

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 2 March 1999

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

### STATUTES AMENDMENT (MINING ADMINISTRATION) BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Bill.

### RUSSACK, Mr E.K., DEATH

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** I move:

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Mr E.K. Russack, former member of the House, and places on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious service, and that as a mark of respect to his memory the sitting of the House be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

It is with a great sense of sadness that I rise in the Chamber today to move a condolence motion for Keith Russack, who passed away Friday last at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. As a family friend, an occasional mentor and a colleague, Keith was a person for whom I had the utmost respect. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word. We were both members of the Kadina Rotary Club, he was my predecessor as President of the Kernerwek Lowender and as Mayor of Kadina, and we worked together over many years on various committees within the Kadina community.

Born in Kadina on 2 April 1918, Keith attended the local primary school and high school before becoming a telegraph messenger at the local post office in 1933. After working as a telegraph messenger for a time, Keith began working in his father's shop at the age of 16—a shop that is still trading in Kadina to this day.

The Second World War broke out in 1939, and in September 1940 Keith, along with his brother Henry, entered the 43rd Battalion, Hindmarsh Regiment, C Company. Most of the men in the battalion were from the Kadina, Wallaroo and Moonta district. Within a short time, Keith undertook an NCO (non-commissioned officers') course, before his battalion was posted to Darwin in early 1942. Within the space of two months, Keith was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and was subsequently assigned to the 3rd Training Battalion at Woodside in the Adelaide Hills. Just prior to returning to the 43rd Battalion, Keith married Ruth and, after a brief honeymoon, returned to his battalion.

By this time the 43rd was engaged in loading and unloading ships in Townsville, before the unit was moved back to Sydney and disbanded. In 1945, he was posted to another battalion bound for New Guinea and later Southern Borneo, and it was in Borneo that he was wounded. By the end of 1945, at the conclusion of the war, Keith was back in his home town of Kadina, but still on the list of Army Reserve officers. From 1948 until 1956 he was a member of the Citizen Military Forces, where he was subsequently promoted to captain and company commander.

It is most evident from Keith's commitment to the armed forces that he was a man who loved his country and, tellingly, his local community. He was a man of the community; no cause was too small or too large. He made personal sacrifices

to look after the interests and concerns of individuals, whoever they were.

If an organisation needed assistance, in whatever form, Keith was only too happy to lend a helping hand, and always in the most courteous manner. People who met Keith Russack during his lifetime would surely understand that that was a feature, the character, the personality of this man. His devotion to the local community and his dedication speaks for itself.

Keith was the inaugural President of the Wontama Homes for the Aged (having walked hundreds of miles to raise funds for the cause); the inaugural President of the Kernerwek Lowender (serving as President from 1972 to 1977); patron of the Kadina Cricket Club for some 25 years; Rotary charter member and Paul Harris fellow; Meals on Wheels member; member of the Kadina Community Hospital board for over 10 years; member of the Kadina Memorial High School Council for ten years; councillor for eight years; and Mayor of the Corporation of the Town of Kadina for three years. The list of Keith's community activities goes on further, but I am sure that the House can gain a sense of the man from the achievements I have outlined. Recognition of these achievements came in 1989, when Keith received the Order of Australia Medal.

While Keith was not involved in the community for accolades, his acknowledgment in the Order of Australia list was indeed befitting of his tireless work for the community and sense of the community that he helped to create. Keith's commitment to others was not restricted to his local community. He served in the South Australian Parliament in the Legislative Council and in the House of Assembly and, by doing so, made a contribution to the broader South Australian community. From 1970 until 1973 he was a member for Midland in the Legislative Council. From 1973 until 1977 Keith was the member for Gouger and, subsequently, from 1977 until 1982 Keith was the member for Goyder in this Chamber. In his time in the South Australian Parliament Keith served on numerous committees—Printing Committee, Standing Orders Committee and Public Works Committee—and from 1979 to 1982 he was Chairman of the Public Works Committee.

In summation, Keith's commitment to his local community was boundless and always was full of enthusiasm, even in his latter years, in recent times. Keith's commitment to the South Australian community is something we should reflect on here today and in the future with a sense of pride. He was a man of the people, certainly a man of his community, and a good South Australian, and someone I am proud to have known and called a friend.

On behalf of the Government and the Liberal Party in this State, I would like to formally place on the record our appreciation and thanks for Keith's contribution to his local community, the South Australian Parliament and, in turn, the South Australian community in general. Also, on behalf of the Liberal Party and the Government I would like to express my sincere condolences to Keith's wife, Ruth, and sons Rodger, Lee and Mark and their respective families.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** In seconding the Premier's condolence motion on behalf of the Opposition, I would like to say that I did not know Keith Russack well and did not serve in the Parliament at the same time that he did but, during the later period of his time as a member of Parliament, I was an adviser to three Labor

Leaders and I know that each of them—Don Dunstan, Des Corcoran and John Bannon—spoke extremely highly of Keith Russack. There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that he was a person who put his electorate number one: it was put before his Party and it was always the local community in terms of the area of Yorke Peninsula and the Mid North that he represented.

He was held in the highest regard on the Labor side of politics over a considerable number of years, as well as obviously being admired by his fellow Liberal colleagues. As was mentioned by the Premier, he was also one of the few people—one of only six or seven—who made the transition from the Legislative Council to the House of Assembly, Frank Blevins, of course, being the most recent. Unfortunately, Keith Russack was unable to show his mettle as a Cabinet Minister because most of his parliamentary career coincided with the Dunstan decade, and he was pipped for the post of Speaker by Dr Bruce Eastick in 1979. However, Keith Russack was a shadow Cabinet member for the Liberal Party when David Tonkin was Leader of the Opposition and Roger Goldsworthy was Deputy and was again outstanding in that role in terms of always presenting a case in the best interests of both his Party and the State. Of course, he was someone who will be remembered for his work as Chairman of the Public Works Committee, where he served the Parliament with great distinction. Certainly, when I joined the committee in 1985, when George Whitten was passing over the baton to Keith Plunkett, I know that both George and the late Keith Plunkett spoke highly of the work of Keith Russack in that role.

Again, Keith helped to enshrine that sense of bipartisanship that has been the mark of the Public Works Standing Committee over many decades. Certainly, in terms of my personal contacts with him, in terms of seeing him on behalf of various Premiers as a staffer, I always found him extremely courteous. The Premier has made that point: the word 'courtesy' is the first thing that is brought to mind when you think of Keith Russack. Certainly, on the Yorke Peninsula—as I know from when I went up at one stage to open a new campus of the Kadina TAFE—people spoke very highly of Keith Russack, both as the member for Gouger and the member for Goyder and as the Legislative Councillor for Midland: people spoke about him with a degree of both affection and respect.

I want also to acknowledge, as the Premier said, his five years in the AIF as an officer and also his contribution to local government over many years before entering Parliament, both as Mayor of Kadina and as a councillor. On behalf of the Opposition, I would like to say that David Tonkin was absolutely right when, at the retirement of Keith Russack, he described him as one of nature's gentlemen. We would certainly like the Speaker to pass on our condolences to his widow Ruth and his three sons.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I support the condolence motion with respect to the late Edwin Keith Russack. As members have heard, Keith was a Legislative Councillor for the District of Midland and then became a House of Assembly member for the area of Gouger and later Goyder. I was privileged to follow Keith as the member for Goyder after he retired.

I first got to know Keith in the mid 1970s, at a time when he was the member for Gouger and I was President of the Yorketown-Edithburgh Liberal Party branch. At that stage Yorketown, being in Goyder, did not have a Liberal Party

member and Keith, as the closest member, was paired to Goyder: I saw him on a frequent basis. It did not take me long to appreciate that Keith had a lot to offer and, in fact, was offering a lot to the people whom he was serving and looking after on Yorke Peninsula. He certainly was a man of the people. He was an honourable man: he was what I would call a true gentleman. In fact, I would go further and say he was a true Christian gentleman, because he loved his church and the church was very important in Keith's day-to-day life. He also was a family man, and he had the knack of being able to balance the commitment to the electorate with ensuring that he spent sufficient time with his family and his wife Ruth. He certainly served the electorate very well.

As we have heard from the Premier, Keith had many successes in life. We can think back to the time when he took over his father's jewellery business: those who have been to Kadina would appreciate how Keith, together with his sons in latter years, built up that business. He also had success in the military forces, where he gained the rank of lieutenant in a very short period of time, and, in later years, in the Citizen Military Forces, he became a captain. As the Premier said, he was Mayor of Kadina. He also gained the Paul Harris Fellow in Rotary and the OAM, and he was successful in entering Parliament in three different ways, namely, as a member of the Legislative Council, as the member for Gouger and as the member for Goyder.

However, there is no doubt that Keith also had what could be described as his disappointments. I suppose Keith must have wondered from time to time why he made the transition from the Upper House to the Lower House, because he had many pre-selections on his hands during those times. It was also a period when Parliament did not have four year terms but, supposedly, three year terms. However, if my memory serves me correctly, they were often terms of 18 months to two years and, in fact, it seemed that Keith was forever going to the people to get re-endorsement. He was shadow Minister for Local Government and Transport, and I well recall the time when Keith lost pre-selection for the Liberal Party for the seat of Goyder: in fact, I was present at a Liberal Party meeting some time later when Keith came late that evening and announced to us that he had lost his shadow portfolio of Local Government and Transport. I do not believe he was surprised at that, because he was no longer the endorsed Liberal candidate, but he said, 'Not only have I lost my portfolio but I have lost my office.' In fact, I remember that Keith used the words, 'I have been relegated to the dungeon in Parliament House—way down below.' I believe that that hurt as much as anything.

When the Tonkin Government came to power, Keith had gained selection from the Liberal Party to be Speaker of this very establishment, the House of Assembly. I believe that Keith's name was already on the Speaker's chair: the seats were reserved for his wife and other members of his family. However, when the time came for the election of Speaker, it was not to be for Keith Russack: he did not gain that position. I suppose it shows the character of the man: Keith could well have held that against the person who defeated him, but that was not in Keith's nature. Again, it showed Keith's Christian nature, his Christian principles, and he showed me—and I am sure he showed many others—that you do have your downs in life but you have to rise above them and look to the positive.

The positives were certainly there for Keith, as I have mentioned already, and they continued to be there after he left Parliament. I was amazed at how he continued to be involved

with so many organisations. A few years ago, Keith suffered a major heart attack while he was on the operating table for a by-pass operation. That meant he could no longer walk as he had in the past, but he still managed to get to functions whenever he could. He was also asked to be guest speaker on many occasions. I could only admire the way he was able to present a magnificent speech on every occasion. He had obviously done his homework, and he knew how to present himself in that respect. He always had that hand of friendship to be offered even in the latter days when, often, we had to go to him: he would recognise us from some distance and say, 'Hello John'—or whoever it was.

I remember asking Keith why he was going to retire from politics when he decided to do so. Although he was going to be 63 at the next election, I felt he had a lot to offer at that stage. He was still very youthful in himself and he was certainly very forthright. He said to me, 'There are probably two key reasons, John. One of them is that I have to do about 50 000 kilometres per year travelling around the electorate. I can no longer grasp the steering wheel as I should. I cannot clench my fist. I cannot get my fingers firmly around the ring of the steering wheel. That is not the best position to be in.' He was suffering arthritis in his hands.

However, there was a much more important reason, I believe, why he did not seek preselection and, again, it showed his dedication to his family and to his wife. He said, 'My wife, Ruth, is not able to remember things as she remembered them in the past.' I said, 'Come on, Keith, she is as good as you. She knows everyone in the electorate.' But he pointed out to me that on every occasion when he went into a room he would go to a couple with Ruth next to him—she accompanied him to virtually all functions—and say, 'Ruth, you remember John Smith and his wife, Margaret.' Of course, Ruth would say, 'Yes, how are you John and Margaret?' While many politicians use that ploy from time to time—and I did not see it coming through—it proved to be the case that, unfortunately, Ruth was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Life has not been easy for her and for Keith in latter years.

Keith taught me many lessons. When I became the local member, I said to Keith, 'One of my commitments will be to visit every school on a regular basis; certainly several times per year.' He said, 'John, before you give that commitment publicly, just remember how many schools you've got'—and there were over 30 in the electorate. He said, 'If you remember that Parliament sits for many weeks of the year and that there are school holidays for quite a few weeks of the year, you will realise that there are not 30 weeks in the year you could go visiting schools. You don't have only schools to visit: you have hospitals, local government establishments, businesses and households as well.'

He was quite right. It is not very easy to get around as much as you would like to. He also said to me, 'Be careful about accepting invitations from people who say, "John, you must call around for a cup of tea or coffee." The temptation is to say, "Yes, I will. I'll try to be there next week." The next week can become next month, and the next month can sometimes become the next year. It would be far better to say, "Thank you, I will endeavour to do that. Hopefully, it can be arranged some time in the future".'

The final thing that he taught me was always to be prepared to give a speech. In those early days when one needed to have a speech written out half the time, I endeavoured not to be caught out. But I remember that on one occasion I was caught out—not because I had not asked but

because they changed the rules. Ever since then, I took notice of what Keith Russack had to say.

Keith has been a great example to us all. He certainly has been a man who served this Parliament very well, who served his community very well and who served his family very well. He will be sadly missed, but I know that he is with his Lord and Saviour in another place. I thank Keith Russack for all he did for this Parliament and for me.

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** I support the condolence motion for the late Keith Russack, OAM, former member of the Legislative Council, member for Gouger and, as has been said, later the member for Goyder. It is true that Keith was only one of seven people in South Australia's history to make the successful transition from the Legislative Council to the House of Assembly. There have been many other attempts, but only seven successful ones. Keith represented the people of South Australia in the Legislative Council from 12 September 1970 to 9 March 1973 and in the House of Assembly from 10 March 1973 to 5 November 1982.

Keith was also an excellent Chairman of the Public Works Committee and handled that committee most effectively in his dealings with the public and other officers in that role. In June 1989 Keith was awarded the OAM for his services to the community and to the South Australian Parliament. I met Keith on several occasions, but only after his retirement from this place. I remember him as a real gentleman, but cannot comment on the way he was in this place. I will pass on a few remarks made by a former Labor Premier, Des Corcoran, to whom I spoke only today in relation to Keith Russack. Des said that, while Keith was a very conservative man, he was very approachable, very friendly and a person with no enemies. Des went on to say that you could not wish for a nicer person and that he was one of nature's gentlemen. That is a good comment to hear from a former Premier of South Australia on the other side of politics.

Keith was an extremely good local member who worked conscientiously and well for not just one but every section of his community. The Government Whip and current member for Goyder made mention of Keith's Christian beliefs. As secretary of the Christian fellowship in the Parliament for something like eight years, I know that Keith was always very keen to get an invitation each year for the annual church service that we put on; he used to enjoy receiving an invitation and attending those church services. Only in recent years because of failing health was he unable to get to the services that he enjoyed so much. On behalf of members of the Labor Opposition, I extend my sincere condolences to Keith's wife and family.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** I am pleased to support this condolence motion for Keith Russack, OAM. I was fortunate to have served for many years in this place with Keith. All who have spoken in this debate previously have referred to Keith Russack as a true gentleman and that is exactly what he was. I am sure that everybody who knew Keith respected him. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition both referred to him as being a very courteous man and he was certainly that. He was a very kindly person and had a tremendous sense of humour. He was very loyal to his community—in fact, totally committed to his constituency and totally committed to the State of South Australia.

I said earlier that he was a very kind person. One of the things that really impressed me about Keith was the time he gave as a member to assist new members when they came

into this place, and I was one of those. Keith was always available at any time to consult on any issues or pass on any advice that one might seek, and he would do it in such a way that you felt you could certainly rely on and respect the advice being given. I know that he did that with all new members from both sides of the House, and I am sure that all of us who have had the opportunity to be counselled by Keith would recognise and be very grateful for that advice.

Keith had total respect for the Parliament and for the procedures of the Parliament. He was a stickler for the procedures, and even when he missed out on being Speaker—and I suggest that he would have made an excellent Speaker in this House, but he was not given that opportunity—he certainly made sure that the House kept to the appropriate procedures on a daily basis.

I know Ruth very well and I pass on my condolences to Ruth, and to their three sons and their respective families.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank all honourable members who have spoken on the motion this afternoon and I assure members that his family will receive a copy of the *Hansard* at the earliest opportunity.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 2.33 to 2.40 p.m.]

#### RETIREMENT VILLAGES

A petition signed by 206 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to amend the Local Government Act to legislate that councils must provide retirement villages that maintain their own infrastructure was presented by the Hon. R.L. Brokenshire.

Petition received.

#### POWER STATION

A petition signed by 3 574 residents of South Australia requesting that the House oppose the Government's plan to construct a power station at Pelican Point, Outer Harbor or near any other residential area was presented by Mr Foley.

Petition received.

#### NETHERBY KINDERGARTEN

A petition signed by 1 071 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to oppose any variation to legislation that prevents the development of the Netherby Kindergarten at the Claremont Avenue site was presented by Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Petition received.

#### QUESTIONS

**The SPEAKER:** I direct that the written answer to question No. 5 on the Notice Paper be distributed and printed in *Hansard*; and I direct that the following answers to questions asked during the examination of the Auditor-General's Report be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 26 November 1998.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:**

1. A contract has been let to World Wide Project Management Services Pty Ltd for extension services to the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Committee. Mr Presser is an approved sub-contractor for that company. Mr Presser did not take a TSVP but

resigned from the public service on 8 May 1998. The funding for extension services is provided by the holders of marine scalefish licences through commercial licence fees.

2. The Bookmark Biosphere Trust is conducting research into developing management guidelines for restoring and maintaining native flora, fauna and water quality found in various River Murray wetlands. As well as conducting biological monitoring on vegetation, birds, frogs and macroinvertebrates, fish sampling will be undertaken as part of the research which involves the catch and release of all fish species including European carp. The Bookmark Biosphere Trust have been granted a Ministerial exemption to conduct the research over a three year period which allows the Trust to use fishing devices to aid their research. Fish collected by the permit holder are for scientific and research purposes only and may not be sold.

Although the Department occasionally receives requests from individuals to harvest European carp, there is concern that 'carp-only' licences may promote the continual survival of carp in South Australia's waterways. The Department has not granted any 'carp-only' licences but instead has encouraged existing commercial licence holders to harvest carp as a way of controlling their numbers. The long term aspirations of people setting up businesses which rely on the supply of carp have been approached with caution.

People are encouraged to make contact with the existing commercial fishers who are permitted to use commercial fishing gear to take carp. The existing commercial licence holders have access to a range of native and non-native species and therefore are able to switch their fishing effort to other species if carp numbers decline significantly.

The structures placed in the wetlands to monitor the movement of fish into Lake Merriti at different flow rates by the Bookmark Biosphere Trust are not in breach of the Fisheries Act 1982. Individuals who wish to erect structures on their private property may do so. However, when the free passage of fish is impaired it is at this time that the compatibility of the structures with the objectives of the Fisheries Act 1982 comes into question.

3. The current membership of the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Committee is as follows:

Mr Martin Cameron	Chairman
Mr Barry Treloar	Recreational member
Mr Greg Wood	Recreational member
Mr David Gill	Commercial member
Mr Neville Sampson	Commercial member
Mr Chris Fewster	Commercial member
Vacant	Community member
Vacant	SARFAC
Ms Lorraine Rosenberg	SAFIC
Dr Keith Jones	SARDI
Ms Merilyn Nobes	PIRSA
Mrs Sally Clark	Committee Support Officer

#### NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 26 November 1998.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** There are 9 NHT regions with a Regional Assessment Panel for each consisting of people from various organisations and interest. Priorities are established for each region and then submitted to a State Assessment Panel. The State Assessment Panel has an independent chair and comprises people with a wide range of expertise and represent the peak natural resource and environmental organisations. Each project is assessed by these panels against a number of criteria including how they contribute to the outcomes agreed to in the Partnership Agreement a detailed document negotiated between the State and Commonwealth Governments. A list of approved projects has been forwarded to Ms Hurley.

#### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development (Hon. R.G. Kerin)—

Dog Fence Board—Report, 1997-98

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

Office for the Ageing—Report, 1997-98

National Aboriginal Cultural Institute Inc. 'Tandanya'—Report, 1997-98

South Australian Country Arts Trust—Report, 1997-98  
Harbors and Navigation Act—Regulations—Water Skiing

By the Minister for Education, Children's Services and  
Training (Hon. M.R. Buckby)—

Petroleum Products Regulation Act—Regulations—  
Subsidy Rate

By the Minister for Industry and Trade (Hon. I.F.  
Evans)—

Liquor Licensing Act—Regulations—Dry Areas—Long  
Term—Normanville

By the Minister for Local Government (Hon. M.K.  
Brindal)—

Local Government Act—Regulations—Superannuation  
Board—Spouse Contributions.

## QUESTION TIME

### ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Given the Premier's statement to the House in June 1998 that construction work on the Adelaide to Darwin rail link would commence by the end of this month, has the Premier discussed with the Prime Minister, during his visit to Adelaide, a further Commonwealth allocation for this important national project that enjoys bipartisan support in addition to the initial commitment from the Commonwealth of \$100 million, and is the Premier now confident that the project will begin construction by the end of this year?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** In relation to the Adelaide to Darwin rail project, best and final offers are due in by 31 March this year. There was an extension of the date of best and final offers, given some protracted negotiations in the Northern Territory between the Northern Territory Government and respective land councils, to sign off arrangements between the land councils and the Northern Territory Government. In addition to that, there are several factors that had to be clarified with the Commonwealth Government so that the tender documents, the basis upon which the best and final offers would be submitted, had to have further aspects of clarification prior to submitting to the three consortia who have been invited to bid for this project.

I have had a meeting with the Prime Minister today on a number of matters and certainly continue to press the Adelaide to Darwin rail link as a major piece of transport infrastructure that is important to this State's future. It is simply too early before those best and final offers are received by 31 March to make a judgment about the need or otherwise for additional Commonwealth funds for the project. There will be an appropriate discussion as and when the tender process is complete for that.

As it relates to the timing, on the advice given to me, with the offers in by 31 March, it will take some two to three months to make an assessment of the offers to select the preferred tenderer, to then pursue over the next several months negotiations with the preferred tenderer, if they are unsuccessful, then take the second preferred tenderer in an attempt to close off negotiations with one of the three parties and, hopefully, within six months of the 31 March, a final determination having been made, construction to commence prior to the end of this year. That is certainly the basis upon which we are proceeding with the project, working cooperatively with the Northern Territory Government and being aware of a number of issues that need to be addressed as we

move forward in this phase. I can assure the Leader that, as a project of significance, the rail link is being maintained by us as a priority project that we want to see come to a successful final conclusion—and this year.

### ELECTRICITY TARIFFS

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Would the Premier please inform the House of the Government's plan to withdraw the ETSA revenue measures if the sale or lease of ETSA is approved?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I can give the member for Colton this commitment, that this Government will withdraw the ETSA revenue measures as soon as the ETSA legislation is passed—and it does not matter whether it is in the next month, the next year or the next three years. We have constantly said that the least preferred option of this Government is for additional revenue measures; but we have been forced into that position because of the intransigence of the Opposition. The revenue measures are the Rann power Bill revenue measures that have been put in place because—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The debt was incurred in this State by the Bannon/Rann Government. Mr Rann, the Leader of the Opposition, was a Minister in the Bannon Government that presided over the collapse of the State Bank. The Opposition and Mr Rann, the Leader of the Opposition, created the problem. They do not want to be a part of the solution to the problem. It is clear that this impost is a direct result of the Labor Party in South Australia refusing to have a policy, refusing to address the issue and, having created the problem, not being prepared to assist in developing a solution to the problem. If households have a concern about this, there is one group in this State that deserves to be held responsible and accountable, and it is the Australian Labor Party of South Australia.

