any guilty verdict was, or will be, unsafe and unsatisfactory. That being so, some sort of tension breaker must be employed.

The Bill is based on the legal assumption that there is but one process involved—the admissibility of evidence. In reality, there are two processes involved: first, the order for the production of documents (the legal jargon for which is subpoena); and, secondly, the question of admissibility or use. Both must be addressed, and this Bill does not do that, even with all the best intentions. It is, therefore, unlikely to satisfy the rape crisis counsellors, because it does not address the whole of their problem which, notably, includes the first part of the process.

Secondly, the Bill employs the criteria used for the admission and use of prior sexual history for guidance in determining whether leave to use the evidence should be given. This is not appropriate—with all the best intentions of the member for Spence. The MCCOC drafting instructions, based on a variation of the existing New South Wales Act, require the trial judge to take into account whether the public interest in protecting confidential communications of this kind is outweighed by the public interest in ensuring that the accused is able to access all the available evidence in his or her defence. In this way, the attention of the judge is drawn to the relevant criterion and the reason for the legislation in the first place.

Thirdly, the analogy with prior sexual history and reputation is not appropriate legal analogy. The discretion to be exercised in those cases and with the counselling records kind of case is entirely different. Previous experience in this State and in New South Wales, in particular, indicates that, unless discretion is properly structured and cast in the two stage sequence, the trial judges routinely grant leave. That is why the MCCOC Bill will be based on public interest immunity rather than a general evidentiary discretion. And that is the right analogy to draw.

Fourthly, the rule should cover both oral and written records to be effective, otherwise the Bill could be rendered useless by the simple expedient of calling the person to whom the confidential communication had been made as a witness to be examined and to give oral testimony.

Fifthly, the Bill is far too wide. It would cover any communication made to anyone at all, so long as 'there is a reasonable expectation of privacy'. For example, it would cover a chat between the complainant and a neighbour over the back fence. Think about that. While the phrase has some uses, it should not be the focus of legislation. The draft being contemplated by the MCCOC and reflected in different ways in the New South Wales and Victorian legislation is direct and requires that the communication be in the course of a relationship in which the other is counselling or treating the complainant for any emotional or psychological harm suffered as a result of the alleged commission of the offence.

There are other details which could be pressed here, but the above suffices to make the point. In general, the issue is a real one on which legislation is needed—no-one questions that. The principle that access to rape counselling notes should be restricted is right. However, any solution is more difficult than this, and the Bill is not a sufficiently well thought out response to a vexing problem.

For the reasons outlined above, the Government does not support this Bill and intends to introduce a Bill into Parliament. The Government's Bill will address the difficult problems surrounding rape counselling notes. On 23 July 1998, the Attorney-General announced the intention to introduce a Government Bill on this issue and has announced the detail of the issues to be addressed under that Bill. And that is really the way in which we should deal with this complex problem. Whilst the intentions of the member for Spence are noble, he does not address the real issue of how to deal with this complex problem.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (INTOXICATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 26 February. Page 552.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): As no member has spoken on the Bill since 26 February, I think it is now reasonable to have a vote on the principle of the Bill. I thank the members for Waite, Playford, Peake and MacKillop for their speeches on the Bill, and I thank the members for Playford, Peake and MacKillop for their support of the principle.

The member for Waite, speaking for the Liberal Party, supported the drunk's defence. The member for Waite is not lonely in this respect. Our Attorney-General supports the drunk's defence, and among those Liberal members who have voted for the drunk's defence in the past are the members for Adelaide, Unley, Mawson, Light, Colton, Davenport, Coles, Frome, Newland, Bright, Goyder, Morphett, Flinders, Hartley, Fisher and Heysen. I hope that none of them will squeal—as the Attorney-General was squealing in another place earlier this week—when the Labor Party letterboxes the drunk's defence leaflet with reply-paid facility in their constituency. The Attorney-General persists in saying that there is no case of the drunk's defence being used in South Australia, but it is pleaded regularly, and the leading case where it succeeded is the case of Shad Alan Gigney. In his judgment, Judge Lunn said:

> Shad Alan Gigney has been charged in this court with two offences, being count one, escape from custody, on 3 December 1996 at Cadell being a person subject to lawful detention he escaped from the custody of the Cadell Training Centre, and a second count of illegal use, in that on that day he used a motor vehicle without obtaining the consent of the owner.

Judge Lunn goes on to say:

> There is no doubt on the evidence that immediately before he left Cadell he had been drinking an alcoholic drink known euphemistically as home-brew. It had been made illegally by another prisoner out of fruit, sugar and possibly other ingredients. The central issue in this trial is the extent to which Gigney was intoxicated at the time he left and the car was taken.

Judge Lunn concludes:

> In law it is not for the accused to establish any defence based on intoxication but for the prosecution to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused had the requisite intention for each offence. In this matter the prosecution has not been able to do so. On the whole of the evidence there is at least a reasonable possibility on each count that the accused's mind was so affected by alcohol at the time that he could not, and therefore did not, form the necessary intention to commit the offence. Accordingly, a verdict of acquittal is entered on each of counts one and two. Mr Gigney, you are discharged.

The Attorney-General repeatedly tells Parliament that there is no such case, yet the Attorney-General has been aware of that case for a long time, including before he made a misleading statement to the Council on Tuesday about the matter. In the debate on the Bill, the member for Waite said:

> The moral and legal guilt of a person depends not only on what they do or fail to do but also on the intention with which they do it. The American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes said that even a dog knows the difference between being kicked and being stumbled over.

The community at large knows that there is a great difference between an accident and a deliberate act.

The member for Waite seems to say that Shad Alan Gigney somehow stumbled into a car and stole it, and he stumbled out of the prison by accident. The member for Waite seems to say that Noa Nadruku stumbled into Sally Middleby and Rebecca Platten with his fists and then stumbled by accident into his wife and beat her up at the civic bus interchange. The member for Waite says:

Accidents are just that: accidents.

The member for Waite went on to say:

A rapist is a person who forces sex knowing that the other person does not consent.

Yet, on the Liberal Party's reasoning, the Attorney-General's reasoning and the member for Waite's reasoning, a man in defence to a charge of rape can plead that he did not know that the victim was not consenting because he was drunk at the time—and there is just such a case which has been decided not so long ago in Port Augusta. The victim of that complaint has contacted me because she is surprised that the Attorney-General continues to go around denying that the drunk's defence is used in South Australian courts. We will have the transcript of that case soon enough.

I urge the House to support the idea. It is a good idea. It is supported by 98 per cent of the population and it is right on principle.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL LEASES (TERMS OF LEASE AND RENEWAL) AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Our role as legislators is basically to strike the balance; to position the fulcrum, as it were, in the see-saw of life; to address the balance between those competing forces—those traditional forces—of capital versus labour, management versus employees, lessor versus lessee and, in this case, the balance between landlord and tenant.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr McEWEN: No, it is not one of these speeches. The Retail Shopping Lease Bill went to conference on Thursday 23 March 1995 for a particularly good reason: the Parliament of that day was struggling with positioning the fulcrum, struggling with the balance between the owner of the asset and that person wishing to lease the asset to conduct business. In that conference, on balance, they made judgments in relation to a number of amendments in the Bill, and we now find that they did not position the fulcrum as well as they should have. Today, I seek to address some wrongs and simply make some slight differences in terms of striking that balance between the lessor and the lessee.

This Bill addresses eight areas, the first of which is quite simple, involving a disclosure statement. Where costs are passed on from the owner of the asset to the lessee, the amendment seeks to ensure that the lessee have the right to sight the original costs. In very few cases, involving very few unscrupulous landlords, in passing on the costs they are escalating those costs. That was never intended; it is not a fair practice. So, the lessee ought to have the right to see the original cost. An example might be with power bills where the landlord pays the one power bill for the whole premises, adds on a percentage and passes it on to the lessees. This amendment seeks to allow the lessee to sight the original document; therefore, there will be an amendment in relation to disclosure statements.

A cooling off period of five days has been asked for. There are times when after signing a lease one ought to get some further advice—legal advice, advice from other people in a similar business, advice from friends, etc. The third amendment is a holding over time at the junction of a five plus five in the lease. If there are difficulties at this time, there ought to be an opportunity for a holding over of up to six months, during which time, if matters cannot be resolved, at least the lessee can move out. We are seeking a holding over time within that negotiating period at the five plus five.

The fourth amendment relates to arbitration over the rights of renewal. There will be times when the two parties ought to be given the opportunity to introduce a third party in relation to difficulties that might arise over renegotiating an extension of the lease. The fifth amendment is simply one about the variance in floor size. If, in relocating, the lessor wishes to introduce the lessee to a larger floor space—and then obviously charge on a square metre basis for that larger space—in some circumstances that could be quite unfair. This amendment seeks to allow a margin of 10 per cent, and beyond that it will need to be negotiated differently: beyond that, the lessor cannot impose an excess rental over the lessee for excess floor space.

The amendments also seek to reimburse fully any lessee for any costs of being relocated should that be required as part of a redevelopment or for other purposes. Furthermore, should profits be forgone during that process, again, the lessee ought to have the opportunity to recoup those costs. The small business ought to be protected where the landlord, for his or her own reasons, relocates them, when there is a delay in the process or whatever. It is a cost that was never factored in to the individual running of a small business, and it ought not be an impost on that person.

I alluded to the role of a magistrate earlier in relation to tribunal matters. The Bill seeks to introduce a magistrate in the process should negotiations break down. The final amendment relates to bonds and guarantees and seeks to provide that only bonds can be used (normally four weeks rent) and that other present unscrupulous practices are not used.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

TOUR DE FRANCE

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I move:

That this House congratulates South Australian cyclists Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker on their outstanding achievements in Le Tour de France and recognises the success of the Italian rider Marco Pantani for winning both the Tour de France and the II Giro D'Italia in the same year.

It gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion. I first met Stuart O'Grady in 1992 when I presented him with the trophy for winning the inaugural Norwood Parade Criterion, a gruelling race which probably ranks among the world's greatest and which was probably the springboard for his latest successes. The only difficulty I had with presenting the trophy to Stuart was that he belonged to the Port Adelaide

Cycling Club. He was one of a group of riders who used to be known as 'Charlie Walsh's Angels,' and Charlie used to put them through their paces by making them endure hundreds of kilometres of riding each week. They were also required to train at the old open air Hanson reserve track in freezing conditions.

In 1982, Stewart won the silver medal in the team pursuit at the Barcelona Olympics, and 12 months later won gold at the world championships—helping set a new world record at the time. After winning the bronze medal again at the 1994 world championships, he signed a professional contract with the GAN team and raced the early part of the 1995 European road season with the team. Stuart achieved a rare feat by winning his first race as a new pro when he won a stage of the Circuit de la Sarthe in April. On 1 July 1995 Stewart rejoined Charlie Walsh's national track team to prepare for the world championships. Stuart's presence back with the national team buoyed the other members of the team throughout its preparation for the world championships, and in Colombia he rode as though he were six men: riding four rounds of the individual pursuit (to win the bronze medal), four rounds of the team pursuit (winning the gold) and the qualification and final of the points race (finishing eighth).

Stuart was also a key member of the team in Atlanta, winning a bronze in the points race and helping the team pursuit to another bronze. After the 1995 Olympics, Stuart turned his attention back to his GAN trade team and the roads of Europe. In 1997, he contested his first Tour de France, achieving a second place in the ninth stage, and in 1998 Stuart has emerged as a leader in the European peleton. Consistent riding saw him wear the coveted yellow jersey as leader of Le Tour de France for three days before winning the 185 kilometre stage 14 and coming second in the points competition.

Patrick Jonker is also one of the graduates of the road cycling program at the AIS. After two years with the Australian Institute of Sport, he turned pro in 1994 for the Dutch Novemall team and, despite having a superb debut season, was forced to find a new team when Novemall withdrew its sponsorship. So, he signed up with Spanish super team ONCE at the end of 1994. During that year he produced several impressive performances in important lead up races to Le Tour de France and, as a result of that form, was subsequently selected to ride in the tour, an impressive effort for a neo-pro. With a new team in 1995, Patrick showed his class by completing the 21 day Giro d'Italia. The 1995 race was universally regarded as one of the toughest in some years, and he finished sixth in the stage 10 time trial. In this year's tour he finished thirty-fourth in the overall points.

The efforts of the Italian cyclist Marco Pantani, '*Il Pirata*'—the pirate—as he is affectionately known because of his shaved head, earring and the colourful bandanna he always wears, are extraordinary. As he claimed his prize as winner of the tour, a race of 3 711 kilometres staged over 20 days, few people realised the pain and suffering he had endured to ride again. He had been told by his doctors three years earlier that his career was over as he tried to come to terms with the possibility of having a leg amputated. In 1995 he collided with a training car, which required stitches in his knee and above his right eye, forcing him to retire from *Il Giro*, but within weeks he was back finishing third in the Tour de France.

In October of that same year, coming out of a bend in the Milan-Turin race, a jeep pulled out of a side street and Pantani smashed into it at 80 km/h, shattering the fibula and tibia in his left leg. It was after this that his leg was to have been amputated. However, he fought back and returned to racing in February last year, but three months after that Pantani was back in hospital after a crash caused by a black cat running across his path. Again he fought back and won two stages in last year's tour. This all confirms what an extraordinary individual he is to have been able to overcome all this adversity, becoming the first Italian to win the tour since Felice Gimondi in 1965; the first to win both the tour and *Il Giro* since Fausto Coppi claimed the double in 1952; and the first from any country since Ireland's Steven Roche in 1987.

I can identify with Marco Pantani because I have also had three accidents. In the early 1980s I was hit by an STA bus and knocked off my bicycle in North Terrace and was not able to ride for three years. Two weeks after that I was in an accident when a fork lift truck hit the car in which I was a passenger, and two weeks after that I was attacked by an alsatian dog, which left its teeth marks in my rear cheeks.

The success of the Australian riders has finally made people take note of what a great sport cycling is. Hopefully the success of our riders will lead to their receiving the same recognition and rewards as do some of our other sportsmen, namely, footballers, cricketers, swimmers and athletes. South Australia has had a long and proud history in the sport of cycling. For many years the Norwood velodrome was the venue for many exciting races and some well-known riders who raced there, including our own Murray De Laine, a sprinter, who represented South Australia 10 times, and Nino Solari, who rode in 29 six-day races, winning one in 1962, again at the Norwood velodrome. His son, David Solari, having dual citizenship, won 10 Italian championships and seven world medals and rode in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The enormous interest generated, as we all watched the success of our riders on SBS, means we can look forward to what should be a great event to be staged in South Australia next year, the 'Tour Down Under'.

The race will consist of 13 teams of 18 competitors each for a total of 104 cyclists. There will be teams from Italy, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, to name a few. The Italian rider Mario Cippolini, who is adored by women around the world, has been confirmed as a starter. The event will run from 19 January to 24 January and the various stages will take in areas such as Norwood—of course—the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula, the Barossa Valley, Glenelg and Port Adelaide, and the event will be televised both nationally and internationally.

Our two cyclists have brought enormous credit to South Australia, and I ask the Premier to organise an appropriate event in recognition of their success, perhaps by having them here at Parliament House. Perhaps by that stage the JPSC will have seen fit to install bike racks outside Parliament House so that these riders can park their bikes out the front of Parliament House without any fear of having them stolen. I commend the motion to the House and hope that members will support it.

Mr De LAINE (Price): I am very pleased to support the motion moved by the member for Norwood. Indeed, I thank her for moving the motion to congratulate these two brilliant South Australian cyclists, Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker. The performances of these two cyclists in this year's Tour de France were unbelievably outstanding. To compete at this level of European cycling in an event as tough and as

exhausting as the Tour de France requires riders not only to be super fit but also almost super human. To give an indication of how hard it is to compete and win at this level in Europe in a race like the tour would be to compare it to an Adelaide Amateur Football League team beating the best AFL football team in a grand final on the MCG. It is a very difficult and almost impossible task, but these two South Australian riders have excelled themselves in their sport.

Also, I would like to recognise the success, as did the member for Norwood, of the Italian rider Marco Pantani in winning this year's Tour de France and also completing the very rare double by also winning the Tour of Italy, *Il Giro d'Italia*, in the same year. This is a special feat reserved for a small number of super champions over the many years that these two events have been run.

