

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 29 October 1998

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

### DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**The SPEAKER:** I recognise in the gallery the Speaker of the Prefecture of Okayama in Japan, the Hon. Mr Kato, who is accompanied by Mr Kaoru Hina, a Minister in that Parliament. They are in South Australia as part of an official State visit by Governor Ishii of Okayama. I invite the Hon. Mr Speaker to join me on the floor of the House, and I ask the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to escort him to his place.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.  
(Continued from 28 October. Page 78.)

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I would like to acknowledge the Governor's speech, and I look forward, together with other members, to this debate at the commencement of the Second Session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament. For me, it is a moment of reflection. I return briefly to my maiden speech which I had the honour of delivering on 9 December 1997. Amongst many other things I spoke about the establishment of a relationship with the local community as a local member of Parliament, the need for leadership in both the local community and the broader State of South Australia, the relationship that exists between employer and employee, the role of education in our society, and the importance of health, and I also touched upon another industry which has special significance for South Australia, and that is the racing industry.

For some members, particularly those who are new to the Parliament, this is an appropriate time to reflect on maiden speeches and other contributions that we and other members have made as we go into the building stage of the Second Session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament. As local members of Parliament it is critical that we establish a relationship with our local community and that we build a relationship with the electorate.

I believe that the role of a member of Parliament in the community is a very important and critical one, and we should not underestimate the role that we play in the local community. I believe that one of the important things we must do, in addition to representation, is to provide leadership to our local community. But beyond that, of course, I believe that we also have a role as legislators in making sure that we provide leadership to the broader community.

I said in my maiden speech that representation includes listening, being accessible, staying in touch, understanding the people you represent, getting to know the local issues, knowing your electorate, reflecting the views of the local community, providing a line of communication, helping to solve the problems of people in the district, and working with people for the people. There are probably many other aspects that also can be included as part of representation but, hopefully, I am some way down the track in helping to provide strong local representation to the local community—

and I am sure that all other local members in this House would have similar aspirations.

As I said before, I believe that we must be serious about providing leadership not only to our local community but also beyond it. We have that dual responsibility to provide leadership as the local member of Parliament not only to our own constituency, to our own individual electorate, but beyond that, of course, we have to show an example and lead, and I believe that the best way to lead is by example. We have to do that with respect to the broader community: we have to make sure that we do that right across the State.

I said on 9 December that leadership is one of the most important roles that we must provide to our local community and beyond. We are here to govern for all people in South Australia. We are here to make sure that we put some of the big picture issues in place, as well as to provide strong representation to our local community.

There are many challenges that face us in going about that task. Some of the broader ones, of course, include trying to best put in place the economic scenario that will give us economic growth. What is an acceptable level of debt to exist in the community? I have listened carefully during the Address in Reply as other members have, quite correctly, spoken about the importance of debt at Government level—that debt is not automatically bad: it is not only what the level of debt is, but the way that debt is operating throughout the community and how a Government is grappling with the debt as it goes about governing.

We all know, of course, that one of the biggest challenges—if not the biggest challenge—that we face as an economy and as a community is how we increase the number of jobs—and I believe that it is perhaps a bit more significant than that. We have to go about finding real jobs in the community, finding long-term jobs for people—particularly our young people. What do we decide is an appropriate level of what stays in Government hands as compared to what is privatised? I believe that our biggest challenge is job creation, job security and the purpose of work. That is one of the challenges that faces us all, and it is one of the great challenges that I believe faces current legislators and will challenge future legislators right into the next century.

For us, we are non-negotiable in regard to the sale of ETSA. I know that it is one of the great issues that currently divides the House. There has been a lot of debate about the pros and cons, but I am proud of the stance that Mike Rann and this Party have taken in regard to the sale of ETSA: for us it is non-negotiable. I believe that the Leader very eloquently has outlined the reasons why we are opposed to it, and we will stay very strong in our opposition to the sale of ETSA. We are here talking about the single biggest Government enterprise that the Government has turned around prior to the last election but it has now said to the people of South Australia that it wants to put it out to private enterprise and sell it.

One of the other areas that was touched upon in the Governor's speech to which I want to refer is education. I believe that one of our other big challenges is to make sure that we have an education system that is relevant to the young people in our community. I listened very carefully to what the member for Fisher said about the public education system, and I agree with him. I am also a strong supporter and advocate of the public education system but, similar to the member for Fisher, that does not mean to say that there is no place for the private education system because quite clearly

there is. The two can work hand-in-hand, but I am a proponent of the public education system.

Like the member for Gordon's comments about education, I think that the education system needs an overhaul. The public education system has a range of problems that need to be addressed to ensure a better outcome and a better quality of education for our children. It is fair to say that, irrespective of one's philosophies with regard to education, one of the significant problems in the education system is the morale of the educators, the morale of the teaching staff. I do not blame this Government solely for that because it has been going on for some time with both Liberal and Labor Administrations.

One of the problems that is critical to teachers is the increasing burden that has been put on them with respect to administration. We have to find a better and different way to address the problems that exist in the education system. There is no doubt that there are other significant problems, which this Administration has put upon the education system, but one of the central issues that we must address as legislators, where there should be some bipartisanship, is how we ensure that there is a better quality of outcome of teaching by our teachers in the public education system. One matter that we must address is the increasing level of administrative tasks that has been put upon teachers.

Another area which is very important and which was touched upon in the Governor's speech regards the health system. We must ensure that we have a quality system, and one of the great difficulties is to make sure that there is the correct balance or the right mix with regard to a public and private health system.

Another matter that is very important in our community is security. I have no doubt that what the member for Bragg touched upon yesterday in regard to members of the community feeling less safe is correct. There is not much doubt about that and we have to find ways of overcoming those problems. Some of it might be perception, but we have to find ways of overcoming the concerns and problems that exist in the local community with regard to law and order, but also with regard to people feeling safer in their homes and safer in their community.

Another important area is the environment, and one matter that I feel very strongly about, which the member for Kaurua touched upon yesterday, is the protection of our coastal areas. We must pay more attention to that and we have to be more serious about it. The coastal area is finite and we must carefully protect the coast, ensuring that we have the right balance between what occurs in our community with regard to the use of the coast and the protection of the coastline.

I should also like to touch briefly on the areas of tourism, sport and recreation, and the racing industry. I have spoken a number of times in this House about my passion for the racing industry. It is an industry which has its difficulties, and one matter that is of concern to all of us, not just in South Australia but Australia-wide, more particularly in South Australia, is the lack of people now going to the racecourse. It is very difficult to get people back to the racecourse. There is little doubt that we have let a generation or two slip by.

We have to change our ways and look at alternative ways of getting people onto the course. In my maiden speech I posed questions such as, 'How do we attract people? How do we get them back to the course?' We must have facilities for the people. We must have the proper facilities that punters demand. All patrons must be out of the elements, and this includes not just the members but the battlers. It will not be

easy. The industry must meet the standards offered by other betting venues.

One of the great problems in the racing industry at the moment is that people can go to a whole range of outlets, whether it be hotels, TAB outlets or other forums, to do exactly what they can do at the racecourse. However, they do that in much better comfort and free of charge. The only thing that they do not get is the live presentation at the racecourse. We have to find ways of getting those people and young people back to the course.

I refer to the Southern Racing Festival and to the attempt by way of the outlay of taxpayers' money to make the festival more attractive in terms of getting people to the course. It was a worthwhile attempt to turn around those problems about which I have already spoken; however, if we look at the cold hard facts, the Southern Racing Festival was not a success. I say that in terms of getting people back onto the racecourse. The whole premise of the outlay in regard to the marketing, which I welcomed, was to try to get people to the racecourse. If you look at the cold hard figures, that simply did not succeed; but there was an increase in TAB turnover. I welcome that and I commend the Government on the marketing it undertook. However, it did not result in additional people going to the racecourse. In respect of the attempt to get people to the racecourse by using that marketing, it was not successful. We have to look next time at other and different ways of trying to do that better.

I refer to the TAB board. There is no great need for me to go into a lot of detail about that, because the member for Hart very correctly highlighted yesterday that that simply has been a shambles. Obviously, the process in regard to the TAB scoping study was a shambles. It was handled extremely poorly and totally unprofessionally, because the Chairman of the TAB board, Mr Phillip Pledge, and another member of the TAB board, Mr Neil Sarah—two very eminent business people in South Australia—resigned and walked away from their duties on the TAB board. We cannot afford to let that happen. We cannot afford to lose competent, eminent people who take on these positions primarily as a social service to the community.

This situation, where two prominent people walked away from the TAB board, is unacceptable and unprofessional in terms of the way the Minister handled his duties. Of course, the big loser is the racing industry and the community of South Australia. The Government must do far better when it undertakes these exercises of examining how it will handle important, fundamental issues such as the scoping study of the TAB.

I refer to sport and recreation. We have gone through a period of halcyon success: the Crows won the AFL Premiership; the South Australian netball team won the Australian Netball Championships; there was our success at the Commonwealth Games; the Thunderbirds won the championship; Adelaide Quit Lightning won; the 36ers won the basketball competition; and the list goes on and on.

Without doubt, we are all very proud of the achievements that have occurred in these areas. Our athletes are now heading towards Olympics 2000. What the Government must do is ensure that we achieve the correct balance between giving adequate support to athletes and to sporting organisations as we go into the next major phase. Of course, the Government must also ensure that we get it correct in the grass roots area. It is only through making sure that the base is strong that we will reach a stage where we will be able to produce these elite athletes of whom we are so proud. It is

fundamental to all of us that the Government put in place a system whereby we ensure that a broad cross section of people are serious about having an active, healthy lifestyle but also about pursuing a range of sporting activities.

We must put in place a system where the base is strong and whereby we provide correct and adequate support to a whole range of sporting levels in both the male and female areas to ensure that all our young people not only are given these opportunities but take them up, so that they are involved in recreation and sport.

I would briefly like to touch upon an area to which this side of the House is very strong in its commitment, that is, additional seating for Football Park.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr WRIGHT:** I welcome the comments from both sides of the House, but particularly from the member for Peake, who I know was a very keen supporter of the South Australian National Football League grand final last season. I am not sure where he was sitting, but I know he was a very keen supporter. We now have a duty to pay back the South Australian National Football League for all the great work that it has undertaken for many years. To the best of my knowledge, in the actual building of the grandstand there was no financial Government support.

The South Australian National Football League has clearly demonstrated that there is a need for additional seating. The Leader of the Opposition on a number of occasions has very strongly put forward the Opposition's case for additional seating, and we will continue to support strongly the call by the South Australian National Football League for an additional 5 000 seats. Clearly, the demand is there, and the Government should ensure that there is bipartisan support for such an important infrastructure need. Let us get on with it and do it now: it will not be very long before another AFL season starts. We already know of the spectacular demand that exists for the seating. We want this additional seating in place so that it is there for the general public to access to see our two great football teams, the Adelaide Crows and Port Power.

We have two very successful teams. Obviously, we are all very proud of the double premiership that the Adelaide Crows have won over the past two seasons. The support is obvious and will remain very strong for many years to come. Probably 95 per cent of the games are an automatic sell-out. We can quite easily sell an additional 5 000 seats for all the Crows games. I also suggest that Port Power will only get stronger and stronger; that Port Power next season will make the final eight; and that it will catapult towards the top of the ladder very quickly, above the Crows, in all probability. It may well be—

**Ms Ciccarello:** What about Norwood?

**Mr WRIGHT:** Norwood in the local competition: Port Power in the AFL. It is a good quinella.

**Ms Ciccarello:** It does not compute.

**Mr WRIGHT:** Yes, it does. I will explain it to you one day.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr WRIGHT:** It might take more than a day. In all seriousness, this is an area that should be addressed and I would like, once again, to strongly record the Opposition's support for additional seating. It is something on which we should move very quickly, and I am sure that the football public would welcome it with open arms.

I refer now to tourism. I noted yesterday that the member for Heysen mentioned the recent publication of Tourism SA,

*The Book of Best Kept Secrets*. The Opposition wishes Tourism SA every success in terms of that publication. We on this side of the House have received a number of criticisms from people in the Adelaide Hills area. As the member for Heysen highlighted yesterday to this House, unfortunately the Adelaide Hills has been, I would presume accidentally, left out of that publication, and that is disappointing. However, it is not our purpose to highlight that: I simply echo what the member for Heysen brought to the attention of this House yesterday.

We hope that the publication is successful and that it does what it is meant to do, that is, to bring more tourists into South Australia and also, of course, increase the travel of people living in South Australia throughout our great State. We wish that publication every success and we look forward to feedback on its success. I noted that during his speech on Tuesday, His Excellency the Governor paid particular attention to tourism and referred to the need for aggressive policy decisions, and we certainly will be putting on the record a number of recommendations in this very critical and important area for South Australia.

I would like to touch, briefly, on the Auditor-General's Report, which was brought down this week. It is another warning to the Government; it is another warning which cannot be ignored; it must be treated seriously; and it must be looked at. I welcome the comments made by two of the Independent members in regard to the need to ensure that we watch very closely what occurs in Government and the accountability of Government. There is no need for me to dwell on this: it is on the record. The outsourcing that has occurred must be of particular concern. The EDS contract, Modbury Hospital and, of course, the management of the Health Commission have been particular areas to which attention has been drawn in the Auditor-General's Report, and these must be areas of concern to us all.

I also refer to matters of local concern to me as the member for Lee. First, I congratulate the local community which has fought a long and hard battle to ensure that sensible decisions were made in respect of proposals that have been ongoing for some five years or more about a waste transfer and recycling facility on the corner of Old Port Road and Tapleys Hill Road. Members may recall that on a number of occasions both the member for Price and I voiced in this House our concerns about a waste transfer and recycling facility. We do not oppose waste transfer because, obviously, all members of this House have particular concerns and, by and large, we agree about the need to have adequate facilities for recycling and appropriate measures for waste transfer. But, we were most concerned about this particular application—and others which preceded it relating to the same site—because a waste transfer and recycling facility was proposed for slap-bang in the middle of a residential housing area. We opposed it simply on those grounds.

Both the member for Price and I made submissions to the Development Assessment Commission, and I can now report to the House that the Development Assessment Commission has refused the application. It would appear—and I hope that this is the case—that forever and a day there will no longer be any silly proposals for a waste transfer and recycling facility for that site. It now appears as though the owners have gone beyond that and are coming up with some alternatives—some different applications in different areas—to make it more suitable for a development in an area which is slap bang in the middle of residential housing.

I would also like to raise today a matter that is of serious concern, and I am sure all members of this House will be worried about it once I draw it to their attention. In recent days it has been brought to my attention that both hotels and fast food outlets are getting young people to put into their books break times that they are not taking. This is of serious concern. I hasten to add that these hotels and fast food outlets are not in the electorate of Lee.

However, in recent days a number of people have come to me and informed me that, as part of their work, they are being asked to record in their time books that they are taking breaks at a certain time and are then being encouraged not to take them. For young people or apprentices who are starting out in an industry—in fact, for anyone—this is just totally unacceptable. Of course, they are being asked to enter their breaks in the books in case inspectors or the unions come along. I will be asking our shadow Minister to look into this matter.

The Government must give a commitment to put on more inspectors and allow them to sit and watch what is happening here. Basically, apprentices are being asked to work 10 to 12 hours a day—sometimes without a break—and employers are getting staff to doctor their timebooks. If this practice persists, I will have no hesitation in naming these employers in the Parliament. It is a totally unacceptable work practice, and it is not fair to the individuals involved. The problem for the individuals involved is that, if I name them now, their security of employment will be put at risk. It is just totally unacceptable.

I conclude by making a couple of points, and I will do so quickly because my time has nearly expired. I would like to thank all members who spoke in the condolence motion on Tuesday. Obviously I did not get the opportunity to thank members because I seconded the motion. It was very moving for me, and I thank all members on both sides of the House who obviously spoke so openly and passionately about my father. I would also like to thank you, Mr Speaker. I can say in all seriousness—and other members have already done this—that I welcome the way in which you, as Speaker, have treated us all. We know it is a hard job, and we know that members on both sides of the House do not behave as well as they should on some occasions. Mr Speaker, we thank you for the role you have performed.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the honourable member.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I rise to support the motion, and I commend His Excellency the Governor on his address. In my first Address in Reply contribution made in this Parliament in 1997, I explained my view on some of the challenges we South Australians face into the next millennium. During this second Address in Reply debate, I intend to focus on the issue of unemployment—a matter that is of prime concern in my constituency of Waite and to us all. I also intend to spell out the key elements that I believe should form part of a vision needed to see us into and beyond the year 2000, because we South Australians are falling behind the rest of Australia. If we do nothing about it, we will look back upon this time as one of lost opportunity and broken dreams. I, like so many South Australians, have no intention of allowing that to happen. Like so many of my fellow South Australians, I hope that we as a community resolve to do all we can through working together to put this State back at the front of the pack and to offer a future to our children.

I want to talk about unemployment using, first, the tools of economics. I have heard a great deal in this House and in

recent public debate about the term ‘economic rationalism’, and I am still struggling to work out what that term means. It seems to have different meanings for different people. Can we forge a future for South Australia without managing the economy? The answer is ‘No.’ Is this Parliament leading an economy or leading a community? The answer is that we are leading both. My proposition is that it is about time that we stopped blaming the Government for everything and that the Opposition, the business community, organised labour, local government and all other people on the economic playing field made some tough decisions and faced some quintessential facts.

There is a prescription which can cure the economic and social illness of unemployment, but the medicine is bitter. Milton Friedman and Edmund Phelps developed the argument in the 1960s that only one level of unemployment—the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment, or ‘natural rate’—was consistent with stable inflation. This followed earlier work by Bill Phillip in the 1950s whose ‘Phillip’s Curve’ charted a relationship between inflation and unemployment. The more you had of one, the less you had of the other.

The world economy in the 1970s and 1980s was, of course, a far different place. The stagflation of concurrent inflation and increased unemployment shook Phillip’s theory to its foundations. The relationship between real wages and unemployment became apparent. As inflation settled at a new plateau, so too would wages, resulting in a new equilibrium within the economy. Inflation and unemployment, the two great evils, were now no longer linked in such a way as to suggest an exploitable trade-off.

In my view, there are three main factors which determine our economy’s natural rate of unemployment: the economy’s recent experience, the external trading and investment environment it faces, and microeconomic structure within the economy. First let me address the economy’s recent experience. It is impossible to deal with an economy today without recognising where it was yesterday and without learning the lessons of history.

In the aftermath of the 1980s and 1990s recessions, we have in Australia far higher levels of short-term and long-term unemployed. This lag or hindsight factor is known to economists as ‘hysteresis’. We have also come from an experience of high inflation and high interest rates, and these threats are seen as the major evil, thereby creating a negative attitude towards high growth and high inflation as an instrument for manipulating unemployment levels.

Secondly, I want to address external trading and the investment environment. Shock waves from overseas, as we are now seeing in South-East Asia and as we experienced during the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s, cannot be contained and avoided. Unemployment levels and the natural rate of unemployment will be influenced by our terms of trade, interest payments in foreign debt, current account deficit, trade reforms and trade barriers, political or military unrest and a range of other outside influences. Confidence in itself emerges as a major factor in influencing the instruments of unemployment.

Finally, it is in the area of microeconomic reform that an economy has its most persuasive scope to influence the natural rate of unemployment in real time, given that both recent experience and external factors are largely beyond the control of our economy or Government acting alone. The argument is that an economy with extensive dole and welfare payments, generous minimum wage conditions, rigid

industrial structures, poor education and training, obstacles to labour mobility (including ill-designed pension schemes and a lack of information for job seekers) is likely to experience high natural rates of unemployment.

Tightening up in these areas can reduce the natural rate of unemployment, but not without collateral political and social damage. Too often the alternative of fiscal policy is seen by Governments as a softer option or at least an option which can be blamed upon someone else. We need to explore in more detail microeconomic reform as a factor and a driver in reducing unemployment.

The reason why the natural rate of unemployment shifts to the right and increases so dramatically, as it did in the 1970s, can be found in the microeconomics of labour markets, in particular in two major areas: first, the wage rate and price of labour can get stuck above a level at which supply equals demand; secondly, Governments get it wrong by creating industrial and welfare frameworks which keep people unemployed.

Let us consider minimum wages and award pay rates. Unions, employers and Governments interact to set minimum wage levels with the intention of protecting the living standards of workers. This is fair for the insiders who already have jobs but, for the outsiders who are out of work, minimum wages eliminate the jobs of too many of those they are supposed to help. Minimum wages are particularly likely to damage the job prospects for the young who start out in low paid jobs.

The actions of some trade unions are often cited as a contribution to unemployment. This argument would have it that a reason for the USA's present low unemployment rate is that trade union membership is down to 15 per cent compared to 30 to 40 per cent in Europe and Australia. This theory portrays unions as monopoly suppliers of labour who raise wages from more competitive levels to a monopolistic level. As a consequence, firms want to hire fewer workers or hire non-union workers, but closed shop deals and strike threats may stop them from doing so. This is the crux of the argument for waterfront reform on the Australian waterfront. The Coalition is to be congratulated in my view for doing what its predecessors could not—bringing commonsense to the docks.

Taxes also make workers less willing to work and companies less eager to hire. Anti-employment payroll taxes or superannuation charges fuel this concern. If we could reduce State debt and discount payroll tax, the immediate impact on unemployment would overjoy thousands of unemployed and give them some hope.

Let me turn now to welfare benefits. Why work or seek work when you can get almost as much in real terms on the dole? Governments push natural rates of unemployment higher by paying over-generous unemployment benefits and in the manner in which they pay them. The rapid rise in the natural rate of unemployment in the 1970s was in my view largely a consequence of this trend. Recent efforts to require people to work for the dole reflect efforts by Governments to tighten up welfare dependency in politically palatable ways. Should we even have a dole, or should we simply offer two days of Government work to unemployed people and with it some dignity presently denied?

One major additional influence on the natural rate of unemployment which, in my view, is given inadequate attention, is the technology revolution. The effect of high tech production has been partly evaluated but the Internet has the potential to bring on a new industrial revolution which lays

waste to employment. Unless new jobs growth can be achieved to replace these people displaced by information technology—with no better example than the banking industry—the industrialised nations could see major movements in the natural rate of unemployment to the right.

An aspect of this shift is that it cuts across services and manufacturing, and creates avenues to bypass unions, taxes, tariffs and intermediary services. Much more work on this phenomena is needed by economists and Parliaments to identify positive and negative effects on the natural rate of unemployment and to establish the overall impact we will see. I am not convinced that information technology employment alone is the answer or some panacea for unemployment caused by technology. We need to look further.

So, what are the policy implications for determining the natural rate of unemployment? I want to propose three worthy ideas aimed at reducing the natural rate of unemployment. The first rests on the simple demand and supply of labour, and argues that process should aim to clear the market leaving no job seekers unresolved. Proposing concrete measures such as abandonment of awards, removal of minimum wage constraints and busting union monopolies points to the obvious problem. Insiders who have jobs already would lose wages and conditions if more outsiders from the dole queue were placed in the market. We have had recent policy initiatives by both State and Federal Governments that have demonstrated how difficult it is to achieve these structural reforms in the face of union and public pressure.

The second proposal is to reduce the mismatch between employers and job seekers by the use of specialist job brokers. The Commonwealth Government is implementing this idea and, despite some problems, I have already seen evidence in my constituency of Waite that it appears to have created a more competitive jobs placement market, particularly for the long-term unemployed. We need, however, to look deeper at the whole TAFE and training school system to ensure we are producing job-ready workers. A reemphasis of apprenticeship on the job type training in lieu of institutionalised training may bear fruit. Every tradesman should have a young person working with them as an apprentice. These young people are the future.

The third approach involves providing special assistance to the long-term unemployed to make them more attractive to employers. This effort is connected to the earlier point involving a more competitive job placement infrastructure to reduce mismatch, but it also relates to Government job creation schemes. They can vary from major capital works projects to wage subsidies to employers. Unfortunately the abolition of schemes such as the Job Start program have seen the removal of some of the more successful job creation schemes. Policy in this area requires review.

Where to from here? The reasons for the movement of the natural rate of unemployment to the right in the 1970s, along with increased unemployment, can be effectively explained using the fundamentals of economics. Australia's external trading and investment environment changed dramatically at that time. At the same time the economy began to experience pressures which had been contained in the 1950s and 1960s when we were still recovering from the Second World War and the Great Depression. At the same time we began to place new demands on the economy. Women entered the work force in increasing numbers, requiring the labour market to absorb them. Unions and workers demanded improved wages and conditions.

Foreign investment in Australia and the globalisation of markets and production combined with changing world tariff and trade agreements to alter workplace dynamics. The pervasive influence of technology multiplied these effects by replacing people with machines in unheralded numbers, further placing pressure on the natural rate of unemployment. Governments responded by embellishing the welfare safety net to a level which in some cases provided disincentives to work or to move within the labour market from one job to another. What is left unsaid is that, although we understand the infection, the medicine is very bitter. The scope and intensity of microeconomic, industrial and welfare reform required to move the natural rate of unemployment to the left and downwards is very apparent. The policy road is open, but only a very brave Government will be prepared to take it.