It was the Australian Labor Party that created this difficulty but it is the Australian Labor Party in Opposition that walks away from attempting to find a solution. We could keep out of the household budgets of every South Australian family if the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party would support either the leasing or sale of ETSA. It is no different from what they did when they were in Government. It was the Bannon Government that actually leased part of our power utilities. If it is okay for the Labor Party to lease them, why is it now wrong for a Liberal Government to lease them? The only reason is, because you are in Opposition, you have no plans and you simply want to block for the sake of blocking. Your blocking and your no policy position will bring about a household budget impost of some \$186, on average, a year. Let it be understood that every household in this State will be paying more because Mr Rann and the Labor Party have copped out. They are not prepared to assist in overcoming the problem that they created in South Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition for continuing to interject when he has been called to order.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** We could have walked away; we could have put our head in the sand; we could have ignored the problem as the Labor Party and Premier Bannon did when he was warned about the State Bank issue. He was warned, but they did nothing. We had an Auditor-General's

Report in December 1997, and it highlighted for the first time in quantity and range of risk. We will not be ignoring the warnings of the State Bank. We will not revisit on this State Bank Mark II. It would be an abdication of responsibility. Every time the Opposition makes a request for new infrastructure, services or facilities in their electorate, let us ask the Leader, Mr Rann, 'Where is the money coming from?' Labor bankrupted South Australia. We are finding the solution to the bankruptcy of South Australia. We are moving—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The fount of wisdom from the back, the member for Peake! Come on down to the front! You might get some new ideas and some lateral thinking amongst your colleagues. Let us look at some of the facts. The 'could be' Leader, the member for Hart—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Well, there's 'wanna be', 'could be' and 'has been'. The 'wanna be' is the member for Kaurna, the 'could be' is the member for Hart, and the Leader is the 'has been'. The member for Hart was on radio saying that the Government has not budgeted for the Government radio network contract and that this was the reason for the black hole. That is what he said this morning. The member for Hart is wrong again. The 1998-99 budget and Forward Estimates include provisions for the cost of the Government radio network project, and included in the budget was the headroom for unplanned costs. It is in the budget paper 1998-99. Not only is it budgeted for but it is yet another policy issue we have taken up. The Government radio network contract was a warning from the Coroner back in 1983. Labor ignored the request, the direction of the Coroner. You did nothing—

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:**—for six or seven years. It has taken a Liberal Government to grasp that policy issue. This Government wants to spend badly needed funds on our schools, hospitals, roads and environment. We cannot do that without more money. Labor Party members simply sit there and say, 'No', they sit there and ask for more money, but they do not get to the bottom line: responsibly, where is the money coming from? The response to that question is a deafening silence from the Opposition, as is its position on ETSA: it is simply 'No' to anything. It is obstructionist, objecting to any policy initiative that attempts to solve South Australia's problems.

Maybe the shame and embarrassment is starting to get to the Opposition that it has created this difficulty, yet it ignores the importance of finding a solution. This Government will not ignore it, because we will take out to South Australians that this impost is the Labor Party impost. We started this decade with the State Bank debacle and it is the Labor Party that wants to finish it with a debacle. You do not want a solution; you do not want it cleaned up; and you do not want South Australia to move on.

Importantly, what we have in the Opposition is some real concern: the economic indicators for the first time in two decades are showing some real movement and positive growth in the economy of South Australia. The Opposition does not like that, because it is showing that six years of good policy direction from this Liberal Government is starting to

produce the goods for the economy of South Australia. What we want is for that not to falter; we do not want it to stall; and we want it to move forward. The best way we can enable it to move forward is to get rid of the shackles that we inherited, the shackles that the Labor Party refuses to remove from South Australians.

The Labor Party would have us go into household budgets—the pay packets of South Australians—rather than front up to the issue. Help us to get out of the pockets of South Australians. You can do it by passing either the ETSA sale or lease legislation—the same as you did when you were in government. That is all we ask of you: implement the same policy as you did when you were in government. That demonstrates the absolute hypocrisy of the Labor Party on this issue. It is base politics at its worst.

**Mr CLARKE:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Under Standing Order 98, the Minister should answer the substance of the question and should not engage in debate.

**The SPEAKER:** The point of order is now irrelevant because the Minister has resumed his seat. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order on my right!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the Minister for Environment and Heritage!

#### GOVERNMENT RADIO NETWORK

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Premier. How does the Government intend to pay for the \$250 million Government radio network? Representatives of various Government agencies who appeared before the Public Works Committee last Thursday told the committee that they had been given assurances that they would not incur extra expenses in linking up to the Government radio network. Most Government agencies have only included repair and maintenance costs for existing radio communications systems in their recurrent and capital budgets, nowhere near the cost to construct or buy into an expensive new radio network. The Government's budget papers have not factored in the majority of the Government radio network costs, including the \$100 million blowout.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Once again the Deputy Leader has it wrong: the last statement is just factually wrong. We have this Opposition that will stand up and make broad brush statements that do not resemble anything near the facts of the matter. I simply draw the Deputy Leader's question to my answer given just a moment ago and to the 1998-99 budget papers. If you have a close look at them, you see that they clearly indicate the answer. I know that the Deputy Leader might be slow on her feet. The simple fact is that the question she asked was answered just a minute ago.

#### WESTERN MINING CORPORATION

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Will the Premier inform the House of the impact of Western Mining Corporation's intention to cancel its electricity contract with ETSA? I understand that Western Mining, ETSA's biggest customer, is terminating its \$1 million a month contract for electricity supply and, instead, is intending to contract with a Victorian company for the supply of electricity.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The State has always warned—we have constantly warned in this House over the past year—

that the national market could take most of ETSA's biggest customers in the next year to 18 months. We warned the House, but Labor has ignored the Government's warning. Labor said it could not and would not happen. Today we see the exodus with Western Mining: the State's largest customer is now walking away from ETSA. This is the organisation—ETSA—about which members opposite say, 'We will keep it; the dividends will keep flowing.' That ignores reality.

The State's largest customer is to buy its power from a Victorian supplier. Make no mistake, it is the start of a costly exodus for the South Australian Government and in turn for the South Australian taxpayers. Losing large customers means less profit for our Government-owned power companies and, therefore, less dividend to the Government and, in the end, less money in the budget and less funding to provide social infrastructure. I repeat what I told the House some months ago: in this State the 27 largest customers make up 17 per cent of the power used. Western Mining represents something like 10 per cent—one customer has just walked away with 10 per cent of the turnover, 10 per cent of the retail. One customer has just done it.

We warned you that this would happen. You said, 'No, it could not happen.' Here is the proof that it is starting to happen. We cannot afford for these customers to move away but we cannot stop them from moving away. We used to have a Government monopoly but we no longer have a Government monopoly. By January 2003 every single household in this State will be able to buy power from anyone they want to buy it from. Every household will be able to buy from a retailer, whomever they want. ETSA's profitability as a monopoly has gone for good. From now on the news about the dividend that ETSA will pay to the South Australian Government will be only bad news, and the forward estimates that we are currently looking at are a significant reduction in the dividends: first, this year, to 30 June there will be a reduction; and, secondly, next financial year the reduction in dividends that we are looking at is in tens of millions of dollars.

These are the facts, yet the Opposition keeps saying, 'Hang on to it; we will keep getting all this money as we have done in the past.' That is a fool's paradise: there is no reality to it, about which we have constantly tried to warn. We warned the Opposition of the circumstances we face. Just in the retail arm of ETSA alone, Western Mining's changing to another retailer means millions of dollars in lost profits each year. That equals less dividend and less being contributed to the infrastructure in South Australia. The State cannot afford these losses.

We do not want to take our power assets out of public ownership because we have some ideological crusade. We want to do so to ensure that South Australian taxpayers are not exposed to commercial risk.

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition laughs, but let us not forget who put the national electricity market in place—it was Labor. It was Labor who put the national electricity market in place, and let us not forget that. There are crocodile tears and joking from the Opposition, yet you put it in place. Why do we not want to expose taxpayers to commercial risk? It is because we know what can happen when taxpayers are exposed to a commercial risk. We know the risks after the State Bank and we do not want another State Bank episode in South Australia. ETSA could have been sold or leased by now. Someone else could be carrying

the risk rather than the South Australian taxpayers. The only reason we are doing so is Labor's position.

The only problem is that the ALP has insisted that taxpayers should be the ones who foot the bill, just as they are still footing the bill for the State Bank. The ALP should wake up. This is 1999, not 1959. We now have a national electricity market, Labor took us into that national market and Labor, of all people, should recognise what it means. The single most important fact about the national electricity market is that companies such as Western Mining can now go elsewhere for their power, and they are. That means that assets such as ETSA and Optima can well become commercial risks.

The shadow Treasurer, the member for Hart, likes to show how well versed he is in matters economic, and he usually sits here in Question Time reading the *Financial Review* to demonstrate how—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I have no doubt he is out at a press conference. The member for Hart would be out at a press conference now trying to get his gab on the news bulletins tonight: that is where he would be. But at least it is a change from his sitting here reading the *Financial Review*. He does understand because, after all, in 1994, five years ago, it was he who said in this House:

I am quite happy to stand here tonight and say that I support asset sales. Given the State's severe debt situation, asset sales are an appropriate tool with which the Government can attack debt. I have no problem with an asset sales program.

To the member for Hart, 10 out of 10: he got that right. No wonder they want to make him Leader if he gets that sort of equation right. In that very same speech the member for Hart further said:

I think members on my side [the Labor side] have to face the fact that we cannot run away from the State Bank.

Amen to that. The Opposition has been attempting to run away from the State Bank for the last six years. So, why does the Opposition think that it can run away from the whole issue of exposing South Australian taxpayers to exactly the same risk now? The Opposition has been warned: the risk is there. We want to take action: it is blocking that action. The Opposition will expose South Australian taxpayers and consumers to risk. The member for Hart certainly hit the nail on the head five years ago. We face a crippling debt. Disposal of assets will help us fix that debt.

Labor encumbered the ordinary people of this State with a massive burden when the State Bank went down. Does it want to do the same with ETSA? It seems that the Opposition is prepared to sit on the sidelines and allow an enormous impost to go onto the household budgets of ordinary South Australians because it simply will not face the reality.

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Once again, I say to the member for Spence: the Opposition created the problem but it is refusing to accept any responsibility for a solution to the problem. It wants to expose South Australians to risk. Well, that will be on its shoulders. Let me make one further point. In five years, when we all look back at this period in South Australia's history, where we had the opportunity to maximise debt retirement to get the best value for our assets, to remove the risk and to keep out of the household budgets, if the economy stalls, if the debt continues and if the impost on individual household budgets continues, we will have one Party to blame—the Australian Labor Party in Opposition. And I can assure members that between now and the ballot

box, up to March 2002, we will not let any South Australians forget that this is the Rann Labor Party power bill impost. It could have been avoided, it should have been avoided and it can be avoided: the Opposition should simply front up to its responsibilities.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Elder for the second time.

### GOVERNMENT RADIO NETWORK

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

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Schubert.

**Ms HURLEY:** Given that each Government agency involved in the Government radio network has been assured by Treasury that the cost of the new radio system will be cost neutral, which Government agency will pick up the costs for project management, training, equipment exchange, new aerials and antennae, software programming, furniture alterations, cabling and installation, and so on? According to the Government's budget papers, none of the Government agencies have budgeted for these or any other Government radio network costs. According to agency representatives appearing before last Thursday's Public Works Committee meeting, the exact nature of the costs involved in the network—

*The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Stuart.

**Ms HURLEY:** —are still unknown to the individual agencies.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** As the Premier identified, a number of things are covered in the budget. I will obtain a response to the Deputy Leader's question from the Minister responsible in another place.

### CLARKS SHOES

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industry and Trade.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Mr SCALZI:** Will the Minister advise the House of the Government's position with respect to industry assistance for Clarks Shoes?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I am sure that all members in the House were disappointed with the announcement that Clarks made last Friday. Certainly, the Government was: we had worked very hard with the company, first, to bring it to South Australia from Preston in 1996 and to help it to develop and expand so as to be competitive in the workplace. I note that there were some media comments in relation to the amount of money that may or may not have been granted to Clarks. I believe everyone is aware that Governments of all persuasions do not reveal the exact details, because the information is used by other companies to ramp up any future negotiations. However, I believe it is important that at least some round figures be illustrated to the House with respect to what sort of commitment was made from the taxpayers to Clarks.

Last Friday, on formally notifying the Government that it was withdrawing over the next six months, Clarks repaid to

the Government something less than \$400 000. I understand that that was banked yesterday. So, that is the first matter to place on the record. In fact, the cost to the taxpayer for the three year agreement with Clarks is something less than \$100 000, and that money has gone to things such as enterprise improvements. For the information of the House, the sorts of things covered under enterprise improvements are aspects such as working with the company and the work force to increase its production layouts and to develop improvements to the processes so that the company has a better chance of being competitive on the global market. As an example, I have been advised by Clarks that, with respect to some of its finished pairs of shoes, in one measurement cycle productivity increased from 600 to 900 pairs of shoes per day, an increase in production of some 50 per cent, which obviously makes it more competitive. So, that is the sort of thing that the less than \$100 000 was used for. Of course, importantly, a lot of that goes to work force training. Regrettably, in this case, while the people in the work force will not be with Clarks on a permanent basis, they can take some of those skills with them to other entities if they are fortunate enough to get work in another area.

I noted a comment attributed to the Leader of the Opposition in the *Advertiser* where he demanded that the Government explain its decision to subsidise the company after it had axed 80 workers last year. For the information of the Leader of the Opposition, there was a payment due to the company at about that time of around \$100 000. In fact, that payment was stopped and was never processed. So, once again, the Opposition is out there making false claims in relation to the industry assistance that was paid to Clarks, and I make the point that payment at that time was withheld. The other comment—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I would argue that the investment of less than \$100 000 in Clarks over three years on behalf of taxpayers to keep 190 families employed at that entity over a three year period is a good investment. I believe that \$100 000 in that area over three years is a good investment. It has helped 190 families in South Australia to keep bread and butter on the table, and I cannot understand why members on the other side would criticise the Government for trying to assist an entity to be competitive in South Australia and keep 190 families in employment. In this case, the directors in London have determined that they cannot compete because of the labour costs in other countries and have decided to withdraw.

When the announcement was made that 140 jobs would go in Whyalla, the Leader of the Opposition was out there claiming that the Government should go in and offer more incentives—that State and Federal Governments and local government should be offering more incentives to BHP at Whyalla. Yet, not two or three weeks later, according to the paper, he is criticising the Government for offering incentives to Clarks, when it had laid off 80 people. There is a clear policy difference there: there is a clear conflict in policy and, once again, the Opposition is clearly showing that it does not have an industry policy. It is also showing clearly the problem concerning its enterprise zones policy. Why is it that a company situated at Whyalla should be treated any differently from a company situated at Marlestone?

Clearly, by the comments from the Leader of the Opposition, that is the sort of policy the Opposition is promoting. The Government has a more strategic approach and is



working with industry sectors, and it is more of a whole of State approach to the industry. Both the Clarks issue and the BHP issue certainly have shown up some real differences between the Opposition's industry policy and the Government's industry policy.

**HAMMOND, Dr L.**

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Can the Minister for Government Enterprises now inform the House as to the final pay-out figure and all associated conditions of that package in full of former MFP boss, Dr Laurie Hammond? It has now been 15 months since Dr Hammond received his termination package from the MFP and the Parliament has still not been provided with details of the final pay-out.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** I have, indeed, previously advised the House that the termination payment of the Chief Executive of the MFP Development Corporation was \$198 500 and that Dr Hammond also was retained by the University of Adelaide to undertake a consultancy with funding provided by the Government. In November last year, as I became aware of the facts inconsistent with that advice, I advised the House that I would have an investigation undertaken to confirm the level of termination payments. The information is now to hand following consultations and an examination of the documentation.

I have been informed that Dr Hammond was provided with a termination payment of \$198 000 and \$48 994 in further payments on unused leave payable on termination, such as accrued recreation and professional leave. Whilst I did not undertake to report on other payments, I indicate to the House that I have a table which, I am informed, details all payments relating to Dr Hammond's remuneration made to or on behalf of Dr Hammond during the term of his appointment as Chief Executive of MFP Development Corporation. I seek leave to insert the document, which is purely statistical, in accordance with Standing Orders.

Leave granted.

Type of Payment	Nominal \$	Actual \$
Commencement		
· Start up fee		60 000
· Relocation/removal expenses		33 060.55
Salary Package		
· Year 1	245 000	239 516.74
· Year 2 (actual only half year plus adjustment for Year 1 underpayment)	275 000	139 413
Fringe Benefits Tax (paid by the MFP)		
· Year 1		82 353
· Year 2		42 361
Bonus		
· Paid start of Year 2		50 000
Termination Payments		
· Negotiated payment		198 000
· Leave payment		48 994
Subsequent Consultancy Payments		
· Maneki—Uni of Adel Intellectual Property		200 000
· Maneki—Uni of Adel GBE Ownership		37 500
· plus expenses		5 000
· plus additional work		3 750

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** The documentation has highlighted a lack of consistency in expectations of involvement between the board of MFP Development Corporation and the Government. To ensure that the Government has appropriate oversight of the setting of senior executive

salaries within its Government business enterprises, the Commissioner for Public Employment and the Chief Executive of the Department for Administrative and Information Services will consult with the Chairs of all Government business enterprises with a view to Cabinet's considering a set of guidelines for the setting of senior executive salaries and employment conditions.

I indicate at this stage that the guidelines will require fringe benefits tax on all elements of the remuneration package to be met by the executive officer. However, the Government will not contemplate our enterprises' being hamstrung by requiring them to offer non-competitive salaries but, rather, we will ensure that the salaries are consistent among the Government business enterprises, that they reflect the relativities between the public and private sector enterprises, and that they are offered with appropriate authorisations of Government.

**ENERGY SOURCES**

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Could the Deputy Premier please provide to the House more information on how the Government is now providing direct support for the development of alternative energy sources? Recent surveys indicate that there is strong support in the community for ongoing research in and the use and development of alternative energy resources in South Australia.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I certainly acknowledge the honourable member's keen interest over a long time in alternative energy sources and I know how keenly he followed the recent successful record attempt of the solar boat from Prince Alfred College.

This Government has a strong commitment to sustainable energy. It is providing direct assistance for the research and development of those new technologies through grants. Last week, I announced grants totalling \$233 500 to support 10 energy programs in this State aimed at improving energy efficiency and looking at new technology. The grants were awarded under the State Energy Research Advisory Committee (SENAC) program which focuses on investments in sustainable energy technology. In fact, over the past five years we have distributed \$1.35 million in grants. This year's grants included:

- an investigation into the use of agricultural wastes as a fuel for gas-fired electricity generators;
- improved fuel efficiency in a natural gas bus engine;
- improved energy efficiency in solar water heating systems; and
- an investigation into combustion of municipal and industrial wastes to recover oil and gas fuels.

The Government's support in these types of research projects is vital in progressing energy sector reform, tackling the global greenhouse problem and adopting renewable forms of energy.

Some interests in South Australia are actively investigating wind generated electricity which has always been seen as more expensive. Certainly, wind energy has the potential to compliment the existing systems in some areas. Through the Office of Energy policy, we have monitored 30 sites throughout the State over recent years for both wind speed and direction, and we have built up considerable data. The office was involved in the installation and monitoring of the 150 kilowatt wind turbine at Coober Pedy and, with the support of the member for Flinders, a site at Uley near Port Lincoln has been looked at, and there is a possibility of a wind farm

at Lake Bonney as well—although that is still in the conceptual stage.

In relation to alternative energy, I should also point out that this Government has already given a valuable commitment through the Minister for Environment to provide \$500 per household from the ETSA Reinvestment Fund for the installation of solar panels. (That is if sanity prevails and the fund is able to proceed following the passing of the sale or lease legislation.)

We have committed to developing competitive energy industries in South Australia and, at the same time, attempting to reduce the energy costs to consumers. The Government is fully committed to a State which is modern, efficient and cost effective in its use of electricity and we will certainly continue to explore and to encourage new developments in technology. We wish those well who have received grants in this current year.

#### HAMMOND, Dr L.

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Given that the Commissioner for Public Employment negotiated the final pay-out for the former MFP boss, Laurie Hammond, can the Premier now confirm that he authorised the final pay-out package and, if not, which Minister did authorise the pay-out? Last November, the Premier confirmed in Parliament that the pay-out for Dr Hammond was negotiated by the Commissioner for Public Employment, and that comes under the Premier's portfolio responsibility.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I will check on that. My recollection of the facts is that the Chief Executive of the Office of Public Sector Employment negotiated and finalised the deal.

#### RURAL HEALTH CARE

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Human Services outline to the House what is being done to improve rural health care services to ensure that these services are similar to those in the city? The report by Chris Sidoti, Human Rights Commissioner, indicated a decline in rural communities in Australia and a widening gap between city and country areas.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Last Friday, Chris Sidoti, the Federal Human Rights Commissioner for Australia, brought down a report, and I guess all members would be very concerned to read the detail of that report. The report highlights what we have known for some time, that is, a growing problem in delivering adequate State, Federal and local government services to rural communities, particularly those more remote rural communities where population levels are dropping. The report picked out a number of key areas such as the lack of jobs, education, youth services, and health and human services. I want to pick up what we are trying to do in the human services area to correct a number of those problems which are emerging.

Let me say from the outset that I am a realist and I understand that the problems exist. It is one of the great challenges. It has always been a problem in Australia but it is even more so now that more and more people live in capital cities. After all, we are one of the most centralised countries in terms of where the population lives that you will find anywhere in the developed world.

In the health area the first important aspect was to make sure we have general practitioners readily available to

maintain both medical services and to support the hospital services. This State Government has put more effort than has any other Government in Australia into making sure that we maintain and recruit where necessary GPs for country areas. We developed, under the former Minister, the \$6.5 million rural enhancement package, which is specifically designed to put 24 hour accident and emergency services into country hospitals, using GPs. I recently expanded that further to include all rural GPs, even where there is not a country hospital. I have put an extra amount of money in to allow those areas, where there was not a public hospital, to now get the same sorts of services as one would expect where there was a public hospital. They will do that through the doctors' clinic.

We have also provided an expansion of the patient assistance scheme, known as the PAT scheme, whereby people in rural areas who need to come into the city for medical treatment for two or more nights are able to get assistance with their transport. Last week I announced further expansion of that scheme. Until now it has been available only for people living more than 200 kilometres from Adelaide and I have now made that 100 kilometres from Adelaide, so it brings a number of disadvantaged people much closer to the services in the metropolitan area.

We have taken a range of other initiatives. I will touch on some of those initiatives that highlight the enormous effort this Government has put into trying to maintain health services in country areas. First, we have developed or redeveloped new hospitals in a range of country areas. I will run through some of them. The Kangaroo Island redevelopment at Kingscote is at a total cost of \$5.8 million over the various stages. The Millicent Hospital has cost \$2.4 million and is nearing completion. The Port Lincoln Hospital, over a number of different stages and in the member's own electorate, will cost \$7.4 million and I am delighted that I will go over to open that hospital in a few weeks' time.

The South Coast Hospital at Victor Harbor, construction of which is due to start shortly, has a redevelopment cost of over \$6 million. A new hospital that I opened late last year at Roxby Downs will provide a hospital and health service to the Roxby Downs community. Two major new hospitals at Mount Gambier and Port Augusta are totally new and will be state of the art in terms of the quality of the facilities they provide. In addition, we are providing a range of other services. I touch on some of those services, one being the provision of mental health services in the country. There are now 15 country hospitals that provide telepsychiatry services, so they are able to access regularly psychiatry back-up for people with mental illness who live in the country.

We have scholarship schemes for doctors, nurses, paramedics and health professionals. We have a scheme whereby we put \$1 million a year into training nurses in rural and remote areas of South Australia. We have a number of other programs that try to give greater access for rural communities. We have inpatient services in rural and remote mental health services, a 24 hour emergency service and triage system operating in country areas, and the list goes on.

I will not go through all of them, but highlight that, although it is extremely difficult to provide the same level of service in country areas as in the metropolitan area, and because of the presence of major teaching hospitals in the metropolitan area it will never be feasible to provide the same level of specialist services, this Government is making a considerable effort in making sure that those additional resources are put into health care in the country, even though

I am the first to acknowledge that in many areas we fall short of where we should be in providing those services.

Another area to which I am very committed is to ensure that we provide care for the aged in country areas. One of the most important things to recognise is that people remaining in country areas often comprise the older community. It is important that we use our local hospitals and other health services to provide strong support for those older people. I have made it a priority of the Department of Human Services to ensure we continue to provide those services and build them up with new facilities in country towns throughout most of South Australia. That is occurring and I am proud that one can go to towns like Loxton and find that the hospital is now the biggest employer in town. You have more cars around the hospital than at any other location within the town, not only because you have acute health services there but also have care for the aged, nursing home beds and other independent living facilities all together in the one facility. So, this Government will maintain an increased effort to try to solve some of those problems that Chris Sidoti highlighted in his national report.

#### PREMIER'S STAFF

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** Is the Premier concerned about disparaging and defamatory comments and opinions expressed about Ministers in his Government by members of his own staff in Melbourne last week and, if so, will he now discipline his staff to ensure there is full support for all his Ministers? The Opposition has been advised that during a long lunch in Melbourne last week members of the Premier's staff—Vicki Thomson and Nick Papps—together with the Premier's special adviser, Alex Kennedy, made a series of derogatory statements about the Minister for Human Services.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I think the honourable member has it about 100 per cent wrong yet again. You come into this House and make unsubstantiated allegations, throw them around in a simple attempt to create disharmony. We have seen in Question Time over the past couple of weeks where you have been factually wrong with your questions and you are again today.