First, I would like to speak about Stuart O'Grady because I have known him all of his life. His father Brian and I raced together for many years, and Brian was a very gifted rider and a national class all-rounder. We were products of the Port Adelaide Cycling Club, as is Stuart, and as is also Mike Turtur, the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic gold medallist. That club, which was established 113 years ago, has, like the Port Adelaide Football Club, a long tradition. In fact, it was one of the earliest cycling clubs formed in Australia. It has a long and proud tradition of producing champions, just like the Port Adelaide Football Club has.

Stuart O'Grady started racing with the Port Adelaide Cycling Club in 1986 as a little skinny freckle-faced 13-year-old kid. At that stage he did not show any signs of outstanding ability and, in fact, as a juvenile rider he was considered to be too small by the State selectors and overlooked for State selection. However, he persisted and in 1989 he represented South Australia for the first time in the National Junior Road Championships in Canberra where he finished a credible sixth. He then went on to win several amateur Australian junior track championships in his first year as a junior rider (under 18), and he won further national junior titles in 1990 and 1991. In both these years he won the George Tattersall's trophy for the most outstanding rider of all categories—juvenile, junior, senior and veteran—in the two national championship series.

Stuart O'Grady represented Australia for the first time at the 1992 world championships as a junior and won a bronze medal in the four man teams pursuit over 4 000 metres. In the same series he forfeited his junior status and, at 17 years of age, competed as part of the senior team in the same 4 000 metre teams pursuit and won a bronze medal in the world championship series. He represented Australia at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics as a young 18-year-old rider and won the silver medal in the four man teams pursuit with three other members of the Australian team. In 1993 he represented Australia in the world championships in Hamar, Norway, again in the 4 000 metre teams pursuit event and won his first world title in world record time.

In 1994 in the world championships he won a bronze medal in the points score scratch race, which gave an indication of his all round ability. In the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada, he won gold in the 10-mile scratch race in Commonwealth record time; he won gold in the 4 000 metre teams pursuit, again in record Commonwealth time; he won a silver in the 40 kilometre points score scratch race; and he won a bronze in the 4 000 metre individual pursuit, which was another indication of his absolutely outstanding all round ability. He came to the notice of European promoters and sponsors and was invited to join the European team of his choice. That is very rare, because usually in Europe teams approach a rider. However, he was given the option of riding with the team of his choice. He chose the Gan team, which is sponsored by a large insurance company of the same name in Paris, and it has proven to be a good choice.

Stuart turned professional in 1994, and he was so highly thought of that, for the first time in Europe, he was the first professional cyclist in a sponsored road team to be allowed to ride for his country, Australia, at the same time in track events in championships around the world. In the 1995 world championships in Colombia, South America, he won his second world title, winning gold in the teams pursuit event, and silver in the individual pursuit—again, a very rare double. In 1996, at the Atlanta Olympic Games, Stuart won a bronze medal in the 4 000 metre teams pursuit, and a bronze medal in the 40 kilometre point score race. In 1997 he rode in his first Tour de France, and he ran second in the fifth stage. His best position was fifth overall on classification, and he finished the event, which is a fantastic effort on its own.

He came home to Adelaide last summer and prepared for his next event, doing thousands of kilometres during the November-December-January period, and then went back to Europe for the start of the season in April this year. He had numerous placings and outstanding performances in major road events around Europe, and at one stage his father Brian went to Amsterdam and paced him on a motor bike, in a motor-paced road race over 130 kilometres. They finished a close fourth, with only two bike length's between the first four positions. It was an amazing effort, and it was a hard race. It was great to see the rapport between Stuart and his father.

In May this year, Stuart went on to win the Tour of Britain, which is a tough event. It is now history that he rode in the eighty-fifth Tour de France—this year's Tour de France—and he wore the much coveted yellow leader's jersey for three consecutive days. It is outstanding to even win the leader's jersey, because the whole world focuses on that rider as the leader of the race. To cap it off, he won the fourteenth stage. It was the longest stage of the tour at 252 kilometres. He is only the second Australian to ever do this in the Tour de France. He finished third in the most prestigious final stage which finished in Paris, and he finished second in the points competition overall. Overall he finished fifty-fourth in the event.

The Tour de France is a month long, it involves many long stages, and they have only two rest days in that time. It is a gruelling event; in fact, it is the most gruelling event in the world. The race finished on Sunday 2 August in Paris, then the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday he was booked to ride in other big road events around Europe, so there is no rest for the wicked. On Thursday 6 August he had his first rest day for a couple of months and celebrated his twenty-fifth birthday. I have insufficient time to tell the House much more about Stuart, but he is the best all-rounder in the world today. He was classified as the No. 1 track rider in the world two years ago, and now with the Tour de France he must be the best all-rounder in the world. It is an enormous achievement to be able to ride road and track. It is a rare feat, and to reach the levels that Stuart has in both is absolutely outstanding.

The other Adelaide rider, Patrick Jonker, is a specialist road rider. He went to Europe when he was quite young, and he has stuck to road racing over there. He has not had the outstanding achievements that Stuart has had, because he is

more of a specialist road rider. He is the equal of Stuart, but he is not as accomplished an all-rounder as Stuart. He finished a creditable thirty-fourth in the tour this year. I also raced with Patrick's father, Evert, in Adelaide, and both riders are a credit to the State. Their performance is absolutely outstanding. The Tour de France is the biggest sporting event in the world. It is viewed by billions on television, and millions line the roads to see this race. Stuart and Patrick are both young, and they both have tremendous futures ahead of them.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I, too, wish to make a brief contribution. I commend the member for Norwood for putting forward this motion, and I congratulate the two South Australian cyclists, Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker, on their outstanding achievements in the Tour de France; and I recognise the Italian rider, Marco Pantani for winning the Tour de France and Giro D'Italia. That is quite an achievement. The member for Price described in detail the achievements of the two South Australian cyclists and what they have done for South Australia and Australia in putting us on the world stage. I also note that the member for Price has made a contribution to cycling in the past. I became aware of that through Frank Piro, who is also a South Australian cyclist from the past and a good friend of Murray's, and he told me of their past participation in this field.

As the member for Price said, it is important to note that cycling, especially the Tour de France, is one of the greatest sporting events in the world. Again, as I said, I commend the member for Norwood, because too often we concentrate on what appear to be more popular sports in Australia and forget that on the world stage they might not have the same importance. It is important to recognise the South Australians who participate in these other sports because they contribute to South Australia and Australia's reputation overseas, and that is what this motion is really all about.

As I said, the member for Price has outlined the achievements of both Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker, and I will not go into the details, because I could not list all their achievements. Suffice to say that they have been doing that for a long time and their commitment has been well noted from a young age. It is important to note that both Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker are typically Australian names! It is important to note that we are a diverse community. This is reflected in the South Australian names and, indeed, the Australian names on the world stage. Again, Australians from diverse backgrounds are making a continuous contribution in all spheres of life, and today in particular we note their sporting achievements. We have that diversity in all fields of sport. Indeed, I am sure that France would not have done so well at the recent World Cup if it was not for its multicultural team.

We must celebrate the fact that Australia has people from diverse backgrounds who are committed Australians, and in this case committed South Australians, who are making us proud overseas in their achievements in all spheres of sport. Many Australians would not know that the Tour de France is one of the great sporting events. As a South Australian, I am proud to know that we have these two outstanding athletes who are doing so much for South Australia overseas. I commend the motion.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): The Tour de France is quite obviously one of the toughest events on the sporting calendar in the world.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

Mr WRIGHT: I have not actually done it yet, but I have followed it with a lot of interest. Being a cyclist, as I know the member for Mawson is also, I have followed the Tour de France on a number of occasions with great interest, because it certainly is one of the most gruelling events on the sporting calendar, and all the athletes involved deserve our commendation. I congratulate the member for Norwood on bringing this motion before the House. I join her in voicing my support for the outstanding performance of both Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker. I can confirm with the member for Price that Jonker is spelt with a 'J' rather than a 'Y'. These two South Australians have performed outstandingly in the Tour de France. They deserve our congratulations and acknowledgment. A huge amount of training goes into the lead-up to this event.

As the members for Price and Norwood have pointed out to us today, the event goes for an extended period of time and requires enormous endurance and mental powers. For Stuart O'Grady to be able to hold the yellow jersey for three stages of the event—stages 4, 5 and 6—is an amazing performance and it really does put him right up there in the elite field as one of the great cyclists of the world. Let us not forgot that he is the first Australian to hold the yellow jersey since Phil Anderson did it some 16 years ago. For an Australian to hold the yellow jersey and for three stages of the Tour de France is certainly a magnificent performance, which we should not let pass without recognition. After Stuart O'Grady held the yellow jersey after stage 4, he said:

> This is the moment I have dreamt of ever since I started cycling. It is so special. Phil Anderson was the only one so far to hold the yellow jersey; now there are two Australians.

We are certainly very proud of Stuart O'Grady's performances; he has done a magnificent job. Members might be keen to know that at the moment he is in Germany training for the Commonwealth Games. We all wish him the best of luck. I do not know whether he will compete in all the events, but at this stage he is programmed to compete in the 4 000 individual pursuit, the 20 kilometre scratch race, the 40 kilometre points race, the 42 kilometre road individual time trial and the road race. I do not know whether he will take part in all those events, but naturally that would be very gruelling in itself. Whichever events he ultimately competes in, I am sure he will perform very well in representing Australia in the Commonwealth Games, and we wish him and the rest of the team every success.

Stuart O'Grady comes from the national track team, unlike Patrick Jonker who comes from the road squad. We might say that both performances were wonderful achievements, of which we should all be very proud. O'Grady came to road cycling after an excellent track career—with which he is still involved—during which he won two bronze medals at the Atlantic Olympics and was team pursuit world champion. We really are talking about an athlete who is in the very highest echelon and who is one of our elite performers. Another Australian competed in the Tour de France, Robbie McEwen, who is also part of the road squad. It is also pertinent to acknowledge Shane Bannan, who has recently been appointed as national head coach for road cycling.

We are extremely proud that the Australian Institute of Sport for cycling is based in South Australia. That is something of which we should all be very proud. From time to time all members would have seen our cyclists from the Australian Institute of Sport undergoing some of their training around Adelaide. It is obviously an event that

requires strong endurance and strong mental powers, because cycling must involve one of the highest levels of training of any of our elite sports.

I would also acknowledge our national head coach in the track area, namely, Charlie Walsh. Charlie Walsh has been an outstanding South Australian who has undertaken the elite program for cycling at the Australian Institute of Sport. Although Charlie may not have direct contact with the road squad, obviously he oversees cycling for the Australian Institute of Sport. But let us not forgot that Stuart O'Grady comes direct from the national track team and obviously the majority, if not all, of his training would be done under the tutelage of Charlie Walsh. Charlie Walsh is another great Australian. He has performed wonders for cycling. His services have been sought by many other countries around the world, but he has been a very loyal Australian and South Australian. We are very lucky to have a person of his calibre and with his loyalty who has stayed in Australia and South Australia and undertaken the responsibilities of looking after our cycling team.

I also acknowledge another person who has undertaken great work with our cycling team, namely, Michael Flynn, who is the high performance manager of the team. Michael Flynn is employed by the Australian Cycling Federation, but he is also with the track team in Germany at the moment along with Charlie Walsh and all our athletes getting ready for the Commonwealth Games. Some members may recall that Michael Flynn was formerly a league coach of North Adelaide in the South Australian National Football League. Michael is another individual whom we are very lucky to have involved with our elite athletes and elite cycling team. I suggest to the House that he has no peer worldwide, and is someone to whom I would like to draw the attention of the House today.

I will conclude on perhaps a more sober note but it is something which we cannot ignore, and that is the high percentage of teams in the Tour de France which were tested and found to have been involved in drugs. This is something which all Australians are very strongly against not only in cycling but also in all sports. I am proud, as I am sure are other members in this House, that our cyclists, along with the majority, if not all, of other elite sporting athletes in Australia, are random tested on a regular basis. It is only as a result of random testing that we will detect some of the drugs which are used in sport. Even with random testing we will not always catch them because of the sophistication that is involved in this cheating, which does occur.

It is a slight on sport worldwide when so many of these teams were obviously taking drugs to enhance their performance. We certainly are proud that no Australian was involved in taking drugs, and it is an area in which Australian sport by and large has a very good record, whether it be cycling or any other sport. I think all Australians, including all sports people, whether they be involved in an elite sport or any other sport, must be strongly encouraged not to become involved in the taking of drugs. The Tour de France must clean up its act and ensure that no drugs are involved in that sport.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): It is a pleasure to support the member for Norwood's motion to congratulate South Australian cyclists Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker on what is simply described—and rightly so—as their outstanding achievements in the Tour de France. The honourable member's motion also seeks to recognise South Australian rider Marco Pantani for winning both the Tour de France and the event in Italy in the same year.

It is of no surprise to me that the member for Norwood has moved this motion, because she is an avid rider herself, and there is no doubt that, if her calling had not been to this Chamber, she might have been the first South Australian or the first woman to win for Australia the Tour de France. However, a calling to Parliament is very important, and I know that she has sacrificed her opportunities to represent the seat of Norwood.

As my colleague the member for Lee said, it takes a lot of stamina, commitment, endurance and dedication to take on any elite form of sport, but I cannot think of a sport where this would be required more than cycling. My father was a road cyclist for many years. He would ride regularly from Adelaide to Victor Harbor and back, and he would tell me about the commitment that was necessary and the pain barrier that had to be broken through time and again. Before coming into Parliament I had to break through the pain barrier only once in my life. Of course, since coming into Parliament I have had to break through the pain barrier a fair bit, particularly when listening to some of the nonsense from members opposite.

This is a great effort. It is fantastic to see South Australians again leading the world. The yellow jersey that Stuart O'Grady wore so proudly brought a smile to the face of every South Australian and, I am sure, every Australian. It is something that most of us would only ever dream about. To put that dream into reality, as both Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker have done, is absolutely fantastic.

These opportunities also provide for a country such as Australia—and particularly for South Australia—a fantastic chance to put South Australia firmly on the international map. It is impossible to put a figure on the economic and social benefits that arise from this sort of success. These people are committed not only to their sport—and to themselves because they know that they can excel—but also to this State. I have seen this time and again, particularly since I have been a member of Parliament, when I have had the privilege of meeting many of these magnificent men and women athletes. They are shining examples for South Australia—and not only on the international map.

As individual members of this State, we should focus on the O'Gradys and Jonkers of this world, because they believe in South Australia and in themselves. Nothing is impossible for them. They have capitalised on a good education and upbringing and their opportunities in South Australia, and they have gone on from there. That is the one ingredient that is lacking in the recovery of South Australia. If we can get people to focus on these sort of folk and see how committed they are and how anything is achievable if you put your mind to it and believe in yourself and your State, South Australia will recover much more quickly. We have done it in the past, and I am sure that we can do it in the future.

This event was particularly gruelling. Whilst I had the chance to see only bits and pieces of it on the late night television news when I came in from work, in the heat in France, particularly this year, for any human being to do what they have done is phenomenal. I am sure that it took a lot out of them, but they have quickly recovered and are getting on with the next major international event and working towards the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It would be fantastic to see Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker win gold medals in the Sydney 2000 Olympics. There is every chance of that happening because of the way they are going at the moment

and they have two years in which to finely condition themselves and their bikes for the 2000 Olympics. I urge all South Australians and Australians to get behind them and encourage them in every way to achieve the ultimate goal—winning gold for Australia in Sydney in the year 2000.

I again want to congratulate the Premier and focus on an opportunity that he recently provided for this State by way of the Tour Down Under. Although I have not been told this, I assume that Stuart O'Grady and Patrick Jonker will be involved. The Tour Down Under, which was initiated through a commitment by the Premier and this Government, will again create magnificent exposure for South Australia. Fortunately, this event will go through my electorate and head down towards Victor Harbor. The community in my electorate is very proud of this fact and appreciates this opportunity. I believe that great economic benefits will flow from this event in both the short and the long term.

Further, I also want to congratulate Mr Ferris and the Southern Districts Veteran Cyclists who have their headquarters on Strout Road in my electorate of McLaren Vale and who have been able to achieve, piggybacking on the Tour Down Under, the Australian Veterans Cycling Championships, which will run through McLaren Vale and hopefully, subject to confirmation, start and finish, during almost a week of events, at the McLaren Vale and Fleurieu Peninsula Visitor Centre. About 300 people will probably look for accommodation in the McLaren Vale and southern regions as a result of these events, and there will be national television coverage and opportunities for us to display our fine wines and quality gourmet Fleurieu Peninsula food during these events. This is something that is snowballing through sport and recreation in a positive direction for South Australia.