To begin with, more than 90 per cent of the voting public are employed insiders, referred to earlier, who are unlikely to welcome any sacrifice of their wages and conditions to make way for the unemployed young people and it can be assumed that the union movement would be very keen to represent its constituents in the paid work force. The technical efficiency, allocative efficiency and dynamic efficiencies that we need to achieve also involve winners and losers. As trade barriers, quotas and subsidies are removed there is pain.

This is a slow process. Putting the need for reform into the too hard basket will never do. The economy's recent experience, one of generous welfare in this lucky country, may see the natural rate of unemployment remain high or move further to the right. Alternatively, we may need to experience a collapse in our external trading and industrial environment leading to a financial crisis that would bring us to the altar of change and reform. Which will it be? We see it is as a simple equation. If you push up the costs of labour, employers will do everything they can to reduce the number of employees they hire.

That is why South Australian trade union moves to abolish youth pay rates within awards is patent nonsense. Ask any small business person whom they will hire if the choice is between a 17 year old with no experience and a 27 year old with plenty of experience when the wages are the same. The union movement can waffle on about how to measure equal pay for equal work but, at some stage of the game, common sense has to come into it. Abolishing youth pay rates will dump more young people on the scrap heap as the South Australian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry has so concisely pointed out.

That is why recent proposals to the Prime Minister by leading academics suggesting that the unemployment rate could be reduced to 5 per cent by freezing living wage rises and compensating low income earners through the tax credit system make so much sense. Contain wages and you will make jobs. Everybody knows that but, as mentioned earlier, I sometimes wonder whether the union movement and the ALP really want to solve the unemployment problem. After all, it is nice to be able to beat the Government with the unemployment stick and unemployed people are not members of the trade union movement. We hear a lot about big business looking to the interests of its shareholders instead of the community but is that not exactly what the trade union movement does? It looks to its shareholders, employed ticket holders.

What we need is a genuine pact between the Government, political Parties in Opposition, employers and the union movement to create jobs. The Government is doing what it can. The other Parties are not putting in the same effort. To

make South Australia competitive we should aim to achieve wage outcomes that are so attractive that businesses are flocking to this State from elsewhere to set up shop. We already know the cost of living in this State and the quality of life is superior to many other parts of Australia, for example, house prices compared to Sydney or Melbourne. Could we not contain wage growth in South Australia relative to other States to give ourselves a competitive edge? A jobs pact between organised labour, employers and Government should aim to deliver such an outcome. Instead of pushing constantly for more income for those who have a job, perhaps we should be looking to creating job opportunities for the young.

That leads to the issue of what vision we see ahead of us as we move forward. We need a bold and broad vision. We need to rekindle the energy with which the early pioneers developed South Australia. We seem to have given up, for example, on population growth, on developing new land and turning up the economic heat. I agree with the President of the Employers Chamber, Mr Terlet, that there seems to be a virus against progress in some sections of the community. I share his view that some minority vested interest groups are standing in the way of progress. I call them the 'anti everything brigade', but I also call on developers and big business to use common sense when putting forward developments and proposals.

It is fine to say, 'I want to build this multi million dollar development and make a lot of money. I want to rip down these beautiful heritage buildings to build a glass and concrete monster', or, 'I want to deface the beach or the hills face to make money and I want you in the community to wear it because it is good for you.' Some common sense from big business would help. Part of our vision must surely be that a marriage occur between development and our quality of life and our environment. It would be nice to see some proposals coming forward from big business which are sensitive to the fact that we have a community here and that we can have both development and an environment. I remind the House that I have the hills face zone within my electorate and it is something we treasure.

One component of our vision for the future ought to include our relationship with the north of this country. This huge unsettled land mass, bountiful in both arable land and water, lies almost completely undeveloped. With the proposed Alice Springs to Darwin railway and by virtue of our history and geography, South Australia is ideally placed to come together with the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Far North Queensland to fuel economic and population growth in the north. We need a plan to develop the north in which South Australia features prominently.

Let me turn to tourism. I recently heard that Monsieur Cointreau, while visiting the food and beverages school last year, described South Australia as the Bordeaux of this country. That raised an interesting prospect. Perhaps we are indeed the wine, food and sunshine capital of Australia. Perhaps we have abdicated to Queensland the privilege of being thought of as the place the tourists should visit to seek the surf and the sun. If you were a Japanese, European or American tourist holidaying for a few weeks from November to March, I can think of no better place for surf and the sun than South Australia.

Due to its effective marketing of tourism, who recalls that Queensland has stingers along its shoreline for much of the year and that it endures a miserable wet season? Who recalls the muddy mangroves that surround Cairns? We have

abdicated to Queensland and other States in tourism. We have consistently failed to optimise our potential. Our market share of foreign tourists is a disgrace. Whoever said, 'Come to your senses, come to South Australia', was right. I commend the State Government for the extra resources it is putting into tourism, in particular because it creates jobs for ordinary South Australians.

You do not need to be a rocket scientist to work in hospitality: you just need to have a big heart and the determination to work hard. Tourism must surely be a major jobs and economic growth focus for the future. Speaking of rocket science, we have Woomera. Kistler Aerospace is preparing to launch satellites. Major defence, science and technology industries are based in South Australia. Why cannot South Australia become the space capital of Australia? Let us grab this industry and stake a claim to it. Flowing on from this proposition, we need to reinvent ourselves as a centre of excellence for higher education.

We need to find those academic fields in which we excel and build upon them. We need to promote education as an export industry and promote South Australia as a destination for overseas students. We are achieving some success in this area. We need to do more. Adelaide, South Australia, needs to have the same association with excellence in education as one finds in Oxford or Cambridge in Europe and Connecticut and New England in the USA. We need actively to promote and expand a number of key industries, not just defend. At present approximately 40 per cent of Australia's defence industry is based in South Australia.

If we are not careful this will dribble away to the Eastern States. There are opportunities for us within the sale of the Australian defence industry and the Australian Submarine Corporation. We need to optimise those opportunities for South Australia.

Population, population, population! In my first address I talked extensively about the need for our population to grow. The growth projections for Australia are woeful but the ABS projection for South Australia is a potential catastrophe. Unless Australia can develop its critical mass to around 30 million to 40 million people in the next century we will not be a credible market; we will not keep pace with our neighbours; and we will not develop the full potential of our great country. We will find it increasingly difficult to justify the retention of 5 per cent of the world's land mass by a small gaggle of wealthy, predominantly white people who appear to have put a fence around themselves and said 'Stay out.'

South Australia should aim at 2 million people or more in the near and not too distant future. South Australians also need inspiration—the sort of inspiration that comes from bold, creative visionary projects, such as the Alice Springs to Darwin railway which is being delivered by a Liberal Government in South Australia and a Coalition Government in Canberra after years of procrastination. We need to consider similar visionary projects if we are to be all we can be. I have talked about South Australia as the space State and as a centre for tourism and education, but they alone are not enough.

Huge parts of this State are totally undeveloped and I applaud the Government's courage in respect of mineral exploration as one way to tap South Australia's riches, but we need to find the water to develop further our primary industries. A number of bold initiatives have been raised. Sooner or later we may need to consider moving water from the north of Australia down to South Australia to enliven this State's Mid North, Eyre Peninsula and the Far North. It may

take 100 years, it may take 50 years or it may take 10 years but, sooner or later, if South Australia is to grow we will need more water. One only needs to visit the damage wrought upon the Murray Darling Basin to grasp this point.

Let me talk now about our system of Government and move towards a conclusion. During the course of the past year I have heard considerable criticism of this Parliament, of members of Parliament and of the whole political process. At times, it seems the media believe that they have far better ideas on how to govern—on the odd occasions that they are able to rise above the old hackneyed whipping horse of MPs' remuneration. The business community, organised labour, local government, prominent individuals and ordinary members of the public all seem to share concern about our political process and the people who implement it. The popular wave of cynicism in this lucky country, this land of plenty, is, at times, overwhelming.

We have never been conquered by a foreign power. At least since colonial days, we have not experienced dictatorship or anything like it. We were given our freedom without a struggle. Unlike the French who overthrew autocracy in a bloody revolution in 1789 and the USA which fought a prolonged revolution in the eighteenth century for the right to have a Parliament and which then shed more blood in a subsequent civil war, we got it all for free. In fact, it seems that the only time Australians get misty eyed about being Australian is during the international sporting fixtures such as the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games, or on that most poignant of days, Anzac Day, the only uniquely Australian day in our history upon which we as a nation commemorate the sacrifice made by a substantial number of Australians who gave up their lives for Australia and its institutions. It seems that on these occasions our flag, our Constitution and our system of Government have some meaning.

How easy it is to be an armchair expert, a critic, and to complain. I would hope that some of those who are critical of MPs and of Parliaments determine to roll up their sleeves, get involved in the political process and attempt to do what MPs are doing—advancing Australia step by step in accordance with their beliefs and experiences. We MPs could honour this place with improved standards of behaviour. I believe we should, and quickly. Our system of Government is not meant to be perfect; it is not meant to be ideally efficient. Our system of Government is not meant to be implemented by blue-suited professionals divorced from reality, grey men and women, professionals who might direct the corporate endeavours of any world multinational. Our system of Government is implemented by ordinary South Australians from all walks of life.

From time to time it would appear that big business, organised labour, community leaders and various groups lament that Parliament is comprised of ordinary South Australians. Democracy is a mysterious and interesting animal. Many fail to see that it is really crafted to keep us free, to divide power and to give everyone, particularly the little people, a fair go. Perhaps if we were to lose our freedom, our democratic institutions and the rights we presently enjoy to have a say in our governance, we would appreciate those things a little more. Perhaps we have become so wealthy, so comfortable, so cynical and so fastidious that we have lost our way: we need to find it.

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

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** I congratulate the Governor on his speech—he serves this State very well—but I could not agree with the whole of the Government's agenda as set out in that speech. There are many issues that I wish to raise in this debate relating directly to social responsibility, issues which affect my community and the communities of other members in this place and which are creating concern for many of us. One of our greatest concerns is the lack of jobs for our young people, whether they will ever have a job and whether they will have the same opportunities that we had in our youth. We wonder whether our children will ever be able to work full-time, buy a home in which to raise a family and have career choices like we had. Most parents no longer believe that their children will have those opportunities. They base that assumption on the fact that many of them, the long-term breadwinners, have lost their job through the Government's mismanagement of ever increasing unemployment levels and the dwindling job market.

His Excellency the Governor outlined that the Government in this term was dedicated to quality of life for all South Australians, yet the Government is committed to a debt reduction strategy which means further job losses through privatisation and industrial relations restructuring. This appears to be a somewhat contrary and hypocritical position taken by the Government. You cannot increase the quality of life for all if the Government takes away jobs from people who may never work again due to their age, sometimes a very young age, or lack of job skills.

Mike Rann, the Leader of the Opposition, has long called for a bipartisan approach to dealing with this devastating problem in the form of a job summit, something that the Premier has failed to hear. When his new Minister, the Minister for Employment, signalled that he at least was willing to listen and act on a bipartisan approach, the Premier quickly pulled his new Minister into line rejecting a cooperative approach which could have helped to stem this State's 10.2 per cent unemployment rate.

We have a Premier who is presiding over a record unemployment level with youth unemployment at 36.7 per cent, and he publicly overrides his Minister's cooperative venture to develop a bipartisan approach to our unemployment problem. Time and again I have heard my constituents say that they want political leaders to work together on issues that affect them—and unemployment is at the top of that list.

Right now, today, our unemployment levels are disastrous. Jobs are going by the day, yet our Premier refuses to work with the Opposition to resolve this problem. The public are sick and tired of seeing this Premier fiddling around and rejecting the chance for a cooperative approach while their children and members of their family are without work.

The Premier launched his \$1 million jobs package in May and promised us 4 500 jobs. We ask: where are they? What does he say about the record of almost 2 000 jobs per month that have been lost this year? We have had jobs lost from Clark Shoes; Berri, which went to Victoria; Adelaide-Brighton Cement; and the list goes on. What does the Premier say? He says very little. The Premier says very little because he is busy flying around the world and does not seem to know or care what is happening in South Australia.

The Governor's speech referred to the Government's embarking on the largest capital works program in the State's history costing \$1.24 billion. The capital works budget for 1997-98 was \$1.29 billion, and this year's capital works budget is \$48 million less than last year's, so I fail to see the accuracy of the figures in the Governor's speech. The 1997

capital works budget was underspent by \$172 million, and over the last four years capital works budgets have been underspent by \$747 million.

If this Government was genuine about job development, why undercut successive capital works budgets? This money could have been used to employ people and keep workers and their skills in South Australia. How can the Premier talk about job creation and how can he promise 4 500 jobs when we lose more than that in just months? Not only does he not listen, but he will not face the reality that his policies are not working. At least Minister Brindal listened and tried to deal with the issue.

The Premier now has a new tactic to resolve the crippling unemployment levels, but really he has no positive agenda. This problem has been growing for some years and will require more than a short period of time talking about it to fix it. We need real long-term strategies and time frames to lay the path to good and proper employment recovery. This State has record youth unemployment levels yet the 'Government sees no reason to pull back from its goals'. Its strategy in the public sector is to reduce full-time jobs through outsourcing to contractors, yet these full-time jobs then become casual jobs with no job security.

Many media commentators have said that job security is now a thing of the past. In the Governor's address, the Government says that it sees its current direction as the only strategy that can deliver what every South Australian wants for themselves and their families—quality of life and job security and an end to the drift of our youth to interstate markets. If unemployment continues to increase and the casualisation of full-time jobs increases, which undermines job security, I fail to see the logic in the Government's arguments.

A couple of years ago, I raised the issue of our children leaving this State to find work interstate and the loss that their families felt. And nothing has changed: they are still leaving the State, because there is little future for them here at the moment. As the Government will not change its policy direction, the drift of young and older workers interstate will continue, along with the consequent loss of their work skills. People are sick of talk and promises. They want to see real jobs created and jobs that last, and they want to see that happen now. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on training programs, and apprenticeships need to be created to cover the loss of tradespeople who have lost their jobs and gone elsewhere, or climbed onto the ever increasing unemployment queues.

Many years ago we had a shortage of tradespeople and we were forced to find them through migration programs. Today that same scenario is again becoming a reality, because the level of apprenticeships has declined so dramatically that we no longer have those skills being grown at home. If we have to advertise interstate or overseas to fill those positions in the not too distant future, how will we explain that to the thousands of unemployed and their families?

One group that has suffered greatly in this declining job market is the over 40s—the men and women who have real life work skills. They trained on the job, were extremely valuable employees and imparted their skills to young people starting out in the work force. They were loyal to the company, gave good service and showed true commitment. What commitment is there to them now? With the Government seeking to sell our public utilities and showing little initiative to the private sector to value its work force, these people are sacked or, to use the 90s terms, downsized, or



redeployed—though no-one ever knows to where they are redeployed. They are now demoralised: they have lost their sense of worth and feel rejected by society.

There are no rewards for all their years of service, only the day-to-day battle in an attempt to avoid falling into greater debt on the unemployment scrap heap. Their work skills are a sad and devastating loss in the work force. They were productive and effective in the workplace. They were reliable and, as I said, they trained young employees starting out, at no cost to the employer, and instilled commitment and a good work ethic in those youth. The over 40s are a tragic loss to our work society, and they feel shunned. They still have years of productivity to share but the dollar and the privatisation agenda has overtaken them.

I have seen—and I am aware that you have as well, Madam Acting Speaker—the Reith industrial relations policy rear its ugly head at the Adelaide Brighton Cement plant. Workers of an average age of 46 or 48 years in the plant are being offered redundancy packages so that contractors can come in and do their work. To make a worker redundant—as was clarified by the AIRC just last week—the job must no longer exist. It is not to be used to shed staff merely at the company's whim, to replace them with contractors.

At this plant, 62 workers at Birkenhead were threatened with the sack and 22 at Angaston—men who need a job in order to support their family and to be able to continue to contribute to society. Thankfully, the violence created by management that was displayed on the docks during the waterside dispute was not seen here, but it had the potential. It was clearly a violation of workers' rights. Several truck drivers—and I make the point that they were non-union—attempted to drive through men who were peacefully protesting about their job losses.

*The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:*

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister opposite said 'It's sad,' and snickered.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Which Minister said that?

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The Minister for the new millennium bug. And, indeed, it is sad. But I mean that in a genuine way, not in a snickering way.

*The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Those drivers who took to driving through those peaceful protesters had no regard for the safety of others. Reith's policy has set worker against worker, and the one or two drivers who placed other workers' lives in jeopardy perhaps did so because they were afraid that their jobs would go, too. Such behaviour must be condemned. Everyone must have the right to peacefully protest to protect their jobs, and that right must be respected.

*Members interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will be heard in silence.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** On Tuesday, the Minister for Industry and Trade was asked a question about Adelaide Brighton Cement and its business plan. He cited it as responsible, and I want to talk about responsibility. The Minister said:

I think that is a responsible long-term view to take. Management and the unions are talking about how best to effect the redundancy program.

This is not really redundancy. The Minister continued:

This is an 18-month, long-term process which will allow the company to consider a very strong retraining and redeployment

program for the employees, and that is a very responsible approach for the company to take.

Let us talk about responsibility. I found it very concerning how the management of Adelaide Brighton Cement handled the dispute. There was nothing openly violent but there was violence nonetheless. Management staff were used to load trailers with cement, and it must be remembered that the workers who could do the job were standing outside. Management staff were used to load trailers with cement, and I suspect that they breached occupational health and safety regulations by using staff who were not trained or licensed to drive forklifts. They then attempted to transport the loaded trailers from the plant. They were unsuccessful but they succeeded in creating greater unity amongst the workers.

A rumour was circulated that trucks were to come in at 2 a.m. It appeared that the plan was for the workers to become complacent after the trucks did not show up, assuming that most of the workers would go home in the later hours of the morning and then the trucks would come in. That is what happened. They got a semitrailer or two through, but they could not get them out. Such behaviour by management merely creates greater mistrust by workers and a great sense of unity in the work force.

Although this dispute was resolved, had it not been for the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, it would have continued much longer, and that is something that the Minister needs to understand. Even during the negotiations in the commission, management secretly set about training managerial staff behind a mound of dirt to drive forklifts and front-end loaders. That went on while they were in the commission pretending that they wanted a resolution. They set about training these people behind a mound of dirt so they would not be seen.

The management jeopardised the negotiations and fought a fair resolution all the way. They were not cooperative, they fought it all the way. As I said, had it not been for the commission pointing out the definition of redundancy—that is, that the job must no longer exist—I suspect that these workers would still be standing outside the gates. The Government should take note of that definition. It was not very responsible.

The management of Adelaide Brighton Cement obviously had the Reith manifesto, and I am sure that Reith has passed it on everywhere. He places no value upon a worker other than to be dispensable at a moment's notice. Perhaps the Premier could expand on how his Government intends to bring about a population that enjoys harmony in the workplace, as referred to in the Governor's speech, given that the Premier has publicly supported Peter Reith's agenda.

More jobs will go, as many have already gone, from our power industries if the Premier sets up our power for sale. If the Premier fails to achieve that sale, he will seek a lease for such a long term that we will lose complete control of our power industry and its distribution network. The Premier cannot guarantee a regular and reliable supply once it is no longer in the hands of the public, nor can the regulator. The Premier will have given away our right to share in the income generated from the utility that provides funds to other public utilities which do not generate profit but which are necessary, fundamental services on which families on low incomes rely. They cannot afford to pay high market prices, but they will have no choice and will end up, as many people are right now, simply without services because they do not have the money to pay.

Promises of cheaper power to large corporations, even under the guise of more jobs, is of little comfort to the average South Australian. Once we lose control of these essential assets, we can never retrieve it, and we will lose long-term control and any chance to regulate them. I do not think I would care to be known as the Premier who gave it all away for the sake of some ideological agenda. Sadly, a virus runs through both the State and Federal Governments, and it may be too late to cure it.

**An honourable member:** And the pilchards.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Yes, there is a virus running through the pilchards, and we are not seeing much action on that, either. When the Hope Valley reservoir was closed recently, were we informed? No. Again, it was a matter of a bumbling Government and Ministers blaming each other to avoid answering questions, and still we, the public, were left in the dark. What credibility can we place on this Government when it so easily disregards the public? I doubt that there would have been a mass panic if we had been informed. Given that New South Wales had had water shut off for weeks because of giardia, was the Government afraid that if it informed the public we would want to know what happened in terms of how this contamination had entered our reservoir? Premier Olsen should understand that we have a right to ask such questions and that we have a right to be given the answers.

Questions have also been asked about the impact the GST will have on this State and, yet again, the Premier does not have an answer. The Premier says that he will ask the Prime Minister to show us that we will not be disadvantaged. Of course, the Prime Minister will give such an answer: it is his GST and he will not hear any criticism against it. The Prime Minister is another one who has failed to listen to the people. He might have won the election, but the message to him is that we do not trust his GST, and to make sure he got the message we did not give him the mandate he needs in the Senate. We do not believe it will stay at 10 per cent; in fact, I do not think the Prime Minister does, either. I heard the Prime Minister on a radio station during the campaign quote a rate of 12.5 per cent. When he was challenged, he said that he was exhausted from the campaign and that he had made a mistake. But often a truer word is spoken when a person is not quite on the ball.

Let us have a quick look at the GST. Those of us in this House will be much better off under a GST. If the Federal Government's cost of living adjustment is correct at 1.9 per cent, those on \$60 000 upwards a year could gain \$100 a week. Compare that with families on \$15 000 a year whose gain will be about \$5.82. Those on lower incomes who need the gains the most will not get them. They are the ones suffering and struggling to make ends meet, yet this Prime Minister refuses to concede there should be no GST on food. It is the low income earners who spend the greatest proportion of their income on the basic necessities such as food and essential services and on bill increases. Many of these bill increases were brought about as a result of last year's State budget.

Increases in taxes, fees, charges and levies and these new things that we have to contend with are estimated to cost about \$1 700 per head of population in this State during the financial year. If we break down this figure to a weekly figure, it means some \$33 extra a week. The number of people visiting my office because they are about to have their electricity and gas cut off is increasing dramatically; in fact, in the last few weeks I have had a number of people come into my office. They are not gambling away their money or

spending it in the pub: they simply cannot make ends meet. The GST will not give them any assistance and, when they discover the added costs to services because of the GST, they really will wonder what has hit them.

People today still do not understand the extent of the term 'service', and that is where the GST will have a great impact on them. But they will know as soon as it comes in. No, change in Government policy will not mean social responsibility but social irresponsibility, as many in the community understand. Far from reducing debt, it will catapult them into greater indebtedness with no option to get out of that cycle. There are no guarantees that pensions and benefits will increase more than the cost of living, as previously asserted by the Federal Government. According to a leading community organisation, SACOSS:

The Government's assumption ignores the fact that people on low incomes spend more than twice the proportion of their household budget on outlays for food, power and household running costs than Australians in the top 20 per cent of income earners. Many basic food and commodity prices will rise by over 6 per cent after the imposition of a GST, and that figure assumes that lower input costs and transport expenses will be fully passed on to consumers by producers and wholesalers.

This shows that a 10 per cent GST will have a catastrophic effect on moderate to low income families in South Australia, and we have a Premier who is an ardent supporter of the GST but who cannot explain the benefits to South Australians; he wants the Prime Minister to do it. Already, my constituents are experiencing cuts in their benefit. The Federal Government has now cut the Partners Allowance, and in some cases those families can stand to lose up to \$100 a fortnight. With the State Government reducing the Housing Trust stock by some 20 000 dwellings, and with the constant increase in rents, each time they receive a pension increase there is little joy for these people. In fact, often about one-third of the pension increase is lost to rent increases and the rest taken over by ever increasing service charges. It is no wonder that people are threatened with eviction because they cannot afford to pay the rent.

These are the people who are forced to go to FACS and other charities because, no matter how one does their budget, they are always some \$10 to \$20 behind each week and there is nothing left to cut back, to stretch their dollar to pay for just the bare necessities. At the State anti-poverty conference in May, information was distributed that showed some 46 per cent of South Australians currently exist on inadequate incomes. People are being forced into destitution. That is the society that this Government is presiding over, and all the Premier can do is promise us jobs in the future, of which jobs we have seen little to date. He shows tacit concern over the massive job losses we have experienced and will continue to experience but seems to be able to spend time flying around on Concorde. What interest does he show in workers in general?

Let us look at the record of the State and Federal Governments on occupational health and safety in the workplace. On 8 July this year I asked a question about opal mining inspectors being withdrawn from the opal mine sites: I am yet to receive an answer. The greatest area for economic cutbacks in the last Federal budget was in occupational health and safety, with some \$3.1 million being cut from that budget. A report in the *Advertiser* recently outlined the State Government's proposal that individual industries establish their own workplace safety standards, a move away from regulated workplace safety. In the Governor's speech he said that the

Government is to introduce legislation to ensure the safety and security of all South Australians. But workers continue to ask: has the Government gone soft on workplace safety?