*Members interjecting:*

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

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Government Enterprises will come to order.

#### SA SHORTS

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg):** Will the Minister for Tourism provide the House with details about the expansion of the *SA Shorts* holiday program and the latest version of the *SA Shorts* booklet?

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** Brilliant idea, *Shorts*.

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON:** One of the few things you did right. I understand that this morning the Minister launched the latest version of the *SA Shorts* holiday booklet, which now enjoys much wider distribution in our interstate markets. Will the Minister provide to the House more information about this expanded distribution and also about the new *SA Shorts* book?

**The Hon. J. HALL:** I thank the member for Bragg for the question and I also thank him for all the work he did on developing this amazingly successful program over his many

years of involvement with the tourism industry. It was an important launch of this program this morning and there was a great air of optimism and confidence down there as more than 150 tourism operators and industry representatives attended the Botanic Gardens for the launch. The shadow Minister, the member for Lee, was there and I am quite sure he would substantiate some of the things I am about to report to the House.

There is absolutely no doubt that the *Shorts* holiday program has been one of the most successful packaging arrangements in which the State has ever been involved. The new edition of the book, which I will be sending to all members, is a 224 page document that I am sure all members will be interested to read. It lists about 380 of the short breaks available for South Australians and covers areas from our wine regions, agricultural areas, our 3 700 kilometres of coastline—

**An honourable member:** Does it include the Adelaide Hills?

**The Hon. J. HALL:** Yes, it does include the Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale. One of the areas which members would be interested to know about is the growth of the *Shorts* program over the past 12 months. It has had an increase of 40 per cent. Some of the figures of which we should all be very proud are that South Australians have spent 3.3 million visits in their own State—and why would you not? We just about have it all. That figure translates into more than 10 million visitor nights. It is very important for us to acknowledge that the intrastate tourism sector in South Australia is worth around \$650 million, which is hugely important when members look at how important the tourism industry is to the State.

I thought that, whilst not listing all the 380-odd opportunities contained within this very impressive book, we ought to acknowledge such things as an overnight winery camel trek at McLaren Vale and the horse-drawn tram to the penguin colony on Granite Island. However, what is so particularly important is that the *Shorts* campaign is now moving interstate with a great vigour and for the 1998-99 year more than 81 000 books are being distributed through more than 1 800 travel agents, and that includes some of the big ones—

**Mr CLARKE:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I refer to Standing Order 107 regarding ministerial statements. Would you advise the Minister to try to avail herself of Standing Order 107 instead of wasting Question Time?

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** As I was saying, one of the important moves is the move interstate and agents such as Harvey Travel World, Traveland and the RACV networks are now actively promoting the *Shorts* program, and I think that is a very valuable asset for South Australia. One of the great things that I noticed this morning was the absolute enthusiasm and confidence of the tourism operators and they were well represented across all the regions of South Australia—and I do know and understand that some members of the Opposition do not particularly like the good news stories coming out of this industry sector. However, I do not attribute that to the member for Lee who moves around the tourism industry with great ease. In concluding, I would love to read out some of these aspects—

**The Hon. M.K. Brindal:** Please do.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** And my colleague is encouraging me just to make reference to the Fossil Farm—

**The SPEAKER:** Before the honourable member does so, I remind her that there is the opportunity through ministerial statements.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is perfectly within Standing Orders at the moment, but I ask her to bear it in mind.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** Of course, I will not go through all the details of the Fossil Farm, but it is a very important destination at Mannum and I look forward to being able to talk about the Fossil Farm in the future. In conclusion, I raise another initiative of the Tourism Commission; that is, of the *Shorts* gift vouchers. I suspect that many members in this Chamber did not have the opportunity to buy them for Valentine's Day, but I have described them in the past as 'Buy now and use later' and I would hope that perhaps some of the members might consider seriously these wonderful gift vouchers for Easter and Mother's Day (which are coming up) and Valentine's Day in the year 2000. The tourism industry is involved in many initiatives. It is great for the State that it is showing such optimism and confidence in the future and it is fantastic to see that it is generating more than \$2 billion worth of economic activity.

#### MEMBER FOR BRAGG

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** Given that the member for Bragg said on the day of his resignation from the ministry that he will be serving out the current parliamentary term, will the Premier assure the House that in the interests of Government stability he will rule out a by-election in the seat of Bragg this year? On 4 August 1998 it was reported that the member for Bragg said he would serve out his parliamentary term and it was reported that this—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. I rule the honourable member's question out of order in that I do not believe that it is the Premier's responsibility to know when the member for Bragg is planning to leave this House. On that basis, I rule the question out of order.

#### YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** Is the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance aware of any adverse consequences that the year 2000 cybernetic problem could have in rural communities and, if so, what steps might he or anyone else take to avoid those adverse consequences?

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** As I have indicated in this place previously, the member has an intense interest in this subject area, and for good reason, because he represents a considerable portion of rural South Australia and is aware of the effect that technology, if not tested for the year 2000 date problem, could have if it fails in rural South Australia. Indeed, at this point in time it looks as though the consequences for rural South Australia, if the matter is left unaddressed, could be worse than the consequences for other parts of South Australia. To this end, on 19 February the Australian Bureau of Statistics released the results of a national survey that was conducted to provide statistics on the progress of Australian business on addressing the year 2000 problem and factors relating to it. These results showed some disturbing trends impacting on regional Australia.

On a national basis, 91 per cent of agricultural businesses, while indicating they understood the problem, were not

indicating they were going to do something about it. Indeed, 59 per cent of Australia's agricultural businesses have indicated they do not intend to take any rectification action at all. This is by far the highest percentage of any sector in Australia and it presents a disturbing problem for us to combat in rural Australia. To compound that problem, in the transport and storage sector, 53 per cent indicated that they will not be doing anything to combat the problem. That particular industry is one upon which rural South Australia also places considerable import because transport and storage is such an essential part of agricultural business.

To assist regional South Australia in their risk assessment Farmwide and the National Farmers Federation have also investigated the level of compliance of agricultural software. They provided some 76 known agricultural software producers and suppliers with a questionnaire which asked them to identify whether software they provided to rural businesses was year 2000 compliant. They also sought recommendations from the companies where products were known not to be compliant, recommendations as to what action would be necessary for their customers to undertake to ensure that their agricultural business would not be affected.

It is interesting to look at the range of software that is covered by this sort of problem. The software for farm management included areas such as paddock management; operations; machinery; chemical management; payroll; feed management; crop, beef, piggery and dairy management; plant and water management; soil loss; and water distribution. A response was received from 41 firms, nine identifying up front that at least some of their software was non-compliant in some way, shape or form. Of course, more than 30 companies did not respond at all.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** As the member for Schubert interjects, that is a bit of a worry. The member for Schubert also represents a rural area and he is well aware of the impact that malfunction of that software could have on farm businesses. In a bid to assist rural South Australia focus on the problem the Office for Year 2000 Compliance has now recruited three rural liaison officers and those officers are now on the field actively working on the problem: one is based in Port Lincoln, one in Port Augusta and one in the Riverland; and those officers and officers from Adelaide will cover the South-East between them. Those officers will be meeting with industry and farm operators in those areas to ensure that they have the knowledge they need to tackle the problem so that South Australia at least, unlike the national average, will be heavily and rapidly addressing the problem.

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#### ELECTRICITY TARIFFS

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training):** I table a ministerial statement made by the Treasurer the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place.

#### PARLIAMENT, MEMBERS' INDEMNIFICATION

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade):** I table a ministerial statement made by the Attorney-General in another place.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Ms KEY (Hanson):** My grievance is with regard to the draft State industrial relations legislation that was released by the Minister for Government Enterprises recently. Today, in the brief period I have available to me, I would like to refer to a copy of a letter I received that was directed to the honourable Minister on 25 February 1999. It is an open letter from the South Australian University academics regarding proposed amendments to industrial relations legislation. The letter is signed by Professor Andrew Stewart, School of Law, Flinders University; Professor Claire Williams, Department of Sociology, Flinders University; Doctor Barbara Pocock from the Department of Social Inquiry, University of Adelaide; Professor Chris Leggett, School of International Business, University of South Australia; Associate Professor Chris Provis, School of International Business, University of South Australia; Mr John Spoehr, Acting Director, Centre for Labour Research, University of Adelaide; Mr Gerry Treuren, Lecturer, School of International Business; Mr Stewart Sweeney, Lecturer, School of International Business, University of South Australia; and Dr David Palmer, Lecturer, American Studies, Flinders University. The Minister may laugh and say that it sank without trace. I believe there was an article in the *Advertiser* last week, but maybe the Minister missed that.

A number of the points that have been raised respectfully to him in this letter need to be addressed quite seriously. The letter contains a number of points, and it talks about general concerns with regard to employment, and I note in particular the recent conference where Professor Keith Hancock, an eminent South Australian economist, said that he did not believe there was any connection between employment growth and changes to the regulation of industrial relations. It is very interesting to see that Professor Hancock has made special mention of this issue, because the rhetoric on the other side quite often refers to the connection supposedly with the creation of jobs and how we basically have to make life miserable, if not completely difficult, for workers who are under the current industrial relations system. I will go so far as to say that the proposals that will be brought forward will make industrial life even worse for those workers.

There is the issue of fairness and equity that this group of academics addresses; there is flexibility—what flexibility actually means; there is the South Australian tradition of the cost of regulation; and marginalising the commission. As people in this place will probably know, there is a very strong suggestion that the independent umpire that we have known over the years in the industrial arena be taken out of the area of workplace agreements and that we set up a new body—which I understand will cost at least \$500 000 just to establish—to scrutinise, and probably rubber stamp, workplace agreements, and that has had some discussion in this House.

There is also discussion in this document about the problems with award simplification and how that will affect adversely women in the work force or workers who are covered by our common rule State awards and how they will be further disadvantaged from any real wage increases or proper localised flexibility in the workplace if their award also goes. There is the issue of public holidays, and I am pleased to note that these learned academics agree with my

position on this issue, that, basically, if the Government's agenda on public holidays gets through, workers will have no private time of their own. They will have to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week and, if they work on a public holiday, there is no answer anywhere about whether they will be compensated for working an unsocial time. I believe that these demands will affect people in the paid work force, and particularly affect their families. Although the issue of public holidays may not seem a major one, I would argue that it is something we really need to look at.

There is quite a bit of information on termination of employment and how ridiculous the Government's proposal is in this regard, freedom of association, and what the letter does is dispel some of the nonsense that is being handed to us on a regular basis about whether workers should be able to be in a trade union.

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

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Earlier today in Question Time, I asked the Deputy Premier a question regarding the Government's direct support for the development of alternative energy sources. I was delighted with the response from the Deputy Premier, and I do not need to hide the fact that I support very strongly further development and research in regard to alternative energy sources. On another occasion, I intend to refer to my strong support for looking more closely at wind energy, having been an advocate of wind energy over a long period of time and having had the opportunity to look at how it is working in countries such as New Zealand, and so on. I will not do that today but on another occasion.

The purpose of becoming involved in this debate today is to express my strong support for the energy research grants that have been handed out by the department and by the Deputy Premier. The energy research programs focus on efficiency of energy supply and technology, and the use of electricity and gas; developing sustainable energy technology, and that is the area I support very strongly; and developing competitive energy industries in South Australia and, at the same time, reducing energy costs to consumers. Of course, that is an area that we would all support. As the Deputy Premier has said, Government support in these types of projects is vital in progressing energy sector reform, tackling the global greenhouse gas problem and adopting renewable forms of energy.

I was interested in the support that has been provided for individual projects: the solar concentrate for photovoltaic systems, with \$18 000 being provided for the design for a solar collector to focus the sun's rays for electricity generation; \$49 500 was provided to phase the changed storage system for space heating and cooling, through the use of chemical substances such as heat exchangers in air-conditioning processes; \$20 000 has been provided for the development of a natural gas engine, seeking to achieve improved fuel efficiency in a natural gas bus engine; \$37 000 has been made available for life cycle management for commercial solar hot water systems, through the development of a management and monitoring plan for in-service solar water heaters (again, an area that I support very strongly); \$7 500 was made available for biomass fuelling of a co-generation system, to investigate how agricultural wastes and other biomass could fuel a gas-fired electricity generator; \$5 000 was granted for the development of an inexpensive domestic water preheater to provide solar preheated water;

some \$27 500 was provided for gas boosting of solar hot water systems and the development of a control system to improve energy efficiency in gas supplemented solar water heating systems; \$7 000 was provided for the reduction in the operating temperature of photovoltaic modules; and so I could go on.

I suggest that these are all excellent projects and, with the Deputy Premier, I would wish all those who have been successful all the very best as they work through their research and development of alternative energy sources in this State. I can only hope that we will see a lot more funding made available for this very important and worthwhile cause in South Australia.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** First, as a country member I often have much to say about the serious situation in regional South Australia, but today I want to congratulate the Whyalla Football League for its weekend efforts in setting up the football game between the Crows and Geelong in Whyalla. I particularly congratulate Jim Hewitson, President of the Whyalla Football League, for all the work done by him and his associates—Graham Papps, his assistant President, and so many members of the Whyalla community who were involved in the project. This wonderful match was attended by some 9 000 people, which was a record for a country match. There was a wonderful atmosphere all the time even though it was fairly warm. Facilities were excellent and it was a wonderful win for the Crows. This great day was typical of the sorts of things which can happen in the country but which are not appreciated. To the smart-arsed commentators who talked about this on television and whatever and who had a go at Whyalla prior to the match, I would say, 'Eat your words and come and look at Whyalla at some time.'

On a far more serious note, I express concern about the apparent lack of surgical coverage at the Whyalla Hospital. I understood there was an arrangement in place with the University of Adelaide's Department of Surgery to provide surgical coverage in Whyalla on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. On Friday morning last week there was a tragic accident where a young man was run over by a police car when the police were pursuing him. The tragic death of 16-year-old Todd Best highlighted the lack of surgical coverage because no surgeon was present during the seven hours that Todd Best was at the Whyalla Hospital. I am not claiming that surgical intervention could have made a difference in this case but, in other cases, surgical intervention can mean the difference between life and death.

Whyalla is still South Australia's second largest city, with a heavy industrial base, and unfortunately traumatic accidents do happen. Surgical coverage is not a luxury but a necessity. I was interested to hear the comments today by the Minister for Human Services about country services and health services in regional areas. This highlights that there is still so much to be done. Certainly, the Minister does not have the answers that satisfy me and I will be seeking an explanation from him about what surgical coverage the Whyalla Hospital actually has.

I am also concerned about the statement in the last Whyalla Hospital and Health Services newsletter that there will be an opportunity in 1999-2000 for further reductions in staffing at the hospital. I do not see the loss of jobs as an opportunity, especially as we have already seen the loss of 150 jobs at the Whyalla Hospital. Currently, there is an over-run at the Whyalla Hospital of more than \$200 000 on top of a past over-run of \$1.67 million. This is just not possible—it

is not through inefficiency—and I challenge anyone to explain in a common sense way the rules which apply to public hospital funding. I have to agree with those people in Whyalla who said recently that the funding frameworks appear to be straight out of the Mad Hatter's tea party. Staff and patients at the Whyalla Hospital deserve better than to be penalised by a Mad Hatter's funding system. I am not blaming the board or the staff, because I believe they have done an excellent job in the past two years in trying to recoup some of the money that has been lost, but I challenge the Minister to explain why there has been such an over-run.

Another question was raised by the death of young Todd Best, who could be anyone's son and who was only 16 years old. I believe there is a police review of the accident. No-one wanted that accident to happen. Certainly, in no way am I blaming the police officer involved for this most unfortunate accident, and my sympathies go out to that officer and the other officers. However, I do question why this officer was working alone. I believe that the Whyalla police are understaffed, as are the police in so many other country areas. Police are being pulled out of country regions and I believe that numbers are down in Whyalla. This is a serious situation. The morale of officers is involved and the safety of communities is at stake. So, this tragic accident has raised many questions, once again, about regional South Australia. Many of the issues need to be answered by the Ministers responsible.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** There are a number of matters upon which I wish to touch today, the first being quite simply the fact that a number of my constituents have been substantially disadvantaged in consequence of an illegal contract made between the State Government, at its instigation, and Australian Southern Railways. The villain in this piece is not the railway company at all but the State Government, the villainy being that the State Government, without consultation with local farmers and other residents along the railway line from Tailem Bend to Pinnaroo, which was recently standardised, made a contract in arrangement with Australian Southern Railways to enable it to license all the crossings.

By way of background history, I can tell the House that all those farmers just after the turn of the century, or their forebears or ancestors, were required to sell the land—a number of them actually gave the land—to the State Government of the day for the construction of the railway line. They have always had, understandably, the right to cross the railway line from one paddock to another with their farm implements, whether they were harrows, seeding or harvesting equipment, trucks, wagons or any other kinds of vehicle. Under the terms of the contract which the State Government offered to the successful tenderer to take over the operations of that railway line, the successful tenderer was given the right to license those crossings for an annual fee and, further, to charge a maintenance cost on each of the crossings.

As members can imagine, if several paddocks on a farm were intersected by that railway line, then you would expect that farmers would want to be able to cross between each of the new paddocks so created with implements and equipment, as I have described. In most instances, anyway, the roadway is on one side of the railway line and their homes and properties are on the other side; that is, the bulk of the property is on the other side of the railway line. At least every one of those farms and the farm families who live on, and operate, them have to be able to cross the railway lines to get home. There has to be at least one crossing point. It has to be

licensed and there is then an annual fee for the licence and an annual fee for the maintenance. That is authorised under the terms of the contract.

The owners of the land, the farmers and my constituents, were not consulted at all in the preparation of those contract documents. They had common law rights to cross that railway line wherever and whenever it was necessary. The gate has never been locked, as it were; the gate was never shut one day a year under those terms for their private crossing purposes. But now some smart A—and I will not say what I was inclined to say—but some smart Alec somewhere in some Government department conspired to provide the means by which they could get a promotion for themselves and big note themselves, I will bet, by writing into the contract a provision which allowed the successful tenderer for the operation of that railway line to charge these fees and thereby increase the amount of money which would be paid to the State Government, thereby enhancing their standing as clever public servants.

The end consequence of that is a gross injustice and I intend to have the matter further ventilated. Certainly, it will not be the last time that members hear about this matter in this place. I think it is outrageous when a Government treats its citizens—over their heads—in that way, without consideration or regard for their rights. They were not so much as told about it until they received their first notice to pay a licence fee, let alone consulted as to how they believed it ought to be done.

The other matter to which I want to draw attention is the problem that I have seen recently referred to in the press of mosquitoes on the Adelaide Plains. In this State there resides one of the most outstanding contemporary entomologists in the world, Professor Dudley Pinnock. He is well supported by another brilliant young man, Dr David Cooper, an entomologist or of similar professional ilk in academic terms. I mention them because I believe that they have been very successful in the development of non-chemical—that is, bacterial—control of insects on sheep, both blowflies and lice, and I am sure that, given the brief to attend to it, they could fix the mosquitoes in the same way.

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I wish today to make a contribution about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am very disturbed about the debate with respect to the future of the maternity unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has been going on since before Christmas. At the moment there is a review under way of hospitals throughout the State, and the Minister in the House last week, I think, was not able to give any commitment beyond 1999 with respect to the maternity unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Many constituents have contacted my office with respect to the ongoing debate. This issue was first raised in the *Advertiser* in December last year and it is of major concern, particularly on top of recent cuts with respect to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It was only in November last year that I had the need to write to the Minister about rolling closures at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and these cuts are having a great effect on people in the western suburbs.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been a beacon to people in the western suburbs since about 1952, I think, when it first opened and, with respect to health care for women, in particular, one cannot speak too highly of the service and the care that has been provided to women and their families. It would be a great tragedy if the maternity unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital did not continue beyond 1999. I believe

that it was the first hospital to be awarded the baby friendly award. It has also received recognition from the World Health Organisation with respect to accreditation for promoting breast feeding. It really does have an extremely professional, caring team not only performing a wonderful service but performing it in a high needs area.

One might ask, 'If mothers do not go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to have their babies, where will they go?' That is a very good question because, to the best of my knowledge, as I understand it from some of my constituents, they are already being directed to look at, for instance, the Lyell McEwin Hospital or even the Women's and Children's Hospital. I would not have thought that they were realistic suggestions. The Lyell McEwin Hospital is a long way away, and I would have thought that it was critical that mothers be able to have their babies as close as possible to their home, where they have the support of family and friends in what is obviously not only a wonderful time for the families involved but, in some cases, a time of great need. I believe that one piece of correspondence that I received (and I have subsequently met with not only the mother but also the baby) really explains it all. It states:

I had the misfortune to have a high risk pregnancy, with a condition which meant that I had to be hospitalised for some weeks leading up to delivery. During my stay I received the highest professional treatment and felt reassured and confident with my care. My stay was made more comfortable and bearable because of the location of our local hospital [the Queen Elizabeth Hospital] so my family and was able to visit often throughout the day.

My condition meant that I was covered in a rash and blisters and was very uncomfortable. My mother came every day to help me bathe and my husband and other family members came for every meal time. This simply would not have been possible if I had to be admitted further from home.

I am not only writing for my own sake but for the ramifications to all families in the western suburbs who risk losing such a wonderful facility. This seems particularly ludicrous with the recent complications of overcrowding at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

I implore you to take action to secure the ongoing future of the Obstetrics Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. They are a groundbreaking team of caring professionals who have leading initiatives such as their home visiting midwives and they are the only hospital in the State with the World Health Organisation accreditation for promoting breast feeding.

I have had many calls and received many letters written by concerned women in the western area, and I implore the Government to guarantee this service.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage):** On 18 February 1999, the member for MacKillop made a number of comments concerning the Ngarkat fire, which appear to have been based on his perception of media statements and, it seems, erroneous information provided to him. In his address, the honourable member referred to a statement that I made on Tuesday 16 February 1999 and interpreted these comments as an attempt, in his words, 'to stifle community debate, to allow a review to be carried out behind closed doors in secret and out of public gaze'. These comments were also translated into headlines in the South-East newspapers of secret meetings and a cover-up.

The member for MacKillop has learnt very quickly the hypocrisy of using parliamentary privilege to issue defamatory statements. These offensive and inaccurate claims I totally reject. Having stood in this place on 16 February and announced, in the most public forum in the State, that a series of debriefs at different locations would be taking place, there can be no credibility in any claim that there was a cover-up.

These meetings would have to be the most un-secret meetings of all time.

I remind all members of the following debriefs that have taken place or will take place: the CFS Region 3 debrief at Lameroo on 16 February; the CFS Region 5 debrief at Bordertown on 25 February; and a series of debriefs at CFS headquarters on Wednesday 3 March, which will comprise of an incident management agencies debrief, a community stakeholder forum and a State operational debrief. In addition, there will be an internal agency debriefing and review of the strategy for managing the fire in several forums, including the National Parks and Wildlife Council and the Reserve Planning and Management Advisory Committee. Rather than stifle community debate, the debrief process is a very public one, albeit disciplined and managed to filter out the emotional and sometimes irrational claims that some members seem to encourage.

The fire effort in Ngarkat was based on a fire management statement that was finalised in December 1998 at a meeting that involved the Tatiara CFS group officer and other local CFS representatives. The plan outlines park values, fire behaviour predictions, fire suppression information and strategies. It should be noted that, contrary to the information provided to this House by the member for MacKillop on 18 February, National Parks and Wildlife SA did not decline an offer of help from local CFS. The only vehicle at the fire that night was a National Parks and Wildlife SA unit, and the decision not to commit further resources to the fire that evening was a general consensus that was made by Tatiara and Mallee CFS group officers in consultation with two local National Parks and Wildlife SA rangers.

It is important for the members of the House to recognise that during that evening some 16 millimetres of rain fell in the south-east of Ngarkat. Uncertainty regarding the number, the size and the location of fires and the prevailing weather conditions, including the fact that 16 millimetres of rain had fallen, would certainly have contributed to this decision. It is also important perhaps for the House to recognise that this fire, which in fact covered and destroyed some 110 000 hectares, was one that burnt to the boundaries both north and south of the park. Private property losses were restricted to approximately 10 kilometres of boundary fencing—and there is some 320 kilometres of boundary fencing surrounding that park.

In addition, two private entrance roads and an airstrip were, indeed, affected by fire vehicles and aircraft and will certainly require minor reinstatement works. Perhaps it would be interesting for members in this place to recognise that the intensity of the fire which was created on that night called in an immense number of resources, and this may assist members in recognising the immensity of the fire with which these people were dealing.