I conclude by saying that, no matter how hard the going gets, elite athletes stick to the track and remain committed. That is something that we ought to remember. We ought to use those people more and more as mentors, particularly for young people. I take the point of the member for Lee about drugs. I am proud to see that South Australians, whether it be in cycling, swimming or any other sport, are not interested in drugs. The rest of the world should look at what happens in Australia where all that athletes do is finely tune their body. They do not need the steroids and other drugs which, unfortunately, some athletes are beginning to take: they finely tune their body in a natural way, they make a commitment and they get on with it.

I also refer to the success achieved by people such as Andy Thomas, who in another area is leading the world through space travel with NASA. He is another South Australian who, I might say, was baptised in St Margaret's of Scotland in McLaren Vale in my electorate. His family had a viticulture property on Sand Road at McLaren Flat. Andy Thomas is another committed South Australian. His father worked for me for more than 10 years. I know the family well, and they have always been proud South Australians.

Members interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: You should write to Andy Thomas and thank him for what he is doing for South Australia. I am proud to have in my electorate office a photograph of Andy Thomas in his astronaut suit which he sent to me to congratulate me for winning the seat of Mawson, because he wanted to see a committed member who would support the endeavours of the Thomas family through many generations to develop the wine industry in the McLaren Vale region.

Again, the electorate of Mawson comes out another winner. I think members might also find that the Jonker family has strong connections with the Morphett Vale district. So, it is a win-win for Mawson and a win-win for South Australia. I encourage all young people and all South Australians to look at these athletes and to aspire to be as committed to South Australia in their own endeavours as are the O'Gradys and Jonkers of this world.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I thank all the speakers for supporting the motion and for the great things they have said about the two South Australian cyclists involved, and I ask the House to support the motion.

Motion carried.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Adjourned debate on motion of Ms White:

That this House expresses concern that South Australia's public school and TAFE systems will suffer unprecedented budget cuts over the next three years and censures the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training for failing to protect the future of education and training in this State and for accepting the Government's cuts to his portfolio which far exceed those in other departments.

(Continued from 6 August. Page 1707.)

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): I rise to oppose the bizarre way in which the member for Taylor has gone about putting this motion to the Parliament and the way in which she has tricked people and manipulated the facts when it comes to dealing with this Government's and the education community's commitment to our young people and their future. The Opposition has continually claimed that this Government has cut back in education outlays: that is wrong. The truth is that, since the last Labor budget in 1993, this Government has increased education outlays, in real terms, by 9 per cent in just five budgets. I encourage any member who does not believe me to study the Budget Speech, Budget Paper 1 where, statistically, the facts speak for themselves. The outlays are nationally adopted through the ABS concept and are considered to be the most appropriate method of measuring growth in net spending. That measure shows that, in real terms, this Government has increased the financial commitment to education by 9 per cent.

However, it is not only a financial commitment that both the previous Minister for Education (Hon. Rob Lucas) and the current Minister for Education (Hon. Malcolm Buckby) have made to education: they have also been prepared to look at how to frame a better education direction for young people in South Australia. And it involves not only young people. When one looks at tertiary opportunities, including the linkages with vocational education and training between senior secondary schools and TAFE, as well as the partnerships now being created by the Government between the education area and the South Australian industry and commerce sectors, one sees that real outcomes are being achieved and genuine opportunities are being provided for a broad ranging group of students in vocational education.

This is not just about money: it is about being smarter with the money that you have. It is not about the trickery of the member for Taylor in trying to get a story or trying to ramp things up to create some sort of furore within the education sector: it is about acknowledging, first and foremost, the commitment of the teachers. I spend a fair bit of time at schools—as, I know, does the Deputy Speaker in his electorate of Heysen—and we know how committed the teachers are in coming up with curriculum opportunities that

will achieve the result we all desire, which is jobs for the students when they become eligible to enter the work force. It is about adopting IT and ensuring that by 2000-2001, through DECS*tech*, we will have a computer for every five children in every public school—and I might add that that is probably better than is the case in most private schools. It is a visionary commitment by the educators and the Government, and these are the sorts of things that ought to be acknowledged.

One example of some of the smaller things that have occurred within education as a result of this Government's again listening to the community and to those involved in the education system is that we can now send SAPSASA teams interstate to compete in sporting events. That should never have been stopped. The previous Government might have had it right in relation to the junior grades when it said that one should encourage the enjoyment and participation rather than the elite aspects of sport and winning at all costs. That is fair enough in the very junior grades but the fact remains that, as you progress through school, sport is no different from anything else you do in life: people will always try to knock you off. You have to try your best and you have to decide to go in hard all the time and see how far as an individual you can go. Looking at issues such as sport in education and encouraging all students to participate and then allowing them to participate in interstate sport will really help those students to develop as a well rounded person, which will assist them when they eventually leave the education system.

There has been a $15 million increase in education, training and employment outlays between 1997-1998 and 1998-99, yet the Opposition persists in perpetuating the myth that it is the custodian of public education. This Government has a record (as did the Playford, Tonkin and successive Liberal Governments) of being absolutely committed to public education. We can proudly stand here in this Parliament, or anywhere in our electorates, and endorse that commitment. But, of course, that is only one part of the jigsaw, and one has to look at all parts when examining opportunities for the future, in particular, for young people.

The simple fact is that Labor's track record cannot match this Government's, in terms of either education outlays or educational achievements on the ground. We are now building a school of the future on Port Road at Hindmarsh. So, we are looking at bringing in another opportunity for young people. We have students with high intellectual potential (SHIPs), and we are identifying those children. The socialists in the Labor Government said that we cannot do that—how dare we identify some people who will have an extra opportunity because they are gifted! How dare we not identify them! And how dare we not identify those students, through basic skills tests, who may need a little more one-to-one support through Cornerstones and Early Intervention programs during their foundation years in preschool and junior primary school, which will allow them to be good mainstream students. This is all about taking a holistic approach, and not voicing the socialistic, ideological nonsense about everyone being equal. We are not all equal—we are not all equal in this Chamber and we are not all equal throughout the world.

We have to make sure that we provide opportunities and checks and balances for all sectors so that we do not lose the greatest and most intelligent students interstate or overseas once they finish their education, and so that we emerge as a smart State, an IT State, a leading edge State and a best practice State. That is what Minister Buckby is doing when it comes to education, and it is about time that he was recognised and thanked by the Labor Party for the commitment and effort that he and the educators are making for the education system. As an example, I ask members to compare this Government's commitment to IT of some $85 million with what the Labor Party managed when it was in Government for 11 years—a paltry $360 000. And they purport to be the visionaries!

I do not really want to bring politics into this. I want to keep politics out of education, but when the Opposition continually plays games one has to become a little political and put the facts before the community. The Government has implemented the Early Years strategy and the Cornerstones and Early Intervention programs. The sum of $50 million has been committed by this Government to assist children with learning difficulties, to help them when they are young so that they have a good future in this State.

At the other end of the school spectrum, the most fundamental change is taking place in secondary school education, that is, the VET courses. I have a passion for these courses because, as the Hon. Bob Such always says, 'We don't need everyone to be a brain surgeon.' It would be a funny place if everyone had a PhD in brain surgery. We need to encourage people to work at Mitsubishi, to develop their trade skills to the highest possible level and to continue to produce world-class cars such as is occurring at Mitsubishi at present. We need electricians, plumbers and farmers—a whole cross-section of people. This Government is providing more vocational learning opportunities now than at any other time in history.

This change is driven by the Government's $11 million Ready, Set, Go program. Labor cannot lay a glove on the Government's education achievements over the past five years. It has been five years of innovation. I cannot recall what Labor did for education in the same context over the same period. The Government's achievements have been quite remarkable not only in their own right but also because they have been possible in times of great economic and financial stress as a result of the State Bank disaster and the collapse of our financial system. That is clearly an achievement that should be acknowledged by every member of this House.

I appreciate that teachers should also be given the opportunity to have decent facilities. Teachers should not have to work in rooms without air-conditioning; they should not have to work in rooms that have not been painted for 17 years or 20 years. This Government has really stepped up the maintenance commitment to schools. There is still a long way to go, still more money needs to be put in, but this Government, after it fixes up the financial mess, has an absolute commitment to do more than it has done in the past five years, that is, to put more dollars into education. It is one of the fundamental planks, along with economic and social issues, and so on, for the future direction of this State. The Government is committed to education and it thanks the teachers for their commitment.

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

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I oppose this motion. I compliment the member for Mawson on his speech and on the well researched points he raised. There is no doubt that the Labor Party is trying to make mischief with this motion. It disappoints me greatly, because I think that education is the key to the future of South Australia. Our young people need to be

given every possible facility, every encouragement and all the financial resources available, within reason, to ensure that they have best education possible. For the Labor Party to give the impression that there have been unprecedented budget cuts is totally false; it is wrong, and this motion needs to be opposed and opposed very vigorously.

As the member for Mawson identified, there has been a 9 per cent increase in real terms in spending on education in this State since the Labor Government left office—a 9 per cent increase. To anyone who suggests that they are trumped up Government figures, I point out that not only Government figures indicate this: Australian Bureau of Statistics figures also indicate a 9 per cent increase in real terms since Labor's last budget. It is a 9 per cent increase and no-one should forget that. Therefore, this motion is totally wrong. The Government has increased spending at a time when it has not been easy. It has not been easy because of the massive debt that was left by the former Labor Government. It would have be an option for the Government to cut back overall in education as well but, recognising education's importance, the Government has sought to address the matter accordingly.

For example, I draw members' attention to the moneys spent on information technology. The Labor Party in its last year of office spent $360 000 on information technology; in simple terms, $360 000 on computers. What has this Government spent on information technology, particularly in relation to computers? It is not $360 000, but $85 million—a huge amount on information technology. We have revolutionised information technology in the schools in this State and we are going from strength to strength. It is very disappointing that the member opposite should laugh, because this matter is far from a joke. This Government takes information technology seriously and is endeavouring to ensure not only that our children will be the best prepared in Australia but also that this State is leading the world in new developments, including information technology. I applaud the Government for the massive amount of money it is putting into this area.

There are so many other areas where the Government has increased funding in an enormous way. For example, the Early Years strategy has seen the Government commit $50 million to assist children with learning difficulties. We know that unless the children concerned are given every help at the very outset they will experience learning difficulties for the rest of their life.

Debate adjourned.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

ISLINGTON RAIL WORKSHOP

A petition signed by 25 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to either place operating conditions on the activities at the National Rail Islington freight centre or have the centre's operation moved to alternative facilities at Dry Creek North was presented by Mr Clarke.

Petition received.

HUMES FACTORY

A petition signed by 45 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ensure that EPA operational standards are adhered to at the Humes factory site on Maxwell Road, Pooraka and to oppose any application for an extension to current operations was presented by Mr Snelling.

Petition received.

QUESTION

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

SCHRODERS

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** (24 March).

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Treasurer has provided the following information.

Optima did not commission Schroders to prepare a report into future options for ETSA and Optima, including privatisation.

During 1996 and 1997 the international merchant bank Schroders Limited undertook a series of assignments related to the separation of the generation business of ETSA pursuant to the amendments to the Electricity Corporations Act 1996. The bulk of this work related to modelling the impact of the separation legislation and the resultant vesting contracts.

As a result of a Board Workshop, a letter on the future of ETSA was prepared and sent on the January 7, 1998. That letter indicated that the board felt it was in the best interests of ETSA and the owner for ETSA to be privatised at an early date.

There is no Schroders report on this issue—merely a series of overheads.

EUROPEAN WASPS

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement about European wasps.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I advised the House on 28 May 1998 of my intention to outline the Government's intended strategy for dealing with European wasps. I am now in a position to do so. At present, the European wasp is considered a significant nuisance pest and is having a major impact on our South Australian lifestyle and economy because of its effect on tourism, outdoor events and food businesses and on the occupational health, safety and welfare of outdoor workers, particularly in the horticulture industry.

We have to accept the fact that the European wasp will remain a significant nuisance for some years to come. Without some type of new control agent at our disposal, all our efforts using available control methods can do no more than suppress numbers. That is why the Government is choosing to take a strategic approach to the problem and put resources into finding and developing new control mechanisms. The strategic approach that I am about to detail is the most comprehensive that will be undertaken in this country. Other States will now look to South Australia to solve this problem.

As I have indicated to the House in the past and reported through the media, I have proposed the allocation of $600 000 for research on European wasp control over the next three years. The aim is to further the development of baiting systems and search for new biological control agents. Submissions were recently sought from research institutions from within South Australia and other States on potential research programs. I will soon be in a position to announce which submission and research proposals have been chosen so that research can begin this summer. This is an investment in the future.

This State is prepared to make an effort to find a solution suitable for South Australian conditions. No other State

Government, nor the Commonwealth, is funding such research at present. However, as a result of the leading role that South Australia has adopted, there are encouraging signs that this may change. In New Zealand, some research is occurring into the control of the European wasp. However, they are putting more effort into the control of the English wasp as distinct from the European variety since it is an even greater problem for them. While useful work on baiting has been carried out both in South Australia and in New Zealand, this work has to be developed further if it is to provide 'off the shelf products' that the general public can utilise at an affordable cost.

Biological control has been tried in the l990s using a parasitic wasp. This method was unsuccessful. Accordingly, new control agents will need to be investigated. With research such as this, there is no guarantee of success, but I believe that we must continue to invest in research that could eradicate the European wasp, as doing nothing will lead to even more disastrous consequences.

European and English wasps are now a problem throughout most of this country. They undoubtedly entered through our ports. It clearly remains a Commonwealth responsibility to protect our environment at these entry points. Having failed to do so, it seems unreasonable that it should continue to deny any responsibility in either controlling this pest or in finding solutions, especially since research in New Zealand indicates that they could cause irretrievable environmental damage to some of our native insect and bird species.

To augment our research effort I have therefore also been lobbying the other States for a nationally funded research program. This appears to have had some impact. The Minister for Environment and Heritage has advised me that, at the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council meeting in New Zealand on 12 June 1998, endorsement was given to investigate the development of a nationally coordinated approach to public education and research for the control of the European wasp. I look forward to this initiative coming to fruition and the possible integration of our research effort with a national research program.

In New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, where the European wasp has been established for many years, the wasp is considered as a nuisance insect and not an agricultural pest. However, there have been reports interstate and overseas of the European wasp attacking bees and beehives and damaging soft fruits. In South Australia, the European wasp is yet to become colonised in established apiary areas, so reports of attacks on hives are yet to be significant. However, reports are now occurring in South Australia of European wasps attacking mature grapes, pears and other soft fruits, both in terms of being a primary agent of damage and as a secondary feeder of fruit damaged by birds and other agents.

Mr Foley: The one journalist we had has gone.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Hart might take note that this is a statement for the House—not for journalists. This has led the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development to commission research for 1999 to check such reports and investigate whether European wasps can act as a primary pest for grapes by actually damaging fruit or whether its true status is as a secondary feeder on already damaged fruit. While these research initiatives are being implemented, negotiations with the Local Government Association are well advanced on the development of a heads of agreement for a cooperative European wasp program to cover the next three years. These negotiations have been given a boost by the success of a joint application by the State Government and the Local Government Association to the Local Government Disaster Fund for $360 000 per annum for the next three years as a contribution to the joint program.

Under the proposed agreement these funds will supplement ongoing contributions of $70 000 each from State and local government to create a significant funding pool of $500 000 per year for the control of European wasps, and that will fund the $600 000 research program over the next three years, a public education program and not only allow continuation of the subsidised nest destruction program that has operated for the past four years but also give a significant boost to that funding.

In undertaking any public education program the role of the wider community in ongoing control programs needs to be made clear. State and local governments cannot suppress European wasp numbers without the active support of the public and affected industries. While I welcome the efforts of those councils which decide to continue offering free wasp nest destruction services through the proposed subsidisation program, I acknowledge that some councils may need to develop, following community consultation, locally appropriate control strategies.

To assist councils where the public do not cooperate with control efforts, I have introduced legislation that will provide order-making powers for councils to destroy nests and recover costs where people fail to arrange for the destruction of nests on their own land. This is only a measure of last resort and parallels, with similar provisions, existing order-making powers of councils in relation to the unsightly condition of land. It is important to have this power in place before next summer so that it is available to those councils who require it.

In order to support the efforts of councils in wasp control I will also be calling on ministerial colleagues to ensure that State agencies undertake a proactive approach to wasp control on land under their care and control. Because some agencies control large tracts of uninhabited land there is a real risk that such land could harbour wasps, and so some effort must be put into their control and tracking.