This is a charge made by the State branch of the Safety Institute of Australia, comprising 250 OHS professionals, in a statement made on 19 February last year. WorkCover figures show that, in 1997, 150 workers per day were injured. Between 1992 and 1993, prohibition or cease work notices gradually reduced from 72 to 34 and improvement notices from 446 to 222.

In 1992-93, 38 employers were convicted of infringements compared with seven in 1995-96. My constituents who have been injured in the workplace agree with the Adelaide University Centre for Labour Studies that the system is not effectively managed or administered. The fact that 54 000 workplace injuries occurred in 1996-97 and that workplace fatalities are on the increase demonstrates an alarming situation.

Industrial growth, which while important in this State perhaps more than any other, cannot be at the expense of workers' health and safety. Workers are not expendable, and growth should not be at their expense, even in times of record unemployment. Many jobs need doing in our communities and we have the people power to do these jobs, but not the funds, it seems, for the job creation that the community needs—nor the initiative, it seems—yet so much money has been wasted on consultants' reports, which often do not see the light of day or are never implemented.

I intended to speak about some of the issues, in particular traffic issues, which affect my community, but I might leave those for another time. But I want to talk about something which, I think, is a great initiative. Developments that crop up from time to time show that corporation bureaucracies are not totally blind, if you will pardon the pun, to the needs of people and recognise that there are sections of our communities that do need services which are a little different from the norm.

As members would know, I have been most unhappy with Telstra and they may recall that from what I said during a grievance debate earlier this year. Sadly, that problem has not been resolved and I still believe that Telstra acted in a most high-handed way. But the initiative that Telstra has shown just recently, that is, to print their accounts in Braille, is to be highly commended. I would like to see other Government agencies take up this initiative. When one of my vision impaired constituents received her first bill in Braille, she wrote to me, as follows:

For many of us, it gives us total confidence, independence and privacy to read for ourselves.

We may often forget that people who are vision impaired are disadvantaged when it comes to dealing with written mail and that they are forced to seek the assistance of others, and this means that their right to privacy is taken away. Telstra's initiative has set an example which all tiers of Government should take up and one which will give the vision impaired more independence and treat them as individuals.

I do understand that a cost will be involved, but the benefits to the vision impaired community will far outweigh those costs. Their dignity will certainly be maintained; it is probably a dignity that most able-bodied people take for granted because we can control our own business activities without our privacy being breached. However, those poor souls who suffer a disability face difficulties that we do not.

My constituent writes to me quite often; we keep in touch by mail. I actually write back to her in 14 point so that she can read it easily, and she is most grateful for that—and I find that these days I can read 14 point more easily than I can 12 point. I do commend Telstra in this instance and I hope that we can encourage the few remaining Government agencies that we have to follow suit.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Thank you, Sir, for the opportunity that is provided in speaking in the Address in Reply. Of course, I support the motion that the draft address be adopted.

I take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the Governor for the way in which he presented his speech at the opening of this Parliament, and I also take this opportunity to commend both Sir Eric and Lady Neal on the excellent way in which they are carrying out their responsibilities. We have been very fortunate over a period of time now with those people who have been selected to carry out that important responsibility. I am delighted that the community has come to know and respect Sir Eric and Lady Neal so well in the time that they have served the State of South Australia.

I did not speak when some other members in this Chamber expressed their condolences to Michael Wright, his mother and the remainder of the family on the death of Jack Wright, a former Minister for many years and the former member for Adelaide. I would like to express my condolences to Michael. I thought Michael spoke very well indeed of his father in this Chamber the other day. I agree with all that Michael and other members said about the former member for Adelaide. As far as I was concerned, he was a great guy. He helped me in the earlier days when I first came into this place. As so many members on this side of the House have said, we did not always agree with what he said or what he stood for. However, he was certainly a person who was held in enormous respect from both sides of the House. If Jack said he was going to something, you could be sure that he would uphold the commitment that he had made. I know that he will be sadly missed by many of his friends and colleagues in this place.

I want to take my time in this Address in Reply debate to speak of an experience that I had this time last week when I was privileged enough to be able to represent the South Australian Parliament at the forty-fourth annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Wellington, New Zealand. It was a rewarding experience which I will always remember and I appreciated that opportunity very much, indeed. Before I speak about the conference itself, I want to make a couple of points about the CPA and about the opportunities that are provided for members of Parliament to learn more about and be more involved in the CPA, which plays a vital role in the life of the Commonwealth by linking members of national and State Parliaments. The CPA helps to strengthen parliamentary traditions and nurture valuable friendships among Commonwealth parliamentarians. Yet, of course, it is more than simply the Commonwealth's forum for parliamentarians; it is increasingly also a body that is involved in practical programs for deepening democracy across our association. Therefore, whatever other opportunities are provided for members should be taken.

It is a great pity—and I can relate only to my own situation—that I have now been in this House for some 24 years and this is the first opportunity in that time that I have been able to learn more about the importance of the

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Prior to that (and I suggest that I speak on the part of the majority of people in this place), the CPA usually means the ringing of the bells; the holding of a meeting for some 3½ minutes; everybody pours in and pours out and their names are recorded as having been there; we are advised who will be attending the next conference; and that is it. That is a great pity.

I hope that a greater opportunity will be provided for members when they come into this place to be advised about the CPA, what the CPA stands for, what they as members of Parliament can contribute to the CPA and—and I say this quite unashamedly—what we as members of Parliament can gain from being members of the CPA. The opportunities are quite remarkable for networking and participating in debate of international importance.

Probably the most to be gained and what I enjoyed more than anything else—and I certainly enjoyed the debates and the matters that were discussed at that conference—was the opportunity to meet representatives of some 50-odd countries which in turn represent some 1.5 billion people who make up the Commonwealth. I guess I should say also at the outset that the thing that staggered me more than anything else was my absolute ignorance in not knowing half the countries that make up the Commonwealth. I am sure that if we were to have a test in this place this afternoon we would all fail dismally in putting down the names and location of those countries that make up the Commonwealth. We recognise the larger countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, India, Australia and some others, but there are many small, developing and struggling island countries about which we hear very little.

I also enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about how they deal with the Westminster system in their own right as individual countries. I was able to learn of the many issues, particularly environmental issues, that are facing many of these smaller countries. I was pleased to be able to contribute in a very small way to some of the discussions that took place, particularly regarding environmental issues and some of the areas of concern that are being experienced by the developing countries. I look forward very much indeed when I leave this place to being able to follow up many of the contacts I made in many of those countries, to visit and hopefully to further contribute in a small way to assisting some of those countries. I am pleased that already I have been able to forward on quite a considerable amount of information regarding policies and initiatives which have been adopted in this State and this country and which might in a small way assist developing countries that make up the Commonwealth.

Additionally, members should be advised that they are able to attend these conferences as observers. We tend to go through the procedures of selecting a person to represent the South Australian Parliament, and that is it. I must say that I have not heard a lot about the conference from those members who have had the opportunity to attend the CPA conferences previously. I certainly was not aware that there was an opportunity for all members of Parliament within the Commonwealth to attend these conferences as observers. If I am still in this place in 12 months it would certainly be my intention to attend a further conference as an observer and to pay my own way, because the opportunities that arise from that are quite considerable, including the opportunity to meet the many hundreds of delegates and observers who attend these conferences.

The conference consisted of a number of opportunities for debate on several issues. The theme of the conference related to globalisation and some of the issues affected by globalisation. One of the many people who addressed the conference was the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who gave a most impressive address at the opening of the conference. I want to quote a little of what he had to say, as follows:

A year ago, when [the conference] met in Mauritius for your 43rd Annual Conference, the East Asian economic crisis was just unfolding. The expectation then was that it would remain a local and passing problem, with the emphasis on finding local solutions. But what was thought to be a local storm has since then become a global hurricane, threatening to push the world economy into recession. It is not surprising, therefore, that searching questions are being asked about the impact of globalisation. What better choice for your theme for this Conference, therefore, than *Globalisation: Its Impact on Commonwealth Governments and Parliaments*.

He talked about a number of the developments that had occurred since the last conference, and referred particularly to the developments which are bringing about shrinking distances and eroding borders. He referred to the fact that this is the age of the Internet and of the world as a global village. He went on to say:

It is also an age where people in all parts of the world, increasingly conscious of the differences in their living conditions, are demanding change and a better life. A global market is emerging for ideas and skills, and people are migrating in search of better pay and jobs. About 80 million people live today in countries where they were not born; about 1.5 million people migrate to other lands permanently each year.

All this, as was pointed out by the Secretary-General, is transforming many nations into multicultural, multiethnic societies and bringing about a change of an enormous significance. Of course, Australia can fit very much into that category. He went on to say:

A change of such significance is therefore giving rise to much anxiety and searching questions: what is in store for humanity down this road? Will globalisation lead to better living conditions and greater freedom for all, to peace and security for the individual and the family, wherever they live? Or will globalisation generate unfulfilled expectations, despair, insecurity and a loss of national identity?

He concluded his address by saying:

In these times of great challenges and opportunities, the Commonwealth is increasingly a valued force for good. By offering informality of contact and genuine friendship among its citizens and governments, a large interconnected civil society across its members, the Commonwealth acts as a glue in bringing people together thereby promoting consensus in a world riven by inequality of opportunity, conflict and division.

You are part of that Commonwealth family and you, better than most, know what the Commonwealth can achieve, not just in facilitating a meeting of minds but in providing a springboard for action. There is no more fundamental an issue facing the world than globalisation in all its dimensions, and with all its consequences.

If members are interested, I would be very happy to provide copies of that full speech given by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

On the occasion of the actual opening of the conference that was performed by His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand, many others spoke. One of them was the Prime Minister of New Zealand, who made a couple of interesting comments as well, and I quote briefly from her speech, as follows:

I can think of no organisation better placed than the Commonwealth to grapple with and make sense of such challenging topics. Our history means we are uniquely equipped to take up the challenge. The Commonwealth brings together countries and cultures of every continent and region of the world. It represents over 1.5 billion people from over 50 countries and shares historic and

linguistic linkages that sets us. But the thing that binds the Commonwealth's rich diversity together is the set of political values we share. The terms and the context in which our shared values find expression has evolved over time. The Commonwealth has no written constitution, yet at the heart of the Commonwealth beats a strong pulse of democracy:

- the rule of honest government;
- the importance and urgency of economic and social development;
- the total rejection of racial discrimination and, in the words of the 1991 Harare Declaration, the liberty of the individual under the law and the right of that individual to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives.

Mrs Shipley went on to say:

These values and the earnest pursuit of them bind us together as a unique family of nations. These values do not belong to east, north, south or Westminster. They are values we have defined and adopted for ourselves by consensus. We do not always achieve those lofty ideals, but we all try and by being a member of the Commonwealth we have accepted the responsibility to debate political and economic values with each other and to open ourselves to encouragement to do better.

The quotes from both those speeches indicate clearly to me the importance of the Commonwealth and, with all the debate now progressing as far as the future of this country, Australia, is concerned, I hope that whatever happens we will be able to retain its membership as part of the Commonwealth. It is vitally important, as I mentioned through these speeches, that the advantages that can be gained by this country and the contribution that can be made by this country and the Commonwealth are very important.

The other matter of interest is that, often when I am talking to people about the direction that Australia might be taking at this time and whether or not we should become a republic, many people say that they would like to see a change for Australia towards the Canadian situation. In having an opportunity to talk to delegates from all of the Provinces of Canada over the past week or so, it was made clear to me that this country is in an almost identical situation to that in which Canada finds itself at this stage. Canada talks about its independence. It has gone as far as having a new flag. I do not support that for Australia, but they still have Her Majesty the Queen as Head of State in their country. They still have a Governor-General and Governors of the Provinces, as we have in this country. It seems to work well for Canada, and I suggest that it could continue to work well for Australia.

Topics on the conference agenda included maintaining accountability to Parliament in an era of corporatisation and privatisation, which I found of particular interest with some of our recent experiences in this Parliament. Another topic was the Commonwealth's role in representing the interests of its more vulnerable members, including overseas territories and the importance of foreign aid in alleviating poverty and how Commonwealth Governments and Parliaments can act as a catalyst for good government in the face of international economic processes. If I have the time, I would like to talk about a number of those issues.

The other issues that were of special interest to me relating to some of the smaller countries in particular were the issues of sustainable use of marine resources, the future protection of potable water and how Commonwealth Governments can assist victims of climate change and rising sea levels. These issues, all of which were of significant importance to me and of the smaller island States and countries, were debated with considerable passion. Many questions hang over the matter of global change and rising sea levels as a consequence but,

when you have the opportunity to listen and talk to people who represent small island countries, you recognise how significant this matter is in those countries. Indeed, a huge number of countries are particularly concerned about coastal and marine issues, including rising sea levels.

If we consider the significance of coastal regions and small islands, we see the coasts and harbors as meeting places for people of many origins and as having intricate social and cultural mosaics, including many of the Earth's most productive and complex ecosystems. Coastal resources are of utmost importance for world food security. Islands and coastal regions in their entirety nurture and sustain unique social and cultural customs and ecological landscapes; and, of course, the smaller island developing States, by making the most of restricted resources, provide lessons on living in a finite yet global world. All those aspects need to be recognised, particularly as some 60 per cent of the world's population lives within 60 kilometres of the sea and this figure is likely to increase to 75 per cent by the year 2025, which I find staggering.

Of the world's 23 mega cities, 16 are in the coastal belt. Of course, there is increasing competition for diminishing resources and the growing disparity between those who have and those who have not, and that in itself makes coastal areas flashpoints for conflict. Then there is the issue of tourism, which is the world's top growth industry. Tourism places inordinate pressure upon coastal and island peoples and their environment and, for local communities, managing coastal resources is rendered all the more difficult by the globalisation of the world economy. That point was raised on a number of occasions by members who spoke in the debate and who did so very passionately.

A number of issues outside those I have talked about were also raised. One involved whether we should give more credence to proportional representation or to first past the post voting procedures in elections to Parliament, and there was a fairly heated debate on that. Having the debate in the capital of New Zealand was fairly ironic, because they are going through tremendous traumas as a result of the situation in which they find themselves in that country. In 1993 New Zealanders adopted, by referendum, a system of proportional representation known as mixed member proportion (MMP).

Of course, it is a system of voting that is used in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Speaker of the House in New Zealand pointed out that the system involves members being elected for individual constituencies and also from Party lists. Its essential feature is that the overall Party composition of Parliament is the same as the proportion of the national vote the Parties obtain at the election. The Speaker of the House pointed out that, from having a well established two Party parliamentary system, New Zealand had moved to a multi-Party system.

At present six Parties are represented in Parliament, with no single Party having an overall majority, and the Coalition of the minority Government has now become the norm. I do not think I need to explain to this House the extreme difficulties that are now being experienced by New Zealand as a result of those changes. Many of the members of the New Zealand Parliament with whom I had the opportunity to meet spelt out very clearly just how difficult the situation has become in that country.

I wanted to take this opportunity to express my support for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; I hope I have been able to do that. It is my intention to have discussions with the South Australian President of the CPA—currently

the President of the Legislative Council in this State—because it is vitally important that all members are provided with information as to how they can become more involved personally and how they can contribute and gain through being members of the CPA. As I said at the outset of my contribution, I regret that I have been made aware of these things only in the latter years of my parliamentary life, rather than at an earlier stage.

It would be well worth their while new members to this place knowing just what can be gained—and what they can gain individually—if they become involved to a greater extent with the CPA, and the many friends they can make with people from the 54-odd Commonwealth countries, and the growing friendships that could emerge from knowing more about those people and the members of Parliament that represent them. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I congratulate the Governor, Sir Eric Neal, and Lady Neal on the role that they both play in South Australia's community. I certainly believe that they are doing the job very well and doing the office proud. In making my contribution today I want to reflect on some of the contents of the Governor's speech and the events that have occurred over the months that this place has been in recess.

On a national front, the dominating event over the past couple of months has not been the AFL Grand Final, which I was lucky enough to attend, but obviously the Federal election. Any Federal election, of course, is a very important event and this election was especially important because of the nature of the issues at stake. We saw John Howard and the Coalition returned to Government with a very much reduced majority in the House of Representatives—in fact, it was almost an historic defeat.

We have the GST well and truly on the agenda. I am not sure that I can say much more than that because, as we know, there is a long way to go in terms of what that GST package will finally look like. We on this side of the House opposed the introduction of this tax because it is inherently unfair, because it is a tax on jobs and because prices will not go down. It is not because we will be any worse off—and, as other speakers have said, we will be better off as individuals. But certainly the vast majority of people in the community will not be. The other point is that once we undertake this fundamental restructuring of the taxation system the ability to turn it back will be very much impaired.

It is interesting to note that, although the Australian Labor Party got the majority of the vote in the election, which was very much a vote against the GST—the overwhelming issue—but also a vote against the many other atrocities of the Howard Government, the fact is we did not win the majority of seats. That is our system and the Government holds that majority in the Lower House. But the Government does not hold a majority in the Upper House.

Over the past few weeks there has been much discussion about what a mandate means—and people have their own interpretation—but I absolutely believe that, when the Australian people, as they have done on many occasions previously, elect one majority Party in the Lower House and another majority combination in the Upper House, they are hedging their bets and are wanting a reasonable solution. They are not quite sure and not quite prepared to go all the way with what the majority Party in the Lower House has proposed. I am absolutely certain that so it is again this time.

So, when the details of a GST are worked out over the next few months we could be facing quite a different package from the one that John Howard put forward in the beginning. However, having said that, I say one thing for John Howard: at least he had the courage of his convictions. He told us what he had in mind, that there would be a GST at 10 per cent—as the starting point, anyway. He had the courage of his convictions. He put it out in front, which is something that did not happen in this State when the Premier wanted to make an unpopular change. The Premier of this State elected not to tell the people the truth and announced it straight after he was elected. So, quite a difference in style and substance between John Howard at a Federal level and John Olsen at a State level.

I must say that on the Federal scene we will be faced with many issues over the next few years. I am disappointed that a Labor Government did not win the necessary few more seats to take Government. I believe that we will face more of the same limited vision and very probably the continued incompetence that we have seen demonstrated by the Howard Government in so many spheres of operation over the past few years, and these two things combine with a very healthy disrespect for the ordinary Australian, for the battler and the people who really struggle.

I also pay a tribute to Kim Beazley, the Federal Labor Party Leader. He did an outstanding job in the election campaign. He certainly took the fight right up to the Government and I believe he will make a very good next Australian Labor Prime Minister. I also congratulate all Labor candidates who stood and fought in that election, all our South Australian colleagues. No matter whether they won or lost, they all tried hard and worked phenomenally hard. There were some great battles and we achieved some large swings towards our Party in seats such as Hindmarsh with Steve Georganas. There were also some bitter disappointments in other seats, but every candidate tried and worked hard. I would also like to pay tribute to the Labor candidates who stood for seats where we knew we had no show of winning. It was a very difficult job.

I spent some time in the electorate of Barker with David Detchon, who has been mentioned. I was impressed with him. He had to stop work and he lost money to do this job. As has been said earlier in the debate, he achieved a significant swing towards Labor in the seat of Gordon in the South-East. I think that result has put that seat well within our sights at a State level. Other candidates such as Jeff Buckland in Grey, with whom I also spent some time; Carla Leversedge in Wakefield; Jade Evans in Mayo; and Jo Chesson in the city seat of Boothby all worked well and tried hard.

One of the best outcomes which all of us could agree upon in relation to the Federal election was the electoral demise of One Nation. The fact that Pauline Hanson lost her seat and that her Party managed to win only one Senate seat—in Queensland—meant that One Nation was soundly defeated at the ballot box by the Australian people. I am relieved and happy that that occurred. For a while during the election I and others were concerned that that would not be the case, that some of the high polling that that Party received earlier would carry through. However, as the campaign rolled on and One Nation candidates were forced to try to articulate solutions to some of the problems they perceived, it became quite clear that they were hopelessly out of their depth.

In spite of that defeat, we must never forget the lessons of One Nation, which still exists although it is scattered across Australia. Those people are still there, as are the people who

voted for them—15 per cent in the seat of Bonython where I live. There is a great lesson to be learnt from this by all of us, and that is that many people feel alienated from the political system and that they do not trust or believe politicians. We must find another way to relate to the people in all the electorates of this nation so that all the people of Australia feel that they can have their place in the sun.

Movements such as One Nation gather support from large numbers of people who believe that they are disfranchised, that they have missed out and that there is no future for them. This should be a lesson for us, because the issues and concerns that One Nation articulated still exist. We must address those issues, otherwise we will have a return of One Nation or One Nation in another guise and we will again face the polarisation, hatred, racism and all the other characteristics that emerged during the past three years with One Nation.

A week ago, I was asked to address the annual general meeting of Guides South Australia. They asked me to talk about the major issues of the twenty-first century and how those issues will impact upon women at home, at work and in the community. It was an interesting task, and it forced me to sit down and think through these issues for myself and work out what I thought were the important issues and challenges that face us as a society moving into the twenty-first century. And I had to be able to do this within 15 or 20 minutes—which I will also have to do today—so, obviously, I needed to be reasonably brief about the issues concerned. I thought that I would share them with members today, because I believe that these are the three big issues and I believe that they present us, as leaders within our community, with an enormous challenge.

The first issue is globalisation—which a number of other speakers have touched upon. The second issue is unemployment—and I have given it status as an issue on its own because it is so large, although it is related to globalisation. The third major issue, in my view, is restoring social capital—restoring the balance between the economic and the social aspects in our community. I will briefly address these issues one by one.

None of us can escape the news on our television screens and in the newspapers about the Asian economic crisis and the spread of that crisis from Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia and even to the door of Alan Greenspan in the United States. I am not an economist, but I have read about these matters, and I believe it is absolutely mind-boggling that some individuals at the head of hedge funds and other entities have such huge power—greater power even than sovereign nations—to be able to shift capital and to play their games and make their money and take their money here and there and, in doing so, put economies of whole countries at risk.

This is not a new occurrence: it has been happening for some years. But it is now right on our back door, and the hot wind from this furnace is sweeping across the world. The United States is even calling for a new way of operating our financial markets. I believe that this is a huge challenge. We cannot go on like this, with this seesawing within the countries of the world—the haves getting more, the have-nots getting less, and a whole lot of countries in between being swept backwards and forwards at the whim of something, or someone, completely out of their control. So, that issue needs to be addressed, and it needs to be brought under control and back into balance.

Unemployment is a huge and endemic issue in our country and other countries in the world today. We are all faced with

this. I am faced with this within my own family. We would all know people who are unemployed: we see them in our electorates and in our offices. We know that unemployment is the scourge of our community at the moment. Unemployment leads to poverty, hopelessness and alienation. It means that our community goes nowhere and is dragged down by this terrible weight. South Australia has the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia and our youth unemployment rate is 36 per cent. In my electorate of Elizabeth, youth unemployment is at that very high level.

I have listened with interest to the contributions of other members. I heard the member for Waite's speech and I agreed with some of the points he made, with some of the solutions he offered, and with some of the things he said we should tackle. However, I get concerned when I hear terms such as 'the medicine is bitter'. He referred to the 'collateral political and social damage'. He also talked about the natural rate of unemployment. I get worried when I hear those sorts of terms, because that is the old way of thinking through these issues.

When people say that the medicine is bitter, I ask for whom is the medicine bitter? The medicine is bitter for my constituents in Elizabeth. That is who takes the hard medicine. The collateral political and social damage is a euphemism for high unemployment and that is the way it is. I do not accept that. The natural rate of unemployment—how can we say that, as if it is something we just accept? I say that the challenge for us in the transition to the new century is to bring in some new thinking about work and the economy, and about how they link into people's lives.

If we choose to go down an economic path which means gains for the community as a whole and if pain is involved, we should share the gain and the pain. It is not right for some to get the gain and some to be stuck with the pain. To make matters worse, what happens is that those who are stuck with the pain get more pain when others turn on them, criticise them as being losers or dole bludgers and suggest that wages should be cut further. That is not the way to go. We need some new thinking. I do not have the answers but I believe that if people got together we could come up with some answers.

I listened very carefully to the member for Waite and that is why I want to comment on some of his remarks. He stated that people would not do anything that meant that they would lose out as individuals. I do not believe that. I think people would give away things for the greater good if they felt that they had a part in developing a new goal. I believe that. At the moment a whole lot of people in work are working harder and harder, longer and longer, and accumulating money, but they are stressed and so exhausted that they are not able to do anything else in their lives, particularly if they have two jobs. On the other side of the coin are people with no work, no money and no hope. Somewhere in the middle is where we have to go.