South Australian resources which were committed to the fire operation included some 200 CFS and National Parks and Wildlife personnel; up to 20 large fire units (CFS); 10 small fire units (National Parks and Wildlife); two fire bomber aircraft; one helicopter; two observation aircraft; and four bulldozers with rollers. There were also significant additional resources provided through Parks Victoria and the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

I have no doubt that as part of the debriefing process there will be constructive criticism of the management of this fire, and undoubtedly matters arising from the debrief will influence future management of bushfires in both Ngarkat and other places. I can assure this House that all comments

will, indeed, be considered. I would certainly encourage those who feel that they may have constructive advice or information to make that particular information available through the debriefing processes being carried out by both CFS and National Parks and Wildlife.

I also advise the House that I have had further information come through today that another fire has started outside Ngarkat Conservation Park on private land. I am told that at this stage it is under control. Two bulldozers are currently on the site and an aircraft has been used to apply retardant. The Murraylands' 14 units and crew are on site and at this stage the assurances are that this fire is under control but, according to fire management procedures in place across the State, I am sure all practices will be in the manner that we have come to expect from CFS volunteers and National Parks and Wildlife staff.

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### STATUTES AMENDMENT (SENTENCING- MISCELLANEOUS) BILL

Second reading.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade):** I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

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

Leave granted.

The Government's Focus on Community Safety election policy reconfirmed the Government's commitment to review continually the law relating to sentencing and the sentencing options available to the courts. This Bill contains several worthwhile additions to the sentencing options available to the courts and improves the operation of other provisions.

Two Acts are amended—the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* and the *Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act 1988*.

The first amendments are to the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*.

Firstly section 348 is amended to put it beyond doubt that an appeal lies in relation to an order under section 39 of *Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act 1988*. Section 39 empowers a court to make an order discharging a convicted person, without imposing a penalty, on the person entering into a bond. An examination of this provision by Perry J in *R v McMann* (1997) 70 SASR 1 suggests that because of the High Court's interpretation of a Queensland definition of 'sentence' there is no appeal against the order of a court made under section 39. It is desirable that the DPP should be able to appeal if it is considered that an inappropriate order has been made under section 39.

The second amendment is to section 352 and gives a right of appeal against the inappropriate use of Griffiths remands. A Griffiths remand occurs where a court, instead of sentencing an offender, releases him or her on bail and adjourns sentencing to assess the offender's prospects of successful rehabilitation. Griffiths remands were considered in *McMann's* case where Perry J suggested that the legislature should provide an appeal against a decision to adjourn sentencing and release an offender on remand. The amendment to section 352 does this.

The other amendments in the Bill amend the *Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act 1988*.

Where a person has been charged with a number of offences on the one complaint or information section 18A allows a court to sentence the person to one penalty for all or some of the offences. The Supreme Court Judges have suggested that the section should be amended to permit a single penalty to be imposed with respect to all matters dealt with at the one time, whether or not they are charged on the one complaint or information. Section 18A is amended accordingly. This will allow one global sentence to be imposed when, for example, the District Court or Supreme Court on finding



a person guilty of an offence calls up all outstanding complaints against the offender.

Section 38 of the Act allows a court to suspend a sentence of imprisonment upon condition that the defendant enters into a bond to be of good behaviour and to comply with other conditions of the bond. The court cannot partially suspend a sentence of imprisonment. Under the *Commonwealth Crimes Act* a court can, in effect, partially suspend a sentence of imprisonment. The court can impose, for example, a sentence of imprisonment of 9 months but order the person be released after 3 months upon conditions of a bond the person has entered into at the time of sentencing.

Section 38 is amended to allow a court to impose a sentence of imprisonment which would be partially suspended on the condition that the defendant enter into a bond to be of good behaviour and to comply with any other conditions of the bond. This new sentencing option is available where the sentence of imprisonment is more than three months but less than one year. Where a prisoner is sentenced to a term of imprisonment for a period of a year or more, the Act requires the sentencing court to impose a non-parole period. Where an offender is sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment it is appropriate that the Parole Board should be the body to set any conditions on which the offender should be released from prison as it will have the benefit of observing the offender's behaviour in prison.

Courts cannot sentence adult offenders to home detention. Home detention is only an option for adult prisoners in custody who are administratively released on home detention. There may be occasions where it would be unduly harsh for a prisoner to serve any time in prison because of the prisoner's ill health, disability or frailty. Section 38 is amended to allow a court to suspend a sentence of imprisonment where this is so and to make it a condition of the bond that the prisoner reside in a specified place and remain in that place for a specified period of no more than 12 months. The court must include a condition in the bond requiring the prisoner to be under the supervision of a probation officer. Consequential amendments are made to sections 42, 48, 49 and 58. A new section, section 50AA, provides for the powers of probation officers in the case of supervising home detention.

Sections 39 and 42 deal with conditions of bonds. There is some question as to whether section 42(1a) achieves its intention which was to prevent a court imposing conditions as part of a bond that does not require the defendant to return to court to be sentenced should the defendant breach the bond. Sections 39 and 42 are amended to eliminate any doubt.

Where a court is satisfied that a person has failed to comply with community service obligations the court can issue a warrant of commitment. Section 71(7) provides that if the court thinks the breach is trivial or excusable the court can refrain from issuing a warrant and either (a) extend the term of the order to enable the person to complete the required service or (b) impose a further order to enable the person to complete the required service or (c) cancel some or all of the unperformed service.

Applications for extensions of time are often made because of a change in the circumstances of the offender. An offender who was unemployed may have gained employment that not only limits his or her capacity to perform community service but also provides the means for satisfying a fine. Section 71 is amended to allow a court in these circumstances to revoke the community service order and impose a fine. In imposing a fine the court must take into account the number of hours that the person has performed.

Explanation of Clauses

*Clause 1: Short title*

This clause is formal.

*Clause 2: Commencement*

This clause provides for the Act to be brought into operation by proclamation.

*Clause 3: Interpretation*

This clause defines "principal Act".

PART 2

AMENDMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAW  
CONSOLIDATION ACT 1935

*Clause 4: Amendment of s. 348—Interpretation*

The definition of "sentence" in Part 11 of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act* is expanded to include an order of a court in criminal proceedings for an indictable offence to discharge the convicted person under section 39 of the *Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act* without penalty but on a bond. Such an order will now be appealable by the defendant or the DPP, with the leave of the Full Court of the Supreme Court.

*Clause 5: Amendment of s. 352—Right of appeal in criminal cases*

This clause provides that a decision of a court to defer sentencing a person who has been convicted of an indictable offence will be similarly appealable.

PART 3

AMENDMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAW  
(SENTENCING) ACT 1988

*Clause 6: Amendment of s. 18A—Sentencing for multiple offences*

This clause empowers a court to sentence a person to a single penalty for a number of offences of which the court has found the person guilty.

*Clause 7: Amendment of s. 38—Suspension of imprisonment on defendant entering into bond*

This clause firstly empowers a court to suspend part of a sentence of imprisonment, but only where the total period of imprisonment to which the defendant is liable is more than 3 months but less than 1 year. In such a case the court will be able to direct that the defendant serve a specified period (of at least one month) in prison and suspend the balance of the total term on the condition that the defendant enter into a bond that will come into effect on release from prison. The court will therefore fix the bond conditions at the time of sentencing. Secondly, a sentencing court is given the express power under new subsection (2c) to include a home detention condition in a bond where the court has suspended a sentence of imprisonment on the ground that the defendant is too ill, disabled or frail to serve any time in prison. Home detention cannot be imposed for more than 12 months, and during that time the defendant must be under the supervision of a probation officer.

*Clause 8: Amendment of s. 39—Discharge without sentence on defendant entering into bond*

This clause inserts a provision (currently appearing in section 42(1a) of the Act) that prevents a court from including conditions in a bond (other than the condition to be of good behaviour) where the court has discharged the defendant and has not required the defendant to come back to court for sentencing in the event of breach of bond.

*Clause 9: Amendment of s. 42—Conditions of bond*

*Clause 10: Amendment of s. 48—Special provisions relating to supervision*

*Clause 11: Amendment of s. 49—CEO must assign a probation officer or community service officer*

These clauses contain various minor consequential amendments.

*Clause 12: Insertion of s. 50AA*

50AA. Powers of probation officer in the case of home detention

This clause inserts a new provision setting out the powers of a probation officer in relation to a probationer who is subject to a home detention condition. The powers in subsection (1) are the same as the powers given to home detention officers under other Acts. A power of arrest is given to probation officers and police in the case of a probationer who has contravened a home detention condition.

*Clause 13: Amendment of s. 58—Orders that court may make on breach of bond*

This clause empowers a court, when dealing with a suspended sentence on breach of bond, to direct that the time spent by the probationer on home detention under the bond will count as part of the suspended sentence.

*Clause 14: Amendment of s. 71—Community service orders may be enforced by imprisonment*

This clause empowers the court to revoke an order for community service in cases where the defendant's failure to comply with the order arose out of his or her having gained paid employment since the order was made and to substitute a fine (but only if the defendant has the means to satisfy it without hardship). Any number of hours of community service performed under the order must be taken into account when the court is fixing the amount of the fine.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (JURIES)  
AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

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

Leave granted.

This Bill amends sections 246 and 247 of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* in order to fortify the principle of confidential jury deliberations and juror identities.

Section 246 and 247 ('the Sections') were inserted in early 1992. Section 246 prevents the disclosure of information that is likely to lead to the identification of a juror or former juror for 6 months after the conclusion of the proceedings, while section 247 makes it an offence for a person to harass a juror, or to give, offer, or agree to give a material benefit to a juror, for the purpose of obtaining information about jury deliberations.

In the 1992 Annual Report the Supreme Court Judges requested amendment to these sections of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*. They argued that the Sections did not go far enough to protect the confidentiality of jury deliberations. They suggested there should be a general prohibition of disclosure and solicitation of disclosure of proceedings in the jury room.

The matter was subsequently included on the agenda of the Standing Committee of Attorneys General ('SCAG') for the purposes of developing effective legislation to protect the confidentiality of jury deliberations and jurors' identities. SCAG took the view that because of the national nature of the media, consistent legislation in all Australian jurisdictions was desirable.

SCAG developed and approved a Model Bill ('the SCAG Bill') dealing with the protection of jury deliberations and jurors' identities. The SCAG Bill was accepted as a minimum standard for the protection of the confidentiality of jury deliberations and jurors' identities. The Bill introduced into Parliament adopts the provisions in the SCAG Bill. Victoria, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory have already enacted legislation adopting these provisions.

The Bill, to a large extent, abolishes the distinction between the protection of jury deliberations and jurors' identities. The proposed provisions will create offences for improperly disclosing, soliciting, or obtaining information relating to jury deliberations and jurors' identities for the purposes of publication, and will create an offence for the publication of such material. However, the provisions will not prevent the disclosure and prosecution of improper conduct by a juror to appropriate authorities, or fair and accurate reporting of proceedings dealing with improper conduct by a juror. Nor will the provisions prevent appropriate research and public discussions of jury functions.

Subsections (1) and (3) of section 247 will be retained. These provisions operate above the minimum standard that is proposed to be implemented nationally. The retention of these provisions will mean that it is still an offence to harass a juror for information about the deliberations of a jury.

The effect of inserting the proposed provisions in the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act* will be to strengthen the protection of the confidentiality of jury deliberations and juror's identities by making the disclosure, solicitation and publication of this information an offence. The provisions strike an appropriate balance between protecting the confidentiality of jury deliberations without sacrificing the ability to ensure that improper juror conduct is disclosed, and that the system is scrutinised to assist in the development of the jury system and the judicial system as a whole.

#### Explanation of Clauses

*Clause 1: Short title*

*Clause 2: Commencement*

*Clause 3: Substitution of s. 246*

The new section is a uniform measure. It makes it an offence—

- to publish information about jury deliberations or information that may identify a juror;
- to disclose such information knowing that it will, or is likely to be published;
- to solicit or obtain such information with the intention of publishing or facilitating the publication of the information.

Various exceptions are specified relating to disclosure to a court or Royal Commission, disclosure to the DPP or police for the purposes of an investigation of certain offences and disclosure to a researcher authorised by the Attorney-General.

*Clause 4: Amendment of s. 247—Harassment to obtain information about jury's deliberations*

The amendment deletes the offence in subsection (2) (offering a material benefit for information about jury deliberations) and increases the penalty for the offence in subsection (1) to match that included in the new section.

**Mr De LAINE** secured adjournment of the debate.

### SUPPLY BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 17 February. Page 815.)

**Mr HILL (Kaurana):** This afternoon I want to talk about a number of issues relating to the practice of democracy in South Australia. In particular, I want to talk about the provisions of the Constitution Act as they apply to electoral fairness, and I refer to a provision that was introduced in 1991 following the Labor Government's win in 1989. I have talked previously on this issue at the time of the most recent redistributions but, as it was only a grievance at that time, I did not get a chance to expand on my remarks.

In 1991 the Constitution Act was amended to include a provision that insisted that electoral fairness should be taken into account by the Electoral Commission every four years after an election. That has meant, in effect, that electoral boundaries are changed very regularly in South Australia. I would make three points about this provision of electoral fairness now that we have had eight years to look at it and a couple of redistributions to evaluate it.

First, I make the point in relation to the 1997 election results that, despite the fact that the commission had drawn boundaries on the basis of apparent fairness, if the Labor Party had in fact achieved 50 per cent of the vote, it would not have achieved government. The electoral pendulum shows that with a 1.5 per cent vote greater than the vote we got (which was 48.5 per cent), if we got 50 per cent we would have picked up only one extra seat. That would have given us 22 seats—not sufficient to form a Government. Even with a test of fairness in the Act, it is obvious that fairness cannot be created by a group of wise men and women sitting around a bench trying to determine fairness prospectively.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr HILL:** They were all men, as the member for Ross Smith says. Even when they try to achieve fairness, they cannot achieve it. The amendments fail that basic test. Do they produce fairness? No, they do not. But they produce a number of other things which, I think, are deleterious. They produce redistributions very frequently—in fact, every four years after an election. That is a necessary component of the fairness test because you cannot leave fairness for a couple of terms. You have to look into it frequently. As a result of having frequent redistributions, it means electors are shifted from one electorate to another very regularly. In fact, some groups of people, depending on where they live, are changed regularly and have not had the same member of Parliament representing them for a number of terms.

For example, the suburb of O'Sullivan Beach was in my electorate of Kaurana. It has been in there for a couple of terms and has now been moved out. Prior to that it was in the member for Bright's electorate; prior to that, it was in the member for Baudin's electorate; and now it has been moved, again, into the member for Bright's electorate. The people in that community (I know from doorknocking and talking to them) are genuinely confused about who is their member of Parliament. It is not good for electors to be changed around from electorate to electorate. They like to know who their member of Parliament is, they like to know where the office is and they like to know how to get help when they need it.

The second problem with the fairness test as it currently stands is that the whole notion of community of interest,

which was the basis of our electoral system until 1991, has virtually been abolished. It is supposed to be taken into account but if members look at the boundaries most recently drawn that consideration is acknowledged now more in the breach than in its true consideration.

I point again to my own electorate where a section of Christies Beach has been removed from my electorate and placed with the electorate of Bright. So, not the whole suburb but a part of the suburb has been moved. Surely, suburban boundaries indicate one very sensible community of interest. This particular community of interest, the suburb of Christies Beach, has been divided into two and some of those electors have been placed in the member for Bright's electorate.

These people live some 300 metres or 400 metres away from my electorate office. It would be natural for them to travel to my office to get help. However, after the next election they will have to travel to the member for Bright's electorate over the hill and off Brighton Road—about 10 or 15 kilometres away from where they live.

**The SPEAKER:** As a point of order, I remind the honourable member and other members that this is a Supply Bill. The honourable member will get an opportunity during the 10 minute grievance debate to address grievance issues. On this occasion he must stick to talking about money and what money will buy—it is a Supply Bill.

**Mr HILL:** I could talk about the Electoral Act and the Electoral Commissioner, who is paid for out of Supply—would that be a better way of approaching it?

**The SPEAKER:** Talking about the Commissioner is fine, but when you start grieving the Chair has a problem.

**Mr HILL:** I will leave those comments until later. I will talk about some other issues which I also intended to talk about and which relate to my electorate in a direct sense in terms of the provision of money. I wanted to talk about the electorate of Kaurna in more detail and about the effects of Government policy and the lack of expenditure by the Government on the folk who live in my electorate. I want to talk about the unemployment rate in the electorate of Kaurna and the urgent need for Government expenditure in my electorate to address some of the social and economic issues facing the people in Kaurna.

I refer to the City of Onkaparinga's recent publication called 'A Social Atlas'. That demonstrates that in my electorate suburb by suburb the following are the unemployment rates: Aldinga, 37.1 per cent; Aldinga Beach, 18.6 per cent; Christies Beach, 17.4 per cent; Maslin Beach, 13.2 per cent; Moana, 13.6 per cent; Noarlunga Downs, 20.1 per cent; O'Sullivan Beach, 18.9 per cent; Port Noarlunga, 15 per cent; Port Noarlunga South, 13.6 per cent; Port Willunga, 20.3 per cent; Seaford, 15.4 per cent; Seaford Meadows, 22.4 per cent; Seaford Rise, 13 per cent; and Sellicks Beach, 13.6 per cent. In my electorate not one suburb has an unemployment rate better than the State average, which at the time of the compilation was 10.5 per cent. It shows that, when statistics are used to show that employment rates are improving, they do not take in account what is happening on the ground at a micro level in individual areas. Many members on this side of the House represent electorates where the unemployment rate is much greater than it is across the metropolitan area.

We can say proudly that the unemployment rate has dropped from 10 per cent to 9.5 per cent or something of that order, but for people in Aldinga, where the unemployment rate is 37 per cent or for people in Port Willunga where it is 20 per cent, it is cold comfort indeed. It is true that the south is facing an unemployment crisis. This Government's actions

have done nothing to help that. The Minister for Employment conducted a seminar in the Parliament some time ago so we could all raise our concerns, but I do not believe any of those issues will help the people in my electorate unless Governments take dramatic action indeed to address the social issues.

In addition, I will go through some of the problems being faced by my electors as a result of Government funding cut backs and Government policy. I turn to the issue of education. Many members will have had experience of electors complaining about the reduction of Schoolcard. In my area the schools cannot tell me how many people have applied for Schoolcard. The school council I am on cannot tell me how many students have applied for Schoolcard because of the problems going through the red tape with the various bureaucracies. They do not know how many Schoolcard holders will be attending their school. I refer to one gentleman who rang me the other day who is on a veterans affairs pension. He contacted the department and was not able to be given advice on whether he was entitled to apply for Schoolcard for his children because he did not have a health care card. He has had to go through another hurdle and get a health care card in addition to his veterans affairs pension card. All this was changed without proper advice to him and other people in his circumstances. Generally it has been a problem for families in the electorate who want to get Schoolcard. It is a problem for the schools because they do not know what is happening.

Close to the electorate of Kaurna, the Christies Beach High School West campus has been vacated. I thank the Minister for the advice that a number of agencies will be placed on that campus, namely, the Southern Support Service, the Fleurieu Southern Range and Southern Vales District Office, the Children's Services Office (formerly at Morphet Vale), the Behaviour Support Unit at Aberfoyle Park and the Bowden/Brompton Community School (formerly at Aberfoyle Park). It is fantastic that these public facilities will continue to be used, but I am concerned that the Behaviour Support Unit and the Bowden/Brompton Community School, previously at Aberfoyle Park, have not yet been reopened, so for the first term of this year students and schools benefiting from the support services they provided have not been able to get that support and I gather there have been problems in the schools as a result of that because children who previously could be removed from the school and put in one of these units now have to stay in the school with inadequate levels of support being provided to them.

In addition to those concerns about the west campus of Christies Beach, I also raise the concern I have about the open space adjacent to that school. I hope at some stage the Minister can clarify what is planned to happen with that space, currently used by local cricket clubs for sporting purposes. I understand the Government is considering selling that land. That would be a disaster for the local community in that suburb as there is not a great deal of open space. What is there is needed and I know the community will fight vigorously to have it retained and I certainly will support them in their cause.

On another educational issue, I refer to the building trades course. I have been informed by a constituent who tried to enrol his son in that course that he was told that he now had to attend Gilles Plains. That was the closest venue for people to undertake a building trades course. In the past I understand it used to be at the O'Halloran Hill TAFE, which has been closed down and constituents in the southern suburbs, whose unemployment rates I have previously given the House, will

now have to travel to Gilles Plains if they want to undertake that course, which is a great inconvenience and a greater cost because of the travel arrangements involved.

The final issue in terms of education is my great concern that the southern suburbs be notified relatively soon about the Government's intention about a vocational school in the southern suburbs. I and the members for Reynell and Mawson have been lobbying hard for the Minister to agree to this happening and to place it on the Christies Beach West campus, which is ideally located in terms of proximity to transport, TAFE, other schools and industry. I am glad the Minister is here and again commend that site to him and I hope he makes up his mind about it soon as I know the people in the electorate are interested in it.

I will briefly talk about health issues, in particular mental health issues. Just before Christmas I had a number of phone calls from a woman elector who was deeply concerned about her son, who was having some sort of mental health trauma. He was 17 or 18 years of age. She attempted to find help in the public health system for this boy and every place she turned to told her they were the inappropriate authority. She went to hospitals, agencies, and public and private instrumentalities to get help, but in each case they said, 'We can't help—you need to go somewhere else.' She rang me in frustration at her inability to get help. She had even been waiting for a locum to turn up to provide an injection to calm her son down for the evening. She had rung at five or six o'clock in the afternoon and the locum did not turn up until midnight and the boy was exhibiting very aggressive behaviour and was somewhat suicidal. He had spent one night in Glenside and was asked to leave because he was considered to be not a mental health patient but a person with a behavioural problem.

There is a real hole in the mental health services for people who cannot be neatly placed into categories. I would very earnestly ask the Government to consider funding something which cuts across and which specifically deals with young people who may have not quite the classic mental health profile but certainly have problems—some of them might be behavioural problems and some of them might be mental problems. In that regard, I was disappointed to read in the local Messenger that a mental health program for people in the southern suburbs called 'Out of the Blues' has been axed in South Australia. The article states:

Southern Youth Junction manager Chris Halsey said. . . 'The service was very responsive, our counsellors can receive advice over the phone,' she said.

'Out of the Blues staff were even prepared to talk to young clients over the phone and often arranged to see them within 24 hours.'

That is what is needed; that is, something which is responsive and which is designed specifically for young people and which can get into the household and help young people sort out the problems and help their families. I know that there are great needs in that area.

I also refer in the general health area to the problems with dental health issues. I know many members will have received, as I have, complaints from constituents who have tried to get appointments to have health work done on their teeth to be told that there is a waiting list of 6, 12, 18 months—and this is people needing dentures or emergency treatment. I have a file—which I will not go through today but I may at another time—of constituents who have contacted me about great problems in the dental health service. I do not blame the clinicians who run the service. I

know they are run off their feet. Clearly, not enough funding is being provided in this area.

The Minister for Human Services has blamed the Federal Government—and it is certainly true that the Federal Government has cut funding completely for dental health services, which is a great shame—and the State Government is refusing to pick up the tab. I understand their political point: if it picks up everything the Commonwealth Government cuts back, then it will end up picking up a lot of programs. However, it seems to me that in the area of dental health there is a great need and I would certainly encourage the Government to review its commitment and to look at working through the problems so that people who are suffering in this area can get help.

The final issue about which I want to talk in the few minutes remaining is the issue of housing. I know that over the past three or four months I have had many constituents approach my office with housing problems. I have only been a member for just over 12 months and I am amazed by the absolute increase in problems in getting access to accommodation that have been demonstrated over the past few months. Certainly, it is almost impossible to get Housing Trust accommodation unless you have been on the list for a very long time. I have had families with three children, both parents out of work and with disabilities who have virtually been thrown out onto the street and who have not been able to get any emergency or short-term accommodation. I do not blame the Housing Trust for that. I know it is short strapped.

The private agencies are all full and the general marketplace is overheated. Certainly, private rental accommodation is not very easily available at the lower end of the market, which is something that people who are unemployed or who are on some sort of pension require. I am not sure what the answer is to this. It is certainly true that the amount of public housing provided by Government has been reduced. It is all very well to spend money doing up houses to make them better for people—and I certainly support that—but the Government is not providing public housing. In South Australia we have a long history of the provision of public housing which has given this State a very good security net for ordinary citizens.