As an adjunct to the public education program, two other programs have already been initiated. First, the Minister for Human Services is arranging for the updating of information sheets to the medical profession on the treatment of stings from the European wasp. The unfortunate attacks on individuals last summer highlighted the deficiency of material available to the medical profession, with the last information sheet being produced back in 1985. It is intended that new updated information will be available this summer.

Secondly, the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training has initiated a development program of school curriculum resource materials on European wasps. Such material will give students and, through them, their parents and families a better understanding of the European wasp, which will ultimately lead to greater public assistance in dealing with it.

Another project that is to occur is an evaluation of a geographical information systems approach to mapping the flight paths of European wasps to aid in tracking the location of nests. The City of West Torrens is working with a private company, Daedalus (SA) Pty Ltd, in evaluating such an approach. Such a system, if successful, could greatly aid our efforts in finding nests and bringing the problem under control.

South Australia, through its seamless cooperation with the local government sector and through its whole of Government approach, is providing significant national leadership in this area. Notwithstanding this, as I have mentioned before, a satisfactory level of control is possible only if we find a new control agent, and that is why I am committing resources in this area. In the meantime, all sectors of the community must shoulder some responsibility for locating and destroying European wasp nests in order to try to keep numbers to tolerable levels this summer.

QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling questions, I advise the House that questions to the Minister for Government Enterprises will be taken by the Deputy Premier.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): What action will the Minister for Human Services take on advice from the Head of Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that the only realistic way for the Division of Medicine to meet savings demanded by the Department of Human Services is to reduce activity and reduce costs by closing wards? The Opposition has been leaked a draft copy of a letter from the Professor of Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the Chairperson of the North Western Adelaide Health Service which says that savings demands could only be met by:

Closing a 20-bed ward and dismissing staff by 1 September.

Closure of medical out-patient clinics 2 and 4 on one day per week.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Mawson will remain silent.

Ms STEVENS: And there are seven other measures, including prohibiting the Emergency Department from booking patients directly to outpatients and requiring them to be referred back to their general practitioner. The letter is dated Wednesday 12 August—one week after the Minister's announcement to this House that the Prime Minister had offered South Australia additional funding for hospitals.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The member for Elizabeth happens to be about 24 hours late, because yesterday morning I met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the North Western Adelaide Health Service. In fact, we discussed a number of issues that they have concern about. It is no secret that the North Western Adelaide Health Service overran its budget substantially last year due to a number of factors, one of which was that there has been unprecedented demand, particularly in respect of accidents and emergencies at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. At this meeting we were able to work through a number of key issues.

Dr Ruffin has indicated that their only option is to close wards but, in fact, in our discussions yesterday we strongly expressed the view that we do not want them to close wards and that, in our view, there is no need to close wards. In fact, we were able to give them an assurance that there would be a significant lift in funding as a result of the high level of activity they have had down there. In fact, we are working with them on their new budget for 1998-99 and I acknowledge that, of all hospitals under the formula for casemix, Queen Elizabeth Hospital could well get the biggest benefit because of the workload undertaken.

The letter was written before the meeting yesterday and before Dr Ruffin understood what the process would be in terms of recasting casemix. The casemix review is complete and we expect in the next two to three weeks to have the hospital budgets finalised. Yesterday I also had a chance to meet some of the senior clinicians from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital when I was out at the Lyell McEwin Hospital because, of course, they come under the same board, and they were at the opening. I discussed the issues with them. In fact, I discussed those issues in opening the new day surgery facility.

I must say that the clinicians, on the news I gave them, went away very pleased indeed. They had concerns which were legitimate because they had overrun their budget by so much. However, it is important that we have agreed to sit down and work through their budget overrun problems. I am talking about Professor Brendan Kearney and other staff from the Department of Human Services, the board of the North Western Adelaide Health Service, senior management and senior clinicians. I am confident that we will be able to resolve most if not all of those issues in those discussions. We will wait and see what the budget is for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in particular when the budgets are finalised.

ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Premier explain what impact a GST might have on the viability of the planned Alice Springs to Darwin rail link?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Certainly, the Adelaide to Darwin rail link is an important issue for this State's future. Preliminary assessments indicate that the tax package will be of significant benefit to the Adelaide to Darwin rail link. The Federal Government estimates that the tax reform package will reduce the cost burden of Australian business by about $10 billion annually and will deliver $4.5 billion in cost savings for Australian exporters. The replacement of a wholesale sales tax will benefit exporters; it will remove a key tax on business inputs; and exports will be GST free under the proposal. This will make exporting even more attractive, with exports more price competitive.

For a State that has 41 per cent of its manufacturing base exporting compared to the national average of 13 per cent, proportionately South Australia will get a greater reward and advantage. This will also impact on those industries that will gain from a direct rail link with the north of Australia. Industries that are our State's strength like agriculture, mining, car manufacturing and of course winemaking will all win from a GST, particularly in relation to the wine industry with the rejection by the Commonwealth Government of a volumetric tax on wine, as proposed by some sections of the industry.

These industries will be able to benefit from an efficient rail link to the port of Darwin and then on to Asian markets. Importantly, the GST will provide running cost savings to the operator of the railway. The Federal Government has also announced that diesel fuel excise for rail use will be reduced from 43¢ to 18¢ a litre.

Given the volume of fuel used in the rail industry, the return on investment for the project will improve due to lower fuel costs. Because of the tax plan, 10 existing taxes on business will be removed, and it has been estimated by the Federal Government that the cost of running the railway will, therefore, be 4 per cent lower. The GST plan, the tax reform

plan, looks like improving by 4 per cent the business case for the Adelaide to Darwin railway. That is a significant increase in the business case for that railway. That reduction would provide further incentive to the bidding parties to build this railway, which will, in turn, benefit our export industries. That has to be a good thing for South Australia.

Regarding access to the corridor, the Northern Territory Government has put a proposal to the Land Council. Having negotiated since October 1996, having reached an agreement in April-May and having had that agreement rejected in July when it was supposed to be signed off by 30 June, the Northern Territory Government has put a further proposal to the Land Council, that is, compensation of $7.4 million, provided that it is accepted by 28 August this year. Failure to accept that compensation package will see the Federal Government introduce on 31 August this year compulsory acquisition legislation to give right of access for that rail corridor. That is an amendment to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act which is particular and specific to the Northern Territory, and it has to be amended because the Northern Territory cannot use the native title legislation to compulsorily acquire. Therefore, to get track access, if agreement is not reached by 28 August, the matter will be introduced into the Federal Parliament, and the Prime Minister has given an indication that that will be fast tracked through Federal Parliament.

On the basis of that issue—the one only outstanding issue—being resolved, the bids have been deferred by a couple of months pending clarification of track access. It is anticipated that those bids will be received by 31 January next. It will take approximately two months to assess those bids, and there is no reason why construction of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link cannot commence prior to 30 June next year, particularly in light of the improved business case as a result of the reduced cost of operating over that railway line.

HOSPITALS FUNDING

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the statement to this House on 4 August by the Minister for Human Services that the Medicare offer fell short of funds needed for the operation of our hospitals, and the Premier's acceptance of that offer, will the Premier now accept the advice of Prof. Ruffin, the Head of Medicine at the QEH, that there are inadequate levels of care for the community and establish a public inquiry into hospital funding and the way this funding is management by the Department of Human Services? The leaked letter from the Head of Medicine of the QEH states:

There are inadequate levels of care available—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If I were the former Deputy Premier, I would be a bit quiet on these matters. The leaked letter from the Head of Medicine—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —at the QEH states:

...there are inadequate levels of care available now for our community that the hospital serves...the medical and nursing staff in the division urge the board to become political rather than remaining with activity in the Department of Human Services.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The first thing to realise is that, in accepting the Medicare offer, we accepted an offer in South Australia which at the time we acknowledged still fell short of the current demand through the doors of our public hospitals by the end of June this year. I said at the time that I saw the shortfall still being potentially as high as 2 per cent. One of the reasons why there has been an exceptional increase in demand—and it is a substantial increase in demand of about 5 per cent across the entire public hospital system, in some areas substantially more than that and, in some hospitals, as high as 7 per cent—is, first, the crash in private health insurance. I have been arguing strongly, indeed, for action to be taken to make sure that we attract people back into private health insurance. No single action could be taken that would have a more beneficial effect on stopping the increased workload going through the doors of the public hospital system.

I am delighted to say that last week the Federal Liberal Government announced a 30 per cent rebate for all people who take out private health insurance. That is equivalent to tax deductabilty for almost everyone and, for those on low incomes such as pensioners and others who do not pay tax, it is a direct rebate of 30 per cent. That is one of the key measures I have been arguing for. The other key measure is to make sure that we eliminate the gap for those on private insurance who go into hospital. Research has shown that that gap is the thing that creates the uncertainty. I am told that the Federal Government is expected to make further announcements about private insurance over the next week or so. I look forward to hearing about that. There is some speculation in the national press that it may look at the gap issue. I would ask it today to do so. Those two issues—the 30 per cent rebate plus tackling the gap—will go a long way to starting to attract people back into private health insurance, which is what we need to take the pressure off the public hospital system.

If people go back into private insurance and use private hospitals in lieu of the public hospital system, we have a further gain under the Medicare offer: for about the first 34 per cent—from 30 per cent to about 34 per cent—there will not be consequential compensation back to the Federal Government out of our Medicare agreement funds. In other words, if further people drop out, we will be further recompensed and get additional money. If people go back into private insurance, no adjustment starts until about 34 per cent. I would have liked the level to be about 37 per cent, because that was the original starting point at the beginning of the last Medicare agreement for which we have failed to be compensated. I cannot blame this Government for that, because that goes back to the former Labor Government and State Governments at the time.

It was not this Liberal Government that signed the 1993 Medicare agreement: it happens to have been the State Labor Government of South Australia. If anyone wants to take the responsibility and stand up and apologise to the people of the State for the fact that our hospitals are overloaded and we have received no compensation for the past five years from the Federal Government for that, I ask the Labor Opposition of South Australia to stand up and apologise to the people of South Australia, because its negligence in government in 1993 is the direct responsibility for that. There is no need for an inquiry. The facts are there. We know what is happening. We will see the facts when the annual report is printed for the Department of Human Services and the Health Commission. The facts will show a substantial increase in demand in the public hospital system. However, I am able to say to the people of the western districts, 'We will not close wards.' We

will achieve this through other means, including the fact that there has been an increase in demand in the western suburbs—an additional allocation of funds to help deal with the additional workload.

BERRI LIMITED

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): My question is directed to the Premier as Minister for Multicultural Affairs. How does the Government regard the particular advertising campaign recently launched by a good, longstanding South Australian company, Berri Limited, which allegorically depicts intolerant attitudes as stupid?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. Yes, I am aware of the campaign and I recently saw the advertisement on television: I have had a bit of time to look at television in the past couple of days. As members would be aware, the Government recently reaffirmed its commitment to racial tolerance by proclaiming the toughest racial vilification laws in Australia. We proclaimed those laws because the Government believes there is no excuse under any circumstance for people to be humiliated because of their racial background. So, you can imagine how pleased I and I am sure members of this House have been to see that advertisement on television.

I will briefly describe the advertisement for those who might not have seen it. It begins with an orange declaring his hatred of apples, and then cuts to an apple, who has a go at a lazy and stupid tomato. The tomatoes think the strawberries are ruining the neighbourhood; the strawberries think the pineapples have funny skin; the pineapples cannot believe how disgusting a mixed lemon-lime marriage is; and the lemon-lime thinks oranges are bludgers. The advertisement finishes by saying, 'Intolerance in people is just as stupid: celebrate Australia's diversity', with a shot of a number of young people of different racial backgrounds in the Riverland.

What impresses me most is that it is exactly the message that we have been trying to portray in the community: that diversity is this State's and nation's strength, not a weakness, as some would have us believe. Our State is made up of people from some 150 different nationalities. The skills, expertise and culture that we draw from these different nationalities all combine to make South Australia such a great place to live. I was impressed with the leadership that Berri Limited has taken in relation to this issue, and today I wrote to the Managing Director, Mr John Cook, commending his company for its stand on what I thought was quite an innovative marketing message not only for the company's products but also for the underlying theme. I think that as a community we ought to congratulate that company on developing such an innovative marketing campaign.

Racial harmony and the diversity of South Australia is important to us for so many reasons. Given our status as an export economy, it is also of vital importance that our trading partners know that we as people do not tolerate racial disharmony. A tolerant society is a great society in which to live, and it is the right of all Australians to be treated fairly. The reality is that we are a multicultural nation, and I am sure that, as legislation and resolutions of this House have demonstrated in the past, this House is proud of that fact.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier agree with the former Secretary to the Treasury and his former Senate colleague Mr John Stone that the Premier should tell the Commonwealth 'to go and get bloody well lost'; if not, what agreement has he negotiated with the Prime Minister to protect the State's funding base? On 14 August Mr Stone said that, if Premiers were in any way interested in retaining the relevance of their own States as entities in the Federation, they would tell the Commonwealth 'to go and get bloody well lost'. Mr Stone said:

> This is a bizarre thing. In 1901 we had a situation where we ushered in Federation. In the year 2001, those two great centralists, Howard and Costello, were ushering the Federation out again and it'll be centred in Canberra.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: You wouldn't have the faintest idea.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson will come to order. The Premier.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: First, let me correct the Deputy Leader. John Stone was not a senator when I was a senator: he was a National Party senator and he had left the Senate by the time I arrived. Having corrected that small point, I go to the thrust of the question, namely, the guarantees that the States have sought from the Prime Minister to protect our revenue base. I think the honourable member said that John Howard and Peter Costello were the two greatest centralists of all time. They are two easy arguments to dismantle, I would have thought.

First, the Prime Minister wrote to all the Premiers. I am surprised that Bob Carr or Peter Beattie have not given the Deputy Leader a copy of the letter; I would have thought her researchers would at least have got that. At the top of the third page is a commitment from the Prime Minister that in the initial period of a GST, when there will not be significant growth factors, the revenue base of the States will be protected so that it will be no worse than it is at the moment. That is the first point. From year 3 through to year 10, on the modelling done by the Federal Treasury—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In the period between years 3 to 10, there will be substantial growth of the order of $5 billion to $7 billion. So, the modelling done in Canberra indicates a growth factor in the latter years. Also, in his correspondence to the Premiers and Chief Ministers, the Prime Minister has given an assurance in the early period. In relation to vertical fiscal imbalance, if ever a Government dismantled any notion or semblance of Federation, it was the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments with their centralist approach.

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: With that interjection, the Deputy Leader demonstrates her ignorance of this matter. The fact is that under this scheme States will get access to a growth tax over the next decade. For the first time since income tax and so on was handed to the Commonwealth, the States will get access to a Commonwealth collected revenue flow. That is exactly what all the States have been arguing for, including Premier Bob Carr at leaders' meetings, believe it or not. I cannot understand how the Labor Party in South Australia and in New South Wales are so far apart on some fundamental, important policy issues: power asset sales is one and, certainly, having a fixed share of Commonwealth revenues is another. What the Opposition really does not like

about this tax plan—this fundamental review of the taxation system—is that, for the first time since the 1930s, instead of having to put up with 7 000 pages of tax legislative requirements which have been patched since the 1930s, we will actually start the next century with a taxation system that will be relevant to the next century, not a 1930s system going into the next century.

Importantly, this gives the States guaranteed access to a revenue flow. No only have we experienced in government the debacle of the State Bank but also the Labor Administration experienced in government a contraction in the disbursements to the States from Canberra. On top of that—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Deputy Leader just does not want to listen to any answer to this question, does she? The simple fact is that, far from being centralists, John Howard and Peter Costello have for the first time in decades put on the table a tax plan that will give some certainty and surety to the revenues of the State, particularly given that the High Court has removed part of our revenue collections. It is the certainty and surety of those revenue flows in future that will make provision for health, education and other essential services in South Australia. Rather than decrying the Howard-Costello plan, members opposite ought to be big enough to acknowledge that they have at least sought to restructure the taxation system so that we have in this State the principles of a true federation post the next election.

RURAL LINK GOVERNMENT SERVICE CENTRES

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Deputy Premier explain to the House the purpose of the Rural Link Government Service Centres which I understand will be officially launched tomorrow?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: The member for Flinders has a great interest in this matter. Indeed, two of the service centres to be opened will be in her electorate. Tomorrow in Peterborough we will launch the Rural Link Government Service Centre program, which is a genuine attempt by the Government to take to country areas some of the Government services which they have not been able to access.