I believe that people would do things and take cuts in their own standard of living if they felt that it would make a difference for others. That would not include everybody, but I think that a good proportion of people would seriously look at that. That is the type of thinking that we need to make changes and to ensure that all our citizens can hold up their heads, live a decent life, and be good parents with pride for their children, rather than being on the dole, on the scrap heap, discarded by society.

I noticed that it was reported in the press that the RAA is to write to all its members when they are billed stating that,

if each of the 650 000 members of the RAA paid \$2 extra, that would generate enough money for the association to employ 20 or 30 new trainees. I thought, 'Good on them; I will pay my \$2.' I think that lots of people will do the same. Here is just one example where a company has said, 'Let's do something about it; let's cut the crap; let's stop the talking; let's just do it.'

I agree with the member for Waite that we do need a genuine pact to do something about unemployment. We all need to be involved. That is what we had in mind when we talked about a jobs summit. It was not going to be, as portrayed by some members opposite, just a talkfest: it was going to be the beginning. It is a matter of getting out there, making a commitment, a pact or a plan and just doing it. That is what we need. I would want to be part of that, and I am sure that every member of this House, together with the hundreds of people in the business community, young people, those in the social welfare community and everyone across our community, would want to be part of something that could make a difference to unemployment. So, let us do it.

I refer to restoring social capital and to restoring the balance between the social and the economic. As was every member of this House, I was horrified to read in the newspapers of the last few weeks about two extraordinarily violent and horrific cases of child abuse. However, these two horrific cases, extreme as they were, are the tip of the iceberg in relation to what is happening with child abuse in our community. The extent of child abuse is an indication of the breakdown of the social bonds, the social fabric, in our community. I would like to share some statistics, because I noticed that people have been very upset about these cases—and it is important to be very upset about them. We are all upset, because these cases are disgraceful, upsetting and shocking. But it is easy to think just about those two cases, those parents, what they did and what we should do to them without asking, 'What is going on in our community? What else is going on in our community? What causes this? What should we do about it?'

This year there have been 12 000 reports of child abuse and neglect in South Australia, of which 2 500 were substantiated. The number of reports of child abuse in our community has doubled in the last five years, and there was an 18 per cent increase just this year. Reports of neglect and emotional abuse have almost doubled. Reports of physical abuse are up by one-third. Thankfully, there has been a decrease in the incidence of sexual abuse over that time of 14 per cent. The fact is that we could say that child abuse is endemic in our community. I would say that 2 500 substantiated cases of child abuse in this day and age in our community is a disgrace, something about which we should shake our heads in shame and something about which we should ask, 'Why? What are we doing about it?' Because we have pursued certain economic policies, the fact is that there are huge frictions and pressures in our communities.

Unemployment, poverty and stress mean that people cannot cope and thus require the help of friends, neighbours, churches, community groups or whatever else they belong to. But what else have we done? At the same time as the economic situation has caused this dislocation, we have also decided that we will not fund any of these organisations any more, that we will pull back the funds and that, essentially, people will have to look after themselves and get on with the job. So, at the very time that the social dislocation has been caused by our economic policies, we have taken away the

funds from those organisations and groups that provide assistance.

Debate adjourned.

*[Sitting suspended from 1.1 to 2 p.m.]*

### ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

A petition signed by 264 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to oppose the sale or lease of ETSA and Optima Energy assets was presented by Ms Breuer.

Petition received.

### GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

A petition signed by 375 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to permit residents and landholders, to the west of the lands incorporated in the District Council of Ceduna, to vote on the proposed establishment of the Great Australian Bight Council was presented by Ms Breuer.

Petition received.

### PUBLIC SECTOR ASSETS

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** On 17 February this year I announced the Government's intention to sell ETSA and Optima Energy. At that time I also indicated that the Government would undertake scoping studies on the possible sale of other Government business enterprises, including Lotteries, the TAB, WorkCover and PortsCorp. In doing so, the Government was not motivated by ideology. We were motivated by a much more basic desire: a desire to do the best thing by the people of South Australia and future generations who will make this State their home. These decisions will help reduce the burden of our debt and our exposure to commercial risk. Let me put it in the simplest possible terms.

Most South Australians seek to pay off their mortgages in the quickest time they can. We do so because the debt of our mortgage leaves us more vulnerable to hard times and other factors beyond our control. We do so to lower our final interest bill, so that we can invest money in things that we would prefer: our homes, our children and our lifestyles. These are the same principles that drive the Government's debt reduction strategy. We have a commitment to the needs of all South Australians who want their public hospitals to deliver quality of care and their schools to deliver us employable young adults we can be proud of, but we can only meet that if we reduce our debt, hence the asset sales process.

Today, I announce the outcome of the scoping study into WorkCover. In May 1998 the Government commissioned Trowbridge Consulting, Marsden Jacob Associates and Transformation Management Services to undertake a scoping study of the WorkCover Corporation of South Australia as part of the review of ownership of various Government enterprises. That scoping study has now been completed and a report forwarded to the Minister. Subsequently, the Minister has given the report due consideration and submitted the report to the Asset Sales Cabinet Committee. The recommendations of the consultants' report, endorsed by the Minister and the Asset Sales Cabinet Committee, is to retain the



WorkCover Corporation of South Australia in Government ownership and hence withdraw the corporation from the Government's asset sales program.

That recommendation and subsequent support for the recommendation have been based upon comprehensive and detailed investigations. At present, the WorkCover Corporation poses a limited financial risk to Government on the basis that any funding shortfall within the corporation must be met by an increase in the levies paid by employers. Alternatively, funding shortfalls within the corporation could be met by reducing the benefits available to injured workers. If we were the plunderers that the Opposition and others allege we are, these are exactly the steps we would have taken before embarking on a fire sale. In fact, in the scoping study that the Minister put forward, as it relates to worker benefits, I understand that that was specifically excluded from the scoping study.

**Mr Foley:** Why can't he make the statement?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Because I made the statement in February putting it on the list, I am making the statement taking it off the list. However, we care about the burdens placed on employers in this State. We want to see a system that meets the needs of injured workers and improves workplace safety, and for that reason the WorkCover Corporation will very much remain on the policy agenda of this Government. Workplace injury and death are a major drain on South Australia's economy and competitiveness. The Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 is currently being reviewed in accordance with competition policy compliance. The review is due to be completed by December 1999. The scoping study consultants have recommended the finetuning of the scheme in order to contain scheme costs and to improve occupational health and safety outcomes.

The Government will support the WorkCover Corporation in meeting those challenges which are properly matters for the board. We need this, as workplace injury and death cost the State approximately \$2 billion per annum. As I said before, this is not a Government motivated by ideology: it is a Government motivated by the simple need to get things right. Workplace safety matters. The workers compensation scheme in this State is working relatively well. Indeed, since the reforms to WorkCover by the Government in 1995—and the member for Bragg can take some credit for this—the business community has enjoyed a sense of stability in terms of workers compensation rates and levies. This Government will seek to improve occupational health and safety, and reduce the burdens on both the State and employers. That will free up more money for investment, and that will free up more money for jobs.

#### PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown)—

Medical Board of South Australia—Report, 1997-98.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** Earlier this week the final

report of the Local Government Boundary Reform Board was tabled in this House. The tabling represents a milestone in the Government's local government reform program. At the end of 1995, when the board was initiated, the Government adopted a three-stage approach to local government reform, beginning with a strong emphasis on boundary restructuring and moving through legislative reform to clarification of roles and responsibilities as between State and local government, with functional reform where appropriate. These three stages are closely interrelated and overlapping. However, the focus shifts as we progress. We are now at the point where the emphasis is on finalising new legislation and will shortly move to new strategies for functional reform, building on the two earlier phases.

I take the opportunity to describe the approach adopted by the Government to finalise the new local government legislation and to indicate the Government's intentions for the start of the next phase of the reform program, that of functional reform. Extensive public consultations have been held this year on proposals for new local government legislation. Because of the size and nature of the project, the Government wished to receive feedback from local government and other stakeholders about the proposals before adopting firm policy decisions. In May, public information sessions were held in metropolitan and regional venues, and during June a series of local government workshops was held on the proposals, again all over the State. Additionally, approximately 120 written submissions were received from the Local Government Association, local government councils, peak bodies, elected members and other individuals.

On the basis of these consultations and submissions, and previous work undertaken by the Government, policy directions have now been adopted by the Government which will form the basis of revised draft Bills that will be the subject of detailed negotiations before the legislation is finalised for introduction in Parliament early next year. Because of the considerable interest shown in this project, these policy directions and negotiation draft documents will be made available for public information in an electronic form.

The encompassing objective of the Review of the Local Government Act is to establish a cohesive and modern legislative framework for local government that is easy to understand and use. I believe it will also set the benchmark for local government legislation in this country. I expect to be in a position to bring finalised legislative proposals to Parliament in the autumn sitting.

**Mr Conlon:** Autumn which year?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** Next year. I turn now to the functional reform agenda and process. As I have indicated, the Government's position has been that it would wish to discuss functional reform once significant progress has been made with local government structural reform and the review of the Local Government Act. This is now the case. Complementing the State's position, councils, through the Local Government Association, have identified functional reform as a priority area.

Local government structural reform has seen the establishment of a number of larger councils, both in population and geographic terms, with stronger administrative and management structures. This is providing the opportunity for a new strategic approach to functional reform through council generated proposals which focus on selected regions where there is a capacity to adjust structures and management practices. In such cases, 'functional' reform would be

achieved through existing structures but with a strategic focus linked, for example, to regional economic development or employment initiatives.

In addition to this approach to functional reform centred on regions, broader State reforms will continue to be pursued in a range of program areas, many of which are already the subject of discussion between the State Government and local government. These include areas such as environmental protection and natural resources management, waste management, emergency services, potentially employment, and activities such as public libraries. Major reviews of legislation covering such functions which are currently under way or proposed will necessarily involve negotiations about roles and responsibilities.

Rather than setting out a precise or comprehensive definition, or specifying closely prescribed criteria for potential initiatives, the Government attaches broad meaning to functional reform along the following lines:

Joint action by State and local government to create and take up opportunities for changes in the activities carried out by either or both spheres of government, where such changes have the potential to provide financial savings, increase employment opportunities or to improve service provision to the South Australian community.

I call on all members to join with the Government in this collaborative initiative to ensure that, by having the best local government legislation and structure in this country, we are thereby able to ensure an economic climate in South Australia which leads to prosperity and increasing long-term job opportunities.

## QUESTION TIME

### HOPE VALLEY RESERVOIR

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Does the Minister for Human Services stand by his statement that he handed the Premier a briefing note during Question Time on 4 August 1998 which said that the Hope Valley Reservoir had been taken out of service on 24 July 1988 following the identification of giardia in water samples from the reservoir? Documents released under Freedom of Information by the Minister's office include a copy of a minute sent by the Minister to the Premier on 10 September 1998. The minute says:

I received a one page briefing paper just before Question Time (2 pm) on 4 August 1998. About 10 minutes later I handed the Premier the briefing paper. He read it and handed it back to me.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I find this incredible that here we are at the start of a new parliamentary session and we are raking up news that is now more than a month old, and all of it has been put out there under Freedom of Information. So, if the honourable member has not yet read fully the Freedom of Information material, I suggest she go and look at it because all of it was put out there by the Government. To be wasting Question Time in this House when everything is out there just shows how weak the Opposition is in terms of focusing on the relevant issues, because all of that evidence shows that there is no health risk to the people of South Australia at all.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have no indication of questions at all from members on my right.

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Premier.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Ms HURLEY:** Given that the Minister for Human Services says that the Premier read a briefing on 4 August 1998 that Hope Valley Reservoir had been closed because of contamination by giardia, why did the Premier deny on 9 September 1998 that he had been so advised? On 9 September the Premier wrote to the Minister for Human Services and said—and I quote from a report in the media of 10 September:

I wish to reiterate that at no time did you or any Minister advise me that Hope Valley Reservoir was shut down because of giardia.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** We see opposite members who are totally bereft of any new initiatives, ideas or questions to use in Question Time—totally bereft of ideas! It may well be that the Leader of the Opposition is correct to absent himself from the Chamber today, because even he might be embarrassed about the standard of questions we are getting in this Parliament. Within a fortnight I will attend one of the most significant Premiers' Conferences on taxation reform, yet there has not been even one question from the Opposition about protecting South Australia's interest. None! Where has this Opposition been imposing questions about economic direction in South Australia? There have been virtually none. All we had yesterday from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a question that repeated an answer that I gave previously to the House.

Members opposite are consistently showing themselves to be an Opposition without any plan, any focus, any vision or any direction for this State. They are also showing that, following the ALP State conference, they have no problems other than focusing internally.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Elder to order.

*The Hon. J.W. Olsen interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Premier to order.

### ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Will the Premier advise the House of the risks to ETSA's profit and to taxpayers' funds that continue to be identified if ETSA remains in State ownership while operating in the new national electricity market?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The Government continues to be advised of risks to taxpayers that arise out of competition for suppliers and freedom for customers in the new national electricity market. One such risk is what is called 'voltage step up'. As the days go by and further risks are identified and put on the deck, it clearly indicates the imperative nature of the need for this Parliament to support the legislation currently before it in relation to ETSA and Optima. Independent expert Sinclair Knight Merz has identified 19 major ETSA customers who would reduce ETSA's profit by \$6.7 million a year through being able to—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** No, I did not tell you this yesterday. If the member for Hart would stop reading his paper and concentrate on the answer he would understand what I am talking about. The member for Hart tells the business community, 'I understand the reason they are selling it: there are important and imperative reasons', but he does not have the guts and the conviction to stand up in this House. Why? Because the Leader has put down a policy that he has

to comply with. In his heart he knows that it is wrong, but he cannot do anything about it. Just to return to the question and the answer, I refer to voltage step up.

*The Hon. M.H. Armitage interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I thought he was trying to be the Leader, not the Deputy Leader—that is the second play they are working on. In relation to voltage step up, Sinclair Knight Merz has identified 19 major ETSA customers who would reduce ETSA's profits by \$6.7 million a year through being able to engage in voltage step up.

For these large customers, the cost of installing the necessary equipment of about \$500 000 would be nothing in comparison with what they could save on their power bills, because the practice means purchasing equipment which alters the voltage at which the customer takes power from the network, allowing them to qualify for significantly lower rates that they are otherwise excluded from accessing. We know that a number of major electrical equipment sellers—I think about three international companies—are in South Australia approaching the companies concerned in the marketplace, the large ETSA customers, to explain the very large benefits of their now being able to do this.

When we enter the national market—whether it be on 15 November or shortly thereafter—these customers with this equipment will be able to voltage step up, which means that they can access a different rate for their electricity that more than compensates for the cost of installing the equipment. We have also been informed that small to medium businesses can team up with each other; that is, a small group can network together to purchase the equipment to voltage step up as a group. So, a group of small or medium businesses would be able to access electricity under the voltage step up at a significantly reduced rate.

This is just one of the many examples of how the new market is changing the way in which people buy and sell power. It spells trouble for ETSA, its profit projections for the future and the risk that we are facing unless we take decisive action. The elimination of that risk, which will see the dividends collapse from ETSA in the future, is the reason why we have taken the legislative measures before the Parliament.

### BABY SIMULATORS

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** My question is directed to the Minister for Youth. What has been the gestation period for the baby simulators which his department now uses as part of the Baby Simulators Loan Service Education Program; who conceived them; when were they delivered—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Mr LEWIS:** —what is their purpose and are they available to girls as well as boys?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I think I thank the member for Hammond for his question. I should not take credit where it is not due, and I must admit that the baby simulators were conceived by my predecessor, the Hon. Joan Hall. While the honourable member asks his question with a certain levity, I would have to say that, if I were responsible for their conception, I would be exceptionally proud. It is a scheme which we are about to introduce and which the honourable member, as Minister, conceived. It is an excellent scheme. To

all intents and purposes, the baby simulators look like a baby but they have a microchip and they are available for loan.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** It is quite simply a program of—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** Members opposite can laugh, but I would have thought that unwanted teenage pregnancies and child battering were serious issues.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** That is fine; members have had their joke, but that is what I now want to address. The idea is that these simulated babies are available on loan to girls and young women. They can borrow those babies and, for a week, look after them. They are like the ultimate Tamagotchi: they wake up in the middle of the night; they need changing; they need feeding; and they need care, just as any baby does. What is more, because they have a little microchip, if they are not properly cared for and properly nurtured, they record that fact. After a week or several days, the girls can take the doll back and the program in the microchip is read out so that you can see how well the baby has been cared for.

They are a huge success in America. They give young women who think they might like a child, if you like, a chance to test the reality, and many women and men in this Chamber will know that the reality of having a child—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The member for Coles tells me that they weigh the same as a baby as well. They give women the chance to test their suitability for child rearing before they conceive. It is an excellent program. I am sorry we are introducing it now and it was not available previously to some who might have liked to avail themselves of the opportunity. It is a great program. The member for Coles deserves nothing but credit. I know it is being treated with some levity, but I am sure that, when all members of the House see the program, the way in which it operates and what it might do for young women in South Australia, they will all applaud this initiative.

### SOUTH-EAST WATER

**Mr HILL (Kaurana):** What discussions has the Minister for Environment had with the former member for MacKillop, the Hon. Dale Baker, concerning water allocations in the South-East; and will the Minister tell the House about the outcome of those discussions and any commitments made by the Minister? Yesterday, the present member for MacKillop claimed that the Hon. Dale Baker had intervened in 1997 with the former Minister for Water Resources and that the former member for MacKillop was responsible for the current allocation system.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I have read articles in recent times where comments have been made in the South-East about some form of connection with Dale Baker and water allocations. I can tell this House quite categorically that, since being appointed to this ministry, I think I have seen Mr Dale Baker on one occasion during the period since he left Parliament—and that was a social occasion—and I have never seen him before or since.

### GAMBLERS' REHABILITATION FUND

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Will the Minister for Human Services outline to the House the findings of the just released evaluation report of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Today I released the evaluation report of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund. It is a report commissioned by the Government to look at the services of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund and committee over the past three years. The report comes to the conclusion that the committee, the fund and the program have been very effective. However, the report makes a number of specific recommendations which the Government will now consider.

I will detail some of the recommendations. First, it was recommended that there be a 24-hour advisory line available for people with a gambling problem. I am able to tell the House that we are now at the point of signing a contract to provide such a 24-hour service on a trial basis for up to about six months. At present, we have an 1800 line, which is available, effectively, only during working hours. By ringing that number, you ascertain the closest Break Even agency, which you can ring during normal working hours. However, no advice, no consultation and no assistance has been provided for people after hours when, invariably, some of the gambling problems occur. The 24-hour telephone counselling service is expected to start around Christmas time and run for six months.

Secondly, the report recommends that there be an emphasis on harm minimisation and a greater focus on prevention, education and early intervention for those with minor gambling problems. In other words, early intervention will prevent a minor problem from developing into a very serious problem. The report highlights that the nature of gambling in our community is changing with the advent, particularly, of Internet and pay TV gambling, which has the potential to impact significantly—

**Mr Atkinson:** Encouraged by you.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The honourable member interjects across the House that it has been encouraged by me. I have been one of the fiercest opponents of Internet gambling.

**Mr Atkinson:** It was in the Governor's speech.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The Governor spoke about controls, and I indicate that I have been strongly opposed to Internet and pay TV gambling.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The report highlights that these new forms of gambling will have a significant impact on the community and particularly on people with a gambling addiction. It also highlights a number of other issues of which the House should be aware. It highlights the fact that gambling addiction comes from a range of activities in the community. Statistics from Break Even agencies showed that about 68 per cent of their clients come from gaming machines or poker machines, 16 per cent come from TAB racing codes, 6 per cent Casino games, 3 per cent from lotteries and X-Lotto, 2 per cent from other sources, and 4 per cent from unidentified sources.

The report recommends that the Government should seek funding from other agencies involved with the other forms of gambling within the community so that those funds also would go through to the gambling rehabilitation services to

allow greater community education and prevention activities to take place. It states that the voluntary funding arrangements for hotels and clubs are not ideal as they are only on a year-by-year basis. It recommends that we should be trying to secure a three-year funding guarantee agreement with either the hotels or clubs, or both. However, I would like to pay tribute to the role that has been played by the contribution made by the hotels and clubs already over the last three years of \$1.5 million a year. It is often not acknowledged within the community that that contribution is made.

There are a number of other recommendations in the report. I urge members of the House to look at the report and I am willing to make copies available for any member who would like to read it. I believe it has profound implications in terms of the types of services we provide. The report also commends the work of the Break Even agencies, although it recommends that the number of agencies should be reduced and that the services provided should be more focused than they have been in the past. I stress the fact that the report shows that the services provided by Break Even agencies and the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund have been effective, that they currently meet the demand in the community, but there is a need for Government and the community to put more money into helping those who are adversely affected by gambling, particularly those with both minor and major addiction problems.

### HOMESTEAD HOMES

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** I ask the Minister representing the Attorney-General: how much did the State's defending a defamation action by Homestead Award Winning Homes cost? Since judgment in favour of the State on 15 September last year, after an extraordinarily long trial, has the Crown Solicitor's Office sought to recover its costs from the unsuccessful plaintiff; and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I shall raise the matter with the Attorney-General.

### GAS EXPLORATION

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Will the Deputy Premier outline the State Government's position on the gas reform process with particular reference to the future of exploration opportunities in the Cooper Basin, which is in my constituency?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I thank the honourable member for his question, because there is no doubt that the major gas producing area in South Australia is within the Stuart electorate. The Cooper Basin, which straddles the South Australian-Queensland border, has been the major onshore petroleum province in Australia for the past 30 years. Gas from the Cooper Basin supplies South Australia, New South Wales and the ACT, and recently there has been an interconnection to Victoria through New South Wales, which helped out in a recent emergency.

The first discoveries in the Cooper Basin were in 1963. To demonstrate the importance of the Cooper Basin, a few of the statistics are useful. Over 1 200 wells have been drilled; 125 oil and gas fields are currently producing; 3.5 trillion cubic feet of gas have been produced, together with 160 million barrels of oil and condensate. This has provided gas security to New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT for over 20 years.

The investment has been huge. The expenditure in 1998 dollars in the basin totals \$9 billion, including \$4 billion on operating expenditure and over \$1.7 billion in exploration expenditure within the area. Production to date has been to the value of over \$14 billion, and there are already proven reserves of another \$10 billion that have not been pulled out. The Cooper Basin will be open to exploration competition after the current tenements expire at the end of February, and there is enormous interest both within Australia and overseas in exploring the area. The Cooper Basin has a terrific history, with approximately one in every two wildcats targeting gas having been successful. The Santos joint venture exploration tenement still has four months to run, and the offer of 'heartland' acreage must wait until next March or April.

However, some of the flank areas of the tenement are to be released, and applications are invited, with a closing date of 11 March 1999. A couple of symposiums have been held to highlight that to industry and to chase bidders. Bids will be on a work program basis. The main criteria will be the number and timing of wells and other work that they are willing to put in within the initial five year exploration licence terms. The department has been busy making sure that the basic technical data necessary for potential new entrants to make decisions is available to them. The South Australian Government is very keen to see a high level of interest in the Cooper Basin acreage, as competition for the acreage will, I am sure, bring benefits to industry as well as to the community, through more competitive gas supply arrangements and economic growth throughout South Australia.

#### ETSA, SUPERANNUATION SCHEME

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Given the Premier's failure on 27 October to stand by his earlier promise of no forced redundancies if ETSA is privatised, does he have full confidence in the performance of the ETSA division 4 superannuation scheme, and will he support dedicated positions on the new ETSA Superannuation Board for representation of unions with coverage of the ETSA work force? I have been approached by an ETSA worker who has accepted a package to leave his job on 30 September. He received a superannuation entitlement of \$188 553.03 for over 30 years of service.

This was almost \$12 000 less than the amount he had been told a month earlier that he could expect to receive, and nearly \$20 000 less than the amount stated in the scheme's annual report for a person with his contribution and years of service. Clearly, the division 4 scheme is not performing as well as other industry schemes, and industry workers—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is starting to comment.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I refer the honourable member to my response to a question yesterday on a range of conditions related to the package put forward to ETSA workers, in relation both to no-redundancy clauses and to superannuation. Discussions are taking place between the Treasurer and work force representatives. In relation to the specific case to which the honourable member refers, if she would like to make those details available to me I will refer them to the Treasurer for comment.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industry and Trade. What training

assistance is being provided to enhance business management skills for small business owners and people looking to commence a business?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** One of the latest initiatives that have been introduced by the Government is low cost workshops and training designed to improve the basic knowledge and enhance the basic management skills of small business. The business starter workshops, as they are called, have now spread to four or five new suburban locations throughout metropolitan Adelaide, in partnership with the business enterprise centres. We are also working with the regional development boards to present the workshops and the small business training to regional and rural communities, and working with industry associations such as the Bed and Breakfast Association. A number of intensive programs have been designed for 1999.