I think it is absolutely dreadful that ordinary people are now struggling to get accommodation—people at the poorer end of the spectrum and many of the people whom I mentioned previously who are unemployed in my electorate and other places who cannot get accommodation through public or private means. This is a very serious social issue that the Government should address seriously.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake):** I support the Government's Supply Bill. I will talk about how the government allocates its money to the Environment Protection Agency. A firm that resides within my electorate is called Mason and Cox. It is a foundry that undertakes a lot of work and employs a number of people in my electorate. Unfortunately, because of the contradiction we have in zoning laws in this State, it means that a company situated in an industrial zone which borders a residential zone can emanate decibel levels higher than what is allowed to be produced in residential zones. The reality is that a factory can be situated on the border of an industrial zone and on the other side of the street there is a residential zone. That industry can produce massive decibel levels, above 70 decibels, which emanate into the residential zone but, because that level of noise is produced within the industrial zone, local residents do not have any recourse.

I have endeavoured many times to get the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate this matter. Unfortunately, I have found that the EPA has let down my constituents and the western suburbs a great deal. One of the organising committees of the Mason and Cox Environmental Group is called the Flinders Park East Residential Environmental Impact Committee, the chairperson being Vicki Cheshire—and of course John Keeley. The residents wrote to the Hon. Mrs Kotz on a number of occasions but have received very little satisfaction. I will give an example of the Government's inaction. In a response to a letter from the resident's group the Hon. Dorothy Kotz said:

Thank you for your letter dated 28 October 1998 concerning noise and air pollution from the Mason and Cox steel foundry.

It is with disappointment that I read your ongoing concerns that the Mason and Cox foundry is causing a negative effect on your lives.

That is very nice, thank you, Minister. Further:

With regard to allegations of leakage to the stormwater system, the EPA has contacted the West Torrens Council officers concerned and I am informed that material swept into a nearby drain was water from the previous night's downpour. Notwithstanding this information, the EPA does not encourage this activity.

That is very important. The Minister continues:

Mason and Cox management has been informed of the concern and advised to establish an environmental management plan for submission to relevant agencies for support.

That letter was dated 15 January 1999. The Minister is claiming that the EPA has told them that the run off from the factory was from the previous night's rainfall. But, on investigation (as outlined in a letter to the Minister from the Flinders Park East Residential Environment Impact Committee), the rainfall between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. was as follows: 11 a.m. to 12 noon, 1.8 millimetres; 12 noon to 2 p.m., 6.4 millimetres; 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., .8 millimetres; 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., 1.6 millimetres; and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., 2 millimetres. The letter continues:

Note that no rain was recorded after the 4 p.m. time bracket from 19 May until after the inspection between 10-11 a.m. on 20 May.

This information refutes your explanation that this was rainwater from the previous night's downpour, Minister. Rainwater is also not coloured as witnessed on that day [verify].

We find the attempt by the EPA, West Torrens Council and Mason and Cox to dismiss this evidence of the residents' group a blatant example of negligence. This is a betrayal of the environment and the residents' concerns regarding industry in our area.

A representative of Mason and Cox at the time of the incident stated that the liquid was being swept into a holding tank. This was not true.

The human resources officer from Mason and Cox told the press that the liquid was being swept away from the drain. This was not true.

The environment officer from the West Torrens Council, who was present when the offence occurred, told the press that the reply from the human resources officer was satisfactory, and accepted by the council.

The residents obviously are not satisfied with this response. The letter continues:

Minister, your sources state that the liquid was being swept into the stormwater drain, however it was rainwater from the previous night's downpour. This is also untrue.

This ever-changing excuse regarding pollution entering the River Torrens is transparent. How many other instances have occurred that were unseen?

I have seen myself a yellow film form on the lawn and on the cars of residents living nearby the foundry. I contacted the EPA to come and get a sample—and it has to be an accurate sample. I cannot take a sample and give it to the EPA, because I will be accused of tampering with it.

The EPA has to come out and do an independent analysis of the material, collect it itself and then calculate whether it is a pollutant. Unfortunately, the EPA did not attend on that night. Of course, the next day's rainfall washed that yellow film—whatever it was—into the River Torrens. The letter continues:

On a previous tour, a member of this committee saw a tank containing some form of chemical leaking into a stormwater drain. When queried about this, a Mason and Cox representative said that this must just have occurred. This was untrue, as there were both stains on the concrete leading down into the drain. Environmental officers, from both councils, also witnessed this.

Consultation between local and State Governments, residents and industry to address these issues are not achieving outcomes. Noise and air pollution from Mason and Cox has increased over the past few years, even though consultation started in earnest in 1996. Meetings at the foundry only served to quieten the issues by placating residents, on a temporary basis. We [that is, the committee and myself] see this as ongoing stalling tactics that only serve the industry. A list of what has been achieved purely in the interests of the residents is tiny, they have:

1. removed speed humps on the residents' side of the buildings; and
2. placed a muffler on one machine that was installed in 1997. This machine was considerably louder than existing exhausts. It took half a year for this to happen.

The general steel foundry clangs and bangs, and machinery noises still go on, but now 24 hours a day! When we started consultation, they at least closed down at night.

The smells are a constant problem. Houses are irregularly inundated with a bakelite smell that is really abhorrent.

I have witnessed this myself first-hand. It continues:

Due to the nature of air currents and production times, this is not a regular thing.

But it spreads throughout the electorate. It continues:

We cannot say that the smell will be at a given location and time, we do know that it is a constant issue of concern for residents.

All industry is looking to maximise production. This means aiming for full production 24 hours per day. Is this what you wish upon us, Minister? Because they hold a one-hour lip-service meeting every so often they are seen as complying.

However, of course, the company is not and the residents do not agree. It continues:

We do agree that the financial responsibility should not rest solely with Mason and Cox.

They are saying that they believe this foundry, which is technically operating within the law, employing South Australians in much needed jobs, should receive some Government assistance to clean up its problems. Indeed, we believe that, if there was no Government assistance, we would never see an end to the problem. The letter continues:

We all have a right to expect financial assistance from both State and Federal Governments to minimise the impact on our lives.

It is the State and Federal legislation that discriminates so terribly against the residents. Noise levels are measured in the yards of our homes and are deemed okay if not exceeding 70 decibels (for a substantial period of time). This is not fair, it is neglect by the governing bodies to uphold a duty of care regarding our lives. Residents here live with industrial levels of smells and noises, which has been proven to lower the quality of good health. Many residents have succumbed to serious health problems. We believe this is related to their immunity being lowered because of the constant bad smells and startling noises.

It is very hard to give substantive proof to these claims and allegations. One only has to look at the incidence of disease in Flinders Park to see that it is higher than the average in the western suburbs. Something is going on. It continues:

Testing of rainwater tanks was done in 1998 on a day after torrential downpour. We request that further testing be done, on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, that has not occurred. It continues:

We can't see that residents' moving from the area is a solution. Many residents have just purchased or are building new homes in Riverpark Estate at Allenby Gardens; many have lived there for 30 years or more. We certainly would think it expensive to relocate whole suburbs; and what would we then do with the ghost towns of Flinders Park East, Torrensville, Allenby Gardens and West Hindmarsh?

The community [and the residents] is tired of the bias evident in the correspondence from the EPA and Government departments. We have given your [Minister Kotz's] department every opportunity to do something constructive about this problem. Testing which supports pollution by industry is environmental vandalism. Your department must accept responsibility for the mistake of allowing industry to operate so close to residents. We are innocent victims of pollution in this area. We have had enough. This blind faith in lies told by industry and councils has to stop. We see this as a dereliction of duty on your behalf, Minister. The attitude of the EPA and local government representatives has become a cause for complaint.

It has been a directive of this committee not to advocate media publicity regarding the inconsistencies dealing with industrial pollution.

Might I say that that was on my request. I do not want to get publicity in relation to fighting the Government and Mason and Cox on this environmental vandalism. I do not want to jeopardise home values in Flinders Park. I do not want people thinking Flinders Park is some sort of toxic waste dump for irresponsible industrialists. However, I want to say that this committee has behaved very much within the law. It has behaved conscious of the fact that people who are employed at this foundry require work in this State, that we have such a high unemployment rate and this Government has done so little to provide employment for those from factories that have shut down. The residents do not want to see the foundry shut down and the workers lose their jobs; they want to see it relocated to an adequate site away from residential areas. They asked that the Minister respond.

The Minister's responses are very interesting. Every time I request that the EPA come out and inspect a site, it does not come. It talks about lack of funding or having only two or three vehicles that can adequately check an area or take samples. I have offered the EPA to hire an independent group to come along and take samples, and hand them to the EPA. The EPA has said that it could not use this as an adequate testing method, that it wanted to take samples itself. Of course, the reality is that Mason and Cox will not call my office and say, 'Okay, ring up the EPA. We are starting a new system now. Pollutants will be running into the Torrens. Get the sample today,' or, 'Yes, we will be doing a lot of work today. The doors will be open and huge decibel levels will be emanating into the residential zone, come take a reading today.' By the time the residents call my office and say, 'It's happening again' and I call the EPA, the EPA might come 24 hours later. The company has got onto this, because the EPA's budget has been slashed and burned by this Government.

This is occurring in a world where every school child is taught to look after the environment, and recycle and reuse old pieces of paper. The Minister actually sent me a video today on cleaning up Australia. The hypocrisy of this Government is immense. This Minister sits in her chair pretending to be the Minister for the Environment. The only environment she is looking after is the Government's. Members opposite are not interested in residents living around industry. It is a crying shame that this Government does not tackle these issues and concerns. It was elected to Government, even though it is a minority Government, to look after the interests of all South Australians, not just the ones in marginal Liberal seats.

In her response, the Minister started off with a lot of glib remarks about how concerned she is about air pollution and how disappointed she is, and she referred to her ongoing concerns. However, there is one way for the Minister to fix this: to increase funding to the EPA and make sure that the EPA has all the resources it needs to tackle environmental vandals. The River Torrens is one of our greatest assets and we are always talking about—

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes. We are always talking about tourism events in the city, having Opera in the Park near the River Torrens and encouraging our children to use the rolling River Torrens, yet we have companies in the western suburbs that are pouring pure pollution into the river. But this Government sits back with its hands under its bum and does absolutely nothing. The Yarra is cleaner than the River Torrens. Indeed, I would rather swim in New York harbour than in the River Torrens but this Government is just not interested.

The Minister says she is informed that the South Australian Health Commission has undertaken a rain water sampling program following health concerns raised by local residents living near Mason and Cox. In a recent letter from the SAHC, she claims, based on current relevant guidelines for drinking water, the results of the study do not highlight a cause for health concern. I am a simple lad and I was raised in a simple home but, when I see black water being pumped into the River Torrens, no-one can tell me that it is healthy for drinking. When I see basically yellow snowfall from this foundry landing on cars and parks near the River Torrens, landing on people's roofs and being washed into people's rainwater tanks, how can the Government tell me that such material is safe for human consumption?

I know that Adelaide water is a complete food, but this goes beyond a joke, especially as the Government has done little about it. The reason why the Minister is doing nothing about this is that she is incompetent. I do not believe that the Minister has the guts to take on a company such as Mason and Cox. I do not think she even has the inclination to do what is right by the residents of the western suburbs because, frankly, these people reside in a Labor seat. That is all I can put it down to. Any other Minister who has any inkling of responsibility for her portfolio would say, 'Hang on, what is going on here is wrong. I do not care where it is; let us do something about it.'

It seems that it is in Labor seats that the schools are being closed, the speed cameras are located, the police stations are being closed and the industrial pollution is occurring. If a foundry was polluting the suburb of Burnside, I am sure that the Government would have acted immediately to compensate it and move it to one of our seats.

**The Hon. G.A. Ingerson:** We did not lose \$3 billion like you—

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Sitting on the backbench where you are, I would be very quiet, but that is another issue altogether. I hear you will not be here for much longer; I hear you will be retiring soon, but I will miss you and be sad to see you go, as you are such an easy target. As I said earlier, this is a classic example of the Government's breaking down its procedure. It has slashed the EPA budget and the EPA cannot do its job. The EPA gives glib answers and dances around the issue, and then the Government turns to the EPA and says, 'Everything is fine.' I urge the Government and the Minister to please increase funding to the EPA, to make it not a toothless tiger but effective.

Environmental vandalism will be the great crime of the twenty-first century: our children will judge us on how we act in relation to the environment today. It is our duty and responsibility to do everything we can to make sure that we provide a safe environment for all South Australians.

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** The Supply debate is an appropriate time to address what I see as the failure of this Government to concentrate on governing as a result of its myopic obsession with the sale of ETSA. Having been in this House now for some 15 months, I am disturbed to have heard repeatedly in Question Time the Government's fixation—obsession—with ETSA. In my opinion, it has led this Government to the position where it has not governed in a proper form for the past 15 months.

The Premier latched onto ETSA some 15 months ago when he betrayed his undertakings and promises to the people of South Australia at the last election. The Premier was constantly under pressure from within his own ranks. His position was under pressure and I can only assume that he believed that this was to be his saviour, that this was to move on his political agenda and, as we heard today in Question Time, give him his place in history. So, with all the problems besetting South Australia, all the challenges we face and all the opportunities we have, none of them has had the proper attention of this Government for 15 months. This Government has been absolutely obsessed with ETSA. Question Time is the clearest indication of this. It saddens me, not simply as a member of the Opposition but as a South Australian, to see how little else has occupied the attention of the Government. Like most people suffering from an illness, an obsession or an addiction, the Government lacks insight into its own condition.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** That is right; as the member for Peake says, it is in denial. It is delusional. The simple truth is this: despite its obsession with ETSA, the Parliament will not let the Government sell it; the Parliament does not want the Government to sell it; and the people of South Australia do not want the Government to sell it. It is time for the Government to get the message and move on. It is time to move on to governing South Australia and addressing some other issues around the place. What happens is this: the Government is obsessed with ETSA. Parliament will not let the Government sell ETSA and the people will not let the Government sell it, and the Government is so obsessional about it and can think of so little else that it is in denial about the actual situation out there. The Government thinks it is going to name a tax after Mike Rann. It will impose it on people so that the people will be angry at us. This mob opposite is delusional.

I turn to some of the other issues that the Government has been simply unable to address. While the Government has been treating the people of South Australia as if they are idiots and do not know what they are talking about, claiming that they have got it wrong and that, even though 70 per cent or 80 per cent of them do not want to sell ETSA, it is because they do not know what is good for them, it has not had its mind on the game. I refer simply to the matter raised in Question Time today, the quarter of a billion dollars to be spent on the Government radio network. I do not know who in Government has been managing this project since 1994, but we now have a Government that is committed with remarkably little thought and no planning, and a report on this issue which says that the Premier misled Parliament. At the

very best, it could be described as an absolutely monumental, colossal stuff-up involving a contract worth a quarter of a billion dollars, and this Government just proceeds.

When is someone going to stop and say, 'Hang on, have we really gone too far in committing ourselves to paying a quarter of a billion dollars for something that has real question marks over its efficacy and use'? We have seen the CFS release consultants' reports suggesting that they are not sure that this quarter of a billion dollar radio network will serve the purposes. We have seen the documents attached to the Cramond report that indicate there might be fights with trade unions when they try to outsource all the radio network. Has any member of the Government sat back and asked, 'Are we spending a quarter of a billion dollars wisely here?' No, they have not. They are too busy with their obsession about the sale of ETSA, which leads them back to their other obsession, that is, that they cannot govern because of Labor and the State Bank. During Question Time today, we heard from the Premier that he cannot govern South Australia because Labor lost money on the State Bank.

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

**Mr CONLON:** And the member for Bragg says it is true. Well, give up and get out of the place. Call an election, and we will give you a Government that can govern. If this Government cannot govern after six years of trying, it should give up.

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

**Mr CONLON:** We got rid of you, Graham, and we will get rid of the rest of you. If you cannot govern, give it away.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Mr CONLON:** The member for Bragg has let the cat out of the bag. He said, 'We can't govern because of Labor and the State Bank.' I say again: give it away. We will happily take it over for you. It is not a sufficiently good answer to the people of South Australia, who elect the Government and who pay the Ministers' wages, to say, 'It is too hard: Labor and the State Bank made it too hard for us.' It is a disgraceful position.

**Mr Condous:** What you did to the State is a disgrace.

**Mr CONLON:** Here we go. Again, as I said, the members on the Government benches are delusional about it. They have their obsession, they lack insight into their condition and all they can see is the problems they have. My electorate has a number of problems that could be well addressed by the supply of infrastructure funding. I will never receive that unless we let the Government sell ETSA, apparently. We need schools, kindergartens and funding in my electorate. But this Government says, on this one issue, that it cannot govern unless it gets to sell ETSA. The people of South Australia have listened to it for 15 months—

**An honourable member:** And they know—

**Mr CONLON:** Yes, they know it's true. You go to a referendum: you go to an election. We will see what is true. The simple truth is that the only people in South Australia who want to sell ETSA are members opposite. The only people in South Australia who want to sell ETSA are John Olsen and his Government.

*Mr Condous interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** I won't be there! The member for Colton suggests that I will not be there at the next election. Were betting not illegal, I would like to get on with him as to who will not be in this Chamber next time.

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

**Mr CONLON:** The member for Bragg says, 'We will still be here.' I can see how well he is travelling. I sometimes suspect that the member for Bragg was elected to this Parliament only because the frightened community thought that he would be less of a danger to them in here than dispensing medicines.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will return to the Supply Bill.

**The Hon. G.A. Ingerson:** At least I didn't fail—

**Mr CONLON:** The member for Bragg is attempting to mislead the Parliament with his interjection. I have a first class honours in law, and I would be happy to show it to the honourable member any time he would like—and a few other things. I will not go on; I do not like to brag.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will return to the Supply Bill before the House and other members will cease to interject.

**Mr CONLON:** As I said, this Government has to stop using as an excuse events of six years ago. Whether it likes it or not, it has the responsibility to govern. Whether it likes it or not, the Parliament, elected by the people of South Australia, will not let it sell ETSA. Whether it likes it or not, the people of South Australia do not want the Government to sell ETSA: they want the Government to keep its word. Whether it likes that or not, in all those circumstances, and despite our best efforts at the last election, it is still the Government and it has a responsibility to govern, regardless of the fact that the member for Bragg does not believe that it is able to.

Those are the few short points that I want to make on this matter. I was provoked into being more angry than I would like to be, because I would like to make a reasoned contribution to this debate and plead with the Government to get its mind back on the job. Denial, delusion and obsession are not a substitute for public policy.

As I have said before, at the southern end of my electorate there is a rise near Flinders University, and I was there recently for a service. It was a lovely day and I had a very good view from there. I could look north, west and south and get a good view of our gulf. When I was there, I was struck by the marvellous opportunities that we have in this State if we get our mind on the job and if we provide good government. I thought of the aquaculture to the west, the Barossa Valley to the north and, further north, our mineral wealth. It struck me then that all that the people of South Australia ask for is some good government, and I plead with this Government to lift its eyes off its obsession with ETSA and blaming the ALP for the things it cannot do and give the people of South Australia what they deserve.

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** There are a number of issues that I would like to cover tonight. I begin by reflecting on the events of today. The Government today announced a tax that it would like the public of South Australia to believe is an ETSA tax. It is a very deceitful move by the Government but, on this issue, that would surprise no-one. The Government in a press release today said that it has decided that it needs to raise \$100 million to fill a black hole and it will be called an ETSA tax.

A number of things need to be considered when we look at this issue of the ETSA tax and whether or not it is required. The first thing one needs to do is to assess whether, indeed, there is a budget black hole. On the night when the budget was delivered, the Treasurer made the statement that there was a black hole of between \$100 million and \$150 million

in the budget forward estimates. That night, during a debate that I had with the Treasurer on Channel 9 on *Lateline*, I asked the Treasurer to show me where the black hole was in the budget papers, because I could not find it. His response to me was, 'It is in there.' I showed him the Budget Statement, Budget Paper 2, which one would have thought was the appropriate document in which to find such a black hole, and he said, 'No, it is not in that document: it is in another one. There are four budget documents.' I said, 'Treasurer, if you think that, you have not read your own budget papers very closely.'

The next day, of course, the Premier tried to tell us that it was, indeed, in the Budget Statement, Budget Paper 2, so the Treasurer's comment that it was in one of the other documents was simply not correct. The Premier that day told us to look at page 2-13. On that page there is a note under 'Reconciliation Statement—Underlying Deficit, Non-commercial Sector' which simply states: 'Above estimates are net of any premium on asset sales.' In small print, a notation amongst hundreds of detailed budget papers, this is the so-called reference to the black hole. If that is the way the Government presents its budget papers—'Take us on trust: somewhere in the forward estimates, in years three and four of the four year budget cycle, there is a \$100 million to \$150 million black hole'—and if it thinks that we or the public or, indeed, commentators would accept that as an explanation, clearly, it is wrong and we do not—and very few have done so. In any budget formulation process of forward estimates you cannot get away with publishing a gap in your forward estimates not matched by income or expenditure. That was tactic number one.

Then about a year ago there was another little episode along the trail. The then Minister for Emergency Services (the present Minister for Industry) released a document titled *Funding Arrangements for Emergency Services in South Australia: the Community Emergency Services Fund*. That document canvasses a whole regime of raising new money to fund our emergency services, in particular MFS, CFS, State Emergency Fund and those functions of SAPOL that are related to emergency services. For those members who are not aware, a vast bulk of the funding of those agencies presently comes from insurance companies and local councils, as I understand it, via various levy arrangements. Through that document the Government is arguing that you broaden the base and all people who possess property, be it fixed or mobile property, will pay a contribution towards this fund. That fund was expected to bring in about \$80 million according to Government estimates—a figure which, I must say, is considerably more than what is currently raised via the levy system. Again, in round numbers, it is probably about \$15 million or more above what we currently receive.

But that document goes further. It states that if funding for the computer-aided dispatch and SAPOL and emergency services component of the Government radio network were required from the fund an extra \$30 million dollars per annum would be raised bringing the total to \$110 million. The Government is saying that this thing called the Government radio network must be funded but that it is not able to pay for it out of the normal budget cycle.

I hope the member for Colton is listening because I remember hearing him on radio at the time. He was one Liberal member who was very angered by the prospect of a poll tax or a property levy being put on homes, boats, trailers and whatever else. I remember the member for Colton on



radio. My recollection is that he was hostile to the notion of this tax.

Well, over the course of the past year, the Government has gone quiet on what had been floated as a \$100 million plus levy. We are discovering that a new tax has emerged. The emergency services levy or the poll tax has gone. All of a sudden, bubbling to the top, is a thing called the ETSA tax. Funny about that. I have no doubt that we will still see a property tax because my information is that the State Treasury office is working very hard on preparing to implement that tax from 1 July. But I will let members into this little secret: it will not be a \$100 million; it will be a lot less.

The Government's plan is to have us believe that this ETSA tax is an ETSA tax when, obviously, it is a tax designed to replace, in large part, the Government's earlier thought of a poll tax. One has to ask the question: why is the Government doing this? The Government would have us believe that its budgetary pressures are such that the black hole must be plugged. As I said, it is my view and the assessment of many that a black hole does not exist. Indeed, when looking at State budget papers the Auditor-General said that a shortfall, if any—to use his words—was between \$35 million and \$65 million, not the \$100 million that this Government today announced, and certainly not \$150 million that the Treasurer himself announced less than a year ago.

Certainly, in the out years there is a bit of movement and that is not uncommon. It is very difficult for any Government to predict revenue, income and expenditure precisely in those out years, and that is reflected in the comments of the Auditor-General. It is wrong and improper for this Government to suggest that there is a gaping hole of \$150 million. There is one gap in its budget—and this is the point I will get to—where the emergency services levy floated a year ago and the ETSA tax released today come together, and that is in large part to fund the Government radio network contract (GRNC). It has been referred to in this place as the Motorola contract but, in fairness to Motorola, it is but a component of the contract. The larger component of that contract is—

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

**Mr FOLEY:** I am not changing tack at all. I understand that the Motorola component is \$70 million to \$80 million; it could even be less. Telstra holds the head contract and a lot of other contractors are involved. We will call it the Government radio network contract. That has blown out from \$100 million in the original estimation, and it was only in February last year Minister Evans said that it was around \$120 million. The latest estimate by Minister Lawson is that it will be \$250 million and, no doubt, still climbing—as these things always do.

The problem for this Government is that it has not accounted for it in its forward estimates. It has a funding crisis and it does need to be addressed, but it is one of its own making. The Premier today tried to tell us that, in fact, it is fully accounted for in the budget papers; that it is in the budget papers. Well, show us, Premier. I did a little more work today and I went to the capital works budget. And, you know, the Premier is right: it is mentioned in the budget—and here I was saying that it was not. It states:

New fixed asset expenditure: provision for a Government radio network and computer-aided dispatch system that will be of significant benefit to the emergency services levy.

The Premier was right. If I go to the capital works statement, on page 1 it states, 'Provision for a Government radio

network and computer-aided dispatch system that will be of significant benefit to the emergency services levy.'