Peterborough is one of six centres which are being set up as host agencies in each town. In Peterborough, the host agency will be the District Council of Peterborough; in Maitland, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service; in Lameroo, the District Council of Southern Mallee; in Keith, the District Council of Tatiara; in Kimba, the District Council of Kimba; and in Ceduna, the host agency will be Centrelink. Staff for these centres have already been trained and the equipment has been installed. With the support of information technology, we should be able to provide to these areas some of the services which previously they have not been able to access.

We have been careful about how we have done this. We want to make sure that we adopt an approach that provides a net increase in services to these towns. One of the things that became obvious reasonably early in putting together these services was that if we took the track of maximising the number of services in each service centre we risked upsetting the balance in some of these towns. For instance, in respect of bill paying services, most of these towns have privately run post offices.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Hart does not want to take part in Question Time, he could always leave.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right will come to order.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the honourable member is not reflecting on the Chair.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is starting to reflect on the Chair. I point out to him that the Chair endeavours to achieve some sort of balance in the House. I have expressed some tolerance of interjections on my left and on my right. If I have to start balancing it, some members on both sides will find themselves not in the Chamber. I expect members at least to try to cooperate with the Chair to enable the smooth running of Question Time so that the business of the House can flow.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: As I was saying, we have been careful to try to make sure that the services we provide do not compete with current services that are available in these towns. In each of these towns, post offices are privately owned. If we were to provide a bill paying service we would be in opposition to businesses which already exist, and that would hurt their viability. We have been conscious of this fact. We have also been approached by financial institutions to offer banking services from these centres. We have rejected those offers, because we do not want to be responsible for the closure of banks in these towns. The range of information and services is quite broad and covers a whole range of Government agencies.

I stress that this is a pilot program. As all Governments in Australia have found, there is no easy answer to how better to provide services in regional areas. Each town has individual characteristics which need to be taken into account. The six pilot centres will give us an ideal opportunity to monitor how best to provide these services. We will keep an eye on these six centres and from that base make decisions on the further provision of services in rural areas.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Did the Premier consult with his senior economic adviser, Professor Cliff Walsh, before making his statement on 14 August 1998 that the Howard Government's tax package would address vertical fiscal imbalance and allow independence of States to have access to revenue for essential services such as education and health? On 14 August, the senior economic adviser to the Government and the Premier, Professor Cliff Walsh, said that the new GST based proposals for Commonwealth-State funding were a fraud and removed some of the State's flexibility to raise revenue. Professor Walsh said:

> We haven't made any significant progress on redressing the what's called vertical fiscal imbalance, the incapacity of States to raise their own revenue in their own way.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In response to the member for Hart, all I can say is that with this new tax plan we can take a quantum step forward in correcting vertical fiscal imbalance. At the moment, we have a position where, particularly under the Hawke-Keating Government with tied grants and restrictions being applied to the States, and coupled with that the recent High Court decisions which have removed the rights of the States to collect revenue from tobacco and alcohol—

The Hon. D.C. Wotton interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No, not today. Given the recent High Court determinations to remove the revenue raising capacity of the States that compounded vertical fiscal imbalance, this is a genuine attempt to redress and change that situation. Given that the States will have access to about $25 billion worth of revenue to be collected annually, which will grow by, as I mentioned a moment ago, I think between $5 billion and $7 billion over the first 10 year period, there is a set guaranteed revenue to the States, and it is growing.

If the member for Hart were to ask whether we would like more, the answer is 'Yes'. However, all I can say is that we have taken a quantum step forward, and we have been big enough to acknowledge that it has been a Liberal-National Party Coalition that has taken this step forward.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Well, if we do not sign on for this—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Hart shows his ignorance, too, because as part of this package horizontal fiscal equalisation will be maintained.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The honourable member will come to order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: As I have indicated to the House—and I remember this well—on the night of the reception for the 36ers, I met Jeff Kennett in Melbourne for 1½ hours. During that meeting, I sought and obtained from him support and commitment from Victoria for any tax package that supported horizontal fiscal equalisation.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The honourable member wants to move on to something else now. Let me finish with the previous interjection. Horizontal fiscal equalisation means disbursement to the smaller economies so that they can maintain the level of essential services to the same standard as the larger States. This package contains a commitment to horizontal fiscal equalisation being maintained. So, the honourable member's last interjection is wrong. In addition—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: What's this?

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order. I warn the member for Hart for continuing to interject.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I will tell the honourable member what I said to the Prime Minister. I welcomed the fact that the Federal Government has at last looked at VFI and attempted to address it. I welcomed the fact that a commitment has been made for underpinning the States during the start-up and interim period and that no State will be worse off. I also welcomed the fact that horizontal fiscal equalisation will be maintained.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services advise the House of plans to re-establish the Correctional Services Advisory Council?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The Correctional Services Advisory Council was established under the Correctional Services Act. I am pleased today to announce that a new council has been established. That council will play an important role in advising on the development and implementation of various policies within the corrections system including negotiating with and having input from many non-government stakeholders such as the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council and the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service (OARS).

About 99 per cent of prisoners who enter the corrections system eventually leave and re-enter the community. Obviously, this council has an important role in making sure that those people emerge to take their place as productive and non-offending members of the community. Importantly, this council will look at things such as the level of health, rehabilitation and education services within the correctional institutions.

The six members of the council have varying degrees of experience and come from different backgrounds. The Presiding Member is Mr Ian Leader-Elliott, who is a senior law lecturer at Adelaide University and who has been involved in a number of working groups dealing with drugs, alcohol and law reform. Georgina Smith, the Deputy Presiding Member, is an education officer and has been involved in many State and national policy making committees. Andrea Simpson is a barrister and is involved with the Law Society and the University of South Australia Council. Morton Menz is well known to the corrections system, being a visiting justice. Leigh Garrett, the CEO of OARS, is also involved, as is Joslene Mazel, a strategic planning officer from the Justice Strategy Unit. We look forward to the input from the council being used as a positive tool of management within the corrections institution, and we look forward to some positive outcomes.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Given the Premier's strong support for a goods and services tax and the Howard Government's tax package announced last Thursday, how does the Premier justify the fact that, under the Howard Liberal tax package, and on its own figuring, the Premier—and any Premier—will gain an increase in weekly after tax income of around $100?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Schubert, the member for Bragg and the member for Waite will come to order!

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: What is grubby about that? It is a fact. The Premier will gain a $100 a week tax cut, while a single unemployed person and a pensioner with no other source of income will receive less than $3 per week.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Labor Party cannot come to grips with the fact that we have a Federal Government that is prepared to restructure the taxation system in Australia in a fundamental way. Perhaps the Labor Party in this State would do well to acknowledge that, as an exporting State, and with our manufactured goods, upon which people rely for a job—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I will come to that in a minute. The initiatives I have indicated will have the capacity to provide to South Australians greater job certainty and greater job prospects. Does the Labor Party not want greater job

growth in this State? Does the Labor Party not want to position our manufacturing industries so that they have a better chance to enter the export market? Is not a person's standard of living principally related to the capacity for job certainty and job opportunity which allows people to have the family life they would wish? This is about creating a better and more competitive Australia that will be able to put its products in the international marketplace, which means more jobs for South Australians. That is a quantum step forward from the Keating Government's wholesale sales tax onslaught, where Federal Labor ripped out of the pay packets and the purses of South Australians many thousands of dollars through hidden taxes. The honourable member adopts a holier than thou stance when, by stealth, his Party has been taking away from the pay packets of South Australians and Australians.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: There is another important point in relation to pensioners. It has been well established—and the modelling has been done to ensure that pensioners are protected in this matter—that there will be a 4 per cent increase in pensions before the GST comes into effect. The net CPI effect across the board in all categories is estimated to be 1.9 per cent. In addition, not only is there a cushion or a safeguard by the 4 per cent compared with the CPI increase post GST but there is also a commitment to keep that gap at a minimum 1.5 per cent thereafter. So, let the Labor Party not go out with its fear campaign. There will be adequate compensation well in excess of the adjustment, and that will be maintained in the future.

LUCINDALE AND NARACOORTE COUNCILS

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Will the Minister for Local Government advise the House what action he proposes to take in light of yesterday's vote by the Lucindale council to support the boundary reforms proposal for it to amalgamate with the Naracoorte council against the clear wishes of the residents of the Lucindale district? My constituents at Lucindale have informed me that, on no fewer than three occasions, the people of Lucindale have expressed, by a substantial majority, their opposition to this amalgamation and similar proposals. These occasions include a telephone survey by the reform board, a postal survey of all electors by the council and an analysis of submissions made to the reform board.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I acknowledge the seriousness of this problem for many of the member for McKillop's constituents. Since I became Minister for Local Government this matter has been drawn to my attention virtually every time I have visited the honourable member's electorate. The fact is that this House passed legislation some time ago to enable the formation of a Local Government Boundary Reform Board. That board has been proceeding with its work at arm's length from this Government, and has now put forward a number of proposals to the two councils in question. While I acknowledge the veracity of the member for MacKillop's claims in terms of polls, I point out to him that it was only in August 1998 that the board forwarded amended terms for proposals for amalgamation to both councils.

Both councils (which are duly elected bodies by the local residents) considered the proposed terms as amended, and on 11 August the Naracoorte council agreed (I believe unanimously) to the board's proposed terms and last night the Lucindale council agreed to the board's proposed terms. Both councils have also agreed to a memorandum of agreement to underpin the board's proposal and to support and endorse any actions which the board may take, including the option of recommending to the Minister that the amalgamation should proceed. At this point, I await a report from the board. When that report comes to me I will consider very carefully (as I would be required to do by all my colleagues on this side of the House) all aspects of this matter and, after consulting my colleagues, I assure the member for MacKillop that we will make a decision which we believe reflects the best interests of local government in this State and which as best as is possible reflects the interests of people in that area without further dividing and rending that community asunder.

PELICANS

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Will the Minister for Environment tell the House how the bodies of two pelicans euthanased by her department were disposed of? Were they shot and left in the river, and did the Minister's office attempt to cover up the killings? The Opposition has been informed by the district council that two pelican bodies were found last Friday, the day after the media reported the killing, in a Department of Environment dumpster bin at the Renmark Caravan Park. I have also been informed that the two bodies had earlier been found floating in the river. We have been told that the ranger involved in this incident sought approval to make a public statement after the incident but was warned by the Minister's office to remain silent. Were they shot in the back?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Quite obviously, the detail that the member for Kaurna has given to the House is certainly not the detail that I have. I will investigate the claims of the member for Kaurna. I just hope that the honourable member's information is correct. In the past, he has not necessarily shown that the information he has brought to this House has been either correct or accurate: usually it is very superficial, over-the-top claims with a degree of flights of fantasy, but I am certainly—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: That is right; self-delusion is a very serious problem. But, as this is a serious matter, regardless of the comments from members opposite who seem to think this is humorous—I certainly do not—and because of the nature of the birds we are talking about, which all members would recognise as very beautiful birds, I think I would appreciate it more if this was kept in the context of something quite serious. No-one likes to see wildlife destroyed.

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader will come to order.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The member for Kaurna's comments on this issue have been extremely offensive in the past. On ABC Radio, when talking about the destroyed pelicans, he suggested, rather offensively, an analogy between behavioural pelicans and behavioural children, and I find those comments absolutely offensive. The member for Kaurna and other members of this House may not be aware of this but during another time in my life I was involved with children who had behavioural problems and I developed literacy development measures for those children. I do not find that analogy at all funny. I think the honourable member

needs to remember that, when he brings up an issue that is serious—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Elder for constant interjection.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: —and when he determines to get his 30 second television grab, the matter should be dealt with in a far more serious way. I say again: the honourable member's comments were totally offensive.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for Administrative Services advise the House of any benefits which have been realised as a result of the State's involvement in the telecommunications services management contract?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am well aware that the member for Mawson has been ensuring that his local business community is aware of the advantages they can reap from this Government contract with AAPT. The Government entered into the telecommunications service contract, or TSM contract, with AAPT Telecommunications (or AAPT) in June 1996 as part of the Government's year 2000 IT vision. The telecommunications services management agreement, or the TSM contract as it is known locally, was for a term of two years with an option for a one year extension. It covers the provision and management of telephone services to the State.

I am pleased to advise the House that the contract has achieved significant benefits for local industry and also savings for Government. A number of South Australian companies have chosen to participate in the TSM scheme which has enabled them to achieve savings of up to 45 per cent on their long distance and international telephone calls. Indeed, under this scheme local industry customers are able to purchase services at discounted rates which in the past have been available only to Government and to large corporations.

As a direct result of the TSM contract, AAPT has expanded its presence in South Australia, including the establishment of a national customer service and telemarketing operation in Adelaide. In addition, satellite and other telecommunications infrastructure has now been deployed in South Australia. AAPT has in excess of 60 local employees compared with just eight employees prior to the commencement of the contract.

Mr Brokenshire: Brand new jobs.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: As the member for Mawson interjects, brand new jobs, and that is something that would be welcomed by all members of this House. AAPT's presence in the South Australian market has stimulated greater competition in the local market for telecommunications services and that, in turn, facilitates lower prices for all South Australians.

It is worth noting that, according to independent customer satisfaction surveys which have been conducted as part of the Government's contract, AAPT has now achieved a 95 per cent customer satisfaction rating with its service to both the State and industry. This figure is well above normal industry standards and shows AAPT's commitment to the service it has provided. The savings to the State for the first two years of operation of the contract were on target and amounted to some $2 million. As a consequence, I am pleased to advise the House that, in June this year, the option for a 12 month extension of the contract was put in place and that, as part of the exercising of that option, further key changes to the benefits to the State have been negotiated as part of the extension. They include further pricing reduction for services provided to the State and to participating industry, and also further industry development commitments by AAPT, including the level of sales to South Australian industry, and a new commitment on increased employment levels during the term of the extension. As a result, additional price reductions have been negotiated as part of the extension. I t is estimated that further savings to the State will be achieved. These include a further $705 000 per annum saving based on the current levels of annual expenditure and also savings to participating industry of some $646 000 per annum against current expenditure levels by industry. I am sure the member for Mawson will be interested to report back to his business constituency that AAPT's South Australian business customers will automatically receive an additional discount of 8.4 per cent on their AAPT accounts for international and national telephone calls, effective 1 July this year, as a result of the extension of the contract that the Government has entered into.

As a result of the deregulation of the telecommunications industry effective from 1 July 1997 and increasing levels of competition in the market, there are obviously opportunities for Government to secure benefits for both industry and for itself. I am pleased to be able to advise the House that the State's telecommunications strategy has been formulated to ensure that the best possible benefits from competition are realised.

POLICE BICYCLE PATROLS

Ms RANKINE (Wright): Will the Minister for Police advise whether the police department's bicycle patrols will be expanded this financial year and, if so, will the Government now undertake to pay for the officers' bikes? Bicycle patrols are claimed to be a very effective method of crime prevention and apprehension. Bicycle patrols appear also to be in line with the purported aim of Focus 21 to bring policing closer to the community yet, when they were introduced into both the Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully divisions, the local councils and businesses were required to buy the bikes for the police to ride. Despite bicycle patrols having the support of local government authorities, local business people and residents, both Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully councils publicly voiced their objection to being forced to pick up the tab for what they clearly saw as a State Government responsibility, but it appears they had no choice at the time with the one local councillor stating, 'The Government point blank refused to pay for them.'

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have learnt one thing when answering questions asked by the member for Wright, that is, ask for the details. About three weeks ago a question was asked in the House about another police matter to which the answer was, 'Provide me with the details and I will follow it up,' but the details have not been provided. The answer remains the same with this question: write to me with the details and I will provide an answer.

Members interjecting:

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

Ms Rankine: You haven't got a point.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wright will come to order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If members persist in interjecting after they have been called to order, I will name them on the spot.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SITTING FEES

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Will the Minister for Local Government inform the House whether the Government supports local government councillors receiving a sitting fee of $100 when attending meetings? I understand that in the *Advertiser* of 17 July it was reported that the Local Government Association proposed a sitting fee of $100 per meeting. Will the Minister explain his position?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The matter of sitting fees and allowances for council members has been a vexing one for some time. Members of the House will recall that a number of months ago I set up a small working party to investigate this matter at arm's length from any interference by the parliamentary process and for that to occur concurrently with a revision of the Local Government Act. Because of the article in the newspaper I have contacted the committee, which has assured me that it is due to report soon. When the committee does report I will, of course, inform the member for Bragg and other members of this House of the Government's decision on the matter.