We have particularly tackled the Master Plumbers Association, and it may be of interest to some of the rural members that the Master Plumbers Association will be running some of the initial programs in areas such as Coonalpyn and Goolwa. They have also developed measures to meet other needs involving specific industry groups. The Business Centre has designed a curriculum for organisations such as the National Institute of Accountants and also for TAFE, so that when they design a course for small business it incorporates all the management skills required by small businesses. The target for this year is about 80 workshops with some 1 200 participants. One only had to be at the Telstra/South Australian Government Small Business Awards the other night to realise that South Australia really has many quality small businesses.

Minelab Electronics won the South Australian Small Business of the Year award, and it is worth recounting its history, because it is a great story. Established in 1989, Minelab focuses on three basic markets: consumer products, mine and unexploded ordnance detectors, and industrial metal detectors. It entered the mine and unexploded ordnance market as a result of mine clearing companies finding Minelab's technology superior to anything else on the world market. After the United Nations trial of its product in places such as Cambodia and Bosnia, Minelab now has 20 per cent of the world market in that industry. It is great when you think that the company started in 1989 and has grown to a turnover of approximately \$12.7 million this year, with 50 per cent of its production now being exported.

That is just one example of a small business that won an award the other night. Another example, in which the member for Chaffey might be interested, was the success of Kingston Estate wines. She might recall that it is better known as sponsor of the Kingston Aces at the Barmera Tennis Club. That company is one of the eighth largest wine companies in Australia and now exports to places such as China, Denmark, South-East Asia and all through the Pacific Rim. It built its turnover to \$12 million after starting from a sales base of less than \$100 000 in 1986. So, there are very simple, very small ideas for companies. They start out small and, through the appropriate support of their industry sector and Government sector, they themselves have grown and have expanded the economy of South Australia. They have done a great job and deserve congratulations.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Employment advise the House what cooperative employment

initiatives the State Government has with the local government sector and indicate how these will increase job opportunities for South Australians?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I know the honourable member's abiding passion for the creation of jobs, especially in the Eyre Peninsula region.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The member for Peake asks whether I share that passion, unlike him, and I note that since Parliament has resumed, while jobs is the No. 1 priority of this Government and the No. 1 piece of rhetoric by those opposite, they have not yet asked one question on jobs, whereas on this side of the House there have been several. The local government job challenge is an exciting collaborative initiative between State and local government. It will create 1 000 new jobs in local communities. The State Government has pledged \$1.5 million to the job challenge for a variety of programs with the aim of creating 1 000 sustainable jobs.

Some proposals already put forward by councils for new jobs in the community include supporting the southern aquaculture network in old Noarlunga to establish new businesses in the aquaculture industry. This project is expected to create 15 jobs within the year, with a further 50 jobs within two years, and it will value add to the important food industry that we are developing in South Australia. The District Council of Le Hunt on Eyre Peninsula—again in country and regional South Australia—has been supporting the development of a granite quarrying and processing industry. Subject to relevant consent, job challenge will add to council and private developer support, which is expected to create more than six jobs within six months, and over 30 jobs over the next two years. Within the job—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:**—challenge is a contract of employment incentive scheme that will also provide new jobs by encouraging employers undertaking contracts for councils to take on new employees. Under the program, contractors such as civil construction engineers—and the House will remember that yesterday I explained how there is a dearth of proper skill levels within that industry—will be encouraged to take this up with the payment of \$1 000 for each new employee taken on for a period of 13 weeks, with another \$1 000 payable if that employment is sustained for a further 13 weeks. Hopefully, in that time, with that incentive, they will be trained, and the skill levels in that industry will be enhanced, and the positions will then be for a longer term. Our criterion is that the positions must be filled by unemployed persons.

New jobs created within councils is another jobs challenge strategy, with incentives available for councils to take on new employees. The announcement of these job challenge strategies is an example of the State Government's view that councils are key partners in building South Australia. I wish that members opposite would take heed of the examples set by local government and work constructively on what is a serious problem instead of sitting there and demonstrating on a daily basis that the lights on the hill went out years ago and the mikes are about to be turned permanently off.

## WATER SUPPLY, CHLORAMINATION

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Will the Minister for the Environment say what steps have been put in place to ensure that chloramine, now being used in Adelaide Hills water, does not leach or flow into local creeks and streams as it is toxic to aquatic life, including certain species of frogs? What steps has SA Water taken to ensure that in future information on new procedures is more readily available before they are introduced? Adelaide Hills residents have complained about the lack of consultation and clear information from SA Water regarding the impact of its decision to use chloramination. An article in the Adelaide Hills *Courier* of 21 October states that the chemical does 'have a toxic effect on ponds and aquarium fish and other aquatic creatures'.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** Quite obviously, with the discussions that are raging across the State at present, a great deal of concern is being expressed on all water issues. Chloramination has occurred for many years. I am advised that, as most chemicals are used under current practices today, although they have a toxic effect on aquarium fish and others, the effect on human beings is no risk whatsoever. I should also advise the honourable member that the question that she has asked comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister who is not in the House at present. So I am quite happy—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** He seems to have disappeared with one of your members, so I am not quite sure. I am quite happy to take the honourable member's full question on notice and pass it over to the Minister to see whether he can add any further information.

## ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** My question is directed to the Premier. How many alternative sites were considered for the \$200 million power station, announced to be built at Pelican Point near Port Adelaide, and was an analysis made of the potential economic benefits to regional South Australia of building the new station at either Whyalla, Port Augusta or Port Pirie? If so, will the Minister release the report and details of why these options were dismissed?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Simply, the Government is facilitating private sector investment in South Australia to meet the peaking requirements of the electricity industry in this State in the period 2000 to 2001. It does not exclude Whyalla or any other region within South Australia. In fact, in my discussions with the Mayor of Whyalla, held as late as last night, I indicated to him that no financial benefit is being given to anybody to locate at Pelican Point over and above any other location in South Australia. The honourable member must understand that, if you are investing a couple of hundred million dollars in up to a 300 megawatt—and possibly a 500 megawatt—combined gas cycle power facility, in a commercial base, you will put it in a location that gives you the best commercial return. That is a position that would be put forward clearly by the private sector groups.

My understanding is that more than 80 per cent of the base load in this State is in the broader metropolitan area of Adelaide. If the station is at a location that is external to the base load in South Australia, requiring long transmission lines, resulting in higher costs and a drop-off of voltage, it would be a commercial disadvantage to locate a generating facility in such a region versus the metropolitan area. That

having been said, it is clearly a matter of commercial interest as to where they wish to invest.

The Government is not favouring one location over another. It is a matter of commercial interest to make that decision. That is clearly the case. As it relates to Pelican Point, the only facilitation the Government is putting in place is a site that happens to be at the end of the national grid system; it happens to be at the start of the transmission system where the base load of South Australia is located. Therefore, there is a commercial advantage for a private sector operator in that location.

The honourable member would be well aware that Western Mining and BHP are looking at building their own generating facility. Given that the consumption by Western Mining is at Olympic Dam and the consumption by BHP is at Whyalla, a logical location for the station would be in that region. I understand that detailed discussions and scoping studies have been undertaken by the commercial interests, and that is a matter for them. It is not a matter for Government to be involved in that because, once again, when the national electricity market starts, anybody is entitled—indeed, the honourable member would be entitled to do this—to construct their own generating plant and just feed it into the system. That is the entitlement of any commercial interest.

In relation to the location, clearly the objective of the Government was simply to play a facilitating role, and we will facilitate an investment of that nature, whether it is at Whyalla or Pelican Point. The main need of the Government and, therefore, South Australians is that we get this plant constructed and operating by November 2000 to ensure that it meets the peaking requirements in the summer of 2000-1. In discussions with a number of commercial interests, they indicated to me that they can meet that peaking requirement in that time line. I want to assure the honourable member that, if a consortium or commercial interest wants to locate a generating facility at Whyalla or elsewhere, they will get the same courtesies, support and encouragement as that which we would apply in any other location in South Australia.

The final point I want to make is that no financial incentive has been put in place—that is, cash incentive—for the Pelican Point development, and no other benefits have been brought to my attention that would be applied to the Pelican Point proposal. It is solely a commercial interest at the behest of a commercial interest.

### GOLDEN OLDIES WORLD RUGBY FESTIVAL

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Will the Minister for Tourism please provide the House with the latest information on the preparations for the staging of the Golden Oldies rugby tournament in Adelaide next year? I understand that the initial announcement of the staging of this major event expressed the expectation that a significant number of overseas teams and visitors would be coming to South Australia as a result of it. I would appreciate information on how these early expectations are being met.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** I am very pleased to move past a few decades, from babies to the golden oldies. The Golden Oldies World Rugby Festival will be held here between 17 and 24 October next year. Members might be interested to know that it will be the largest participation sporting event ever held in our State. So far, 12 months out, more than 180 teams have registered for this biennial event which will involve more than 5 000 players. Every team averages about 34 members

per group. So far (although we are expecting this to improve) only eight teams have registered from South Australia—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair is having trouble hearing the reply.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** —whilst more than 170 interstate and international teams have registered. Members will be interested to know that the countries so far represented include New Zealand, the United States, Japan, Italy, the Bahamas, England, Scotland, Ireland and South Africa. It is expected that the players and participants will bring their partners and families to join them and stay for two weeks, enjoying our unique attractions and particularly our internationally acclaimed food and wine. In fact, taking up the suggestion that is currently under the badging of the South Australian Tourism Commission, it is our wish that all visitors to South Australia will relax, indulge, discover and enjoy.

The financial benefits expected to be generated from this event are in excess of \$25 million, and it is worth noting with some pride that Adelaide was successful in bidding for this event two years ago, winning from an international field of 13 cities, which included Atlanta, Paris and Melbourne. The other important aspect of this major event is the grand finale dinner which will be organised to cater for at least 5 000 people, making it the biggest ever sit-down dinner in Adelaide, and that is something of which we ought to be rather proud. It is another demonstration of this State's ability to attract and develop major events of international standard, to increase our profile, both nationally and internationally, and to provide significant benefits for our State and our people.

Since 1994, events that have been secured and supported here in South Australia are estimated to have generated more than \$140 million, of which I would have thought every member of the House would be very proud. It is very interesting to note that these events and tourism destinations have been promoted to a potential world wide audience of some 800 million people, through free to air television and other media.

I will conclude my remarks by suggesting that all members take advantage of a fabulous new production called *Calendar of Events*, a 55 page publication put out by the South Australian Tourism Commission. I am sure that all members will be able to find a number of events that they would be happy to support and promote through their electorates.

### FIRE SERVICE LEVY

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. In light of the former Minister's statement to this House on 6 August that, in order to free the CFS of the \$13 million debt owed to the State Government, it had been recommended that a once off \$6 premium surcharge be levied on those policies which currently attract a fire service levy, will the Minister advise why insurance policies not previously subjected to this Government charge are now attracting the Government's fire service levy?

Following the approach of a constituent whose comprehensive car insurance had previously attracted no fire service levy, but has this year attracted a levy of \$12.93, I contacted the insurance company involved and was advised that the company had not previously charged the fire service levy on

motor vehicle policies and therefore never had to pass it on to policyholders. However, this year the Government insisted they do so.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** While the member for Elder might say, 'Blame someone else', the fact is that this \$13 million debt lives completely with the Opposition, because it is just another case of \$13 million worth of debt not being addressed by the Labor Party when it was in office. We have got on with the job. It would be good if we had a little support from the other side, but we all know that that is never forthcoming.

The bottom line is that I recollect that the previous Minister did say that this one off debt would include the issue raised by the honourable member. I will look at that matter and, if it is different, I will get back to the honourable member. It would be great if members opposite realised how bad a state South Australia was in when we came to office.

*Members interjecting:*

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

### CHILD CARE

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training. Will the Government be taking any action to assist working parents with unexpected child-care costs because of the early closure of schools this year?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** In September I gave approval for new school closure arrangements to come into force at the end of this year. Students will no longer attend school after 16 December and, in 1999 and subsequent years, the end of the school year will be shortened by five days. This move will ensure that teachers are able to undertake five days of professional development in their own time. Thus, it will not detract from class time. There is no reduction in the amount of time that teachers are required to work. They will now be able to upgrade their own skills and undertake training and develop in their own time—not in their students' time.

Although I recognise that these new closure arrangements will suit many families, the Government is aware that these arrangements may impact on some families at the end of this year. Free care for school age children will be available, and parents will be contacted shortly through schools seeking their preferences for care at the end of this school year. Information will be provided about early childhood and school age care services that are available to parents in their local community, which will include vacation care, family day care and child-care centres. Care will be available at more than some 130 sites across the State, and schools will encourage parents to enrol their children early so that arrangements can be put in place.

The end of the year was chosen because of minimal disruption to children and students. As I might remind members of this House, year 11 and year 12 students are not on campus in the last week of the school year, and the majority of year 10 students are not on campus, either. That is one of the reasons why this period was chosen.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I draw attention to the Channel 2 cameraman that you are not to film people walking around the Chamber, only members who are on their feet speaking.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** In secondary schools, only students under compulsion will attend at this time of the year and all SSABSA courses finish in November, so there is no

detriment in terms of choice courses or promotion for all other students. This initiative will save the Government some \$18 million over the next five years.

### POLICE SOUTHERN COMMAND RESPONSE DIVISION

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. Given the outstanding success of the Police Southern Command Response Division, why is it to be discontinued in February 1999 and what alternative strategies are to be put in place to replace this excellent initiative? Since the introduction in 1995 of this division, which consists of 45 police officers in the northern suburbs and 45 police officers in the southern suburbs, the number of housebreaks in South Australia has plummeted each year, and this back-up support division has made an excellent contribution to law enforcement across the board.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Police have been doing a good job in that area, and I acknowledge that not only as the Police Minister but also as one of the local members. As members would know, it is about looking at how well the police are doing and can further go forward in providing opportunities to support and enhance community safety and the well-being of the South Australian community. As a result of the new Police Bill, most members in this House would realise that Focus 21 is a strategy being developed by the Police Department to ensure that the opportunities available in future further enhance good policing, intelligent policing and opportunities for looking after the community.

In about February next year there will be major announcements with regard to the new directions with Focus 21 and I am happy to provide detailed answers to all members' questions regarding Focus 21 during that time. Suffice to say that Focus 21 is a clear commitment by the Police Department of South Australia to further improve policing in those areas. I will report back to the Parliament in due course.

### CANCER PREVENTION

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** Will the Minister for Human Services outline recent developments in the fight against cancer?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Recently in South Australia we launched what is now called the South Australian Familial Cancer Service. Members of the House would be very interested in this service. The Department of Human Services has put in about \$800 000 to establish it. It identifies families that have an on-going incidence of breast and bowel cancer, because it has been found that between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of breast and bowel cancers are genetically related. Therefore, by identifying those families where from one generation to the next in particular there is a history of breast or bowel cancer, they are then able to chart those families and identify those where there is likely to be a high incidence of those cancers.

At the launch of the Familial Cancer Service, a particular person spoke about three generations of her family having had cancers. It was through the identification of her cancer that she immediately alerted her two sisters, who also were diagnosed shortly afterwards as having cancers. Through this we hope to target particular families and people. It will not be too long before we will be able to identify whether or not



those people have a particular genetic make up and are likely, even within the one family, to have a specific cancer. I urge members to bring to the attention of their constituents this new Familial Cancer Service. It is a world first, we understand; certainly, it is the first we know of within Australia. It is an important service in helping those families where the incidence of bowel and breast cancer has been high indeed. Recognising that each year about 6 800 cases of cancer are diagnosed in the community, we are working on trying to bring about early identification of cancer and thereby improve the survival rate of people with cancers. It is interesting to see the figures from the late 1970s when the survival rate from cancer was 47 per cent: in 1996 it had risen to 55 per cent. Some headway is being made, even though most people would argue it is still a marginal increase, but it is significant. We put more money into breast cancer screening in South Australia.

I pay tribute to the breast cancer screening service. It is regarded as a gold plate service compared with that in other States of Australia. This Government has made an on-going commitment to try to get more people screened each year. Earlier this year, compared with 12 months ago, there was a 20 per cent increase in the number of women being screened, and we have exceeded the 1997-98 target by about 6 300 women. We are doing that now by putting in additional financial services and resources. We expect 62 000 women to be screened in 1998-99.

We have also put money into a new facility at Marion—an extension of the Marion clinic—which will be completed in December this year. In addition, we have put money into a new mobile clinic to be commissioned next year to target those women in remote and rural areas. Through services such as these and many others, we are as a community—and I pay tribute to all involved in the fight against cancer at the research, medical, nursing and other levels—having some success, even though cancer is still a major killer in our community. As a community we need to be very mindful of the enormous personal tragedy that occurs in our community through the incidence of cancer.

That is one reason why the Government has made a commitment to the anti-tobacco strategy: this year we have committed \$3.9 million and we are about to embark on a major advertising campaign in terms of ensuring that, when people go out to dine, they will be able to dine in smoke-free areas. From 4 January next year there will be a ban on smoking in all dining areas, whether in restaurants, cafeterias or any other such place, and that will be a further significant step towards reducing the incidence of passive smoking within the community. Research from the National Health and Medical Research Council shows that passive smoking significantly increases both asthma and lung cancers. With steps such as this, we are starting to pull back the incidence of cancers and improve the chance of people with cancer to survive beyond five years.

---

## EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES LEGISLATION

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** It gives me a great deal of pleasure to formally announce that the Government will be reviewing two very important Acts concerning school education and children's services in this State. I refer to the Education Act 1972 and the Children's Services Act 1985. Both of these Acts have served South Australia well but time has taken its toll on the integrity and cohesiveness of both. The Education Act is now 26 years old and has been amended many times to reflect the educational policies and practices of the day. Over time it has lost its cohesiveness and still contains sections that are no longer relevant. Much of the language is dated and some sections inhibit change and innovation.

The Children's Services Act, on the other hand, is much more youthful and has not been extensively amended. However, it no longer reflects the contemporary realities of how children's services are administered or delivered. It is clearly time to create one modern integrated Act. The Government believes it is timely to think of children's services and school education as part of the same world—as an integrated whole, underpinned by the spirit of life-long learning. The Government also believes that the children of South Australia would be better served if the policies and practices affecting children's services and school education were influenced by the one integrated piece of legislation.

We will, therefore, be aiming to put before the House an education and children's services Bill that will take us well into the new century. Before providing the House with more detail of the review, I wish to inform members that there will be an independent analysis of aspects of the education and children's services legislation which will meet the demands of the Competition Principles Agreement. This agreement requires all Governments to have reviewed and reformed all existing legislation that restricts competition by the year 2000. I have sought advice from the office of the Crown Solicitor as to which aspects of the current education and children's services legislation might restrict competition as defined by the Competition Principles Agreement.

Three broad areas were identified: teacher registration; the registration of non-government schools; and the licensing and regulation of children's services. Notwithstanding these obligations, the review will cover all aspects of the legislation so that the new arrangements will ensure optimum community benefit. I will, therefore, establish three independent review panels: one to review the teacher registration requirements of the current Education Act; one to examine non-government school registration; and one to review aspects of the Children's Services Act.

I will now provide the House with a description of the process to be used in the wider review of the Education Act and the Children's Services Act 1985. The key feature of this review will be the openness of its process. There will be widespread in-depth public consultation. Any individual, group, or organisation may participate in the review. I have established a legislative review unit within the Department for Education, Training and Employment to manage the review process, and contact with special interests groups has already been made.

Shortly, some 10 000 information guides will be distributed to all child-care centres, pre-schools, schools, education authorities, universities, parent organisations and community groups. It will explain the purpose of the review but, most importantly, it will explain how the community can participate in the review process to contribute to the development

of revised legislation. The first opportunity for the community to contribute will occur this year when I will be asking the community to identify issues of concern to them. Another opportunity for public response will occur with the release of a proposals paper in March next year. This paper will be open for discussion, debate and consultation from March through to July 1999. The issues previously identified by the public will assist in the formulation of this proposals paper.

The third opportunity for community participation will occur late in 1999 or early in the year 2000, when a draft consultation Bill will be circulated for final comment. It is planned that the proposed legislation will be presented to the House early in the year 2000. In addition to the opportunities for consultation outlined above, I will be establishing a reference group of prominent persons to provide me with advice from a range of perspectives. In particular, I will be seeking their advice on matters arising from the review and the content and nature of the proposals paper and the draft Bill.

It is anticipated that members of the reference group will attend public meetings where they can hear the views of the South Australian community. I am certain that the process I have described will result in an Act that will remain contemporary well into the new century. The new integrated Act will become an innovative model for other Governments to follow, and I am certain it will bring great benefits to the students of South Australia.

### FOOD ACT

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Yesterday I answered a question from, I think, the member for Elizabeth concerning food hygiene standards and operations in the State. Yesterday during Question Time I indicated, on information given to me just prior to the question from Christine Charles, CEO of the Department of Human Services, that they had collected survey information concerning the officers responsible for environmental health within the councils and their qualifications. Late in the afternoon Christine Charles informed me that some councils had also responded to a survey which gave information on their activity levels during 1997-98.

I want to acknowledge that some councils have done that. It is still concerning that a number of councils have not. The points I made in answering that question yesterday still stand: those councils that have not done so need to respond; those councils that are not carrying out sufficient activity in terms of food surveillance and hygiene standards surveillance need to do so; and the Department of Human Services needs also, at the same time, to be actively monitoring what is being done by the councils in checking that they are putting in the effort that they claim to be putting in. I do acknowledge that some councils have sent back survey information already highlighting the number of premises investigated.

**The SPEAKER:** I make the observation that that personal explanation did stray into a ministerial statement. Perhaps personal explanations could be kept a bit shorter and the rest kept for ministerial statements.

### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister for Human Services but I want to refer further to those matters. Yesterday in Question Time the Minister, in answer to my question, said that recommendation 12 of the Coroner investigating the death of Nikki Robinson had been met. Yesterday the Minister said:

That was specifically to put additional resources into the department, and additional staff have been appointed to the department. I repeat: additional resources have been allocated to the Public and Environmental Health Department. . .

Recommendation 12 of the Coroner states:

That the Minister of Health, in consultation with the Minister for Primary Industry, and with the relevant departments, and with local government, conduct a review of the resources available in the area of enforcement of food legislation (the term resources extending to human resources, training, development and physical resources) to the intent that the legislation presently in place can be rigorously and effectively enforced.

I contend that the Coroner's recommendation 12 has not been implemented and, of course, that is the view of the Auditor-General, as he expressed in his report. I heard and noted what the Minister just said. The Minister wanted to clarify the fact that he had been told later in the day by his department that, in fact, some of the councils had sent back some of the required information. The fact is that the Coroner asked for a full audit of the resources available. The Minister is saying that, just over three years after the Coroner's report was released, all they could come up with today was that some of the work had been done.

That is the point the Coroner was making and certainly that is the point we have been making in response to that over the past couple of days. Let us go back. This matter commenced in February 1995 when Nikki Robinson died as a result of the HUS outbreak. Nikki Robinson died and a number of other young children are permanently disabled as a result. A coronial inquiry was conducted, the then Minister for Health insisting that this was the best we could get—an independent inquiry. The 12 recommendations were made.

Recommendation 12, as I have just said, has not been completed, and that is what the Auditor-General said in his report and recommended that it be done—at last. The Coroner also recommended that South Australian legislation, the Food Act, be strengthened. Interestingly enough, that has not been completed in South Australia, either. In relation to that matter, a discussion paper was sent out and work was done on a national level. I understand why the Government might want the legislation to be nationally consistent, but how long do we wait? We made the point—and the Auditor-General made the point—that Victoria did not wait for the national legislation and went ahead on its own and brought in its own legislation. Yesterday, the Minister said that it would have been too late for us to do that and it was better to wait. The point is that we could have started that three years ago, too.

We need to look at the facts: a child died, a number of other children are permanently disabled and what have we in South Australia to show for it today? Virtually nothing. We have had lots of discussions and committees, and some information has been collected, but nothing substantial enough has been forthcoming to make changes for the future. It is a disgrace.

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Today I give acknowledgment to a senior citizens concert which was held on 23 October in my electorate. This concert, which is a very good example of a great community event, involved the local Campbelltown council, local schools and local community clubs and organisations. It was truly a community event and, most importantly, it involved young people. Although it was a senior citizens event, in reality it could not take place each year without the contribution from the young people. I know that the member for Coles would agree with me—and a number of schools from her electorate as well as from my electorate attend each year—in saying that it is a great event, and the council, its staff and the community organisations concerned should be congratulated.

The City of Campbelltown held this concert at the St Bernards Recreation Centre on 23 October, as I have said. The entertainment is provided free of charge for those who wish to attend. His Worship the Mayor of Campbelltown, Steve Woodcock, officially opened the afternoon, which was compered by Richard Berry, the public relations officer with the Blind Welfare Association. Lighting and sound equipment was provided by two local residents with assistance from a member of one of the service clubs. Approximately 500 people attended, including groups from some 34 nursing homes, retirement villages, senior citizen groups, the North Eastern Community Hospital and various other clubs within the council area.