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

**Mr FOLEY:** No, I am not being cynical: I am being honest. I thought, 'Gee, it must be in there.' But guess what? As I flick through page after page, line after line, document after document, I cannot find \$250 million budgeted for anywhere. That is not to say that somewhere in the budget there is not some allocation by agency, but there is not \$250 million allocated in this budget for the Government radio network contract—not that I can see.

Indeed, we were so concerned about that, the member for Elder during the Estimates Committees and the passage of the budget asked Minister after Minister, 'Where in your budget is an allocation for the Government radio network contract?' The stock standard reply was, 'We have not signed the contract. We have not decided whether we will lease it or buy it. We do not know exactly the size or scope, so it is not in there.'

We could not find a Minister to tell us where the radio network was budgeted for in the budget papers. Not content with that, the members for Elizabeth and Reynell on the Public Works Committee have been asking questions of public servants who come before the committee on that issue. Public servants are saying, 'We do not have an extra supplement for it. We are told it will be cost neutral to the agency.' Therefore, it will be one of these magical appropriations from Treasury, a sort of central agency top up which all Governments from time to time tend to do.

I have to say that a \$250 million supplement is a doozey, it is a ripper, and I look forward to seeing how that is explained away in the budget coming down in May. Clearly, there is not adequate provisioning for the radio network in this budget document; there is not in the out years; the Government has not put it in. A year ago the Government's solution was to bring in the property tax, the emergency services levy. It has come up with what it thinks is a clever political ploy: 'Let us call it an ETSA tax. Let us use this as a battering ram against the Labor Party.'

Like everything with this Government, not only with the ETSA debate, as you peel back and work your way through these issues and the fabric comes apart, there is no substance to the Government's position. I simply say that any requirement to raise taxes is your call, it is your doing and it is to fund your financial mistakes. It is to fund your Government's financial mistakes. Sure, you can keep blaming the Labor Party—you have been doing it for six years.

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

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Bragg says he will keep on doing it—no doubt you will. If you thought that that issue was biting with the electorate, I suspect that the events of late 1997—the last State election—will show you that the public have had enough of blame when it comes to issues of the past. I simply say, as I said at a press conference at 3 p.m. today, the Labor Party will strike back on this issue because we are going to make the public understand that any increase in taxation is of the Government's own making, to fund the Government's own financial mismanagement. It is not about ETSA or about Governments past but about this Government. This Government has to realise that at some stage it has to start being accountable for its own actions. You have to be accountable for your own mistakes. You have to wear the problems created within Government through your own incompetence and your own mismanagement. That comes with being in Government. You just cannot blame everyone

else, blame other people and wish for the future that things will sort themselves out. You have to take responsibility—not a novel thing but a reality. That is something this Government has great difficulty in doing.

Today will be a defining moment, a day on which people will realise the level of financial mismanagement and in some part incompetence and down right bad public policy that this Government has been about for many years. As I listed today, there is many an example. A radio network system is now exceeding one quarter of a billion dollars—a \$150 million blow out. As I somewhat whimsically said earlier, you could almost buy a half share in an Optus satellite for a cheaper price than what this radio network contract is turning out to cost. We have seen this Government lose \$15 million-plus on Australis.

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

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Bragg says that it is not as much as the Labor Party lost, and he is correct. I made the point today that the Labor Party has never walked away from its responsibility and accountability when it came to the State Bank. We suffered a massive electoral defeat and I, the Leader of the Opposition and our colleagues spent four long years in the last Parliament having to live with the reality of the mistakes of that Government and we have not walked away from that. But I tell you what: that does not give you the right or moral authority to walk into this place, strut about publicly and make mistake after mistake of your own doing, and the list is long. Some of them the member for Bragg knows only too well: the EDS building on North Terrace is at present half empty—an office building which on Treasury's own estimate, as tabled in this Parliament, has potential losses (and the worst case scenario is looking like the likely scenario) of up to \$30 million as we subsidise the rental on that building.

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

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Bragg says it is a tenth of this, a tenth of that. The mistakes and failures of the past do not give you the right to repeat those mistakes and to continually lose taxpayers' money. We can look at Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium, as the member for Bragg knows only too well: plenty of that is to come out and be known in this place. About \$30 million of taxpayers' money was found. In the middle of a budget cycle the Government could find \$30 million at the drop of a hat when it was at some meeting in Sydney. When soccer clubs can only average 4 000 people at Hindmarsh Stadium, we are going to have a stadium that can cater for 25 000 people. If you think it is better to spend \$30 million on a soccer stadium than spend \$30 million on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, sorry ex-Minister, you are terribly mistaken.

The list goes on: \$7.5 million for consultants for the outsourcing of SA Water, found at the drop of a hat; \$30 million plus allocated for the consultants to sell ETSA and Optima Energy, found at the drop of a hat; millions of dollars paid out to other consultants to prepare scoping studies, be it for the TAB, the lotteries or whatever. This Government has been able to find money when it has suited its political purposes. It has lost and wasted money and the bills are racking up. The average family in this State will have to pay \$186 and as high as \$500, not to cover any shortfall in ETSA, not to make up for any mistakes of past Labor Governments but to fund the financial mistakes of this Liberal Government. Today the Labor Party will strike back and make people realise that your financial mismanagement is what has caused people to have to pay this tax and which

has caused people to have this tax put upon them because you cannot balance your books. It is your mistake; it is John Olsen's tax.

**Ms KEY (Hanson):** In this debate I reluctantly support the Supply Bill. Labor Party members are obliged to support Supply Bills because of the history we have had in this area with the Liberal Government, particularly in 1975. I am surprised and concerned to see that the contributions from the other side are by way of interjections rather than by making speeches. I would have thought that this would be a good opportunity to raise issues rather than yelling at us while we are trying to make our contributions. I am surprised at the lack of input from the other side. I hope the Minister will make a speech that will cover the Government's position, rather than talking about things that happened more than seven years ago.

I also note that last year I asked what I thought was a perfectly reasonable question of Ministers in different portfolios, with the blessing of our Caucus, with regard to outsourcing of services and functions in departments for particular Ministers. Some shadow Ministers decided to ask the questions themselves. We asked for information with regard to outsourcing of contracts, what firms were awarded the contracts, what was the system of open tendering and the total value of the contracts for 1997 and 1998 and the estimated value of contracts for 1998-99. So far I have not had a response to any of these questions, so it makes it very difficult to comment on my areas of responsibility as a shadow Minister, certainly under the Government enterprises banner for industrial relations, youth affairs and assisting in multicultural and ethnic affairs. We receive information about the budget and information from time to time about how that money is prioritised and spent, but it puts the Opposition in a difficult position when for some reason the questions are not answered. Maybe the Ministers concerned do not know the answers or maybe it is not considered to be a reasonable question, I do not know.

Tonight I will look at the issue of Supply on two levels. First, I will look at the general portfolio areas for which I am responsible on this side as they directly affect the issue of financing in this State. Secondly, I will look at some specific issues in my own electorate which need to be raised in this forum. I referred previously in the industrial relations area to an open letter given to me, addressed to the Hon. Dr Michael Armitage, with regard to the proposed amendments to the industrial relations legislation. Although it may not seem directly relevant to a Supply debate, there are issues in here about employment which go to the core of not only my portfolio area but also the issue we are talking about: supposedly making South Australia a better place for South Australians.

I will quote just briefly from this document, Sir, because it may be that you do not agree with my interpretation of the importance of the issues that I want to raise. It is headed 'An open letter from South Australian university academics regarding proposed amendments to the industrial relations legislation' and states, in part:

Our main areas of concern are that:

- the hoped-for employment effects are unlikely—

they do not believe that they are likely if the incorporation of the Industrial Relations Bill is passed—

- the changes will result in greater inequity;
- they will damage the quality of social life in South Australia;

- they will undermine the hitherto constructive role of the Industrial Relations Commission;
- they will encourage those employers who wish to engage in exploitative contracts—

in fact they will be able to do that—

- they will inhibit employees' capacity to join unions; and
- the elimination of unfair dismissal redress for many employees is discriminatory and unfair.

In not wanting to test your patience, Sir, I will also refer—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am having difficulty in determining how the matters being raised by the honourable member relate to the Supply Bill and I ask her to come back to the provisions of the Bill.

**Ms KEY:** Thank you, Sir. The amendments proposed are based on the argument that is put forward by the Minister for Government Enterprises, that there will be an increase in employment especially amongst young people. This implies that there is a relationship between employment growth and changes to the regulation of industrial relations. I wonder what that connection really is, but probably for different reasons from you, Sir. There is little evidence that the shift to individual employment contracts, the removal of recourse to unfair dismissal provisions for many and the extension of junior rates for people and related measures will increase employment levels. There is no case for this. In a State which has enormous problems with unemployment, particularly for young people, and having very bad statistics quarter after quarter, I would argue that this is of significance to South Australians and also to the Supply Bill.

Professor Keith Hancock, who is an eminent South Australian economist, has looked at the supposed relationship between employment levels and the decentralisation of industrial relations systems both in Australia and internationally over the past 25 years. In a recent paper that he presented he argued that the decentralisation of industrial relations systems does not guarantee any increase in the number of jobs created and, in many cases, ensures that different groups of workers suffer greater inequality. This is Professor Hancock saying this, not me as the shadow Industrial Relations Minister. The document continues:

Reliance upon changes in labour market regulation to achieve employment growth is an unreliable and unproven remedy. Such changes often have the opposite effect to that which is intended. For example, a fall in wages for young people relative to others is more likely to result in labour market substitution of the young for the old, rather than net job creation. Such outcomes are often inefficient and inequitable. Similarly, there is no evidence that making unfair dismissal possible in smaller companies will create unemployment: indeed, evidence from the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (the most comprehensive survey we have to date) suggests that unfair dismissal regulation is a lower-order concern to small business in relation to hiring decisions.

One of the reasons for my raising those issues is that a number of wage claims are being made upon the Government at the moment—and certainly Minister Buckby would be well aware of the claims in the education area—from the State Public Service generally, and not to mention the firefighters, the ambulance employees and other workers who come under the umbrella of the State Public Service. This is a crucial issue for workers in this State and it is certainly important to the workers I have just mentioned who are covered by the State public sector or the Commissioner for Public Employment. Some of the questions that the Opposition asks may seem to be far from the main point but they are important issues that need to be addressed by this Government.

I now turn briefly to some of the issues in the electorate of Hanson which have been raised with me in the past year

and I think relate very strongly to the services and infrastructure that is available to the citizens of the Hanson electorate. First, the Ashford Special School has contacted me a number of times about its concern regarding the lack of action over a payment of an equitable school grant. This has been going on for quite some time—and Minister Buckby would probably understand what I am talking about here. Russell Heywood-Smith, the Chairperson of the School Council, has written to me to saying that he wrote to the Minister in August—I am assuming that is August last year—and was formally advised that his letter was receiving attention. The letter continues:

but the school has been advised informally by phone that the grant adjustment will not be paid for the 1997-98 financial year as expected following a meeting of the Special Schools Principals Association held on 27 February 1997 (a copy of minutes attached).

As I said, this has been going on for some time. It seems that the Ashford Special School will not receive a payment of \$15 000 at this time. I have tried to do some research into this area and I have to say that I found people in this area very unhelpful, which is unusual. Other schools coming under the banner of supplies grants to special schools have told me that they have also had problems in getting information about what assistance will be available for them in the next financial year. So, what is the Minister doing in relation to grants for special schools and, in this case, the Ashford Special School, which has some 85 students, some from the former Minda School and some from within the community? As members would probably know, the Ashford Special School provides a comprehensive program for students with various disabilities, some of them very severe.

Although this is a specific issue, I think it addresses the issue of supply in my area and I would like some answers to those problems as well. A number of issues arise in relation to the Camden Park area. My colleague the member for Peake raised the issue today of Mason and Cox, a foundry in the Flinders Park area. I have raised on a number of occasions issues concerning the Camden Park and Plympton areas in relation to environmental pollution, so I will not raise them in this debate. I merely say that I certainly endorse the call on the part of the member for Peake with regard to ensuring that the Environment Protection Agency has enough resources to ensure that it can operate effectively and also have a proper inspectorate so that many of the issues raised by the community can be adequately addressed. I will not say any more about that because I have been campaigning on that issue for a long time.

We have had a number of problems with resources in the Camden Park area, one of them being the Camden Park Community Centre which has been lobbying for 18 months to get funding for two more toilets in the community centre. I am pleased to say that the West Torrens Council and eventually FACS came to the call—a bit late in the piece, but did come to the call—so we now have some toilets for the aged pensioners who work and who participate in different recreational activities in that centre. Given all the different programs that centre provides, it can have from 60 to 100 people through it. Indeed, until recently, it had only one toilet to service all the people who used that centre, including staff and volunteers.

On Christmas Eve last year, people who lived in the Adelaide workmen's homes, the Thomas Elder Trust in the Richmond area, were told that they would have to vacate their premises. Some of them had been there since the 1940s, and they were quite disturbed to hear that they would be given a

couple of months' notice—in some cases, three months' notice—to evacuate their houses so that their houses could either be renovated or demolished, depending on the state of the house. Some 77 families and at least 150 people—and there may be more—were affected by this move. As has been mentioned before by members on this side of the House, housing is a quite serious issue in the electorate. Staff in the electorate office have told me that they spend a lot of time trying to assist people who have no housing at all.

Recently an Aboriginal woman in my electorate went to visit her traditional family up North and, when she came, she found that all her goods had been taken from the house. I found out that, if a house is abandoned—even for a legitimate reason—for longer than a couple of weeks, the Housing Trust takes the view that it has the responsibility to clear that house and to confiscate the belongings of the person. Although the Housing Trust is usually positive and supportive of the many constituents with whom it works, it took us about six weeks to rehouse this woman, who had experienced some mental illness, and to make sure that she got back some of her belongings. Fortunately the person from the Housing Trust who cleared the house put most of her possessions in the fridge, as it was worth more than a basic amount. Apparently, it is Housing Trust policy that, if there are goods of some financial worth, they are kept rather than taken to the dump. In this case, the only photos this woman had of her traditional family—and, unfortunately, she was stolen from her family—were in the fridge. In as much as it is a bizarre story, this is the level of concern that has been raised in the electorate office with regard to housing. The Adelaide workmen's homes debacle is just another example of that. This is a big problem that my office is trying to address.

There has been a lot of discussion about the Adelaide Airport in this House. The Adelaide Airport is right in the middle of the electorate of Hanson and, at the next election, it will be in the electorate of West Torrens. Despite the promises and the rhetoric we have heard time and again from the current member for Hindmarsh, we still do not have a curfew that is part of the legislation.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair again is having some difficulty in linking the comments being made by the member to the provisions of the Supply Bill. I would ask the member to consider the provisions of the Bill.

**Ms KEY:** Thank you, Sir. Adelaide Airport is a big issue in that area, and there is the most pressing issue of the curfew, along with environmental issues and stormwater runoff which the member for Peake has raised in this House. As far as I know, we still have not received any serious responses on those matters. There is some concern that, if there is a large rain downpour, Adelaide Airport and the area all around could be seriously flooded, and I am not talking about just a couple of inches. At this stage, I am not aware of any provisions to look at that issue. I may have missed the response, but at this stage we can see some serious infrastructure problems emanating from the lack of attention that has been paid in the western suburbs, particularly around the airport.

In summarising, it is important that we make a response to the Supply Bill. I am hoping the member for Hammond will make a contribution on this issue, because it is disgraceful that the only contributions we have had on this Bill since I have been in the Chamber have been by way of interjection. I would certainly like to hear contributions from members who had hard issues or problems in their own electorates. I am disappointed that that has not happened. We have a

serious problem, and I hope my comments will be addressed by the relevant Ministers, so that I can understand the silence so far.

#### DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before calling on the member for Hammond, the Chair recognises the presence of the Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives.

#### SUPPLY BILL

Debate resumed.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I also acknowledge that present in the Chamber this evening we have the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and it is a good many years since the Speaker of the House of Representatives has visited this Chamber, even though, I guess, the Federal Parliament *per se* more than anything else has its origins in the beliefs of many of the members of this Chamber of just over 100 years ago. It was in this Chamber that many of the high ideals which resulted in the formation of a federation of the then established colonies into one indissoluble federation arose. The last time was, I think, when Speaker McLeay, again from South Australia, visited this Chamber, and that must be about 40 years ago.

In any case, I am pleased to see the Hon. Neil Andrew here this evening. Whilst I am on the point, I indicate that this Parliament, which has the responsibility for the constitution of Government in South Australia, is a Parliament for which I fear. At present it does not seem to have as much control of its destiny as it ought to and, to that extent, I again repeat my belief that, unless this Parliament takes control of its destiny, both the Parliament and the State it serves will disappear and the Federation will disappear with it.

Let me explain that statement. As it stands at present, we constantly legislate by using template legislation to copy what is being done by every other State. That is not necessarily a bad thing if it relates to the uniform standards of either business conduct or citizens' behaviour in one form or another, but it does become a bad thing if it makes us so hide bound and if we do nothing that is innovative in the form of law that we would introduce.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair reminds the member that the debate relates to the provisions of the Supply Bill. There will be an opportunity later in the proceedings to have a broader debate.

**Mr LEWIS:** This, Sir, is precisely the point. Our Supply Bill for the State of South Australia provides revenue to all Government agencies and, in addition, to this Parliament. This Parliament depends upon the Government's willingness to give it money. At present, the services to backbenchers of this Parliament are inadequate. I am not talking about the amount of pay or allowances that we get as that is dealt with by independent tribunals. I am talking about what is provided through this Parliament to enable members to do their job competently, and whether or not they are competent to do the job is a matter for their electorates to determine one by one amongst us. But, as it stands, we appropriate revenue into the Government's hands and then as a Parliament go cap in hand to the Government for some of that revenue, which is to be spent in the provision of services required by us as individual members to contribute to the process of debating what the Government does, therefore, making legislation as well as

making sure that the Government is accountable to the people through the institution of Parliament.

I do not want to see this State disappear and I do want to see this Parliament take control of its own responsibilities for itself. It ought to do that separately from the appropriations made for the purpose of providing Government, and we should amend the Constitution in a way which prevents the Government from ever introducing a Bill to get Supply until and unless the Parliament itself has Supply. That will mean that Parliament becomes more open and accountable where its accounts are more easily understood by the journalists who report it and the public who hear about it or read it. That will enable them to understand that you cannot have a democracy unless, in the first instance, you have a Parliament through which it will function. It is impossible for us to have a true democracy. It is so inefficient for all of us to participate in making every decision about what law to introduce or what change to make to existing law, so what we do is to have a representative democracy whereby, through elections, the citizens delegate their authority to those of us who are elected to this place.

That delegated authority gives us the honour and responsibility of discharging their will. Without the Parliament, that cannot happen. I despair for the future of the State if we continue down the path that we have been going down in recent times where, since the time of Sir Thomas Playford, there has been a complete shift away from government through the Parliament to a point where it is now easily described as government by press release. There is a big difference. That is a very unfortunate change that has happened in consequence of a deliberate but gradual process during these past 30 or so years. It is time we called a halt to that. It is time we made it possible for the Parliament to do its work. It is time we ensured that citizens are properly represented here in the way in which legislation affects them and for the best interests of people who live in our climate, latitudes and State. What might be appropriate for us is not necessarily appropriate for people who live in Cairns or Darwin or, for that matter, Campbelltown in Tasmania. It is for those reasons that I make these remarks.

Let me now turn to another aspect of Government, that is, the responsibility it has, as it were, to nurture and encourage the development of enterprises which will provide employment for the citizens of our society. The South Australian Centre for Manufacturing, whilst coming from the former Labor Government, still exists today and provides such a nurturing role, but we have to decide, as a Parliament, where and when that nurturing role ought to cease and where private enterprise, once it has been nurtured sufficiently by the Government process of establishment and development of the availability of that service, pulls out so that private enterprise is allowed to go on with it. Government cannot continue to compete with private enterprise in any way sensibly because the risk is not the same and always it has the capacity to fall back on the taxpayers' guarantee and derive revenue from a Supply Bill of a kind we are debating here. No such situation can occur with private enterprise.

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

**Mr LEWIS:** I am pointing out that we are wasting money from the revenue we seek to appropriate through this Supply Bill by propping up an inefficient Government enterprise under the banner of the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing, which involves the production (and I am sure many

members have seen this if they have been to the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing) of models and other products from a sintering process. The South Australian Centre for Manufacturing does a very good job. Its intention, its philosophy and its purpose was to establish new businesses here and, once there was a critical mass of a market and the recognition that we had the skill and ability, it was intended to allow that to go into the private sector. But what has happened is that the staff of the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing have taken the view that it is their territory and they are now using the South Australian taxpayers to underwrite the risk and, indeed, to continue to enable them to cut prices to the point where they are not on full price recovery.

Let me read a letter that defines this. It comes from the owner of a company, Darrick Spaven, and the company's name is RPM Solutions Australia Pty Ltd. He says that he is writing to the Minister for Industry and Trade, and he did that late last year and set out the case, describing the competitive situation that existed between his company and the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing's advanced manufacturing facility, the AMF, which was originally a State Government initiative. The situation is being investigated by the Competitive Neutrality Committee of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and, from what I know of what happened there—and I do not know whether they were nits or whether they were nit-picking, or what happened—they did not do what they should have done. In his letter Mr Spaven says:

I thought it important to write you with my concerns regarding this situation. For your reference I have included a copy of my original complaint to the Premier. I have requested a full inquiry into the commercial viability of the AMF as I have considerable knowledge of unfair trading practices being used by them in order to maintain a monopoly in this industry at considerable expense to the [tax paying] community [of South Australia].

That is the tax paying community, from which we are appropriating the \$600 million. The letter continues:

Although we are proceeding with the investigation I am concerned that the AMF, through the consistent lowering of its prices, will cause my business and the market irrefutable damage prior to reaching an outcome.

He has weathered the storm thus far, but I do not know how much further he can go. The letter continues:

The AMF was initially set up to demonstrate leading edge technologies not available to South Australian companies.

This being the case, he asks why it was necessary for the AMF to purchase its second selective laser sintering machine. He says:

One could argue that it was unnecessary to purchase the second machine in order to demonstrate the technology. The second system purchased, at considerable expense to the community, has not operated properly since its installation in 1996.

I have checked his assertions and facts in every instance, and they are accurate; they are fact. He is not misrepresenting the case. He continues:

At the time that the second system was purchased the first piece of equipment was not even fully utilised. RPM currently offers very similar services to the AMF. Since we began to trade commercially in June of this year we have reduced the costs of services due to our increased efficiency and reduced overheads. The increased efficiency was passed onto our customers by reducing prices for our products and services. This was received well by the consumer and allowed companies to use the services—

They were companies which previously were not otherwise able to do so because of the high costs. He continues:

Since our inception the AMF have continued to drop their prices in order to compete.

That is, the Government sponsored body has been dropping its prices in order to compete. He continues:

They have not proportionally reduced their costs but rather have been assisted by State grants for capital equipment and used their association with the State Government in order to subsidise their commercial business. What concerns me personally as a taxpayer is that the South Australian community has funded the AMF through grants and operating expenses under the guise of assisting South Australian companies to become more competitive.

I remark to that: he is dead right and the AMF's argument for their continued funding is piffle. It continues:

while approximately 70 per cent of AMF's business is conducted with interstate companies.

So we, as South Australian taxpayers, are making products at a loss and selling them at a loss to interstate companies; not just a few, not just at the margin, but 70 per cent of the business at that time. He continues:

In all fairness, RPM also offers services to both South Australian and interstate companies but on the other hand it costs the Government nothing to provide.

The taxpayers do not make a contribution to RPM. He continues:

I believe that if you were to look at the charter for the AMF, and the submissions the SACFM [South Australian Centre for Manufacturing] have made to the Government for grants to purchase capital equipment, it would become obvious to you [the Minister] that the time has come to diffuse this technology—

to spread it out into the community. Indeed, the time has come for the South Australian Government to get out of this business. He continues:

Regardless of whether the AMF modify their current pricing strategies to fully recover their costs, they can never reach their stated objectives through the further application of this technology, as it is already now established and offered commercially by a private company within this State. In the past, I have endeavoured to have discussions with the SACFM in regards to the AMF, but as they are emotionally and personally attached to the outcome I believe they are unwilling to investigate the possibilities. During a previous discussion between SACFM and RPM board members, it was indicated that the AMF would need to double their turnover in order to just break even. We are now aware that they are offering services for up to half of what was being charged at that time [that they first met with commercial competition].

Now we can enter into competitive neutrality investigations and courtroom proceedings that in the end may put us out of business which I believe would be a great loss to the community and to the manufacturing industry in South Australia. Alternatively, we could meet to initiate the sharing of mutually beneficial scenarios that will further benefit the State, promote a new industry and allow us to reach our full potential.