While I and the Government have no position on this matter, it needs to be put on the record that there are a number of important principles. First, the local government sector has asked strongly to remain as a voluntary service. Secondly, the levels of allowance applicable to councillors and to mayors generally speaking fall below the amount of money it costs them to fulfil their duties. I doubt that any members of the House would like to see any elected person in this State out of pocket because of their commitment to public service.

I believe that when the committee reports it may well look at some further increase in recompense. I hope that if this matter comes before the House it will consider it from the point of view of people who give loyal and voluntary service but who should not be out of pocket in consequence. I thank the member for Bragg for his question and promise him a detailed and considered response as soon as the committee reports to me.

MINISTER'S REMARKS

Ms RANKINE (Wright): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Ms RANKINE: In relation to—

Members interjecting:

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

Ms RANKINE: —the question I just asked of the Minister for Police, I believe that I have been misrepresented. The Minister said that, in a question I asked him approximately three weeks ago in relation to police cars being withdrawn, he asked for details of that situation and that I did not provide that information. In fact, the very next day I took all those specific details—written down and signed—to the attendant's office and was assured that they would be delivered to the Minister.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Mr HILL (Kaurna): On Tuesday during Question Time the Deputy Premier arranged for a Dorothy Dix question to enable him to address the recent leaking of radioactive liquid from a split pipe at the Beverley mine. No doubt, he was expecting a question from this side of the House on the same issue. If he was so expecting, he was correct. I have had a chance since Tuesday to read the Deputy Premier's answer and his subsequent press release carefully. I shall make some observations about these statements and the Government's handling of the issue. First, the Deputy Premier decided that attack was the best form of defence. In the Deputy Premier's speech on Tuesday and in his press release he described those critical of the uranium industry as scaremongers who make 'outrageous' and 'absurd' claims. He also said that they are jeopardising one of the State's most promising new industries. Of course, this line of defence is typical of this Government.

Criticism of the water contract, the outsourcing of technology, the Motorola disaster and now the sale of ETSA have all been treated in the same way. The Government believes that those who are critical are disloyal and damaging to the State's interests. Let me remind the Deputy Premier that the days of quiet acquiescence in the case of Government projects à la Tom Playford and Mick O'Halloran are long dead. I say to the Deputy Premier that, if the criticism is wrong, deal with it factually; that is what South Australians want. The uranium issue is particularly emotional and sensitive in this State and it does generate a lot of community concern. This is particularly so in South Australia, which is rapidly becoming the uranium State.

This concern is understandable when you consider the effects of the earlier nuclear testing at Maralinga. Not only were many South Australians exposed to and damaged by radiation during that period but our community has been exposed to the issue ever since. As a result, people in South Australia are very nervous. In addition, we have Roxby Downs, the largest uranium mine in the world, in this State, the Beverley and Honeymoon trial mines and other potential sites announced by the Minister on Tuesday. As well, the State Government seems very sympathetic and very keen for the Federal Government to make South Australia the site for all of Australia's radioactive waste. It is no wonder South Australians are concerned.

On Tuesday in Parliament the Deputy Premier said, 'Radiation readings from the site were negligible' and that 'radiation experts' had reached certain conclusions about how harmless this spilt material was to workers. This may be true, but I found it curious that the Deputy Premier did not identify these radiation experts, nor did he say who conducted the radiation readings. Heathgate, the company involved at the time of the accident, reported these incidents to Primary Industries and to the Health Commission. I congratulate Heathgate for doing this.

The Deputy Premier did not say whether either of these agencies attended the site and, if they did attend, whether they made their own independent investigations; or is the Deputy Premier relying on investigations made by Heathgate? Was the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) called in to investigate this spillage? We can assume from what the Deputy Premier said on Tuesday and in his subsequent press

release that no Government agency attended. The Deputy Premier's press release is instructive on that point, in that the Deputy Premier said:

> An assessment by the South Australian Health Commission determined that the incident was minor. . . further inquiries by PIRSA have confirmed that assessment. . .

I call on the House to note the word 'assessment' rather than the word 'investigation'. If Heathgate, the good corporate citizen, decided that the incident was worthy of reporting, why did the Government not investigate and then assure itself and the public that there was no cause for alarm? Its failure to do either has created the so-called scaremongering to which the Deputy Premier referred in his address to Parliament on Tuesday.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I refer to yet another good news story in the electorate of Schubert, in particular the Barossa Valley. BIG (Barossa Infrastructure Group) was formed late in 1997 to explore options to procure a reliable source of good quality water to ensure the future of the Barossa as the premium wine producing area of the State and indeed Australia—and internationally. Premium Barossa red has no peer anywhere. This has been a wonderful initiative by BIG and its Chairman Mr Mark Whitmore. The State Liberal Government was so impressed by this initiative that it removed many of the barriers that could have chilled any enthusiasm generated by groups such as BIG and it accelerated the process.

Water—the lack of it, the quality of it and its future supply—is the only problem standing in the way of ensuring that the Barossa retains its position as one of the best regions in the world for super premium wines. BIG has exhibited the self help attitude with this initiative and it was pleased with the Liberal Government's input in funding half the cost of the consultancy and making its departmental experts available to assist with the initiative. The 'make it happen' attitude replaced the old 'all too hard' attitude. It has been magnificent.

Once again, the true spirit of enterprise of the Barossa people came to the fore: the way in which the ideas were brought forward, the way in which they supported the project with their own money and the way in which they are prepared to attack the future positively is certainly inspiring. BIG is on a roll; the desire and enthusiasm is infectious. Yes, there can be problems, both real and perceived, but the will to overcome them far outweighs any of the negatives. The cooperation that BIG has attracted has been most notable from the grape growers, the wine companies, the Barossa Regional Development Authority, the Barossa council, SA Water, the Premier's Department, and State and Federal members.

I have been accused of giving a Government bureaucrat a whack or two in my time here but I am pleased to recognise a bureaucrat at this juncture. Mr Borvan Kracman of the Premier's Department has played a pivotal role in this whole matter, being the link across the 'great abyss' between the bureaucracy and BIG and its spokesman and Chairman, Mr Mark Whitmore. They have all done a magnificent and wonderful job. I thank the Premier greatly for assigning Mr Kracman to this duty and I urge the Premier to give him an early minute.

A key issue underlying the need for more water for the Barossa has been the international reputation for quality wine making developed by this region over the past 150 years. It has much the same intellectual property value and label recognition factors as have the French regions of the Rhone, Burgundy, Bordeaux and the Napa Valley in California.

Premium Barossa wines are distinctly different from other wines and have inherent weight, richness, depth of flavour and soft tannins which come from quality fruit and quality wine making. Grape composition is influenced by a region's climate, soil type, vine canopy management, disease control and the use of good irrigation practices. A feature of the region is its old vineyards—many planted by the Barossa's early settlers—which managed to escape phylloxera and vine pulls to survive today. As members know, they are amongst the oldest vines in the world. Members will have heard of them: Hill of Grace, Old Redemption, Kalimna and the list goes on.

The Barossa receives an average 550 mm of rain per annum, give or take 100 mm, and so in some years the vines can be drought affected and young vines can suffer a set back in their development. Other reasons for a better guaranteed supply of quality water are the insecure surface storage of water in the dams, the variable quality of bore water, insufficient capacity in existing dams and a quiet concern about salinity. This is not a problem but we do not want any compromise with the premium quality of our wines. The whole initiative of bringing a reliable source of water to the Barossa will see current salinity levels reduced in the medium term to a range of 350 ppm to 500 ppm, which is a big improvement.

I congratulate the Premier on making the right decision many years ago. The Barossa has two pipelines: one to the north and one to the south. There is the Swan Reach to the Barossa line and also the Mannum to Adelaide pipeline. Years ago I led a delegation that wanted the Premier to site the filtration plant in the Barossa itself but he said, 'No, we will put it near the river.' That was the right decision because now the Barossa will get its filtered water from the Swan Reach pipeline and its unfiltered from Mannum. The Premier's judgment has stood the test of time and I congratulate all those involved and look forward to the ongoing success of BIG and the Barossa.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I raise a serious matter about which I hope all members have a concern, that is, the Aboriginal Lands Trust Parliamentary Committee. I would like to know why the committee has not met. I would like to know what is going on with regard to the committee and whether or not the current Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is treating the committee as a joke or is just too lazy to call it together. What is she about with respect to the committee? I am somewhat disgusted that for about nine months we have been waiting for the committee to be called together. I remind the House that the member for Giles asked a question of the Minister on 7 July but still no action has been taken. The member for Giles asked why the committee has not met. She has raised that matter with the Minister on a number of occasions and still we have had no response about a meeting of this important parliamentary committee.

I remind all members of the House that the committee is a committee of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act, and Aboriginal lands under the trust include more than 40 properties such as significant communities at Yalata, Point McLeay, Colebrook in the Adelaide Hills, Gerard in the Riverland, Davenport at Port Augusta (which runs an efficient community employment development program), Point Pearce (which has a successful farm and which is developing an aquaculture business based on oysters and

abalone), Coober Pedy, Nepabunna and Oodnadatta. The trust has a long-term requirement of land sustainability and works in conjunction with the communities that live there. It is all about how the land is managed on a long-term basis.

The role of the parliamentary committee is to work with that trust and communities and to report to Parliament. It is a joint effort of the Parliament, but no joint effort is taking place because no action is occurring. The committee has not met since the end of 1996, which is an absolute disgrace. I am extremely disappointed that the committee has not been called to meet by the Minister, who has had about nine months to get the committee started. It is an absolute disgrace that the committee has not been called together. I remind the House that the committee is established under the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1996 and section 20B—Parliamentary Committee—provides:

(1) The Aboriginal Lands Trust Parliamentary Committee is established.
(2) The duties of the committee are—
(a) to take an interest in—
(i) the operation of this Act; and
(ii) matters that affect the interests of the Aboriginal persons who ordinarily reside on the land; and
(iii) the manner in which the lands are being managed, used and controlled; and
(b) to consider any other matter referred to the committee referred by the Minister; and
(c) to provide, on or before 31 December each year, an annual report to Parliament on the work of the committee during the preceding financial year.

I do not know how a report can be written this year when the committee has not even been called together. With the committee not meeting in 1997, there would not have been any report for that year, either. That is something I have been trying to check. I indicate to all members that this committee has not met since November 1996. Not only is the current Minister responsible for the committee not being called but the former Minister, the Hon. Dean Brown, had the responsibility in 1997 for calling the committee together but failed to do so. Two successive Ministers have failed to call this important parliamentary committee together. It is an absolute disgrace and both Ministers should hang their heads in shame.

Members on this side of the House have brought this matter to the attention of the Minister on several occasions and we will not be held responsible for her lack of activity in bringing the committee together. The member for Giles and I have been waiting for some nine months for the Minister to call the committee together and it is absolutely disgraceful that she has failed to do so. I am not sure which members opposite are Government representatives on the committee, but I am sure they would like the committee to be called together—

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

Mr WRIGHT: —and I call for a meeting before this Parliament rises.

Ms Breuer interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Giles will come to order.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Thank you, Mr Speaker. There seems to be a place for euthanasia occasionally. I would like to acknowledge the recent introduction of the 618 bus service from The Hub shopping centre area to Marion, and I thank the Minister for Transport for acceding to that request. It is a very popular service. People now want it expanded and extended, and I trust that that can happen in the very near future. I appreciate that resources are tight, but I do welcome that initiative, particularly for teenagers who want to access the picture theatres and also use the bus service for part-time employment. As members would know, my area has many teenagers.

The other exciting development on the horizon is the proposal for a bus interchange and car parking facility adjacent to the Hub Shopping Centre which is much needed. At present, people have to park on shopping centre land, which is not fair on the traders. I look forward to the City of Onkaparinga working with TransAdelaide and the owners of the Hub Shopping Centre, Jonal Properties, to bring about that bus interchange and improved car parking and safety for pedestrians using the bus services which start and terminate at that point. In supporting the introduction of the bus service and the proposed interchange, I am mindful that local traders become apprehensive that they may lose trade to Marion Shopping Centre. They do not have anything to fear, because at the end of the day local shoppers look for service, as well as price. We have a good local shopping centre, and I am keen that that local shopping centre continues to prosper.

The second matter I would like to address is the old Happy Valley Council Chambers located adjacent to the Hub Shopping Centre. They are now available for sale, and I have been urging the Minister for Education, the Hon. Malcolm Buckby, to purchase that facility for use by the Aberfoyle Park High School. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I do not believe that the council will give it away at a rock bottom price. Nevertheless, it is a once only opportunity to secure that wonderful facility to provide a senior high school service area for the students. That high school currently has 1 350 students. It is at capacity. The next local high school—Reynella East—is also at capacity, and that is without a greater intake which is foreshadowed for next year. Something needs to be done to provide for local students, and I strongly urge the Minister to purchase the former Council Chambers and make them available to the Aberfoyle Park High School. I am even willing to have the centre named after the Minister if he accedes to my request.

The other matter I would like to address is the taxation reform package announced by the Federal Government which has, as we know, many exciting features. We need to look at the whole question of taxation claims, deductions, and so on, because we still have a system that is far too cumbersome and complex. It is still a bit of a dog's breakfast in terms of deductions, and so on. We could simplify the system dramatically, and we could include some sensible deductions that already occur in the United States, one of which would be to allow people who relocate for the purpose of seeking employment to have a full tax deduction. I am talking not about where the company pays but about where an individual, for example, is offered employment in a different location and has to fund the cost of that and associated costs. Those costs should be fully tax deductable. It would help, as it does in the United States, to create a more flexible and mobile work force.

Likewise, there is merit in looking at deductibility for travel to and from work for PAYE taxpayers, because there is some justification in that, particularly for people who live in the outer lying areas who tend to be the lower paid workers and who incur considerable costs in travelling to and from work. We could look at many other examples that need to be addressed. I have written to the Federal Treasurer asking him to look at the question of tax deductibility where people

relocate in order to obtain employment. These are issues of concern to my electorate, and I would be delighted to see particularly the reform of the taxation system go a little further to build on the exciting initiatives that have already been announced.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I wish to put on the record the contents of a letter written by Dr Dick Ruffin, Professor and Head of Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to the Chair of the board in relation to the serious situation at the hospital. I believe that all members ought to the hear all these details. The letter states:

In response to the letter from the CEO with regard to the budgetary position of the North Western Adelaide Health Service and the instruction to implement strategies to bring the service into line with the Human Services or Health Commission funding, the Division of Medicine is proposing the following strategies, but emphasises the impact on the service and on the community.

The Division of Medicine cannot control demand directly—beyond the measures already in place such as interface. The only realistic way for the Division of Medicine to reduce activity and to reduce costs is by closing full wards. . .

Strategy

1. To achieve savings we require dismissal of staff to occur from the time of a 20 bed ward closure—1 September 1998. The impact of this on the health service will be the following:

- Reduced ability to manage same day patients for invasive procedures such as angiograms, endoscopies and bronchoscopies.
- use of surgical beds unless the surgical bed stock is quarantined. To this extent it would seem a fair decision across the State that hospitals should all be admitting the same percentage of elective surgical patients when cost is being the major driver for changes in practice.
- There will be increased waiting time for patients in the emergency department in medical units for beds, with the concurrent difficulties for the emergency staff because of increased patient numbers in that area.
- There will need to be a 'transfer on' policy when the medical (hospital) bed stock is filled.
- Increased demand on community services to provide home care for patients discharged earlier.

This issue of transferring on, presumably to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, will be seen to be futile from the community and patients' point of view rather than reallocating funding to this site for that increased activity.

- The impact of all the above on the community we serve will be to increase delays and increase transfers which will reduce the quality and availability of care for patients in the community.
- A very major issue will be reduced patient load available for teaching which will have a major impact on the University of Adelaide Medical School and the University of South Australia's School of Nursing.

2. Closure of the medical outpatients clinics 2 and 4 on one day per week on rotation. To achieve savings this will require dismissal of staff and changing employment conditions to a four day per week basis.

The impact will be increased waiting time for patients and for general practitioners trying to get patients booked into the outpatients clinic. There are also consequences for teaching with further reduction in patient availability for teaching and for postgraduate experience.

3. Prohibiting the emergency department from booking patients, seen in emergency, directly to outpatients.

The emergency department would be required to refer the patient back to their general practitioner before they received an outpatient clinic. The net effect of this would be to reduce the outpatient activity by 100 patients per month in the first instance. Later referral by general practitioners may increase the activity somewhat but not back to baseline. This will not result in direct savings but will reduce the outpatient patient load.

4. Savings made on better systems and supply of medications, because of the introduction of individual patient supply based on the medical wards, is estimated to produce a once off saving of $500 000 per annum.