Of the above, 173 required transport and were ably assisted by some 24 cars provided by the various service clubs and members of council. The council community bus, plus six shuttle buses, also helped with transport. The council buses were also utilised to transport primary and secondary school students to and from the concert. Some of the groups attending had their own transport, including Palm Gardens, APAIA, whilst the North Eastern Community Hospital and some nursing homes used access cabs. In all, some 20 people in wheelchairs attended, plus others using frames and some with intellectual disabilities. The balance of those attending the concert came from private homes within the area.

Assistance was given by the service clubs, council members, council staff and St Bernards Recreation Centre staff in helping to set up the chairs, assisting with the afternoon tea and later stacking up to 450 chairs for return to local businesses in the area which, over a number of years, have been instrumental in lending them to us free of charge. Some 222 children from 10 primary schools in the area entertained, including three concert bands, four choirs, one puppeteer, two pianists and three special guests who also attend local schools in the area. Instruments played by the concert bands included trombones, trumpets, saxophones, timpani drums, flutes, piano, clarinet, recorder, keyboard, electric guitar and bass guitar.

I must admit that this is one of the events to which I look forward attending every year. It is great to see the expressions on the faces of our elderly citizens and to see them show their appreciation for the young people who perform. I congratulate all the organisers, the special organiser, Mrs Marie Saynor, the council staff and the teachers of each of the schools and the students who are willing to participate, as well as guest artists who help make the day a great success. The schools include Rostrevor College, Athelstone Primary School, St Josephs School, Hectorville, Magill Primary School, St Ignatius College, Stradbroke Primary School, Thorndon Park Primary School, Campbelltown Primary School and St Francis of Assisi School. Entertainment is also

provided by the Charles Campbell Concert Band. I believe it is important to acknowledge young people's contribution towards making our elderly feel more appreciated as they did on that day.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** This afternoon I would like to talk about courage, determination and commitment by one of my constituents to her children and to their education. A woman who has approached me—and I will not mention her name or that of her children—has had a couple of children who have been classified as slow learners, or in need of special help, or whatever, in the education system. For 10 years or so this woman has been trying to get the appropriate level of help so that her children can receive proper learning and not suffer the indignity of being classed as 'dumb' in the classroom and being reviled by the students. I will read her letter to the House because I asked her to set down the facts, and she puts the case far more eloquently than I could. I will call her daughter 'Mary'. The letter states:

Mary, 15, has been on an NCP [negotiated curriculum program] for 10 years and on 31 July was reassessed or, should I say, properly assessed, as I was informed she had never been properly tested in the first place. Originally, in reception I felt Mary has a problem but was told she was learning at her own pace. As a mother I felt my instincts were right. I had her hearing and eyes tested as suggested by her teacher. At the eye specialist it was found that she had a 'hand-eye' coordination problem. After occupational therapy it was decided it was now up to the school to assist her with her learning difficulties. She was, I assumed, fully tested by a guidance officer and placed on an NCP.

When she got to high school I was told she was to be reassessed and expressed my concern. I was well aware she needed considerable help, but due to criteria changes I was afraid she would be removed from the program. I was assured she would still get some help.

Mary went into the testing saying she was going to prove she no longer needed help. As much as I would have liked this, I knew it was not to be. She was assessed by—

and I will not name the person—

a psychologist 'outsourced' by the Education Department. I then had a meeting with . . . after Mary had been sent back to class. She proceeded to ask a few questions. How did I feel she was doing at school? How did she cope socially? Did I have any concerns about her? You could understand I became quite concerned and was then told her scores were considerably low and, overall, her 'IQ' score gave her the label of 'borderline intellectually handicapped'.

I was astounded. I didn't believe the diagnosis and, if she scored so low, why did it take so long to discover? She had been on an NCP for 10 years! As far as the label was concerned, I did not believe it as . . . [the psychologist] did not know my daughter as I did! She is bright and articulate and, despite her difficulties, had maintained C levels. She is a kid who wants to learn and has never given up.

I suppose this is where the anger 'kicked in' and the 'how dare they' started. The education system has let down not just my daughter but also my son. I wanted and still do want answers.

I have spoken to numerous people about my kids, some helpful but too many were not. Someone told me we are eligible for disability allowance. This enabled me to go outside the system to get tested elsewhere. They were tested at Kip McGrath by [a particular person]. He found them to be dyslexic. He referred us on to another psychologist. . . who colour tested both my children. The results were outstanding. What I want to know is, why can't this test be done when there are concerns that a child might have learning difficulties? Dyslexia comes in many forms but it appears quite easy to diagnose. The test is so simple.

Learning difficulties are often hereditary so why can't parents fill out questionnaires with relevant details, and also ask parents about concerns they have about their child? If parents had more attention paid to them a lot of time would not be wasted! I had asked numerous times about dyslexia and was fobbed off. My daughter was devastated by the results of her testing. If she hadn't received a lot of love and care, I hate to think. She is a battler and has never quit and because of this neither will I. I want answers! If this had been my son . . . the outcome would have been worse. Socially he is not

accepted by his peers because he is unable to express himself adequately. He has low self-esteem and lacks confidence in his ability to succeed. Evidently this is common in kids with learning difficulties.

If the Government doesn't change its ways I feel that youth suicide will become a bigger issue. Self-esteem comes with the ability to succeed and at the present time, with the criteria for special needs set out as it is, kids with learning difficulties are being set up to fail. Not a good scenario, is it? Funding cuts over the years have, I feel, run down the education system to the point where many parents and teachers are disillusioned with the system. How can anyone be expected to function in a system that is floundering? Why is extra funding going to the private schools when the public system is so inept? I thought it was the right of every child to expect a fair and decent education, regardless of whether they have learning difficulties.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I wish to address a recurring theme of mine, that is, the need to protect significant trees. I have been distressed lately—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** I would like to respond to the member for Ross Smith. One does not have to be an environmentalist to be a member of the Democrats. In fact, many people on our side going back to Mr Brookman many years ago have been dedicated conservationists. I am an optimist, and I believe that the member for Stuart is showing signs of greening as he matures in his role as senior statesman.

I have been disturbed lately to see further removal of mature trees in the Hills area and, whilst I am not an absolutist and realise that we have to clear some trees, I think that poor planning in subdivision projects has led to the removal of trees by landowners and home builders, who have no choice but to clear a tree to put a house on their land. We need to change that situation, otherwise we will destroy the character of the Adelaide Hills. There was a recent example in Blackwood where someone planning to build home units cut down the trees before the application for development had been lodged.

Similarly in my electorate there are many examples where significant trees have been removed. I urge the Government to introduce legislation to give local government the authority to declare significant trees and thereby help to preserve and protect the very old river red gums, particularly, many of which are 200 and 300 years old. If the Government cannot move on this quickly, I will be inclined to move a private member's Bill to that effect.

Another related matter concerns the planting of vineyards and I noticed in today's paper a letter from Tim Barritt of Lyndoch who is concerned about a property near Mount Crawford, where it is planned to clear 300 and 400 year old red gums to plant vines. I trust that the Vegetation Clearance Council under the chairmanship of the Hon. Peter Dunn will look closely at that application to ensure that the character of that area is not spoilt. With sensible planning, we can have both vineyards and old river red gums.

I am also concerned at what I see as the diminution of open space in the metropolitan area. When it happens on a piecemeal basis people tend to forget the overall consequences. It is time that we had an audit or stocktake to make sure that we have adequate open space for our population well into the future. A lot of people say that there is plenty of open space, but much of it is not accessible. In my electorate, there is the Happy Valley reservoir, but people are not allowed in there and neither should they be. It is deceptive for people to say that there is a lot of open space, including the

parklands, because the reality is that it is not accessible, it is not genuine open space, and we need an urgent audit. I will be encouraging the Government to look at what we have and what we need to ensure that we retain enough open space, including a third generation of parklands for future generations.

Another matter that I would like to address in terms of local government is the amalgamation process, which has been quite successful overall. I do not suggest that anything change in country areas but, in the city, the City of Mitcham and the City of Unley should look closely at merging. They have both spent a fortune on separate workshops, and it will not be long before they look at building brand new council chambers, which is a completely unnecessary waste of money. Mitcham, which is one of the oldest councils in the State, should combine with Unley. I have discussed this with other local members and, from what they have told me, they would be supportive of that move.

Another matter of concern is that the Flinders Medical Centre needs to be treated more equitably in regard to funding, and I have written to the Minister accordingly. I would also like to see the Noarlunga Hospital receive greater emergency and accident provision, including salaried medical officers, so that it can be a genuine and more complete accident and emergency facility. I believe that Flinders is discriminated against.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** I rise to act as a peacebroker between members of the Government and, in particular, between the member for Gordon and the Hon. Angus Redford in another place. I read the *Hansard* report for the Legislative Council yesterday and I was surprised at the outburst made by the Hon. Angus Redford and the accusations that he made against the member for Gordon. We must remember that in this House the Government rests solely on the member for Gordon, the member for Mackillop and the member for Chaffey. I would have thought that the Hon. Angus Redford would go out of his way to try not to insult or incite the member for Gordon to vote against his own political Party in Government in this State.

**Mr Hanna:** He cannot help himself.

**Mr CLARKE:** As the member for Mitchell points out, the Hon. Angus Redford cannot help himself because he believes that he is the fount of all knowledge, irrespective of the fact that the other 68 members of the Parliament know only too well that he knows so little about anything.

**Mr Hanna:** He calls himself a thinking conservative.

**Mr CLARKE:** A thinking conservative? That is an oxymoron. Yesterday's *Hansard* report reveals that the Hon. Angus Redford spoke about the remarks of the member for Gordon in the following terms:

I am not sure whether he was comparing the Liberals with the Hitler Government or the Weimar Republic, but either way his comment was cheap, insulting and churlish. . . My challenge to Rory McEwen is to come out and dissociate himself from this desperate grab for power made on his behalf by Mr Beck.

Mr Beck was the Independent candidate for the Federal seat of Barker. The Hon. Angus Redford believes that he helped the Liberal Party retain the seat of Barker. I point out that the Labor Party received a 7 per cent two-Party preferred swing in that seat without any resources.

**Mr Hanna:** Because Redford was down there.

**Mr CLARKE:** Exactly. As the member for Mitchell points out, if it were not for Angus Redford, we would have

got less than half that swing. The honourable member went on to say:

Mr President, just think, in the 2001 election campaign we might see the slogan 'Rory for Premier'. I suppose that beats 'Joh for PM', but not by much!

I understand that only three weeks ago, at an award presentation for winners of the South-East tourism awards, the Hon. Angus Redford and the new Federal member for Barker (Mr Secker) were at a table of prominent Mount Gambier businessmen, but what were they doing? Were they extolling the virtues of a united team of the Liberal Party here in South Australia, how well this Government was doing and how well it represented the interests of regional South Australia? No: they were bagging the member for Gordon and the member for MacKillop and saying how terrible those two persons were in acting as Independents in this place; how they were an absolute pain in the butt with respect to the Liberal Government; and that they were useless. That was the sum total of their contribution.

The trouble is that what the Hon. Angus Redford did not know was that the very people he was talking to were amongst the greatest supporters of the members for Gordon and MacKillop, and that they immediately reported their conversation to those two members! What is the Premier doing by allowing this maverick from the Upper House to pretend that he is in the heavyweight division by almost trying to pretend to be a House of Assembly member, by pretending to represent those people down at Mount Gambier, when he is throwing fuel on the fire of discontent amongst these Independents, who could well tip this Government out of office before its four year term naturally expires?

My challenge to the Hon. Angus Redford is this: if he thinks that he is a heavyweight, politically speaking—we know that he is, physically speaking—he should get out of the lightweight division in the Upper House, resign his seat, run for the seat of Gordon against the current member and see whether he can mix it in the real heavyweight division, namely, the House of Assembly, instead of the powder puff division in which he calls himself a heavyweight, the Legislative Council.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** For as long as I can recall as a member for Parliament, as someone who uses the Library on a regular basis I have had the pleasure of reading the London *Times* and its weekend edition. On every day on which I come to the Parliament building it has been my wont to examine that newspaper. It always contains a considerable number of articles which are of interest to me and which are very enlightening, and it is probably recognised as one of the best newspapers in the world. I am not the only one who is concerned: the Leader of the Opposition is most annoyed about this matter too, because we have discussed it. When I inquired at the front desk as to what had happened to the newspaper, I was told that the subscription had been cancelled. I was particularly annoyed at this, especially when you look in the Library and see a number of magazines of little value or consequence.

I would like to know how much it costs a year to get the *National Geographic* or the *Readers Digest*, and I am considering putting some questions on notice about the cost of all these magazines. Having been told that the subscription had been cancelled, I made some further inquiries and was told that some cost cutting had been entered into. I am not quite sure what the function of the Library is after this

exercise. I thought it was to better inform members of Parliament so they could make a constructive contribution in respect of this matter. As someone who enjoys using the facilities of the Library I am, to put it mildly, most annoyed at what I consider to be an unnecessary, short-sighted and narrow-minded course of action. Whoever the enlightened character or characters are, they ought to have a close look in the mirror.

In my view, there are plenty of magazines which are of no importance or consequence and which do nothing for the enlightenment of members of Parliament, yet probably the best newspaper in there has been removed. I have always been of the view that we should have one of the New Zealand papers in our Library. However, I have not been able to achieve that.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Certainly. If you have any interest in politics around the world or in what is taking place with legislation around the world, at least you can be informed. I think that this action is unwise and unnecessary, and I am quite happy to move a motion to have it put back in there, if that becomes necessary. I do not think that I would have much trouble getting the numbers: I have already confirmed a couple of others; but surely it is not necessary. But I say to those responsible: go into the Library and have a count. I have been in there this morning. I do not want to have to go through the process of listing all the magazines in there, who reads them and how much they cost the Library, although I will, because I think this action is unnecessary.

The second matter I want to raise is this. For a long time I have been of the view that the tapestries that adorn this Chamber have more than served their purpose and should be removed.

**Mr Hanna:** You should be removed. You should go before they do.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I am of the view that they should be put in Old Parliament House.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I appear to have more support than opposition on this subject.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Then the honourable member should be pleased that I am still here. What I would suggest in their place—

**Mr Conlon:** Three years: that's all you've got.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I will be here longer than you will be. You are finished.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Stuart should be heard in silence.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Fifty-seven per cent in the Federal election in my area. I make the suggestion that in place of the tapestries we could put a portrait of the late Joyce Steele, the first woman to be a member of this Chamber, the first woman to be a Whip and the first woman to be a Cabinet Minister, and we should put the late Mr Torrens back in here. I am of the view that we have recognised the event with the public—

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

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 94.)

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I have three minutes in which to complete my previous contribution. During Child Protection Week earlier this year it was noted that at this time 80 per cent of tier 1 cases are investigated. Tier 1 cases involve children in danger, so if 80 per cent are investigated that means that 20 per cent are not. As well as that, many tier 2 cases, which are serious cases of child abuse, are not investigated at all and are simply referred on somewhere else to be handled. The problem is: where do you refer them on? Many of the agencies that would take these cases have lost their funding and others have huge waiting lists; for example, CAMHS has a six to 12 month or longer waiting list for people to get in. My point is that we need a new approach to provide a balance between the economic and the social. We have to do both of those things; we cannot do one without the other. We need to look at that.

I want to refer to the words of Professor Freda Briggs, and I quote from the University of South Australia's latest newsletter which talks about Professor Briggs having been named Australian Humanitarian of the Year for Education at the inaugural Australian Humanitarian awards ceremony in Melbourne on 14 October. These awards coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In accepting this award, Professor Briggs said:

It seems children are not valued sufficiently in any part of the world and in western societies, in many instances, pets are treated better than children. The cost of that is quite clear—societies reap what they sow and, unless the right support structures are in place to help victims and families, the problems will not get better.

Professor Briggs said:

The long-term social and financial costs of child abuse were astronomical. An Institute of Family Studies report shows that the cost of child abuse in South Australia is equivalent to the cheque for annual wine sales.

So this matter is in our interests. I conclude by saying that in the new millennium we need a new way and a new balance for a sustainable future that balances economics, social concerns and the environment. That is what we need for the future.

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

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** The process of evaluation is one that is important in any organisation or for any individual, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to reflect on my first year as the member for Reynell. I am sure I have been like all new members in being astounded at just how much constituents expect me to know about such a wide range of issues. Just this week, I have been expected to know the intricate details of the process of applying for a builder's licence and the legal aid system in relation to the Family Court.

These expectations are also made of the staff of my electorate office, and I wish to pay tribute straight up to my personal assistant Jo Carlisle and trainee Claire Freke. These two people have provided substantial services to the people of Reynell and the south in general. It is important to take a moment to recognise the way in which each of us in this place is supported by skilled and dedicated teams, both paid and unpaid.

My thanks also go to the many staff here who assist us to undertake our jobs, whether it be research and library support, *Hansard*, service to committees or in the Chamber, or providing us with sustenance. These people also do an excellent job. However, the main message of my first year is that of an overwhelming impression I have of a Government that has its priorities wrong, which seems unaware of the consequences of its decisions and which is unable to anticipate, plan or support its decisions with sound reasoning. Instead, we have major business decisions based on hopes and beliefs.

Early in the last session, we had the supposedly belated realisation that the national electricity market would have important consequences for the owners of our power generation and transmission facilities—that is, the people of South Australia. These assets are managed in trust for them by the newly elected Olsen Government—a Government that had gone to those owners a matter of weeks earlier and outlined its management program for the next four years.

Included in that program was a commitment to the owners of ETSA and Optima that their assets would not be sold. Yet only a few weeks later we were told that this Government could see no way to protect the owners from risks associated with their asset but to sell it. These trustees of the people's assets were seemingly so incompetent at their jobs that they had not even identified the risks involved until they were pointed out to them by the auditor. This is despite the fact that the sale of electricity assets was well on the national agenda, and risks and challenges associated with the new national marketing regime were canvassed widely throughout Australia well before the Premier and his Ministers committed themselves not to sell.

These points have been made many times before, but it is important to spell out once again that I see no way for this Government to have it both ways. Either it is an imprudent manager who would be sacked by shareholders in an ordinary business environment for not prudentially recognising a risk or it went to the people of South Australia on a platform that it could not deliver. Constituents are sick of hearing, 'Everything will be fine as soon as we sell ETSA,' because so many of my constituents do not believe this Government is any better at effectively identifying risks and problems and prioritising in social areas than it is with ETSA.

I have been struck this year by the way in which small changes in spending priorities would make such a difference to the lives of people who are having a very hard time. Let me provide a couple of examples. A group of parents with children who have severe disabilities asked recently whether they could use my office to meet with a ministerial staffer and whether I could sit in on the meeting. Their problem was that Grundy House, a respite centre that is used by 39 families in the south, no longer has funding to allow it to stay open seven days a week. This has several consequences, the most obvious of which is that no longer can these families have a week's break. Caring for a child with serious disabilities is a rewarding and exhausting task. It is usually undertaken by one parent only, because unfortunately the stresses of this job mean that many parental relationships break up, leaving one parent with the care of a severely disabled child, as well as the care of other children.

It is important for the development of the other children, as well as the health of the carer, that they have times where the active members of the family are able to do things together—ordinary things such as go to the pictures, the museum, the zoo or a school sports day. It is good for these

members of the family to be able to do something such as camping for a week. Each of us understands that you get a much better break from a demanding job if you are able to take off a whole week rather than just a few days. No longer can these families have the luxury of a week's break. How much would it cost to provide this facility to these over-worked families? They are not sure, but they think about \$30 000. These parents point out that, if they became totally exhausted by the care of their children, it could cost the State about \$120 000 per year to care for each one. Where is the economic sense here, let alone the social sense?

Another area where a small change in spending priorities would make a major change to people's lives relates to the survivors of sexual abuse, and I support the remarks just made by the member for Elizabeth. Surviving Sexual Abuse and Finding Empowerment (SSAFE) is a group that operates out of the Southern Women's Community Health Centre. It receives funding of \$14 500 from FAYS. A part-time coordinator provides a direct counselling service and coordinates a panel of volunteers. These people provide mutual support to the parents of children who have been abused. The part-time worker has recently been taken ill from the excessive demands of the job and the inadequate support and facilities. This group thinks that its situation could be greatly relieved if it received \$30 000.

Professor Freda Briggs, who was recently named Australian Humanitarian of the Year, in the latest edition of the newsletter of the University of South Australia, says that the long-term social and financial costs of child abuse are astronomical. She says:

An Institute of Family Studies report shows that the cost of child abuse in South Australia is equivalent to the cheque for annual wine sales.

With consistent cuts to funding to support families and children in crisis it is clear that it is getting harder to report cases of child abuse and harder to get help to children and families.

Professor Briggs frequently talks about the need for effective parental support as being the key to minimising the damage from child abuse. Yet which of us here would know just how to support a child who was abused? Which of us would know how to support a partner or friend who finally reveals this terrible experience and, when all the evidence shows that the most likely abuser—whether male or female—is someone who was themselves abused, what are we doing to provide treatment and support to break the cycle? So they are two clear and tragic examples of how Governments, and this one in particular, get things wrong.

Accountability, process and procedures are things that we rightly hear a lot about these days, but I have also come across examples where so-called accountability is just out of hand. Again, this issue came up particularly in relation to parents of children with disabilities. Ellen Turner, the mother of severely disabled Rebekah, as well as three other young children, told me about some of the forms she has to fill in: forms for the physiotherapist, medication forms for school, forms for the negotiated curriculum plan, taxi forms, and forms relating to access workers at both school and home.

When Rebekah is going to Grundy House for a few days, everything has to be changed. First, Ellen has to get permission; she has to change all the arrangements for taxis and so on; and, if Rebekah is sick, all these arrangements have to be changed while Ellen deals with a highly dependent sick child. At other times, if Rebekah has to go to hospital, Ellen now finds it necessary to take medication and equipment with them, as no longer can they rely on the hospital having spare

equipment available. This relates particularly to feed lines which often get lost or damaged in the hospital, thus costing Ellen an extra \$16, which she can ill afford.

Ellen also has to chase nappies through two different systems. Equipment repairs or adjustments are another administrative nightmare. Options Coordination was supposed to help with many of these matters, but Ellen finds—and this has been supported by many other parents—that the service is extremely erratic. Sometimes it is great but at other times the parents spend all their time telling the worker what needs to be done.

Ellen Turner is an extremely articulate and knowledgeable woman, and she just battles constantly to deal with all the administration and accountability processes. How does someone with fewer skills than she manage? We have to get better at managing in a responsible and responsive manner and providing the services really needed by the people who are doing such a tremendous job in our community.

The paperwork and intrusions associated with lack of money are also related to the Housing Trust. We all know that a few recipients of public funds abuse this privilege, but most do not. Elderly Housing Trust tenants find the frequent requirement to provide information about their bank balances a real intrusion and insult. 'I am 74 years old,' one person told me, 'and I have had about the same amount in my bank account for the last 15 years. Do they think I have gone out and robbed a bank or something?'

A father whose children have recently, thankfully, found work was really upset that he had to provide information about his children's wages for a rent adjustment. 'Why should I have to demand this information from my children, and why should the trust force me to charge my children rent when I am trying to give them a bit of a start?' he asked me. I explained the system, but was struck again by the need to provide dignity and privacy to recipients of benefits. Just because you are poor and need help from the community, you should not lose your rights to respect, information, privacy and dignity, so the way we match accountability with respect requires much greater skill than is currently being demonstrated.

Our inability to deal fairly and effectively with the community is evident in relation to such things as speeding fines. I hope that the new special unit to administer the collection of various fines will overcome some of the problems, but the same pattern appears in other areas. This basically relates to people whose skills are in neither the law nor the English language, having to make their way through complicated forms.

Several of my constituents have had penalties added to their speeding fines because they were late in paying instalments. In each case these people thought that, although they could not make the payment on the due date, they would make an extra effort to pay double the next time, thus, as they thought, bringing themselves up to date. These people discovered that the system does not work like that and incurred a penalty of \$90 for late payment. This really bamboozles people who do not understand the wording of the forms to start with and who think the system is stupid. Not only does it present people with the problem of finding the extra money from a tight budget but it decreases their respect for the rule of law and for government administration in our community. Again, it is a high cost for strictly sticking to the rules.

Whilst confronted with these issues, I was dealing with the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium issue with its lack of planning,

accountability or management. I wish the word 'soccer' was not in the name of the stadium, because it makes some people think that I and others who are looking for improved accountability in government are opposed to soccer. This is simply not the case. Soccer is an important international sport and is played extensively in the south. Usually, the facilities are inadequate, as is the support for the dedicated men and women who make it happen. A small injection of funds would be most welcome and justifiable to support the healthy recreation of ordinary people.