Mr Spaven wrote that letter to the Minister hoping that he would have the opportunity to meet the Minister and outline his concerns. However, that has not happened. In my judgment, what the Minister's minders need to do is to get out of the way and allow the Minister to have an unfettered, objective consideration of this issue and resolve it once and for all so that the Government is not doing another State Bank, albeit on a much smaller scale.

There is no necessity for the Government to be engaged in a business where it is losing money so that it can directly compete with an enterprise that is already operating in the marketplace on a profitable basis. For us to continue to allow that to happen is a complete abrogation of our responsibilities under the competition policy (Hilmer) and it is also, as a Government, I say, a complete abrogation of the role and function of the Competitive Neutrality Unit in the Premier's department. If they cannot address and sort these matters out,

they should be sacked as well—not only the people in the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing who continue with this scurrilous cover-up but also the people who fail in their duty to make it plain to Ministers where this kind of thing is going on. If it is going on in one instance like this, God knows how many more of the \$600 million that we are appropriating today will be needed to continue to support it in other instances.

Not every instance of where this kind of thing happens comes to my attention, but I hope that, in consequence of my drawing the problem to the attention of the House this evening, some serious attempt is made by the unit within the Premier's own department to deal with it. It is not good enough to go on creating jobs at the expense of the taxpayer where, once the industry is established, once the type of enterprise is known to exist and is available on a competitive basis in South Australia, the job the Government set out to do has been done—QED.

The next matter to which I wish to draw attention and which I will continue to explain during the course of my grievance debate later this evening on this Bill relates to the way in which a small business engaging in providing training services as a broker in the job marketplace is being unfairly dumped upon by another Minister's department. It has met its reasonable obligations; yet it is being victimised. It is being told in a nitpicking fashion by a public servant that it is not doing its job. The department is finding fault with the services that are provided and it is terrible that it does not pay its bills. The firm will go broke. It did not start with a great amount of capital. The people who work there are working on goodwill to keep their business going, to keep their jobs alive, and the Government department responsible for training and the provision of payments to those people engaging in the brokering of the training arrangements is simply sitting on the money, yet we are appropriating another \$600 million for that purpose.

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

Today we saw this Government attempt to blackmail South Australians and this Parliament. It is an attempt that will fail. At the time when ordinary South Australians need essential services—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! As Leader, are you the principal speaker for the Opposition?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes, Sir. At the time when ordinary South Australians need essential services most, this Government is continuing its threat to take those services away and to introduce still more taxes. At a time when South Australians are saying loudly and clearly that they want to keep ownership of their electricity supply, this Government is still trying to sell it all from under them to foreign interests. This State faces opportunities as well as challenges, but to face those challenges and to harness those opportunities we need active Government with a strategy for economic development rather than just selling off the family silver, as Edward Heath, the former Conservative Prime Minister of Britain, would describe the plans of John Olsen and Rob Lucas for the privatisation of our electricity utilities.

John Howard may be happy to fly into South Australia once in a blue moon to support the sale of ETSA, but that just shows to South Australians how remote he and the Premier are from the people of this State. Can you imagine Jeff Kennett begging John Howard to come to Victoria to bail him out of a broken promise? John Howard was the one who said that it would have been immoral for him to go to the last

Federal election promising not to impose a GST and then change his mind after the election. He said that would have been politically immoral, so why is John Howard now backing the Olsen Government's deceit? If the Prime Minister is fair dinkum about his principles, he should apply the same moral imperative to John Olsen's deception on ETSA before and after the last State election.

In South Australia we need strategies for a clever and innovation-driven economy. We need to recognise that our greatest potential source of economic strength is our people and our community, and it is by developing our potential human capital that South Australia can get ahead again. It is not by Government withdrawing or by cutting the wages and security of working people or by reducing our investment in human services and education or by selling the birthright of South Australians. It is only by relying on and developing our own capacities as a community that we can advance South Australia's economic performance and create jobs. We have to give up the cargo cult mentality that says sell everything and we will be better off. We will not, and our future depends in large measure on our holding on to key public assets such as ETSA and developing our State rather than selling it away.

South Australia needs a hand up and a more helpful and supportive Commonwealth Government, and I was disappointed that John Howard did not use his visit today to announce the start date for the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. Last April the Premier said that we could expect that work would begin on the railway by the end of this very month—the end of March 1999—and that the first instalment of Federal funds would be paid by June of this year. While it appears certain that there will be a delay in the start date, the project does have the full and total support of the Labor Opposition, but I am concerned that the \$100 million promised by John Howard will not be enough to kick start the project. So, I make this offer to the Premier: I am prepared to work with him in an effort to get the Commonwealth to pledge additional moneys if these are required to get this project going.

Federal Labor, headed by Kim Beazley, pledged at the last election up to \$300 million in Commonwealth support for the railway. I am certainly more than pleased to offer the Premier any support in a vigorous public campaign to secure extra financial commitment from the Howard Government for the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. As a State we need to steer a way forward between the 'everything fine' statements of Government Ministers that are made for expediency and the confidence sapping claims often made by the Premier that we are sunk if we do not sell off the State. We need balance and South Australia needs optimism and a growing confidence that can only come from working together constructively.

Let us deal with the Olsen ETSA tax—the Olsen tax. At the last election this Government and the Liberal Party showed us how little it understands politics, which caused them to lose 13 seats, how little they understood political strategy and, most importantly, how little they understood the decency and commonsense of South Australians. But today they showed us the same form again. The people of this State do not want ETSA sold from behind their backs and they want their say in its future. They despise John Olsen's attempt to blackmail them and the Parliament with more taxes.

Today I want to talk about the Government's plans for more taxes. Today we heard about the Olsen tax—a tax that is a broken promise, a tax that is a broken promise to cover another broken promise. First was the promise never to sell

ETSA or Optima and then there was the promise not to increase the amounts raised in taxes by the State Government. When in April 1996 Labor showed that the Government was doing work behind the scenes for a privatisation of ETSA that avoided State Parliament, John Olsen responded with this unequivocal guarantee, which was aired on ABC TV news, and I will quote him directly—his own words:

The Government is not considering, nor ever will it be considering, privatising either in full or part the Electricity Trust of South Australia.

On 16 September 1997 the Premier told Channel Nine News—and he has got some good friends there:

We are not pursuing a privatisation course with ETSA.

On 21 September the Adelaide *Advertiser* quoted the Premier in relation to power during the election campaign, when we again said ETSA would be privatised after the election. This is what the *Tiser* quoted him as saying:

I have consistently said there will be no privatisation and that position remains.

We did not see an editorial from the *Advertiser* saying that the Premier was wrong. We did not see a campaign by the *Advertiser*, by the Chamber of Commerce or by other people in the business community saying to the Premier, 'You are wrong in pledging never to sell ETSA'—not at all. In response to allegations by Labor that the Liberals would privatise ETSA and Optima after the election the hapless member for Bragg, who was then still Deputy Premier, again told Channel Nine, 'This is obviously part of a Labor lie campaign.' On ABC TV that night he said, 'There is no sale of ETSA; there is no plan for the sale of Optima Energy, full stop, full stop, full stop'—and so on.

Today, no-one could seriously believe that these people were telling the truth to South Australians. Since that time, their deceit has become obvious to all, and embarrassingly so. There was also the promise that the budget was on track and in good shape and that no increases in taxation would be required. The 1997-98 pre-election budget was described by the then Treasurer, Stephen Baker, as 'a remarkable and historic turnaround'.

During the election when the Opposition asked whether the budget was still on track, Stephen Baker said that of course it was. He said, 'I can assure you we will get across the line' (*Advertiser*—22 September 1997). He maintained that the budget was on track to deliver a small surplus. The Treasurer assured South Australians that there would be no increase in the overall tax burden. He said, 'There is going to be a taxation adjustment, but we are not out to get an increase in the quantum of tax' (*Advertiser*—19 September 1997).

The Premier staked his political future on a broken promise never to sell ETSA. Having failed to privatise ETSA, now the Premier and Rob Lucas, true to form, are staking their political futures on yet another broken promise not to increase taxes. It is all too familiar—the deceit, the cynicism, the excuses, the ritual blaming of everyone else.

What the Government attempted to do today is the moral equivalent of corporate fraud. This is a Government that conned the people last time but is fearful of facing them again in either a referendum on the future ownership of ETSA or a general election. First, the Premier promised not to privatise ETSA. Then he said that he had to sell ETSA to pay off the debt. Then he said that the Government would need to sell off ETSA to pay for schools and hospitals. Today he said that

they had to have a new tax to fund ETSA capital works even though the corporation is making record sales.

From one day to the next John Olsen's story changes. He has no strategy and no desire to tell South Australians the truth. Neither do some of his mediocre cabal of long-lunching advisers who are so widely disliked amongst other parts of the Liberal Party. It is time for John Olsen to take responsibility for his own financial management of the State and the actions of this Liberal Government. This Government has been in power now for over five years. I challenge John Olsen to put the privatisation of ETSA and Optima to a referendum.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader will please refer to members by their electorate or title.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Thank you, Sir, but today during Question Time when the Premier referred to me as 'Mike Rann' and I went up and spoke to you, you told me to sit down.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. That comment is in direct conflict with the Chair. The Chair well knows what happened during Question Time. I remind all members of the practice that has spread on my left as well as on my right, but certainly on my left, of calling people by their Christian name and surname across the Chamber. That habit must cease and cease quickly.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Thank you, Sir. I know that you will be fair tomorrow and in future when the other side does the same.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope that the Leader is not reflecting on the Chair.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I challenge the Premier to put the privatisation of ETSA and Optima to a referendum, to put his leadership on the line on his Government's tax blackmail, but I know that he will not. He will not even debate me in public on television on this issue. This is how confident the Premier is about his position on ETSA. Remember what the Premier said after the last election: he was forced, compelled, to change his policy and break his word over ETSA because he had got all these reports that told him that he must. However, he would not release those reports publicly. He expected us to break our promise, but he would not actually show us these secret reports that convinced him to break his word to the people of this State.

I know why: first, they were not compelling; secondly, they showed that the Government planned to sell ETSA right from the start; or, thirdly, there was a bit of both. The Premier has refused an invitation from Channel 7 that would involve me, Mike Elliott, Nick Xenophon and him to debate the ETSA privatisation issue and to answer questions from a studio audience.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes, it is funny. Before the last election he thought he had a special deal with Channel 9. He would not go on ABC television, 5DN radio or ABC radio, or Channel 10 television, but he was happy for Chris Kenny to arrange a debate on Channel 9. That was it: exclusive. He was very happy about going into that debate but not so happy to come out of that debate. If members could have seen his face, surrounded by minders, by police and security guards, fronting the kids from Croydon Primary School with an ashen face—and we saw the result. However, that is okay; the Premier says he will not appear if I am there or if he has to answer questions from ordinary South Australians. He will certainly not face me in a television debate about ETSA, and every member opposite knows why, everyone knows why—because he does not have the guts to do so.

The only time that the Premier will appear on Channel 7 is in glossy, taxpayer funded advertisements with a 30 second spin and no right of reply. Apparently he has someone in his office—Duffield or someone—to write this advertisement. He is on the highway; and it is similar to the last one we saw and it will be as effective as his advertisements last year. He will have Geoff Anderson and Alex Kennedy patting him on the back saying, 'You are doing well, John.' That is exactly what they said last year. The more he is poured in, in terms of his reputation and credibility on an issue, the more the Government and its backbench loses. Let me say this: today the Premier signed his own political suicide note and a death warrant for his backbench.

*Mr Scalzi interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The member for Hartley may well laugh. The Premier—

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. R.B. Such):** Order! The Leader will resume his seat. The House is becoming disorderly. Members will refrain from calling across the Chamber and the member for Hartley—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ross Smith will be warned in a minute. The member for Hartley will cease provoking the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Thank you, Sir. Today, the Premier signed his own political suicide note and a death warrant for his backbenchers, including the member for Hartley. Before the election, we were told that the budget was in a small surplus. After the election, it had become a \$150 million black hole. The Government's defence for having misled South Australians about ETSA was that it had not been telling the truth about the state of the budget all along. It had misled about its intentions on tax before the last election. Some defence!

At the last budget and before the Parliament had any chance whatsoever to vote for or against the privatisation of ETSA, the Premier brought down tax increases of 10.5 per cent or nearly a quarter of a billion dollars. That was in a year when the inflation rate had fallen, not risen, by 1.1 per cent. That was after the previous budget that had already increased taxes, fees and fines by 4.3 per cent. That was before the introduction of the emergency services levy or the Olsen-Lucas ETSA tax. Even before that, on average, South Australians pay a greater percentage of their income on State taxes than the national average. South Australians pay, on average, 6.13 per cent of their income on State taxes compared with 6.02 per cent nationally.

I repeat: that is before the emergency services levy, the ETSA tax or anything else that the Premier and his Treasurer are planning for this year's budget. Today, the Olsen Government is seeking to raise \$100 million through its ETSA tax. When Rob Lucas threatened a mini-budget in his last budget speech, he talked about the need to raise \$150 million, but in the Premier's world of rubbery figures and broken promises who are we to quibble about the difference between \$100 million and \$150 million? The Premier is trying to extract from South Australians \$100 million. We have been told that businesses will escape the Olsen-Lucas ETSA tax. This means that the lion's share of the tax, if not all of it, will fall on ordinary South Australian households and taxpayers.

The average annual power bill is to rise by about 27 per cent to raise \$100 million. In 1997, ETSA's revenue from residences was \$420 million, making the average residential bill \$673 per annum. Today's increase takes the average bill



to \$860. Of course, since the figures I am using come from the 1997 ETSA annual report—the last report to provide information on revenues to ETSA from households—the actual amounts will be higher. Yet I remind the House that there is no evidence of a budgetary black hole. We have challenged the Treasurer and the Premier repeatedly to show us where the black hole is. Where, in the out years of the budget, can the Treasurer show us that further budgetary improvement depends upon the sale of ETSA? He has not been able to supply the answer. But we have, in any event, clear evidence of the Olsen/Lucas deception on taxes and the sale of ETSA.

There is no black hole. What there really is, is a drive by the Olsen/Lucas forces within the Government for a war chest for use in an attempt to buy their way back into office at the next polls. If there really were a structural shortfall or deficit in the out years of the budget, the ETSA tax would not fix it. Why? Because the Government can collect the ETSA tax from household consumers only for as long as household consumers are kept out of the contestable market for power under the national electricity market legislation by 2003. After that, how can the Government impose such a tax? Clearly it would make a mockery of the very concept of a competitive market.

Make no mistake: the Opposition believes that the privatisation of ETSA makes no financial sense and would deprive South Australia of a vital income earning asset. But it is for the Premier and the Treasurer to make an economically responsible case for the privatisation. They have failed miserably. It is also up to them to prove that the budgetary improvement forecast in their own budget papers depends on the privatisation of ETSA. So far, they have not even tried to prove it. If the case were there to be made, you would think that someone in the Government would make it. Of course, their real agenda is quite clear: it is not repairing the budget; it is getting a war chest for the next election—politics at its most cynical.

There is no case based on a so-called black hole for these tax increases. There may be a budget blow-out, but that is not the same as a black hole. That blow-out is called the Government radio network contract, which has blown out by as much as \$100 million—there is that magic figure again—and it stands as a monument to the expensive, bizarre and questionable contracting practices of this Government, and I shall have more to say about that later.

**Mr Scalzi:** It's the exchange rate.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The member for Hartley says it is the exchange rate.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hartley will cease interjecting and the Leader will cease responding.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The \$100 million blow-out is about a change in the exchange rate. Obviously, on his many overseas trips, he has been visiting duty-free shops. He has worked out that there is an exchange rate and that it will cost \$100 million extra for the Government radio network. We will ask that question from the member for Hartley to one of the Ministers in due season. If there were a case for privatisation, the Government would have made it. It has not; instead, it was the Auditor-General who, in his last annual report, investigated these claims and found them to be without substance. The Auditor-General set out 'to explore the relationships between the possible sale. . . and the State budget'. His conclusion was not that there would necessarily be any financial benefit from privatisation. But, even more

so, he investigated Treasury spreadsheets and calculations to see what was behind the claim that we would be a recurrent \$150 million worse off without privatisation. He could find no evidence to support that claim.

The Auditor-General did not find in favour of the Government's claim of a \$150 million benefit from their sale or any \$150 million black hole. In his budget speech, the Treasurer stated:

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. . .

But the Auditor-General found no such evidence. On the basis of Treasury figures only, and without independent verification, the Auditor-General said that there could be a benefit to the budget of \$35 million to \$65 million, but he stressed that that was on the basis of Treasury's figuring alone and that losses as much as gains could be the result of privatisation. Today the Premier and the Treasurer toned it down from \$150 million to \$100 million. But the Treasurer could not help himself. He again claimed that the Auditor-General had endorsed the figure of a \$100 million black hole, and that is an untruth.

The Auditor points out that when he looked at the Treasurer's figures he found that Treasury had made an assumption that its expenditure would fall in the years 2001-02 by \$100 million, nothing more. The Auditor has been at pains to stress that he has made no independent assessment of these claims. When the Auditor asked Treasury to explain the Treasurer's threat of a \$150 million tax slug, even his own department backed away. As the Auditor-General stated when referring to the figure of \$150 million:

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.

The Auditor also points out that, since this Government came to office five years ago, it has already introduced massive tax increases that will mean that South Australians will be paying 26 per cent more in tax in real terms in 2001-02 than they were in 1993-94. As I say, this is even before an Olsen tax or Howard's goods and services tax. This has been a cynical exercise by the Olsen-Lucas Government from the first, and a typically ham-fisted one. It is driven by a cynical and foolish view of the political process whereby the public will forget all the promises that were made and then so crudely broken; and that, through the introduction of yet more taxes, Labor, the Democrats and Nick Xenophon will be blamed for the pain inflicted on South Australians by this Government.

It is a view of the world so skewed that it thinks that South Australians will blame Labor for keeping its promises and applaud the Liberals for being serial breakers of their promises. The Premier says that if the Parliament agrees to privatise ETSA he will not proceed with these tax hikes. Unfortunately, the Premier making this promise was John Olsen, whose form means that he simply cannot be believed. Let me make it quite clear: if the Premier and the Treasurer go ahead with their plans to bleed South Australian households with yet more taxes, it will be John Olsen and Rob Lucas, and those people alone, who will be held responsible at the ballot box.

**Ms Hurley:** Because they are.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Because they are responsible. This is a total, crude hoax on the people of this State. Every attempt elsewhere by a Government to try to hang a new tax on its opponents has had one singular result: it has been a

noose around the neck of the Government that introduced the taxes. Let us deal with Motorola. Apart from the election war chest for buying votes at the next election there is one other reason we can think of why the Government would need to raise yet more taxes: the \$250 million Government radio network and the Government's shonky deal with Motorola.

In spite of the Cramond report and everything that has been discussed in this Parliament about whether or not the Premier misled the Parliament, the fact is that there was indeed a side deal to the Motorola incentive package. Certainly I can say this given evidence provided in the Cramond report that had not been previously seen by the Opposition, and that evidence is absolute. It is contained in the Cabinet submission which the Premier, as then Industry Minister, took into a Thursday Executive Council meeting asking specifically to vary the incentive package to Motorola in order to get it to establish its software development centre in Adelaide.

That variation involved giving Motorola a firm indication that it would be successful in securing the contract to provide the equipment component of the Government's new radio network. It is there in black and white—all the evidence we needed that this was indeed a side deal and tied very much to the incentive package for the software centre. That Executive Council meeting was held on 14 April 1994. That same day, the now Premier wrote a letter to Motorola offering it the opportunity to become the equipment suppliers for our Government radio network. Motorola made its decision to move to Adelaide the following day. It was an offer that was taken up; we all know that.

The problem is that the supply of equipment for the Government radio network was a very large part of the \$250 million system. Back in 1994 the Motorola equipment was probably well considered state of the art but the fact is that, because other companies were deprived of the opportunity to tender for this contract, there was no way of evaluating whether or not the taxpayers of South Australia were getting value for money or the best available equipment. We had no comparisons on either the technical capability of the equipment or the price. We were locked in, with no way out. It locked us into a system that appears to be old, at prices that appear to be extremely high, with consequences for the future which are still to be explained. For instance, the trade marked Astro Smartzone technology is totally proprietary. That means that no other manufacturer can make the equipment and no other company's equipment is compatible with it.

In the future, if we wish to upgrade the radio network, unless we want to scrap the lot and start again, we will have no option but to use Motorola equipment. Another factor is repairs and maintenance. Again, the Cramond report has included it in another Cabinet document, signed by John Olsen and not previously sighted by us, which outlines in the agreement between this Government and Motorola a clause which allows Motorola to carry out its repairs and maintenance of equipment 'interstate or overseas'. That means that our radio equipment will have to be packed up and will have physically to leave the State and possibly the country in order to be repaired.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** We are told that Motorola does not manufacture any of this equipment in Australia. Indeed, we have been told that Motorola has actually stopped manufacturing some of this equipment altogether, anywhere.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The almost five year delay in this project has not been explained, and neither has the escalating cost of this project nor, more importantly, where exactly we will find the money for the \$150 million blow-out in the cost of the Government radio network. Witnesses from the various emergency service agencies to the Public Works Committee have testified that they have received assurances from the Government and the Treasury that the Motorola system would be cost neutral for them in spite of the enormous cost of the system.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The May 1998 Emergency Services Funding Review Steering Committee—

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The Leader will resume his seat. The member for Hartley is continually interjecting. He will cease.

*Members interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There are members to my left who will be subject to the wrath of the Chair in a minute. I caution the member for Hartley against interjecting anymore. The Leader of the Opposition.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The May 1998 Emergency Services Funding Review Steering Committee stated that, if the Government radio network were to be needed to be funded from the Emergency Services levy, an extra \$30 million a year would be needed and that was well before Minister Lawson announced a blow-out in the GRN cost by as much as \$150 million. Apart from the Olsen-Lucas drive for a war chest for fighting the next election, it is perhaps the Government's radio network cost blow-out that helps explain the Government's alleged \$150 million budget black hole.

The number one issue in South Australia is jobs. John Olsen needs a plan for new jobs—not new taxes. This is not the time for a new tax which punishes ordinary South Australian families and which would snuff out what little economic growth we have in our State. It is not the time to introduce a new tax on household consumption when our unemployment for the last calendar year was an average 1.8 per cent or a full 20 per cent higher than the national level.

Is it the time to introduce more taxes when, over the life of the Government, our job growth has been just one-third that of the rest of the nation? Is it the time to introduce a new tax that will bite deeply into family pay packets when full-time employment today is around 30 000 lower than it was eight years ago and with under-employment estimates by Access Economics to be over 20 per cent? Is it time for a new tax when our youth unemployment is consistently the highest or second highest in the nation? Is it time for a new tax when the figures show that in South Australia the average duration of unemployment is nearly 68 weeks—the second highest in the country—and we have one of the worst ratios of unemployment to advertised job vacancies?

I say to the Premier that this is the worst time to impose a tax that is unnecessary and harmful to families and the economy, when private new capital expenditure has fallen by over 6 per cent over the year to September 1998 and when one of the few areas of growth is consumer household demand. That is not the time for new taxes on consumption. That will only cause a further drag on growth.

The Olsen Government no more has a mandate to levy an ETSA tax than it does to sell ETSA. Despite all their attempts to lay the blame for these taxes at the door of the Opposition, the Democrats or the Hon. Nick Xenophon, the taxes announced by the Premier and Treasurer today, on top of all the others brought in last year, will be seen for what they are:

the work of John Olsen and Rob Lucas—all their own work. It will be known as the ‘Olsen tax’.

This is not a time to be diverted by John Olsen’s misleading claims of a bonanza from the privatisation of ETSA or the threat of still more taxes if it is not. This is the time for a coordinated, bipartisan plan for jobs. This is not the time for a job-destroying new tax.

There will be a desperate attempt by the Olsen Government and its craven mates in part of the media who will swallow anything from this Premier and still keep saluting. Ordinary South Australians will wear the hardship that will come from John Olsen’s unfair tax, but the Government will wear the political odium of this dishonesty. John Olsen will not, because his days in this place are numbered. But let me assure members that it will be all you nervous and vulnerable Government backbenchers who will pay the political price for the Premier’s duplicity and dishonesty.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** I support the Bill. Obviously, our public servants need to be paid and the only way of paying them is to pass this Appropriation Bill. Later in my speech tonight I will take up the issue of taxes, but I want also to refer to the fact that lack of resources being devoted by this Government to a whole range of services is seriously eroding the social security net that South Australians have taken for granted for so many years, particularly under successive Labor Governments.