5. Medical and surgical supplies—saving with the tendering out of cardiology implants. . . will result in a saving of $500 000 per annum.

6. A reduction in medical staff overtime through restructuring of rosters and reduced number of beds will result in a saving of $100 000 this year.

7. Reduction in nurse agency costs which will be facilitated by points 1 and 2 in allowing permanent staff to replace nurse agency staff is estimated to produce a saving of $200 000 this year.

8. Reduction in pathology costs will be achieved by targeting resident staff in being more specific in ordering repeat tests, for example, ordering a haemoglobin only rather than ordering a full blood examination. It is estimated that savings from this will come to $100 000 this year.

9. Stop interface admissions for emergency department and put effort into early discharge (reduces activity and potentially blocks beds for more acute admissions from emergency department—transfer on, delays in getting a bed).

The board must understand that the latter measures are fringe measures which are part of the process of the Division of Medicine trying to achieve best practice, but to come anywhere near the proposed budget we will have to close beds. The board must also understand the consequences of this for the community and for the remainder of the hospital, and it will potentially adversely affect its cost effectiveness. The Division of Medicine further believes that the board must understand that medical and nursing staff are aware that there are inadequate levels of care available now for our community that the hospital serves and that the medical and nursing staff in the division urge the board to become political rather than remaining with activity in the Department of Human Services. . .

It is also likely that the reduction in the capacity to treat patients will lead to situations where choices will need to be made about relative priorities for treatment. It is possible that under these circumstances the hospital and individual staff members will be subject to legal action, and we seek the assurance that the board will move to ensure that individual staff members are protected.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I rise to refer to some of the comments made by the member for Kaurna. It is interesting that the member for Kaurna appears to have become the unofficial member for radical elements of the Conservation Council. First, he came into this Chamber and attacked the pastoral industry some months ago, making most disparaging comments about what he wants to do in that respect. Obviously he wants to rid the State of that valuable industry. Now he has decided to take his brickbats to the Beverley uranium mine and Heathgate in particular. I wonder what industries the honourable member wants to keep in this State, or whether he is more intent on using this place as a platform to act as an agent for Mr Noonan, Jasmine Rose or some of those other irrational people who believe that South Australians should live in tents and use candles instead of electricity: that is their style. If you listen to them, we would have no development, no opportunities and no jobs.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, pelicans. Let me tell the member for Kaurna that the Beverley uranium mine will be a very good small industry for South Australia. It is creating opportunities and jobs and will provide facilities in that part of Australia which do not now exist. The same thing applies at Honeymoon. I remember going to Honeymoon years ago when they were trying to get it going. What happened? In came 'Bumbling Bannon' and his cohorts. We had Minister Hopgood, who had to get a public servant to make decisions for him, and that was the end of it. Today the honourable member also mentioned Roxby Downs. Is he opposed to Roxby Downs? Let him stand up and tell the people of South Australia. That is one of the great mining developments in this country. It has created hundreds of opportunities and huge amounts of income for the State. Is he seriously telling this House that there is something wrong with that project?

What is wrong with this person who sets himself up as the alternative Leader of the Labor Party? Here he is, making the running; he and the member for Hart are neck and neck in

competition to see who will push the present Leader off the end of the bench.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: We will not go into the matter of the Deputy Leader; she is a temporary adornment to this Chamber. I want to return to the subject of the Beverley mine. One would think that the people operating that facility deliberately and maliciously set out to cause trouble, but nothing could be further from the truth. I ask the honourable member and his colleagues whether they want to stop all mining development in this State. They successfully prevented exploration at Yumbarra Park because they did not have the political courage to stand up to the Conservation Council. They put the interests of a few radical conservationists ahead of the welfare of the people of South Australia.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Mawson that it is not Question Time, but the rules still apply.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Now that there is a change in the ranks in the Upper House I believe that in the not too distant future we will not have to worry so much about some of these things and that we will have some more enlightened and intelligent decisions made, so that the first priority will be the welfare of the people of South Australia. I am most concerned about this anti-development, anti-farmer, anti-mining attitude being displayed by the member for Kaurna. He is obviously captive to the Conservation Council, or those elements which control it.

I will conclude by raising one other matter. I am most concerned about the lawlessness in certain sections of my electorate where a small minority of juveniles and others, who have no regard for property, privacy and the welfare of ordinary, law abiding citizens, are breaking into their homes and vandalising them. The time has come to deal with these elements. The time has come for the police to be given the power to remove the people concerned from the streets as they do in certain parts of New South Wales. We need a Children's Protection Act.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The Attorney-General knows my views and, whether or not he likes it, he will get a Bill in this Parliament.

Ms Breuer interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The honourable member wants to concentrate on getting—

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

Mr MEIER: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the vote on the third reading of the Legal Practitioners (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill taken in the House yesterday be rescinded.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The reason the third reading needs to be rescinded is that clause 52 of the Bill was in erased type, being a money provision that originated in another place. It is most distressing that the Minister representing the Attorney-General in this House was unable in his carriage of a Government Bill to notice that that clause was in erased type. It is even more distressing that I as the Opposition spokesman failed to notice it.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the Legal Practitioners (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill be recommitted to a Committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering a new clause 52.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

New clause 52.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I move:

Page 24, after line 21—Insert:

Amendment of s.95—Application of certain revenues

52. Section 95 of the principal Act is amended by inserting in subsection (1) 'and the fees paid by interstate practitioners on giving notice of the establishment of an office in this State' after 'fees'.

Mr LEWIS: What is the effect of this clause?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: As the member for Spence in his inimitable fashion has said, the reason for this new clause being moved is that it is a money clause which cannot be inserted in the other House.

Mr LEWIS: What are the consequences of including this clause in the legislation?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: It enables the collection of fees from interstate practitioners.

New clause inserted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

AERODROME FEES BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 30 June. Page 1178.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Until recently, the 23 aerodromes in South Australia were owned by the Commonwealth or Government agencies. Most of these aerodromes have now been privatised, although nine were purchased by local councils. When the aerodromes were owned by the Commonwealth, it had legislation that gave it authority to charge the holder of a certificate of registration for an aircraft for use of the aerodrome. By 'use' I mean arrival, parking, departure and training flight approach as set out in clause 6 of the Bill.

Of course, the Commonwealth could have tried to recover the fees under the law of contract from the pilot of an aircraft using the aerodrome or his employer. The difficulty with that means of recovery is that many of these aerodromes are in remote areas and unstaffed. The only way that the Commonwealth knew that the aerodrome had been used was through the required radio transmissions which revealed the aircraft's call sign, which could be traced to the certificate of registration.

Now that the Commonwealth no longer owns aerodromes, its legislation is no longer used to recover aerodrome fees. We are told that one-quarter of fees payable for the use of aerodromes is now not paid to the owners. I hope the member for Stuart is not one of those pilots who is hopping around the countryside freeloading on aerodromes in remote areas. I am sure that that would not be the case.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Perhaps he will inform the House of his record on paying aerodrome fees. The purpose of the Bill is to give new owners of aerodromes much the same statutory rights of recovery of aerodrome fees as the Commonwealth had. This is necessary, because it would be impractical to have most of these aerodromes staffed. If the aerodrome owner wishes to avail itself of the provisions of the Bill it must gazette its fees. Although it might be unfair to slug the holder of the certificate of registration instead of the actual user of the aircraft and the aerodrome, there is provision in the Bill for the holder of the certificate to assign prospectively and in writing the liability for aerodrome fees to the person using the aircraft. The aerodrome owner may now recover the fees as gazetted from the person liable as a debt. With those remarks, the Opposition supports the Bill.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): As someone who uses a number of these isolated air strips on a regular basis, I know that operators have been having difficulties with collecting fees. Normally, when the pilot of an aircraft gives a CTAF call within five miles of the aerodrome, that is recorded, and the owner or the collecting agency, whether it be a district council or a progress association, is then in a position to send an appropriate account to the owner or operator of the aircraft, and the people who may have hired that aircraft then have that fee attached to their account.

Airfields are being upgraded and funds are needed for continuous maintenance and the provision of such things as power operated lighting. I believe that the Government is taking the most responsible course of action by bringing this proposal before the House. I hope that these improvements to airfields around South Australia continue. In a State such as South Australia, which is suitable for light aircraft operations—even though Federal Governments of all colours in the past have set out to make life as difficult as possible by imposing unreasonable charges and fees—I believe that the people who operate these aerodromes need to be able to raise revenue. As I understand it, airports such as the one at Wudinna cost about $6 000 to $7 000 a year to maintain. Therefore, those of us who use it should pay for it.

When you have aerodromes such as the one that has just been constructed at Booleroo Centre, where the community raised many thousands of dollars for this purpose so that people would have the benefit of using it, a small fee is not unreasonable. This Bill gives those people the force of law to collect such fees, and it has my full support. We want to see these airfields improved so that the Flying Doctor Service can continue to evacuate people and carry on the high standard of service that it gives to people in South Australia.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I thank the two members for their contribution to this debate and urge all members to support the second and third readings.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

Mr LEWIS: 'Aerodrome' means an area of land or water intended for the arrival, departure or movement of aircraft—that is whether partly or completely—but does not include an aerodrome excluded by regulation from the ambit of the definition. What sort of aerodromes are excluded?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The definition of 'aerodrome' is taken straight from the Federal Act. There is no specific exclusion at this stage, but it may allow us to exclude, for example, Adelaide Airport if it were appropriate, and to do so by way of regulation.

Mr LEWIS: Then would 'aerodrome' in this instance mean those privately constructed strips in the pastoral areas of South Australia—or, indeed, on some privately owned land, such as the strip at Lameroo or perhaps the strip on Patsy Springs Station in the north Flinders?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: All those airstrips are potentially included, but they do not automatically have to charge a fee, unless they wish to do so.

Clause passed.

Clauses 4 and 5 passed.

Clause 6.

Mr LEWIS: This clause is the other half of the area of my curiosity, in that it enables the owner of an airstrip to fix the fee. That being the case, I wonder whether that is in any way subject to any controls, or can the owners of these strips in the remote areas simply determine the fee that they will charge if it suits them to make such a charge? I give again as an example the strip at Lameroo, or a strip on a pastoral lease somewhere in the north of the State, where the strip is on private land. If that is the case, can they decide case by case, instance by instance, what the fee may be, such that they could perhaps decide to charge the Royal Flying Doctor Service nothing but charge a mining exploration company $50 000 for every movement?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, they can apply that sort of flexibility. So, they could exempt the Royal Flying Doctor Service from paying any fees but they could charge a mining company a substantial fee if they wished to. It is for the owner of the airstrip to decide what fee should apply.

Mr LEWIS: I have previously declared an interest in the mining industry, as I own in my own right some mining activities, so this provision causes me a great deal of anxiety. If it is possible on any day for the owner of a strip to decide who he will charge, and how much—and that amount could be anything from zero to $1 million, or more—that is one way to put the mining industry in jeopardy. More particularly, if we pass this provision in its present form, it is a way in which strip owners can simply please themselves who they screw and for how much. It strikes me as being a grossly inadequate piece of legislation in that respect. I would be grateful if the Minister could provide an explanation. I note that clause 6(3)(a) provides:

> Fees fixed under this section—
> (a) may vary according to different factors. . .

What are the circumstances governing those factors? Clause 6(3)(b) provides:

> Fees fixed under this section—
> (b) come into force on the day specified by the aerodrome operator in the notice of the fees published under this section, being a day not earlier than the day on which the notice is published.

So, you can switch and change to suit yourself if you know that you will have an easy mark, and it would be a much better way of raising money than raising sheep for wool, if you own a pastoral lease. To my mind, it is an outrageous anomaly.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I draw the attention of the honourable member to clause 6(2), which provides:

> If an aerodrome operator fixes fees under this section, the aerodrome operator must publish in the *Gazette* and in—
> (a) a daily newspaper circulating in the State; or
> (b) a periodical publication published by regulation. . .

To be published in the *Gazette*, it has to have first gone to the Minister. That in itself is somewhat of a barrier towards changing the fees week to week because, clearly, the Minister would not be willing to put through the *Government Gazette* such frequent changes in fees. So, I believe that that gives some protection. In other words, there is at least an overview by the Minister as to what fees are set, and I suppose that, if that were the case and a problem arose, the Minister would take action to then question the owner of the airstrip about the constant change in fees or the unreasonable fees and, if need be, there could be some amendment to the Act.

Certainly, what the honourable member has said is correct: there is nothing to stop an owner from charging a substantial fee for landing, for example, at a small airstrip for a particular mining venture. However, the operator would have a chance to find out what fees had been set by looking at the *Government Gazette.*

Mr LEWIS: I know that the Minister is a reasonable person, and I know that the Minister at the bench is a reasonable person. However, what I do not know is whether or not Ministers in the future will take much interest in this—or be reasonable, for that matter. You and I both know, Sir, that there have been some Ministers in the history of our time in this place, not of our political persuasion, who would have done anything to get at someone if it suited them, one way or another, or to ignore their pleas for some commonsense to prevail. As someone engaged in mineral exploration, I have to say that, for efficiency purposes, and because of the need to rely on aircraft to travel to and from places with equipment and personnel, the budget for exploration purposes in any given area now is thrown into disarray a little, in that there is no certainty of the fees that could apply in that total cost structure.

One might have been able to undertake an exploration program for $6 000 to $10 000 but, if the owner of the airstrip you intend to rely on can charge $3 000 a movement after getting what appears to be a reasonable acceptance of it through the *Government Gazette* and the *Advertiser* (the only newspaper that circulates generally in this State), that budget of $6 000 to $10 000 will suddenly more than double if one has to make something like five to 10 movements to conduct that exploration. So, I am anxious about this provision.

This the last occasion on which I can speak, and I ask the Minister also to note that there is a potential difficulty for the Crown in that, if an airstrip operator sought to discriminate between the types of aircraft which land on the strip, then, as is provided for in an earlier clause, namely, that the Act binds the Crown, the Department of Defence, hypothetically, at Whyalla might find itself suddenly liable to pay $100 000 a movement. I know that the State Government might not want to gratify the Whyalla council to that extent, but the Whyalla council owns the Whyalla airstrip, and it is presently in dispute with the Defence Department over whether or not its aircraft can land there. That would be one way of ensuring that the Defence Department pays its fee unless it is by some other means exempted; and, if it is by some other means exempted, does that mean, unlike everyone else, the Defence Department takes unto itself where it will and will not land and to hell with anyone who otherwise must meet the cost of maintaining the airstrip?

So, when the legislation provides that it binds the Crown, do I take it that it binds the State as well as the Commonwealth? I seek from the Minister an explanation as to whether or not that is the case. If it is the case that it does bind both parties, there is no provision in the legislation which would ensure that appropriate mechanism exists for the negotiation of those fees, or whatever else might be involved, to try to set it at a realistic level rather than just somewhere between zero and infinity. I would be grateful if the Minister would address both those matters in his answer.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can deal with both issues. I will deal, first, with the second issue, which is the binding of the Crown. State legislation can only bind the South Australian Government; it cannot bind the Federal Government. Therefore, the Department of Defence would be exempt from this Act.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: And all other Commonwealth agencies. In binding the Crown, it only binds the South Australian Government and, apparently, local government is bound as a private citizen. Therefore, the example of the Department of Defence would not apply but, if State Government aircraft were involved, the same fees could be imposed upon it.

I appreciate the point made by the member for Hammond and his general concern, but I highlight the present situation. At present, the owner of an airstrip can set whatever fees they like at any rate. They currently have that power. This Bill will not change in any way the ability of the owner of an airstrip to charge whatever fee they like for a private operator to land on that strip. Therefore, the honourable member's concern already applies at present without this legislation. This legislation only changes the method of charging and makes it more simplified, that is, it provides that the registered owner of the aircraft is charged. I understand that the previous procedure was much more complex in terms of tracking down who landed the aircraft and, therefore, who was liable.

Parliament should note that we are not changing the choice or ability or freedom of an airport owner to set the fee. We are not changing that at all. We are simply changing the method and making it very clear as to who is liable for that charge, that is, the registered owner of the aircraft. I hope that answers the point the honourable member has raised.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (7 to 9) and title passed.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): During the course of the Committee stage, my level of understanding of how fees for access to airstrips and aerodromes, call them what you like, throughout the State of South Australia and, I presume, elsewhere, has been improved somewhat. In the past I have hired aircraft and used those strips on many occasions—more than I can remember over the years—without fully understanding the procedure. I now have to say that I think the methodology by which fees are determined is unsatisfactory. It is entirely subjective, as much subjective on the part of the owner of a strip as it is on the part of the Minister now as a consequence of the passage of this legislation.