My problem with the Hindmarsh Stadium is the inability of the proponents to show how it was the best option for the expenditure of, at the time, \$18.5 million. Seven Olympic soccer matches in Adelaide are an exciting thing but, even with the commitment of this huge sum, the Hindmarsh Stadium will be able to accommodate a maximum crowd of 24 000. It will probably be 20 000: that is what current planning allows for. This makes it the smallest stadium by far. The next smallest stadium will accommodate 40 000 people. So, if you were the organisers of Olympic soccer, where would you be programming the most exciting matches?

The Public Works Committee had no evidence that any other option to hold Olympic soccer in South Australia had been seriously explored. And what of the venue after that time? The evidence showed that the existing facility that was upgraded only a year ago at taxpayers' expense of some \$8.5 million holds an average attendance of about 3 000 people per match during the soccer season, with some 8 000 to 9 000 people attending on derby days. Hopes were expressed for other uses of the stadium, and I am pleased indeed to see that the Rams are now using it. But that does not add to the State's revenue or well-being. It simply moves the revenue from Adelaide Oval to Hindmarsh.

No evidence was presented that jobs would result from the second stage development; no evidence was presented that the well-being of the community in general would be enhanced; and no evidence was presented that, having spent so much money on the facility, the taxpayer would not have to further shell out for the maintenance of a facility that seemed to attract minimum revenue. Evidence did show that nearby residents had not been consulted about possible alternative uses, most of which were quite noisy. Evidence also showed a serious lack of car parking facilities and, on top of this, the title to the land does not even rest in the hands of the people of this State.

Where is the accountability in this? Where is the sound planning? Where is the prioritising of scarce resources? Where is the economic management skill, let alone the social management skill of this Government? It is not to be found. No wonder ordinary people, including many soccer fans, shake their heads in wonder at the decision-making processes and management ability of this Government.

But the year has not been all about frustrations, and I valued the opportunity to work with some wonderful people and organisations. I have been struck by the number of volunteers in our community, and others tell me that this is especially a feature of the south. We have volunteers in schools, running the community transport service, running the seniors' centres, and running three extremely active community centres that allow people to develop their skills, their social contacts and their confidence in themselves. One organisation I have particularly enjoyed working with is the Southern Youth Workers Network, which brings together people in our community who have responsibilities in relation

to youth. I was pleased that the then Minister for Youth was able to join us at a meeting to hear first-hand about the needs of young people in the south for recreation and entertainment facilities. They need jobs, too, but while we are achieving those jobs we need to see that those people have the opportunity to participate in wide and valuable activities.

Again, recent research shows that people do better when they are unemployed if they have a broad range of social contacts, a broad range of activities and the opportunity to achieve in some way, even though not in paid employment. School councils, principals and staff provide an amazing contribution to our community. They work together to overcome the challenges presented by constant budgetary cuts and by constant failure to adjust to the priority of giving every child in our community a fair and decent start in life.

Partnership 2000 is a particularly valuable organisation whereby community members, employers, unions and school principals come together to provide vocational education and training opportunities for our young people. This organisation has been recognised for its excellence by a grant from the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) and will continue its excellent work in a challenging environment.

Most of the businesses in the south are small to medium businesses. We have some significant large businesses in Mitsubishi, Mobil, Solar, Britax, Seeley, Hardys and so on, but most of the businesses are small to medium businesses, thus finding work experience and vocational education opportunities in these organisations is a special challenge. The businesses themselves need to be supported in being able to provide a safe learning environment for these people.

Previously in this House I have raised the problem of not being able to obtain the support to develop an effective procedure through the Healthy Cities program to support small business organisations in occupational health and safety. In Partnership 2000, we are particularly concerned about this, because we recognise the high risks experienced by workers in their first job. We cannot afford to have any of the young people in our program injured. We cannot afford to have employers responsible for such a tragedy. They need support. Again, a small amount of money—about \$120 000—would develop a pilot program that could be implemented elsewhere to assist small businesses easily to upgrade their occupational health and safety facilities and be safe and caring as well as willing hosts to these important young people.

The Onkaparinga crime prevention program has also had some notable achievements, one of which is an innovative program called Canines Prevent Crime, in which people who walk their dogs have been included in a type of Neighbourhood Watch program. These people have been responsible for reporting a number of instances of suspicious occurrences.

Small business people come to my office frequently, whether about a building licence or more frequently about disputes they are having with their large property manager or property owner. There is a serious need to address the imbalance of power experienced between these large property developers and the average Joe and Joanne who are trying to run a small business. They are nowhere near on an equal footing when negotiating the lease; and they are nowhere near on an equal footing when they are following up with various conditions relating to that lease. Much more has to be done to protect small business if we are not to end up with a situation of vast companies and multi-nationals running this country. Three or four grocery suppliers—at the moment only



three—will be able to set rates and manipulate the market to the great disadvantage of ordinary people.

Nothing that I heard in the Governor's speech would do anything to address the wrong priorities and lack of accountability I have detailed above. There was one example of a sensible, small expenditure measure being taken to address a difficulty, namely, the introduction of mobile phones on public transport after eight o'clock. I commend the Minister concerned for the introduction of a sensible, low-cost initiative to overcome a difficulty for members of our community.

We know that a healthy community is based on shared values, experiences and aspirations, but how do we build a healthy community when people who lack money feel they are treated differently because of the multiple intrusions into their private lives when they seek various forms of support? Where are the shared values when some are not really equal before the law because they lack the means to obtain proper representation? Where are the shared experiences when there is an increasing separation of the community because increasing numbers are encouraged by this Government and the Federal Government to go to private schools and thus do not form bonds with the wider spectrum in the community? Where are the shared experiences when, even in State schools, children can experience differences in the quality of education because of their parents' inability to pay for the 'free' education their children receive?

Where is the underpinning of our community when people have different health care experiences, depending on their ability to pay, and when some cannot get dental treatment and suffer the indignity and inconvenience of having all their teeth removed in their 30s because of lack of adequate dental facilities? Many people in our community are not suffering the difficulties I have outlined today and I am grateful for this. They are ordinary people, trying to raise their children responsibly, to buy a house, to take an annual holiday and to look forward to security in their old age. The needs, wants and aspirations of these people also deserve our attention, but the damage done to these everyday Australians by the failure of this Government to implement a program to develop shared values, experiences and aspirations is as unfair to them as it is to the disadvantaged members of our community.

In conclusion, I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your assistance in allowing me to learn the rules and conventions of this place, and I thank you for the way in which you guide us to make the workings of the House as valuable as possible for the people of South Australia. Once again, I thank the people of Reynell for electing me and I look forward to continuing to serve them, being their advocate in this and other places, and helping to change government so that it operates in a way that is more sensible and beneficial for such admirable people.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):**

First, I thank His Excellency, the Governor, for the contribution that he and Lady Neal have made and continue to make to our community. Over the years South Australia has been well served by its Governors, who perform an important and sensitive role, not just a ceremonial role, as a healing balm on the body politic. For our system of democracy to work, whether it be under the current arrangements of a constitutional monarchy or in the future under a republic, it is vitally important that nationally our Governor-General or President, and at the State level our Governor, continue to be non-partisan figures who enjoy bipartisan respect and support.

I remind members, and particularly the Premier, of Standing Order 121 of this House, which refers to the irreverent use of the Sovereign's name or the Governor's name and which provides:

A Member may not use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to the Sovereign or the Governor nor may the Sovereign or the Governor be gratuitously referred to for the purpose of influencing the House in its deliberations.

The Premier should take his copy home and read and re-read this Standing Order—a long established rule and tradition of this Parliament. In saying what I am about to say I am being very careful with my words to ensure that they are not misinterpreted or misreported by the incompetent or the malicious. In recent days, both nationally as well as locally, considerable media attention has been given to what has been described as the overtly political and contentious nature of the text prepared for the Governor by the Premier's office for the official opening of this Parliament.

One report said that the speech was written largely by the Premier's senior policy adviser, Ms Vicki Thomson, and may have included input by a team advising the Government on the planned privatisation of our power utilities. If that is the case, that is a disgrace. It was also reported that the overtly political nature of the speech caused some friction between Government House and the Premier's office before it was finally delivered. After all, these were the Premier's words, not the Governor's words, and that is why there has been strong criticism of the text of the Governor's speech but not of the Governor.

The Premier's office clearly wanted to give the impression to South Australians that Sir Eric, as Governor, was personally endorsing the privatisation of ETSA. I am informed today that Ms Vicki Thomson even telephoned a radio station to provide details of how the Governor's speech was assembled and faxed from overseas—presumably by the team accompanying the Premier on the sale of ETSA in their new constitutional role. If this is true then it is a serious breach of protocol by the Premier's staff and again demonstrates that the Premier's office lacks class as well as substance.

I think it is reprehensible that the Premier of the State—in a desperate bid to shore up his own sagging political fortunes and to secure a headline alleging that the Governor somehow supported the sale of ETSA—should stoop so low as to deliberately involve His Excellency in political controversy by using his name to try to influence debate on a highly contentious matter: the sale of Government utilities. To do so is quite unfair and disrespectful to our Governor and to his office. This Leader of the Opposition will not attack the Governor for whom I have a profound respect and affection. I will continue to defend the Governor from attack. It is, however, unfortunate that this Premier has no sense of how our Governor must not only be but must be seen to be above the political fray. There must be no further attempt by the Government to politically sully the role of the Governor. My advice to the Premier is: do not wreck the system or damage our valued institutions in a last ditch attempt to save your own political skin.

*The Hon. J. Hall interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Madam Bucket—or, as she describes herself, Madam Bouquet—has just interjected. We all know about her loyalty. We know about her loyalty to the head of Government and what she did to him.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** That is right. Labor has always stood ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Govern-

ment to do the things that are really in South Australia's interests. Labor will work with the Government, employers, unions, all political Parties, community and church groups, local government and small business to create jobs and secure existing ones. I worked with the previous Premier—who was once a close friend of the Minister in the Chamber—to secure the Adelaide Airport extension. I worked with the present Premier to secure a future for our automotive, textile, clothing and footwear industry, and to achieve a go ahead for the Alice Springs-Darwin railway.

But there is one thing that Labor will not help John Olsen do: Labor will not help the present Premier break his promises to the electorate at the last election not to sell our electricity assets—an election that was a referendum on the sale of ETSA; a referendum where the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and the Democrats pledged solemnly not to sell off our electricity assets. We will not let this Premier sell South Australia's largest company, with its headquarters here in Adelaide, to foreign owners in Tokyo, New York or London. I want also to make brief reference to the recent report of the Auditor-General, because it throws a piquant light on the spurious claims made by the Olsen Government about its attempts to sell this State and our power assets.

The first response of this Government and the hapless Treasurer was the calculated misrepresentation of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General, another non-partisan officer, was verbed. Bit by bit, over the past five years, we have seen this Government try to sully the non-political status of police commissioners, the Auditor-General and various other supposedly non-partisan officials. This time it was again the Auditor-General's role and he was verbed by the Treasurer. The Treasurer issued a press release claiming that the Auditor-General had found that the State would benefit financially from the sale of our power utilities.

The reality is that the Auditor-General has made no such claim and was merely reporting on work done by the Treasurer's own department. The Auditor-General says that his comments are not about the merits of the sale but rather, he said:

... to explore the relationships between the possible sale... and the State budget.

He further states:

It is to be emphasised that this analysis is based entirely on the material provided by the Department of Treasury and Finance as to the figures incorporated in the budget estimates. Clearly, the actual amounts of any premium, if any, will depend on sale proceeds and on interest rates, neither of which can be predicted at this stage. It is certainly not the role of the Auditor-General to make such predictions, and the foregoing should not in any way be interpreted as an attempt to do so.

In fact, what the Auditor-General does is to cast even more doubt over the claims made by the Hon. Rob Lucas and John Olsen for their sell-off of ETSA and their sell-out of South Australia. The Olsen Government has claimed vast benefits in reduced interest payments—so vast, in fact, that the Government and its paid acolyte Cliff Walsh have described them as 'unquantifiable'—from an upgrade to a AAA credit rating that would supposedly come from selling ETSA and Optima. The Auditor-General has put 'paid' to that dishonesty. I must say that, week after week, we see this little column in the *Advertiser* from Cliff Walsh and he is generally endorsing what the Premier said the day or a couple of days before.

It is a bit of a coincidence, because what is never spelt out by Mr Walsh, the *Advertiser* or the Premier's office is that

Cliff Walsh is paid a small fortune by the Premier's office to be an adviser to the Premier, but we will deal with Cliff on another day. The Auditor-General has confirmed that Treasury and Finance—and that is Mr Lucas's own department—has advised the Government that the sale of South Australia's power assets would not guarantee a AAA credit rating agency upgrade, and that the reduction in borrowing costs from such an upgrade would, in the words of the Auditor-General, be 'very small (the reduction possibly being well under 0.1 per cent per annum) . . .'. That is, if you even get the upgrade by selling out.

Then there was Rob Lucas's threat of a mini budget involving tax increases and service cuts amounting to an extra \$150 million if the Parliament did not approve the sale of ETSA and Optima. In his budget speech the Treasurer states:

Members must understand that, if the sale of ETSA and Optima is stopped, then the Government will be forced reluctantly to return to the Parliament in October with a mini budget to provide up to \$150 million of further tax increases or expenditure reductions. . .

The tortured logic was that the State would be \$150 million a year better off through the sale. In other words, we would save \$150 million more in public debt interest after the sale than we would have lost in revenue when we sell. We asked for evidence, but were given none, save for the hopelessly inadequate report of Mr Tom Sheridan. Well, the current Auditor-General has not found in favour of the Government's claim of a \$150 million benefit from its sale. When inquiring into the derivation of the figure of \$150 million, the Auditor-General states:

The Department of Treasury and Finance has advised that, in interpreting the significance of this statement, the words 'up to' are to be particularly noted.

No wonder that John Olsen and Rob Lucas will not release any of the documents they say convinced them to back away from their clear election promise over ETSA. Notwithstanding this threat of higher taxes, the Auditor-General tells us that this Government has already introduced massive increases in taxes, fees and fines. The Auditor-General states that announced increases already mean that South Australians will be paying 26 per cent more in tax in real terms in 2001-2002 than they were in 1993-94. This is a high tax, low service Government, its only beneficiaries appearing to be overpaid consultants sourced from as far away as New York and as close as the Premier's own office.

Yet, for all that taxing and cutting of essential services, we find that, as the Auditor-General has told us, there has been a \$400 million increase in underlying debt, courtesy of deficit budgets run by the Liberals since the 1993 election. Not only that, because the Auditor-General tells us more about his concerns about the proposed sale of ETSA. The Auditor-General, for instance, expresses concerns that the Government may understate future profits to make a low sale price look better. The Auditor-General implicitly points out that the Sheridan report used by Lucas as a guide was hopeless and that it only looked at returns to the non-commercial sector and not to the whole South Australian public sector. The Auditor-General points out that, under the Treasurer's own department's conservative assumptions about future earnings, these are expected to rise, not fall, after this year. Small wonder that the Treasurer and the Premier have resorted to misrepresentation of the Auditor-General to claim he supports the sale of ETSA and Optima—how could they do otherwise?

But even more than this, the Auditor-General finds that when it comes to lesser cases of privatisation—information technology and the Modbury Hospital—this Government is

found to be utterly incompetent and uncaring. Why would anyone trust the Premier to sell our most valuable power assets for a good price, without shackling consumers with higher prices and an unreliable supply after what he did to our water system?

The truth is that no-one can trust the Premier to look after the public interest or to sell off our most valuable assets. Now the Premier hopes that No Pokies MP, Nick Xenophon, will wriggle out of his commitment to support the sale of ETSA only if endorsed by a referendum. Mr Xenophon, in making his referendum announcement, talked a great deal about morality and mandate. Now the Government and consultants are openly boasting that Nick Xenophon's vote is in the bag for an outsourcing deal leasing out ETSA and Optima for 25 years or more. So much for the Liberals' regard for Mr Xenophon's morality. This so-called 'short term' 25 year lease of ETSA and Optima would be the equivalent of a generation in duration, a period equal to half the life of ETSA after it was created by Tom Playford. No mandate and no referendum, because the Liberals and Mr Xenophon know that a lease proposal would crash in any referendum. They know that the people of South Australia do not want this Government or this Parliament to do to ETSA what the Liberals did to our water system.

I turn to Modbury Hospital. The Auditor-General has made serious criticisms about key deficiencies in the contract process and the contract negotiated by the former Minister for Health with Healthscope for the management of the Modbury Hospital. He points out that a report by Coopers & Lybrand into the deal listed six key deficiencies in the contract and says due diligence failed to establish an adequate benchmark for patient activity and to identify and value the equipment. One of the results of this failure by the Government to ensure due diligence is that patients with serious conditions such as diabetes are being asked to assess themselves as to whether their condition is not so serious after all—this is up to the patients; we hope they do not extend it to heart surgery—and could they please turn up for their dietitian's consultation in six months time instead of the couple of weeks they have a right to expect.

I challenge the Minister for Human Services—the would be Premier, the past and future Premier—to release the three reports prepared by Coopers & Lybrand for the Government which led Cabinet to agree to renegotiate the contract and pay Healthscope more money for the provision of the same services at Modbury Hospital. I challenge the Minister to explain in this place why it is that, after giving more money to Healthscope for providing the same services, people diagnosed with diabetes are still having to wait six months for their first consultation with a dietitian.

Let us look at EDS. When he comes to EDS, the Auditor-General's annual report warns that many Government agencies have not yet negotiated final assumed costs or completed their first annual review of service level agreements and:

the failure to do this may result in adverse service delivery or financial consequences for the Government.

How can anyone claim the EDS contract has saved taxpayers \$10 million per year, as promised by the former Premier, when, three years after the contract was signed, some agencies still have not reviewed the first year service level agreements and we do not have final cost projections for others?

How can it be that the Government has failed to resolve key issues such as 'final assumed costs' with EDS after three years of the nine year contract, especially since the criticisms of the Auditor-General in this year's annual report are the same as the criticisms in his 1995 annual report? Three years into this nine year contract, the Auditor-General has revealed that final assumed costs, unit pricing arrangements, revised annual price reductions and agency service level agreements have still not be finalised. That is a disgrace.

I now turn to the state of the South Australian economy. We are constantly asked both here and interstate: how is South Australia performing? The reality is that, in spite of some signs of partial improvement, the South Australian economy has been badly under performing compared with the national economy for the past four or so years. That under performance has become most marked over the past year or so. I released an economic discussion paper very early this year about South Australia's economic prospects and the ways of averting or minimising the adverse impact of the Asian financial crisis on our regional and national economies.

Today, I fear the position has not improved and, unless there is leadership from the State Government, we may see some more opportunities squandered at a time of diminished opportunities overall. I am pleased that some recent improvements have occurred in retail sales, investment, construction and even some slight improvement in employment in the latest figures. But the fact remains that the single most important indicator of how well an economy is performing must be jobs. I am tired of hearing from apologists about how jobs are somehow a lagged indicator. How long are we supposed to wait?

A recent article in the *Australian Bulletin of Labour* sets out South Australia's under performance in jobs, and it made the following points. We experienced a certain degree of growth in the mid 1990s, but all these gains were lost in late 1997 and 1998. In July 1998, the total number of jobs in the South Australian economy was below the number existing in the pre-recession years. South Australia has had the second smallest drop in unemployment between the 1992 recession and 1998 (after Tasmania).

During the period 1997 to 1998, South Australia was the 'clear loser', being the only State to lose jobs over that time. The loss of jobs was sizeable, being 3.4 per cent or 22 800 jobs. At the same time, this deplorable situation only failed to appear even more deplorable by a massive fall in our participation rate from 61.7 per cent to 59.5 per cent. The author states:

If South Australia had not been 'blessed' with this large withdrawal from its labour force, the increase in the unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent would have been even larger.

In May 1997 South Australia had the worst rate of unemployment relative to job vacancies, and it only improved to second worst (after Tasmania) by May 1998.

It is clear that, to grow our economy and jobs at a respectable rate, we need better leadership from the State Government. We also need a Government that listens to all the players in the economy—workers as well as business, small business as well as the big end of town, church and community groups, and local government and the regions. The No. 1 priority is jobs, and we must all work together to create them.

No-one, least of all Government, has all the answers, nor can Government alone make economic development happen. We need the perspectives and views of all the economic stakeholders, and we need the commitment of all those

stakeholders. That is why I propose that the Premier convene a jobs and recovery summit of all the key players. The jobs and recovery summit would comprise the Government and Opposition Parties and leaders of industry, unions and small business, as well as church and community leaders and local government. Labor's proposal for a summit is broader than the present Partnership for Jobs meetings and would have a lot more teeth and substance than the jobs workshops that our policy-free Premier is attempting to use to paper over the cracks.

Labor believes that a bipartisan approach to economic development, supported by the whole community, is what is needed to forge an effective growth agreement for South Australia. Because I am a generous person, I have to say that I was encouraged by the statements recently made by the new Employment Minister that he intended to break with the obstinate refusal of the Premier to hold a jobs summit. I was impressed that he said it while the Premier was overseas. That is why, having listened to the comments and taken note of the courage of the Minister for Employment, on 13 October I wrote to the Premier reaffirming Labor's commitment to work with all Parties, including this Government, to promote more jobs and less unemployment.

I have written to the Premier a number of times about this issue. I mentioned it before the last State election, and during the election campaign I raised it publicly during the debate. Days after the election campaign I wrote to him again offering bipartisanship. I received no reply. A couple of weeks later I wrote to him again but received no reply. I have written to him persistently, but I have not received any reply, yet we hear him posturing about bipartisanship on jobs. For the benefit of this House, for the benefit of the community and history, I would like to read the text of my letter of 13 October into the record, as follows:

Dear John, I am aware that you are overseas but I am writing to you to accept the invitation from your new Minister for Employment, the Hon. Mark Brindal, to become involved in a constructive way in a South Australian jobs summit. I have not heard from Mr Brindal directly, but in a front page story on Monday the *Advertiser* has reported that the Minister will be asking Employment South Australia to look at the possibility of a jobs summit and assess the possible outcomes from such a summit. Minister Brindal was reported as saying that the jobs crisis was now 'beyond politics'. He was also quoted as saying:

'If Mike Rann has good ideas, I am not going to say no. I am inviting him to become involved.'

I would like through you to accept this public offer of participation in a jobs summit. Indeed, I am prepared to meet with you at any time or any place of your choosing to discuss constructive ideas for job creation in a frank, positive and bipartisan way.

You will recall that I wrote to you proposing a jobs summit exactly a year ago immediately following the 11 October State election. In formally conceding defeat to you, I offered the Labor Opposition's support in tackling South Australia's jobs crisis. Indeed, during our television debate the previous week I said win or lose, I was prepared to take part in a jobs summit with you, the Democrats, industry, unions and small business, church and community leaders and local government.

I wrote to you again on 28 October 1997 repeating my positive offer of support. I was disappointed not to receive a reply. But now it is time to look forward, not backwards, and to try to improve communications between Government and Opposition. We owe it to the people of South Australia to put the jobs future of South Australians before partisan or personal concerns. I am more than pleased to again repeat my offer to participate directly in a summit and also to meet with you personally on your return from overseas to discuss ideas about how a truly bipartisan summit can be convened and how we as a community can forge a genuine jobs growth agreement.

Given the growing jobs and growth gap between our State and the rest of the nation, there can be no more important task facing

South Australians than tackling our jobs crisis. It will require a united front involving all political Parties, industry and community leaders. As I said a year ago, fighting unemployment must be our moral imperative. Obviously there will be some areas where we will disagree. Genuine bipartisanship does not mean one Party simply acquiescing in a submissive way to the views of another. In my view real bipartisanship involves give and take. I am sure that there will be many areas where we can agree.

Bipartisanship can and does work in South Australia. After all, the Government and Opposition worked well together in securing the upgrade of Adelaide Airport, in fighting tariff cuts that would have damaged our automotive, textile, clothing and footwear industries, and in lobbying for a go ahead for the Alice Springs-Darwin railway. None of us should pretend that we have a monopoly of good ideas. As Leaders, we have to be bigger than that. However, South Australian business and the community in general have grown weary of an endless series of vision statements. They now want action, not words.

There are a number of policy initiatives Labor believes are urgently needed. In a summit, I would propose the establishment of a jobs commission to coordinate all arms of Government to service one key objective—the creation of jobs. The jobs commission should report, in my view, to the Premier of the State, not to a junior Minister who does not sit in Cabinet. Certainly from my discussions, local business feels frustrated by the State's economic development bureaucracy. We have had the South Australian Development Council, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Economic Development Authority, the Economic Development Board, the multifunction polis, MISBARD, Roger Cook's Task Force as well as your recently announced State development team. At this critical time we need to consolidate our economic development efforts, not dilute them.