It strikes me that it would be a good idea if owners of private strips were to have those strips categorised and properly described and catalogued for the use of pilots and other people who want to hire aircraft so that one could then decide which strip to use according to category or type. Limits also ought to apply to the maximum amount which can be charged for a movement on a strip to ensure that we do not have the situation where some community owned strips,

particularly in the North Flinders—I say 'community' advisedly; I am thinking of Aboriginal communities which have bought pastoral leases and so on—would otherwise make a welter of it and claim there was some discrimination against them if the Minister sought to disallow their application for an increase in the fees that they wish to charge a particular type aircraft knowing that was the type of aircraft, for instance, that a mining company wanted to use on that strip in the immediate future. Anybody else could do the same.

It therefore strikes me as being a good idea if the Minister now further examines the matters to which I have drawn attention and sees whether or not there is any sense in what I am saying regarding having strips categorised and limits set in consultation with the owners of those private strips to determine the good sense of the limits and their acceptability to the people who have to maintain the strips. Therefore, I thank the Minister at the bench very much for the information he has provided, and I trust that he will pass onto the Minister responsible for the legislation the concerns that I have expressed about the measure.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I note the member for Hammond's comments. Currently, every pilot across Australia can avail themselves of this information by consulting an annual publication of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association that lists all registered—and many unlicensed—strips around Australia. Being a former pilot, you, Mr Speaker, would know that the publication contains information about longitude and latitude, the height in feet, fees, whether fuel is available, and so on. Of course, every five or six months the Commonwealth department responsible for aviation produces a supplement which also provides this information.

If the honourable member wants to start collecting paper, I suggest that he obtain a private pilot's licence, because the department produces huge quantities of material. So, that information is available to any private or commercial pilot who wishes to avail themselves of it so that they know this information prior to landing, except in those few locations where there are private strips. In my time flying around South Australia and landing on airstrips at remote properties, I have never heard of anyone asking for a fee. If people are to be involved in commercial activities, I put it to the honourable member that, in most of those locations, such as at Honeymoon where they have constructed an airfield themselves, they want the airfields to be of a fairly high standard, because in most cases they use pretty sophisticated aircraft. The operators of those aircraft demand certain standards for safety reasons and because of insurance provisions.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I thank members for their comments. I will certainly make sure that the member for Hammond's comments are drawn to the attention of the Minister for Transport. The officers involved have given me that undertaking. If the member for Hammond would like to take up his point with the Minister for Transport, I am sure that she would be delighted to have a discussion with him. The member for Stuart has clarified some of those issues in terms of the information already available to pilots.

Bill read a third time and passed.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (PUBLIC OPINION POLLS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the Bill without any amendment.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MOTOR ACCIDENTS) BILL

The Legislative Council disagreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly.

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I move:

That the House of Assembly insist on its amendments.

After all, the wisdom of this Lower House should prevail.

Motion carried.

ROAD TRAFFIC (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 July. Page 1233.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied the Bill most carefully, and we have had a lively debate about the 'give way to buses' provisions. One's position in the Parliamentary Labor Party debate depends on whether one is a motorist or, as I am, a bus passenger. The Bill has four aspects of which the 'give way to buses' is one. Currently, buses display a 'please give way' sign on their back corners, but clause 7 of the Bill will require motorists and cyclists to give way to buses pulling out from a kerb on roads with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less. The buses must display a 'give way' sign on their rear approved by the Minister and illustrated in the *Gazette*. The law will apply only to vehicles in the left most lane.

The Minister says that the clause is consistent with the draft Australian road rules and has long been the law in New South Wales and Victoria. A minute from the Department of Transport states:

> The proposal is not based on a need to reduce accidents. Nationwide, the motivation for the proposal has principally been to improve traffic flow and bus timetable reliability rather than to reduce accidents. . . if a bus must wait until the end of the traffic flow before pulling out, and this is repeated at every bus stop, significant time is added to the total journey.

Later, the minute states:

> Although many drivers show courtesy, bus operators highlight aggressive drivers objecting to buses pulling out and a tendency for vehicles to tailgate and thereby deny entry to buses. Requiring drivers to make way for buses will address these problems, reduce journey times and further enhance public transport as an efficient—

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister says that this clause is sponsored by the crash repair industry. I am disappointed that the Minister does not have faith in the public transport system. I once remember sitting next to the Minister on a bus to Torrens Park when we boarded at the Commonwealth Bank building in King William Street.

The Hon. Dean Brown: I used to be a regular years ago.

Mr ATKINSON: Yes, that must be about 12 years ago now—when he was having his holiday. The minute states:

> The focus is important in our efforts to increase patronage.

Members interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Hammond says that we will have a lot of dead bicycle riders. Instead of waiting for the bus, I will go up the inside; that is the way I will get past. I endorse what has been said in that minute, but it pains me to say that the motorists in the Parliamentary Labor Party who comprise a majority of 27 to 2 over the member for

Norwood and me insisted on an amendment to the Bill carried in another place, namely, that the operation of the clause be reviewed after 12 months and that a report be tabled in Parliament within six months. I do not know why an initiative which is such plain commonsense would need to be reviewed. I am confident that the review and the report will vindicate the change.

There are three other aspects of the Bill. The first is closing roads to allow aircraft to use them in an emergency; the second is allowing police an exemption from road rules when on foot, horseback or bicycle; and the third is repealing the requirement that an annual report be written on random breath testing. I was pleased to hear that the Government has constructed an all weather emergency airstrip on the Stuart Highway near Coober Pedy by widening the pavement by three metres and making sure there is enough clearance. The Government says it will make four more of these airstrips, two on the Stuart Highway and two on the Eyre Highway.

Clause 3 allows police in charge of a station or of or above the rank of inspector to close a road to enable an aircraft to use it in an emergency. The clause allows the police to erect signs and barriers to close the road. The signs and barriers will be kept in huts alongside the highway airstrip. Police can give reasonable direction to motorists and pedestrians at the highway airstrip. It is an offence not to comply with a policeman's direction in these circumstances. The clause says that the aircraft is not to be treated as a vehicle for the purposes of the Act. This sensible provision is supported by the Opposition, as is the whole Bill.

We certainly support the clause that gives police exemption from road rules while on foot, horseback or bicycle. That seems sensible to me. In fact, I did not realise police had such exemption from the road rules until I was doing a press conference with the media on Barton Road in April 1995 when the member for Adelaide got the police to start enforcement up there. I was doing this interview, telling them how iniquitous it was that my constituents had been fined that morning, and a whole series of police cars went through Barton Road using the bus lane for their own convenience. The Commissioner of Police explained to me later that there was an escaped prisoner in the vicinity.

Members interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Yes, in North Adelaide. The prisoner had escaped from the Magistrates Court and did a runner to North Adelaide.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: There are big backyards to hide in there, especially the member for Adelaide's backyard, as the member for Peake and I would well know after letter boxing there on the weekend. I also support the clause to get rid of the requirement that an annual report about random breath testing be tabled. The Hon. Angus Redford in another place seemed to think that this was a retrograde step. He thought there ought to be an annual report on speed cameras. I do not know about speed cameras. Random breath testing was extremely controversial when it was introduced in 1981. I remember that the then evening paper, the *News*, campaigned against the introduction of random breath testing. I think it is a lot less controversial today and there is really no point in preparing an annual report on it. That can be suitably handled in the Police Commissioner's annual report.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I will be brief. I acknowledge the ambit of the legislation. In the first instance, it addresses the matter of closing roads for the purpose of enabling the police to allow aircraft to land on those roads, and I sincerely hope that some of our freeway surfaces and other major arterial road surfaces, where the road surface is level and straight for a sufficient distance, have been made with sufficient strength to take the weight of landing aircraft in an emergency—commercial airliners at that. There is no reason why that ought not to have been so. Whilst this country has never been ravaged by war—

Mr Atkinson: Bombs have been dropped on Darwin and Wyndham.

Mr LEWIS: I stand corrected in that context, but I was talking about the territorial occupation by an alien force when I used the word 'ravaged'. I know that we have been subject to air attack and I know there were a couple of misguided chaps from the Middle East somewhere who set out to declare war on Australia near Broken Hill.

Mr Atkinson: Turks.

Mr LEWIS: I am not sure that they were Turks. They were said to be—

Mr Atkinson: My grandfather was—

Mr LEWIS: Was he one of them?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hammond.

Mr LEWIS: I had not realised that Atkinsons, who are Irish, came from Turkey.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The discussion between the member for Hammond and the member for Spence will cease.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LEWIS: It is a good idea and it is possible to use the road surface to land aircraft, and the law now makes that plain. The other issue to which I wish to draw attention is the matter in relation to which, I acknowledge inappropriately, I was interjecting in the course of the remarks of the member for Spence. It is about buses and bus drivers who will, I fear, now take the view that they have right of way—

Mr Atkinson: Which they do.

Mr LEWIS: —and that will be tragic. In fact, what the legislation says and what the drivers must have rammed home into their brain—and not just a few of them, either—is that the driver of another vehicle must give way to the bus, not that the bus driver can take right of way. I fear that will happen and that there will be an increase in the number of collisions between buses and other motor vehicles on the road and, worse yet—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Maybe the member for Spence will interject the same way when I finish making this statement: cyclists will suffer the same fate because bus drivers will not look to see whether anyone is approaching from the rear of the bus. They will just pull out and put on the signal to turn, and I have already seen them do that. They have done that to me when I am driving in the morning from my Adelaide digs to Parliament House. That is okay if it is a clearway, because they do not have to go anywhere and they can stay in the lane in which they have stopped, and they proceed in that lane. But along Walkerville Terrace and other places such as that, it is a different story: there is a bicycle lane and some of them seem to forget that those two solid white lines painted along the left margin of the road, between the kerb and the carriageway for motor vehicles, are to give cyclists a space on the road where they can move safely.

Bus drivers seem not to care that there are cyclists who travel along Walkerville Terrace. I have seen some cyclists come horribly close to having their legs crushed between the bus and the car proceeding past the bus when the bus pulled out across the cycling lane. The legislation as we propose it in new section 69AA(2) provides:

> (c) in the case of a portion of a carriageway marked with two or more lanes for vehicles moving in the same direction, the vehicle is proceeding along—
>
> (i) the left most of those lanes; or
>
> (ii) where that lane is a bicycle lane, that lane or the next lane [to it].

The cyclists and the motorists have to give way, but the cyclists are not as quick, nor are they able to avoid getting squashed, as it were, between the bus and a car—or any other kind of motor vehicle, but not a car, if you want to be technical. I am concerned to ensure that, once this legislation is passed by the Parliament, all bus drivers who fit into the category described elsewhere in the legislation, driving such buses, will remember that they do not have right of way and that the rest of the general public understand that, when the turning indicator on the right hand side of the bus is switched on by the bus driver, the motorist and the cyclist need to give way. It is the responsibility imposed on the other motorists and road users that matters.

We do not want an increase in the number of collisions—that is, sideswipes—between buses and motorists, and buses and cyclists. I feel for the Supreme Court judge, His Honour Justice Millhouse, who had the misadventure to collide with a bus on one occasion, and he accused the Minister of not meeting his reasonable obligations in repairing the damage and reimbursing the costs involved when his cycle was completely demolished, because there was no provision for it under the Act and the regulations. It was between registered vehicles that recovery could be made under the Motor Vehicles Act, and relying on those provisions of the Road Traffic Act to get that. However, it was under common law that His Honour Mr Justice Millhouse had to sue the Minister for Transport to get the money he had to outlay to repair the damage or, indeed, buy another bike—that is what it amounted to, because the bike he had been riding was not capable of being repaired. I thank the House for its indulgence and trust that my remarks do not go unheeded by those people responsible for teaching some bus drivers some manners.

Mr SNELLING (Playford): I rise in support of the Bill. I congratulate the Minister for what I think is a wise decision with regard to giving buses greater rights when it comes to pulling out into traffic. I do this as a user of both public and private transport. Public transport users are doing a social good by travelling on public transport rather than driving around and driving to and from work on their own in a car, which amounts to a tremendous waste of resources, as well as increased traffic congestion. Those members of this House who drive V8 Commodores would probably change their views on public transport if the users of public transport all started driving to work every morning in their own cars.

Public transport users have a right to their bus arriving on time and not being stuck in traffic while their bus awaits a driver who is courteous enough to allow their bus to pull into the traffic and to move on. This is just extending to buses the sort of courtesy that really should be shown to all drivers. In conclusion, I reiterate my support of the Bill and congratulate the Minister, because it is a very wise Bill which will make public transport more punctual and thus encourage people to patronise public transport more often.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I thank members for their comments. Obviously the Bill has the support of the House, or at least it would appear so, and I look forward to its speedy passage.

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

MOTOR VEHICLES (CHEQUE AND DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 July. Page 1431.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Bill allows the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to recover money owing if a customer's merchant card payment is dishonoured. Merchant cards will be treated in much the same way cheques are. The Bill also introduces a new provision regarding dishonoured cheques that allows the Registrar to charge a $20 administration fee for dealing with a dishonoured cheque. This will apply to a dishonoured merchant card payment also. The Minister of Transport tells us that 2 400 cheques made out to the registration and licensing section of the Department of Transport each year are dishonoured. She expects that the administration fee will raise $50 000 a year for the Highways Fund. I support this measure.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I thank the honourable member for his comments. The key point is that all of us are looking forward to being able to pay our motor vehicle registration fees using a bankcard. I am delighted to see that the Department of Transport has now come into the twentieth century, even though we are about go into the twenty-first century. It has made it by some 18 months, and I am delighted to see it.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MOTOR ACCIDENTS) BILL

The Legislative Council requested that a conference be granted to it respecting certain amendments in the Bill. In the event of a conference being agreed to, the Legislative Council would be represented at the conference by five managers.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council granting a conference as requested by the Council; that the time and place for holding it be the Plaza Room at 11 a.m. tomorrow; and that Messrs Conlon, Foley and Meier, Mrs Maywald and the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training be the managers on the part of this House.

Motion carried.

The Legislative Council agreed to the time and place appointed by the House of Assembly for holding the conference.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.32 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 25 August at 2 p.m.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 18 August 1998

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

NOARLUNGA CENTRE

166. **Mr HILL:** When will the multi-function building for health services (including Mental Health, domiciliary care, RDN and the Fleurieu Volunteers Centre) promised for the Noarlunga Centre be constructed and what arrangements will be put in place in the meantime?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: With the formation of the Department of Human Services in late 1997, I requested further investigation of the concept of a multi-agency building for Noarlunga be undertaken to ascertain other departmental service delivery needs in the region. This process has identified further opportunities to improve service delivery in housing and disability services. Detailed planning to identify how these services will best be integrated into the project is now in progress. Later this year I will be in a position to announce the program for commencement of construction works for the project.

In the meantime, service providers are continuing to deliver their services as they have in recent years. In terms of their accommodation needs, many have, or are in the process of, extending short-term lease arrangements until the project is completed.

CAPITAL WORKS BUDGET

198. **Ms THOMPSON:**

1. What is the timeframe for the development of guidelines for prioritising and assessing major capital investments as referred to at page 3.7 of Budget Paper 4 Volume 1?

2. What existing guidelines were used to give priority to the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium stage 2 development ahead of works such as the upgrading of hospitals which do not meet current Australian standards?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The Treasurer has provided the following information:

1. The present plan provides for the development of guidelines for implementation as part of the budget process for 1999-2000. The changes envisaged are likely to require a staged implementation of the guidelines over two budget cycles. This timeframe will allow agencies to adjust their procedures and planning processes to meet the new requirements.

The new guidelines are expected to enable the Department of Treasury and Finance to provide the Treasurer with better informed advice on the merits of new investment proposals and their relationship to Government policy objectives and strategies. Ultimately, the priorities for proposed capital expenditures are decided by Cabinet taking account of all matters that it considers are relevant.

2. There are existing requirements and procedures for the evaluation and initiation of projects, in particular, the Treasury and Finance guidelines on the evaluation of public sector projects. These assist in providing information on the economic and financial aspects of proposals and are significant influences in assessing project priorities. However, there are a range of other factors which also need to be taken into account in considering the Government's capital works priorities, such as social and equity objectives.

In the past the process has typically involved Ministers providing the Treasurer with prioritised capital investment bids and the merits of the proposals have then been debated in a process of bilateral discussions between the Minister and the Treasurer. This is usually followed by Cabinet consideration of priorities and subsequent Cabinet endorsement of a capital works program.