Labor believes that the jobs commission should also include:

- A Centre for Industry to concentrate on the needs of existing industry to retain jobs and upgrade skills, apply new technologies, develop new products and find new markets. This approach was endorsed by the Beazley Labor Opposition during the recent Federal election campaign;
- An expanded and pro-active Industrial Supplies Office to work with companies and unions to identify opportunities for Government and companies to buy local;
- A Jobs Rescue Task Force to identify jobs that are at risk and devise practical strategies for keeping jobs here in South Australia;
- Trouble Shooting Teams to smooth the way for potential investors around Government regulations, plus a genuine commitment to cutting compliance costs;
- Enterprise Zone status for designated regions of high unemployment. This would provide exemptions from State Government taxes for 10 years to designated value-adding industries that add to employment within our hardest hit regions.

I am pleased to see that the Commonwealth has now embraced the concept of an Enterprise Zone for Newcastle, and the same status should be given to the cities of the Upper Spencer Gulf; and

- Introducing performance based industry assistance. At present, some firms have been granted generous assistance but have not delivered the promised jobs. Assistance should from now on be provided on the basis of clear benchmarks and demonstrated performance. If a firm promises 1 000 jobs and delivers 1 000 jobs it should receive the full assistance agreed but, if it only delivers 500 jobs, it should receive only half the agreed assistance.

You would also be aware that during the last election Labor proposed two other initiatives, namely:

- A 40 per cent cut to the rate of significant business transactions tax, the bank accounts debit (BAD) tax. This measure would be a tax break for jobs and would have helped all businesses large and small, existing and new, to retain existing jobs and create new ones. Above all, this move was designed to encourage greater confidence in our local economy.
- Secondly, the First Start youth employment scheme, which could have provided 6 000 apprenticeships and traineeships to our young people over three years. This scheme would provide large subsidies to local government and business to take on young people, in many cases providing a dollar for dollar Government subsidy.

Now, more than ever, South Australians need confidence in our State's future. Given our unacceptable unemployment figures and the jobs performance gap between ourselves and the rest of the

nation, there can be no more important task facing South Australians than creating and securing jobs. I look forward to your positive reply and your endorsement of Minister Brindal's initiative. Yours sincerely.

I have been disappointed but not surprised by the lack of a reply, once again, but also by the ungenerous response by the Premier to this offer. I care little about the fact that the response is so niggardly and petty about the Opposition. I care much more about the fact that it is so ungenerous to the people of South Australia. It is South Australians who understand more than most that it is by working together, not by fighting each other, that we can go ahead. I look forward to the day when this Olsen Government wakes up to that fact.

I look forward to getting a reply, even if it is one year late, to last year's letter offering assistance on jobs. I look forward to being invited and for other members of the Opposition being invited to the job workshops. If the Government is fair dinkum, it will want our involvement. Here is the Premier saying that he will not have a job summit that actually reaches an outcome and reaches a formula that people can agree upon. He rejects that as a talkfest, but what does he replace it with—a debate in Parliament with no outcomes at the end, presumably held at night, with him off at some Elton John show.

The simple fact is that this Premier will not admit that he does not have all the answers as he continues to slide, and as he takes the State with him. Why cannot this Premier be big enough to engage? Why can he not be big enough, as we move into a new century, to bring this State around him and his team and say, 'How can we move out of the present slump? How can we have bold strokes that will shape South Australia to move forward?' But he will not do it, because he thinks that if he does the right thing it will diminish his leadership even further because he is a smaller person.

Recent experience once again underlines the need for what I have been calling for now for years, that is, performance based industry assistance. We have had the Premier photographed—because he is big on that—wearing a hard hat, with the Berri fruit juice company, claiming to have saved 300 jobs. That is before he flew off overseas on Concorde. Presumably they were working on the plane, typing up the Governor's speech.

Yet the company will still move its headquarters and 42 management jobs from Adelaide to Melbourne despite having received a \$2 million State Government incentive package. Will the Government take action to recover any of this money? The Clark Shoe Company received taxpayer funded State Government assistance of as much as \$550 000, the final instalment on 1 October—just 13 days before the company announced the sacking of almost one-third of its work force in one of the shabbiest, most cynical performances I have seen. What we have is a Premier who is interested in himself, in getting his picture in the paper and in cutting ribbons rather than in getting the State moving again.

The priority is jobs. If a company promises jobs and gets money to provide those jobs but does not deliver them, it should not receive the full assistance. Virtually every State in the United States accepted that fact some years ago, because they could see States like Mississippi and Arkansas being played off against each other by footloose companies.

Let us turn to the GST. The Premier of the State today said he would like to hear about the GST. I bet he does, because instead of fighting for more jobs the Premier has been fighting for a new tax, a goods and services tax. In the process, he has not only left the needs and interests of low

and middle income earners exposed but he has also put South Australia's financial future under a cloud. In the process, the Premier has again confirmed that he alone is entitled to wear the crown of the Walter Mitty—or is it the Frank Spencer—of South Australian politics.

**Mr Conlon:** Walter Mitty was well intentioned.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** That is true: Walter Mitty was well intentioned. While the Premier was a Senator during 1991 he supported the introduction of a 15 per cent GST. On 25 July 1996 the Premier addressed the Centre for Economic Studies as Industry Minister. That is a few months before he rolled the then Premier. He said that a GST should be introduced. Everyone there heard him. The media heard him; the business community heard him; but he later denied that he had said it. When the Opposition asked questions about these remarks, the whole Government went into denial. During the 1997 State election, on 6 October, the existence was revealed of a confidential paper prepared by the South Australian Treasury for a national working party on tax, supporting a State based GST of up to 20.8 per cent.

Members will remember that it was revealed on the day of the debate: somehow or other Laurie Oakes had it on TV the night before, and then it was released here in South Australia. The Premier seemed a little rattled when he arrived at the studio. But two days later, responding to a question, the Premier again said, 'No, I am not a supporter of a GST.' He had also been saying that he was not a supporter of selling off ETSA. But the day after the election, the Premier told the media he supported a GST as part of fundamental tax reform: a complete flip in the space of about four days. At least with ETSA he waited two months until he saw this report that convinced him to change his mind, this secret report that none of us are allowed to see.

So, we hear after the election that the Premier says he now supports the GST again. Since then, the Premier has come clean, at least to the extent of saying that he supported a GST. True, he has refused to answer specific and vital questions about his proposals for a GST and those of his Federal Liberal colleagues. Experience suggests that he has probably been incapable of answering such questions in any case. The truth is that, regardless of the fact that they are wrong to support so unfair a tax as a GST, Liberal Premiers such as Jeff Kennett and Richard Court at least have had the courage of their convictions and stood up for their States. They had the backbone to say to John Howard and to their electors, 'Yes, we support a GST, but we won't support something that leaves our State worse off.'

They did not scurry around furtively planning a GST and denying it to the Parliament and the people. They did not say, 'We will have a GST without conditions,' as John Olsen did. Every time this Premier was asked, 'What is the Olsen Government's position on, for example, whether food should be exempt from the GST?' he said that the State had no position until after the Howard Government had brought down its tax package. Every other Premier had the guts to say what they thought was in the interests of their State.

Now we have the laughable spectacle of the Premier's trying to look tough after the event. Now that Howard has won his election by the thinnest of margins, the Premier wants Howard to demonstrate that the tax package will not disadvantage the State financially. I heard an interjection about winning by the thinnest of margins, and we have heard some speakers talking about the Government's winning a mandate from the people for its GST. I remember, because I was in this House, after the 1989 State election when the

Liberals won a majority of the popular vote but did not win a majority of the seats, that they squealed about our not having a mandate to govern. Who led the squeals? It was John Wayne Olsen.

In my view, it is now a bit late for that talk. Where was he when this State needed strong representation? Where was he when other Premiers were raising concerns on behalf of their States? He was a callow, cowering quisling of the Prime Minister. Even after the release of the Coalition's tax package and the Federal election, senior Ministers were pathetically unable to answer basic questions about the GST's impact on services provided under their own portfolios. Now they have less than two weeks to raise any concerns with the Prime Minister's so-called expert committee.

**An honourable member:** They'll be too weak to do it.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** That's right; they'll be too weak to get it in on time, let alone to do a proper job. Such is the seriousness with which the Premier is regarded in Canberra. However, just as serious is the impact of the GST, which the Premier supports—its impact on basic social justice and the distribution of wealth in our nation. Everyone knows that a tax package that delivers huge tax cuts to the wealthy while taxing the food of the poor is indecent. That is the tax package John Olsen and John Howard support. When the Premier receives his tax break of nearly \$150 per week while pensioners, workers and the unemployed get a new tax on their meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, and nearly everything else, including school fees, electricity and medicines, rest assured that Labor will be reminding the public of South Australia of John Olsen's complicity.

I tried today to be positive in my Address in Reply contribution. I will conclude my remarks by assuring the House and the public that Labor stands for jobs, justice and equity. Labor stands for an active Government—activist Governments—to create jobs, not for the snake oil of a GST or the privatisation of ETSA, which are both job killers. Labor stands committed to oppose the Premier's sell off of our assets and his complete sell out of our State. When the Premier finally wakes up to the fact that saving his own job is less important than saving and creating the jobs of all South Australians, he will find that the Labor Party, this Opposition, is keen to work with the Government in that task, because there is nothing more important.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** I welcome this opportunity to respond to the Governor's speech. As I represent the largest electorate geographically in the State, I would like to address many issues, but time will prevent me from doing so. I will address only those that are particularly relevant to the Governor's speech.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Ms BREUER:** If the member for Stuart speaks as much in his electorate, he might win the election by a few more votes next time.

**An honourable member:** It was Baldrick.

**Ms BREUER:** It was Baldrick. First, I want to congratulate the member for Chaffey on her speech yesterday. I found much of what she said particularly relevant to my electorate. There are many issues in regional and remote South Australia that may not have the same impact in metropolitan Adelaide, and I found it interesting that I was able to relate well to comments of a member of the National Party on those issues. There certainly is a form of solidarity in country areas, even in the electorates of Stuart and Giles.

Of course, in the next few months the member for Chaffey's life will change far more so than it has changed in the past 12 months as a new member of Parliament. I would like to see support for her in this Parliament in the difficult role of juggling life as a parent and as a member of Parliament. Perhaps it is time that we really looked at the hours we work in this Parliament, which are unfriendly to parenting. Many of us have young families, and I am sure that the mothers and fathers here have experienced child-care or quality time problems because of the nature of this place. Gone are the days of ageing grandfathers only in this place—although there are still some—and we are likely to have more parents of young children in future years. It is time we looked at the facilities, which could be more child friendly and supportive. We cannot use community child-care centres because of the hours we work, because we cannot leave the premises and because we can be required in the Chamber at any time. It would not take much to make this place more user-friendly, and it will be interesting to see how Parliament copes with a new baby in its midst.

The member for Chaffey referred to the effect of privatisation on rural areas. I found this particularly pungent having just travelled the full width of my electorate on the *Indian Pacific*. The train line covers many of the small places that are very difficult to visit by vehicle. I travelled through Tarcoola, Kingoonya and many smaller sidings. I also had the opportunity to walk through Cook and to meet the locals. The problem is that there were no locals. The privatisation of Australian National and the contracting out of its maintenance now means that there are only two permanent residents in Cook. Once it was a thriving little community; it had shops, a school and a hospital. 'If you're crook, come to Cook' was well recognised in tourist circles. However, now Cook and many other small communities have completely disappeared. I believe that there is a policy to raze the communities to the ground, and get rid of the buildings and the evidence that they were ever there. It is sad to see, and I believe it is indicative of the direct results of the privatisation of our assets. That is just the tip of the iceberg.

I imagine that very few members in this Chamber would have taken the time to read the report prepared by the Federal parliamentary committee inquiring into the steel industry. The report was completed in September last year and it contains major implications for the future of South Australia's largest regional city, Whyalla. The Whyalla City Council was so concerned about the implications in the report that it wrote to the Premier on 24 April 1998 seeking the establishment of a high level task force to address issues surrounding the long-term future of the city. Before canvassing the issues that the Whyalla City Council wanted to see addressed, it is worth my briefly quoting a number of extracts from the majority report that the Federal Liberal members actually signed off on. It states (page 10):

The committee notes the need for BHP to improve returns from its investment in the steel industry and the need to consolidate over fewer sites.

Page 77 states:

BHP expect the major iron and steel making equipment at Whyalla to reach the end of its useful life in about 15 years.

Page 95 states:

BHP have foreshadowed that it would be difficult to replace the steelworks at the end of their useful life in about 15 years. This would cause a major upheaval since there is no other large employer in the city.

Page 95 further states:

BHP have foreshadowed that the works (Port Kembla) could be significantly expanded if its New Zealand steelworks are closed in 10 years and Whyalla in about 15 years.

It is now more than one year since the report was handed down, and the Olsen Government still does not appear to appreciate the gravity of the situation. Fourteen years in the life of a community is not a long time, and 14 years may well be an optimistic assessment. The people of Whyalla are only too well aware that the people of Newcastle were told in 1995 that steel making would continue in Newcastle and that by 2002 the shift to arc furnace steel making would be made.

The commitment to steel making in Newcastle has been abandoned, and only 2½ years' notice of closure was given. Newcastle can economically and socially absorb the closure because of its population base, location and diverse economic base, but Whyalla is not in the same fortunate position. We know that, even with the continuation of steel making in Whyalla, hundreds of additional jobs will be lost between now and the year 2000 as BHP aims for a productivity level of 1 000 tonnes per employee. This comes on top of approximately 3 000 jobs lost already. Our continued dependence on one main employer in a period of great uncertainty represents the major risk we face as a community.

The Olsen Government may not appreciate the gravity of the situation, by the Whyalla City Council does, the community does and so do I. As I said, the council wrote to the Premier on 24 April calling for the establishment of a high level task force to address the long-term future of the city. The council called on the State Government through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to establish as a matter of urgency a high level task force with senior State representation to put in place a well resourced strategy designed to assist with ensuring the long-term future of the city.

The council also called for Federal Government representation on the task force, in addition to various other stakeholders, as a matter of urgency. Here we are in October and the Premier has still not provided a written response to the Whyalla City Council. He seems to have a problem, as we have heard from the Leader. I think we need to get some pens in the Premier's office. What has been established is a task force to look at regional development statewide. What was one of the first actions undertaken by this task force? It advertised a number of public hearings, three of which were to be held in the general metropolitan area; and, guess what, Whyalla, the State's largest regional city, did not get a mention in the schedule of public hearings.

**Mr Clarke:** Not one?

**Ms BREUER:** Not one. A community which has proportionately borne more job losses than has any other regional centre was not included in the publicly advertised schedule of visits. The task force is now saying that missing Whyalla was an oversight. What an oversight! It comes as no surprise, given the failure of the Government to ensure that Whyalla was represented on the Regional Development Task Force. It is interesting that, I believe, Cliff Walsh, mentioned by our Leader earlier, is on this task force.

**Mr Clarke:** I bet he's being paid.

**Ms BREUER:** I am sure. Regional communities are entitled to be sceptical about the South Australian Regional Development Task Force. I sincerely hope that it delivers some worthwhile results and that it acknowledges that the resources provided by the State Government to address the major challenges faced by communities such as Whyalla fall well short of what is needed. I hope it acknowledges that the

Federal Government has no proactive regional development strategy. Perhaps the Regional Development Task Force could ask the Olsen Government what its position is on the Liberal majority report on the steel industry. Perhaps the Regional Development Task Force could ask the Premier to comment on the Labor minority report, which gives a commitment to steel making in Whyalla, a commitment which does not appear in the majority report.

In supporting a continuing role for steel making in Whyalla, the minority Labor report had the following to say about the future of steel making under the 'do nothing' Federal Liberal approach:

If Australia fails to take up the current window of opportunity opened by new steel making technologies, it should be understood that over time—

1. As a nation we will be committed to exporting low value, low employing iron ore in perpetuity;
2. The life of blast furnace technology will be maintained in the short term;
3. South America, and possibly South Africa, will take up these technologies more rapidly and will, over time, outperform many of the Asian steel makers and in the process put tremendous pressure on price and volume of Australian iron ore exports; and
4. BHP's blast furnace technology may not be able to compete with imports.

Whyalla has faced serious challenges before. The community weathered the closure of the country's largest shipyard in the late 1970s. Hot on the heels of the shipyard closure came the threat to the steel industry nationally in 1982. It was a threat to which the then Federal Liberal Government turned a blind eye. It was a newly elected Hawke Labor Government which rejected the 'do nothing' approach of the previous Liberal Government and put in place the Steel Plan, a plan which helped to revitalise the steel industry in this country. It seems that the Federal Government has learnt nothing in the intervening years, and this is despite the Prime Minister's acknowledging in Parliament on 25 March 1997 that the Labor Steel Plan actually worked and delivered strong results.

Whyalla knows it is time for a new steel plan. Unfortunately, we have a Federal Government committed to doing next to nothing and a State Government that does not appear to be listening. In the letter from the Whyalla City Council asking for the establishment of a task force, the council suggested that the task force should develop a policy framework to facilitate the long-term future for steel making in Whyalla with attention given to the exploitation of lower grade ores and the technology upgrades required to exploit such ores; and introduction of additional value adding strategies in the steel industry.

The council also called on the proposed task force to examine the viability of establishing Whyalla as a resource processing hub, and to examine the incentives required to facilitate the establishment of a resource processing hub. A series of other issues were also to be examined by the task force, but I will not go into those now.

Resource processing requires energy at a competitive price. Already in the Whyalla area we have major resource processors which are about to become major contestable customers in the energy market. I recall that the State Government endorsed the Northern Spencer Gulf Resource Processing Strategy, a strategy that was an initiative of the previous State Labor Government. It was an initiative which ran in parallel with the aerial magnetic survey that opened up the Gawler Craton for mineral exploration.

The previous CEO of the Department of Mines and Energy, Ross Vardon, stated that the Northern Spencer Gulf

could become a leading national and international region for resource processing. I asked a question earlier today about the new power station site. The Whyalla Economic Development Board and the Whyalla City Council have had extensive discussions with one major energy utility with a view to the construction of a gas fired combined cycle power station near Whyalla. A power station in Whyalla is potentially a commercially viable proposition, given the proximity of major contestable customers. The transmission losses associated with the provision of some electricity to the Adelaide market are within acceptable limits, according to industry experts.

By supporting Whyalla's bid, the Premier had an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to real jobs and investment in a regional centre. A power station providing competitively priced energy in this region has the capacity to act as a magnet for additional capital investment. In addition, the environmental negatives at Pelican Point in Adelaide can be turned into positives in the Whyalla region, with thermal pollution providing a useable resource for the growing aquaculture industry. If we are to have a new power station, why will not John Olsen get behind one of our most neglected cities and regions?

One company has expressed an interest in building in Whyalla and has demonstrated a strong commitment to renewable energy overseas. The Premier needs to bear in mind that the Whyalla community is committed to developing a renewable energy sector, as shown by the recent commitment to fund a pre-feasibility study for a 20 megawatt solar thermal power station and desalination plant—the Whyalla Solar Oasis Project. A new corporate player with a culture open to innovative approaches might well assist in generating new opportunities for Whyalla and the State.

But when it comes to regional development, this Government has no vision. Indeed, in the report prepared for the Provincial Cities Association by the Centre for Economic Studies, it was stated that, if this Government has a regional development strategy, it is one of its best kept secrets.

I thank the Whyalla City Council for sending me a copy of a letter to the Premier on the issue of the power plant. I understand that a copy was also sent to the Deputy Premier and to the Federal member for Gray, Mr Barry Wakelin. The letter, dated 12 October, expresses the frustration felt by the council when it comes to dealing with this Government. It reads as follows:

You will recall that on Wednesday 22 July you met with the Whyalla City Council and the Whyalla Economic Development Board regarding the possibility of the State Government promoting Whyalla as the preferred site for the construction of a power station. You will recall that both the council and WEDB have been working on this project for most of this year. At the time of our meeting we were delighted with your positive support and we had hoped that our efforts would lead to a very significant initiative for regional development in Whyalla.

However, despite your assurance that you would consult us, we have not had any feedback from your office. We have kept up communication with Deputy Premier Kerin, who has showed us considerable support. However, it was your leadership that we had hoped for. We thought that you understood the need for regional development and that you would have actively supported this new power station for Whyalla and the Upper Spencer Gulf region. It seems from your and your Government's recent comments that you have given up on Whyalla and that the faith we had that you would show the same type of leadership that former Premier Tom Playford had shown in regional development in the past was misplaced.

The Mayor of Whyalla, John Smith, goes on to say in the letter that, if the Premier does not display some foresight

when it comes to regional economic development, no amount of regional task forces will turn the situation around.

We all acknowledge the need for ongoing commercial viability when it comes to the siting of projects such as the power station, but the strong impression in the regional cities is that this Government has an almost exclusively metropolitan mind set. Regional communities do not get a look in when it comes to major projects over which the Government, through leadership and a creative approach to regional development, has some influence. Communities such as Whyalla receive little in the way of support or encouragement from this Government.

Indeed, the situation is worse than that of receiving little support: the Government has actively worked to run down services and public sector jobs in cities such as Whyalla and as a result has contributed to the loss of jobs and investments. Where will it end? We have lost a quarter of our population and the loss of our population is continuing. We have BHP flagging its longer-term intentions to a Federal parliamentary committee and we are seeing no response from the Government—not even the courtesy of answering the Whyalla City Council's letter, a letter that went to the heart of the issues facing the city. How long does it take to answer a letter, Premier?

It is not all doom and gloom. We have a tough and resilient community that is up to meeting whatever challenge is dished out. We are not looking for handouts but we are looking for a hand up. On this side of the House we are committed to actively assisting communities such as Whyalla. Unfortunately, there seems to be no commitment forthcoming from the other side of the House.

As I said, it is not all doom in Whyalla. The community is actively trying to help itself. It is a resourceful community. At present a series of workshops are occurring that were originally seeded by the city council and the Whyalla Economic Development Board. I recently attended a meeting of over 200 residents with major concerns about the future of our city. It was no small public meeting. This initiative is working to get the community to help itself; to get involved in planning for its future. There is an emphasis on community development ideas. They are generating enthusiasm and ideas. The workshops are well attended. I congratulate my community on its initiatives and wish it well, and I will certainly continue to be a part of this.

I turn to another important issue affecting schools in my district. The issue of flexible initiative resourcing has already been discussed this week in this place along with the problems schools are having in determining their staff for next year. While I appreciate that it is a problem in metropolitan schools, it is chronic in country schools. Some 300 positions should have gone out for recruitment by now, but it has not happened. Country schools have always had problems attracting teachers. Metropolitan based teachers think their throats are cut if they have to leave the sights of the town hall, but it is particularly critical now. Whyalla schools struggled to find teachers this year.

For example, it has been impossible to find technical studies teachers. I visited one high school a few months ago and found a science teacher teaching home economics. The Government has had a copy of the union's claims for over six months, yet only at the last meeting showed its plans. It appears there is no long-term planning, just a holding off to see where the budget cuts are. The situation is chronic in Whyalla, but much worse in other country schools. If staff are found they are not trained in the areas required and therefore



require maximum support. I heard the comment made, 'It's often not worth doing; it's better to teach the class yourself than give the support required by some of these teachers.'

We have heard the Minister talk on a number of occasions about country incentives, but where are they? Over \$2 million is still being held over. We need realistic, concrete initiatives—they are crucial. One of the major problems in recruiting teachers to country schools is the removal of the four year guarantee to teachers. There is also some discussion occurring at the moment that many country areas will lose their eligibility for country incentive schemes and places such as Whyalla may be included in this. Schools cannot plan for their next year and it is vital that this situation is resolved immediately.

One year into Parliament and still I have not attended a meeting of this Parliament's Aboriginal Lands Trust Committee. Last week I was privileged to attend the Aboriginal Elders Conference in Coober Pedy. It was opened by the Minister with many platitudes. It was wonderful to talk to the delegates, many of them old friends, and to see the enthusiasm, the vision and desire to improve the future for older people in Aboriginal communities. The Minister said all the right things, but how committed is this Minister to Aboriginal issues when we still have not met on this committee, despite questions from myself and the member for Lee? The committee has not met since November 1996. My Aboriginal friends ask me why.

I could talk for some length on health issues in regional South Australia, but will just mention one example. The Minister for Human Services discussed a review of dental

health services in South Australia. Two weeks ago the dentist employed at the Whyalla Hospital moved on. Where is her replacement? There is at present a two year wait for dental services, other than emergencies, in Whyalla. I have been assured that every effort will be made to replace her, but what incentives are being offered? Recently—12 months ago—hours were cut in the Whyalla Hospital and the hours were relocated to the Port Augusta Hospital, increasing the length of wait for services for people in Whyalla. All I can now say to residents that ring in to complain is, 'Don't lose your false teeth down the toilet or eat too much sugar, because you'll be gummy for a long time.'

There are many other issues I have to discuss in the future months in Parliament. I am fiercely proud of my country background and believe I have the most beautiful, diverse and resource rich electorate in the State, and I am proud to serve this electorate.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN** secured the adjournment of the debate.

**NATIONAL ELECTRICITY (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)  
(MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 5.35 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 3 November at 2 p.m.