I will refer briefly to education and give an example of one of the primary schools in my electorate. I will not name it in particular in case it becomes stigmatised. When I was there recently the principal of this primary school told me that his teachers had advised him that almost 50 per cent of the students attending that primary school were in need of additional assistance to get them over their learning difficulties.

My electorate is a low income area with many single families and a whole host of social problems which one can appreciate in that type of environment. Many of those children could do very well at school; all they need is that extra leg-up and assistance in education. But the Government does not provide the resources that that school needs to do it. In the special education area, the bar, if I could put it that way, for those students who qualify for the intensive curriculum program has been lowered to such an extent that a lot of the money used to help these people—and these are mainly Commonwealth Government funds which have been slashed—is wasted because, no matter how much effort is put in, the outcome is very limited. Yet there are so many children just above the bar who do not qualify for that extra assistance but who could do so much better if they were able to get the extra assistance that they need.

In the State budget there are only 70 salaries for school counsellors. A number of my schools—and there is one that I can recall quite distinctly—lost their school counsellor this year.

*The Hon. M.R. Buckby interjecting:*

**Mr CLARKE:** Ninety—the Minister corrects me. It is still too few but, nonetheless, this particular primary school lost its school counsellor this year. This occurred in an area where there are tremendous behavioural problems amongst students, particularly as there is a high transient rate of children coming in and out because parents shift house for a whole host of reasons. Much of this could be overcome by providing dedicated school counsellors in those areas so that those children were looked after and so that the rest of the

school could get on with their education without being disturbed by disruptive students.

If I visit the schools in my electorate, many of which were built in the 1950s and 1960s and, in some cases, earlier, I find that school maintenance is considerably less than it should be. I do not expect it to be pristine or new as you would get in a new development, but the standards are constantly being eroded because of cutbacks in funding. Because of the lack of funding from the State Government, in the housing redevelopments of Kilburn, Blair Athol and in the Housing Trust areas—and we talk about it a lot—we will not see any progress for quite some time because the Housing Trust does not have the money. In this area I will not blame the State Government entirely because, quite frankly, the Federal Liberal Government has abandoned many of its responsibilities in these areas where it once provided supplementary finances for the State Government of the day, irrespective of political complexion.

Last week, the Attorney-General convened a meeting of MPs and members of the Supreme Court, Magistrates Court and District Court judiciary. One issue of concern to all MPs, irrespective of political persuasion, was the denial of access to justice for a whole range of South Australian citizens simply because they have no access to legal aid. There are many citizens in this State who are pleading guilty to crimes that they did not commit or who believe that they were unfairly treated because they could not afford to plead not guilty as they could not afford legal assistance. As they could not pay for it, they pleaded guilty to lesser charges just simply to get on with life because they could not afford to defend themselves. That was acknowledged by the members of the judiciary at the meeting.

In the area of family law, which I know is not the State Government’s responsibility but which I trust it would take up very vigorously with the Federal Government, there is a lack of access to financial assistance. It is driving parents, particularly the non-custodial parent, to the verge of despair and, regrettably in some instances, violence, because they do not believe they can get a fair hearing. They cannot assert what they regard as their lawful rights, because they do not have access to legal assistance to present their case in court. As members of the judiciary at that meeting said to the assembled groups of MPs last year, the number of people who are representing themselves are causing a danger to themselves and others. In many instances, cases are being dragged out because unrepresented lay persons representing themselves do not know the legal system, the precedents in law and various other matters. It is taking far longer to settle matters than would be the case if trained legal counsel could give assistance and proper advice to those people and to the court in resolving these disputes.

We have problems with the under-funding of the police department, where the budget was cut by \$4 million last year. I have a constituent who runs a sporting goods store who has been burgled three times in the last six weeks. He has been robbed 25 times since his store was established over the last number of years, and there has not been one conviction. Although the robbers who break into the store know that there is a security alarm system and the like they know that, at the earliest, a police vehicle will be on the scene within about 25 to 30 minutes. Irrespective of the statistics that people at the Holden Hill Police Station showed me, which indicated that the average response time was seven minutes, it is like the average wage: 80 per cent of the work force does not get the average wage. If it is a life-threatening situation the police are

able to be on the spot fairly quickly because, obviously, such cases get high priority. But in areas of burglaries and the like, the response time is appallingly slow—25 to 30 minutes—and every member in this House who has dealt with constituents with respect to this issue would know that to be the case. This means that the criminals know that they have that amount of time to break into the place, choose the goods that they want and get out, on average, within 10 minutes and be well on their way out of the place. This sports store has been burgled 25 times and there has not been one conviction.

In addition, when this store was broken into and the front glass was all broken—in a shopping centre at 2 o'clock in the morning—the owner and his wife argued with the police officers as to whether they could get the forensic services out to test for fingerprints. But the police said that they could not get the fingerprint department in because they would have to pay them overtime. They said that they could not bring them in before 7 a.m. The store was due to open at 9 a.m.—as was the whole shopping centre—and they had to clean up the broken glass not only for themselves but for the safety of the passing trade and for the convenience of the other traders in that centre. You cannot get those who take the fingerprints before 7 a.m. because the department does not have the money to pay the overtime. I regard that as a disgrace.

The areas that the Leader of the Opposition spoke of are also equally valid with respect to employment and employment generation, and in terms of a whole range of social services, hospital waiting times and so on. A constituent spoke to me on Saturday night of his 75 year old mother who went into hospital for a serious operation. She was at home within less than 24 hours after that operation: they want them out of the hospital quickly because of the cost. It is not an issue of making sure that that person is being looked after in a safe manner and being kept in hospital for observation to make sure that there is no delayed reaction to the operation: it is cheaper to get them out as quickly as possible. I do not believe that that is reasonable. However, we do need to be able to pay for it, and one of the real problems for State Parliaments is our narrow tax base. We have an incredibly narrow tax base, and if we up certain taxes we have problems with respect to industry and the like with the competitor States next to us, which may keep their tax base lower. We experienced that problem with Queensland for a number of years: it had a lower tax base than our own with respect to petrol taxes and tobacco taxes, when the States were still able to levy them separately. In terms of payroll tax, there is always a bidding war between the States. It is about time that a Commonwealth Government thought nationally and brought in a fair tax system. Of course, the Liberal Party would argue that that is what is happening with respect to the GST.

My point is simply this: there are far too many tax dodgers in Australia and they start at the very top of the tree in this country. When I read in the paper recently—and I am surprised one is able to read it in the Murdoch press—that Mr Packer, Australia's wealthiest man reputedly, as a point of principle appealed a Taxation Office ruling that he was to pay \$30 in tax and went through an expensive High Court challenge to ensure that he did not have to pay that \$30 tax to make his point, and when Consolidated Press's tax to the Commonwealth Treasury was nil, in effect, it made me ill. It is not just Mr Packer and his company: it is the Murdoch press as well.

One reads in the Murdoch press on page 3 or on page 1 about the rorters of workers' compensation payments—

always that the injured worker or the supposed injured worker is rorting the workers' compensation system—or about somebody rorting the social security system. They will get their photograph on page 3 or page 1 of the newspaper. They do not deserve to get away with rorting the system; but it makes me ill and the hypocrisy of the Murdoch press makes me want to vomit, because I am absolutely confident that the Murdoch press pays sweet FA in terms of income tax and of their fair share towards the running of the governance of not only this State but this nation through their tax dodges, through their family trusts, through all their tax avoidance techniques, and through their absolute refusal to countenance the introduction of retrospective tax laws to ensure that the spirit and intent of our taxation laws are upheld.

The media in this country are absolutely hypocritical and are absolutely protective of their own hip pocket nerve, irrespective of the costs to the overall community. We are denied that income to be able to ensure that a 75 year old grandmother is able to stay in hospital for the time that the doctor believes it is necessary for her to recover; to provide those children in the primary schools in my electorate with a chance of making a life for themselves through having the type of education and remedial teaching they need; to ensure that the social security structures of this country provide that no-one live in poverty in this country because they are in a position of unemployment through no fault of their own; and to ensure that at a State and Federal level we are able to have a whole range of training programs, retraining programs, and massive capital works programs to give people work and to give them work to do which will create lasting wealth in this country.

We have the likes of the Murdoch press and the other media establishments who are only too happy to say that there is a whole class of rorters out there, whether social security or otherwise, but they do not turn on the spotlights other than occasionally with respect to the alleged frauds committed by Christopher Skase and the Qintex group. But they do not look at themselves. When was the last time we read in the *Advertiser* what taxation NewsCorp paid? What did NewsCorp pay the Australia Taxation Office with respect to taxes? How much of their taxes did they avoid through a series of offshore deals, transfer pricing, depreciation and, in terms of many of their major shareholders, their tax rip-offs in forms of family trusts?

Ministers in the Federal Liberal Cabinet, over half of whom enjoy the tax minimisation bases of family trusts, have the absolute hide to say that they will introduce a new goods and services tax which taxes basic necessities of life such as food. It is an outrage yet we will not read about it in this country because it is not in the financial interests of the Murdoch press and those who own and control it to do it. We do not have journalists of any guts or courage in this country who will write such stories because they fear that they will never get employment in this country again because their only choice of employer is with the Murdoch or Packer press, or working for one of the electronic media news outlets, which are also tightly controlled.

We have to do a whole range of things in this country to bring in a fairer tax regime and to extend the helping hand to people who, through no fault of their own, are down on hard times. It is about time that every citizen in this State and in this country put their hand into their pocket and paid their fair share of tax. I am not ashamed to admit that I pay a full 47.5¢ in the dollar in income tax. I do not have family trusts and I will never have family trusts because I believe that I am

earning a sufficient level of income on which I ought to pay my fair share of tax. I will never be involved in a tax minimisation scheme, and all my colleagues in the Labor Party share the same basic values.

We cannot do the things we must do unless everyone shares that burden fairly. We all talk about the need to improve our environment and a whole range of areas. We worry about capital gains tax, and the Liberal Party got away with a massive furphy. The Labor Party blew it at the last Federal election in terms of selling the message. The principle was right but we did not sell it correctly because there is nothing inherently wrong with a fair, progressive capital gains tax, and I am happy to stand here any time and proclaim that it is a fair tax. However, we did not sell it politically the right way. How else are we going to get money in this country?

I recently read the John Ralph review on business taxes, which aims to get it down to 30¢ in the dollar and to take away depreciation allowances, which will crucify manufacturing industry. These are the sorts of issues that we have to confront. I do not blame simply the State Government for the lack of revenue because the ability to raise revenue at a State level is very constrained. The Tonkin Government did us a disservice in the early 1980s when it abolished death duties, but it was forced in part to do so because of the Bjelke-Petersen Government's stance on abolishing death duties in Queensland.

We must confront these issues. It is about fairness; it is about equity. It is about raising the necessary revenues to create the type of society that we all believe we should have and that our children should inherit. It means our explaining politically over the voices of vested interests to ensure that our taxation system is a fair one.

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

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I will comment on the racing industry, which is a very important sector of our community and a very important component of our economy. Last week I made a statement in respect of the need for an upgrade of the Morphettsville Racecourse. Amongst other things, I said that the Government should immediately release \$5 million to fix up sections of the track, for a second grass track, and for an all-weather training track. The beauty of this announcement is that the money is already available. The Racing Industry Development Authority, more commonly known as RIDA, recently brought out its annual report. That report showed that there was an operating surplus of some \$5.89 million. The critical thing about that money is that it is racing industry money and it should be used for the benefit of the racing industry.

At the moment, our premier racecourse, that is, Morphettsville, is not in a suitable condition for racing. A bias exists between approximately 100 and 300 metres and, in that section, horses and jockeys are forced to go wide because the track is referred to as dead. So the premier racing track, the jewel in the crown for thoroughbred racing in South Australia, is not in a suitable condition and, if we are to make optimum use of the Morphettsville course, we need to put in a second grass track, so that we can alternate between the two tracks and use the second grass track for fast gallops. It is also suggested strongly by a whole range of people in the racing industry that South Australia is well and truly due for an all-weather training track. These are critical issues for the racing

industry. A range of other issues need to be addressed, some of which I am hoping to have time to highlight tonight.

In response to the statement I made last week, I was very disappointed and somewhat surprised that the Minister's reply was that he was waiting for a report on venue rationalisation. Venue rationalisation has been going on since approximately September 1996. The racing industry has been waiting for about 2½ years for this Government to come down with its recommendations on venue rationalisation. However, despite all that and despite the inadequacies of the Government in not showing any leadership in this area for the racing industry, the upgrade of the Morphettsville racecourse is an issue separate from venue rationalisation, about which I will speak more shortly. The racing industry is crying out for leadership and for decision making to occur in the industry so that it can get going and start flourishing.

Further, with our race tracks—not just for Morphettsville but for race tracks throughout the metropolitan area—in thoroughbred racing, in harness racing and in the greyhound area, we have to ensure that we have venues that are suitable and attractive to the recreational punter. If we are to get people to the racecourse and keep people coming to the racecourse, we have to provide a comfortable oncourse environment. For too long we have lived in the dark ages, expecting that the recreational gambler or punter, as he or she is often known, will come along and face conditions that are somewhat barbaric as we go into the next millennium. As a minimum we must have conditions where, when the punter turns up in summer, he goes into an air conditioned environment and, when he turns up in winter, he goes into a warm and dry environment. The punter must be comfortable with the elements. We must provide an outdoor carpeted area on the grounds so that, when the punter or gambler turns up to the venue, we have something which is attractive and something which is at least comparable with what the recreational gambler would receive if he or she went to the hotels or the TAB to invest money: we must have conditions that are at least comparable, if not better.

We must create an ideal environment to optimise oncourse turnover. Turnover is the linchpin of the industry and I will return to the topic of turnover shortly. We must get the betting ring right; we must have an environment that is suitable so that we attract and keep people. At Morphettsville, as an example, the ring is not in a suitable condition. It should be reconfigured. We should try to have an environment where all tote windows are along one line. They are currently in the members' section and the rails bookmakers are out from there, and the ring is further out from that. We should change that, because at the moment the only people who can go to that tote window are the members and not the general public. The general public have to walk some distance from their current betting ring to the public tote. We should be opening up that existing configuration so that we have a bank of tote windows accessible to both members and the general public. We should have something like a horseshoe or two-thirds of a rectangle with two sides and another row of bookmakers parallel to and opposite the tote windows. That would open up the arrangement and create a much better shaped, attractive and suitable environment which would make it possible and much more feasible for non-members who go to the races to invest money at the on-course tote.

At the moment, it is unattractive: the punter has to go out of the bookmakers' ring and walk some distance to invest at the tote. That is not a conducive arrangement. It is a matter of simple geography: we must get the configuration correct

if we want to provide a suitable environment for the recreational gambler with airconditioning and outdoor carpet, an all-weather arrangement that is much more conducive to families when they come to the course.

I spoke earlier about turnover being critical to the racing industry, that it is the linchpin for the racing industry. Income comes from turnover. People must understand that turnover both on and off the course is critical to the success and ongoing flourishing of the racing industry. It generates stake money and the ownership and breeding of race horses. Turnover must be maintained and increased both on and off course.

I will provide one stark example of how critical and important turnover is. Let us say that a punter goes to the races with \$100 in their pocket intending to invest that money during the course of the day. The on-course tote will take out commission for the bets that that person makes during the day. Under our system, for each form of betting (for example, win-and-place, quinella, doubles, quadrella, and multiples) there is a different rate of commission.

For ease of argument, let us say that across the board the take-out figure is 15 per cent. This means that the turnover will be \$650. When the recreational gambler makes their first investment of, say, \$100, the commission will be 15 per cent and the return will be \$85. That gives you a total all-up figure of \$650 in turnover. If you increase the crowd by just 100 people, the turnover on the on-course tote will be \$65 000. If you increase the crowd by 1 000 people, the turnover will be \$650 000.

If turnover is increased, we will have the money for the basic comforts and improvements that need to be provided at the various betting venues. If you maximise the turnover, you maximise the income. We must have appropriate facilities for the punter. As I said before, they must be as good as those which the punter enjoys in hotels or TABs. We must never give up trying to get people to the racecourse. When we get them there, we want them to come again and again. This is one of the fundamental challenges that faces the racing industry.

We must also give strong thought to the TAB. I understand that this year there will be a record turnover. I eagerly look forward to the distribution of the money for the racing industry. There has been a lot of conjecture in the racing industry that the turnover is at record levels but that the profit line is marginally different from what it is at other times. So, I look forward eagerly to seeing what the turnover is, what the profit of the TAB is, and what amount of money is distributed to the racing industry. It is through that that the racing industry receives the bulk of its money which enables it to survive and hopefully to move forward into the next century.

Sadly, this Government has an appalling record in racing. There is no vision, decisions or leadership. The racing industry must have and deserves far better than what it is receiving currently and what it has received for the past few years. I can provide some very stark examples of what I am talking about. I talked earlier about venue rationalisation. It would appear that the whole industry is paralysed by the inability of this Government to make a decision about venue rationalisation. Since September 1996, this Government has taken the racing industry down a course where each of the clubs has had to go through a process in respect of venue rationalisation. That is not such a bad thing—in fact it was probably a good thing—but this has now gone on for 2½ years and people in the racing industry have lost enthusi-

asm for it and they have lost any respect for the way in which the Government has gone about introducing venue rationalisation.

It is my assessment that, by and large, venue rationalisation is dead in the water. It is now hard for me to see how the Government can do anything with any substance in respect of venue rationalisation. It has let it go on for too long and it has left clubs and the industry in a waiting situation where no-one knows what is happening. We have a paralysis with Morphettville. We have a situation where the Minister says he cannot and will not make a decision about Morphettville because he is waiting for this decision about venue rationalisation. What is happening in relation to the Victoria Park upgrade which will enable us to use it as one of our ongoing three successful metropolitan racetracks in South Australia? South Australia can afford three racetracks. Morphettville, Cheltenham and Victoria Park can all be successful if they are run properly and if the Government shows some direction in this area. However, for Victoria Park to be successful it must be upgraded.

What is happening with the TAB? We have no idea. The Government, once again, as with venue rationalisation, has put it in the too hard basket. It is in a waiting pattern. We and the industry are waiting. What is the Government's preferred option? What is the model that the Government will put forward to take the racing industry into the next millennium? No-one knows, and people in the racing industry feel that the Government does not care. What the Government is doing is putting it in the too hard basket: it will not take it on and it is squibbing it until something is resolved about ETSA. The Government is making the racing industry pay because it will not make these decisions and bring forward its preferred model which it should have done a long time ago.

As I mentioned earlier, we also have a Government sponsored organisation in South Australia (which was introduced by this Government some three years ago or thereabouts) called RIDA (Racing Industry Development Authority). I would like to know where it is heading, what its priorities are and what it is doing to make the racing industry more successful and to give it some confidence to take it into the next century. We also have a range of other big issues, for example, night racing. We need to know whether there is a plan with regard to night racing. Moonee Valley has moved in that direction in Victoria; Canterbury in New South Wales is about to go in that direction; and I understand that Queensland is not far behind as well. Do we have a plan in South Australia? If we do, let us discuss it and let us put it on the agenda.

What is happening in harness racing—we do not seem to know. Once again we have what appears to me to be an incredulous decision whereby the Government appointed a Victorian as Chairman of our trotting board in South Australia. The South Australian Harness Racing Authority is chaired by Mr Ian McEwen who is also the Chairman of the Victorian Trotting Board. With no disrespect to Mr McEwen, surely in South Australia we have one person, if not many others, who could chair our board and look after trotting. No-one can tell me that we have to go to Victoria to find a person to chair the South Australian Harness Racing Authority. I just cannot believe that that is the case. I also suggest very strongly that the Government has put not only trotting but also Mr McEwen in a very difficult position, because we have an obvious conflict of interest with Mr McEwen heading up the trotting boards in both South Australia and Victoria. We

have many examples of this Government's lack of decisions, leadership and vision.

We have a duplicity of people involved in at least the thoroughbred racing area: we have the Racing Industry Development Authority, SATRA and the SAJC. In recent times, considerable work has been done to try to promote thoroughbred racing in South Australia, to try to find ways to attract people to the races and to try to keep people coming to the races, and I welcome those initiatives. I say, 'Well done! Keep it going, and try new and different ways of doing it.' However, unless we improve facilities for the punter when we get them to the course, we will not get them there on a regular basis and they will not return. That has to be our fundamental base—we must improve facilities for the punter when we get them there.

We must look carefully at the future direction of those three bodies and question whether there is some overlay here, whether we have too many people in various organisations with differing but similar responsibilities and whether we have too many people trying to steer the ship. With trotting, we have the South Australian Harness Racing Authority and Globe Derby. I understand that they are at loggerheads as well. It seems that the greyhound racing industry has the simplest solution. It seems to have streamlined the administration of its code, and I congratulate it for the way it is going about its business.

I would like to conclude by saying that there are many challenges out there—challenges that can be met only by this Government showing an interest and some enthusiasm, and by having a vision and showing some leadership. It must fundamentally work side by side with people in the racing industry to take us in to the next century, to show some leadership and to make some of the big decisions that will make sure that racing is successful into the next century.

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

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** It was not my intention to speak in this debate, because I fully support the Government's Supply Bill. However, some of the rubbish I have heard from the Opposition during this debate has brought me to my feet. I cannot simply sit here and accept what has been put by members opposite. The importance of selling ETSA cannot be over emphasised. If members opposite will not agree to sell ETSA at least they should agree to lease it, because it is the potential saviour for this State, as we can reduce our State debt by about \$4 billion to \$6 billion. We can virtually eliminate the \$2 million per day interest bill that was imposed on us by the former Labor Government.

What members opposite have said grieves me, and it shows me clearly that the democratic system we have in this State does not work. It is a tragedy for the people of this State when members of the Labor Party in another place collude with members of the Australian Democrats and an Independent or two and block legislation that is absolutely imperative to this State.

**Mr Clarke:** What did you do for 23 out of the past 30 years?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Goyder will resume his seat. The member for Ross Smith is out of order and is getting close to antagonising the Chair.

**Mr MEIER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Speaker. The member for Ross Smith does not antagonise me. He asked what we did for the past 23 years. I will tell the honourable member that we did not oppose the determination

of the Government of the day to lease the power station at Torrens Island. Certainly, we questioned it and, of course, commercial confidentiality was brought to the fore and, in the end, we had to accept it. We did not like it but we had to accept it. It was put to us that, unless we did accept the decision, it would cost the State millions of dollars to upgrade those power stations. We put a similar argument to the Opposition today.

For many months we have been putting to the Opposition and to the other Parties that if we do not sell or lease ETSA we, the Government, and therefore the taxpayers of this State, will be responsible for the upgrade of ETSA to make it at least competitive with interstate power suppliers. Today we had the worst news ever. Under the headline 'Big spender dumps ETSA', an article in the *Advertiser* announced that Western Mining would be seeking a cheaper source of electricity, and that cheaper source of electricity—

*Members interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The member for Goyder will resume his seat. The gathering of the members for Giles, Ross Smith and Norwood is out of order. I issue a caution to those three members.

**Mr MEIER:** That cheaper source of electricity was not going to come from our own ETSA suppliers but rather from Victoria's Yallourn Energy. Here is a classic example, a classic case, about which we warned the Labor Opposition: if we do not sell ETSA while it is at top price we will find that big users of electricity, such as Western Mining (it could well be General Motors-Holden's, Mitsubishi or other companies), will seek the cheapest electricity supply. No-one has to tell me or this Parliament that, in years to come, the average consumer of electricity will seek out the cheapest suppliers.

One has to look only at the car industry. What is the biggest selling small car in this country? Is it an Australian built car? No, it happens to be a Hyundai Excel from Korea. I have nothing against that particular car, but I say that every sale of that car means the creation of one less job in this State. It is the natural way of people to seek the best possible price on anything, and electricity is no different.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** We hear the interjections from the members opposite—

*Ms Breuer interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Next time the member for Giles will receive a warning.

**Mr MEIER:** Those who interject fail to face up to reality. They do not want to acknowledge the fact that we must sell or lease ETSA while it is a profitable organisation and while it is worth billions of dollars. Already, as a result of Western Mining's decision, the sale price of ETSA has reduced significantly, so the taxpayers will miss out. It is therefore not surprising that this very day we had announced what I would call the Rann tax, the Labor Party tax.

**Mr Clarke:** How long did it take you to think that up?

**Mr MEIER:** It is not a tax in real terms: it is a charge on the people of South Australia as a result of the ineptitude of the Opposition, because it is determined to follow its inept Leader—a person whom they should have dismissed some time ago—but, like sheep, they follow him without thinking. Yes, we have some members—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The member for Ross Smith is warned.

**Mr MEIER:**—such as the member for Hart who, both privately and some years ago, acknowledged that the sale of assets is a very important way to reduce our debt.

*Mr Scalzi interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** The member for Hart obviously must be in the minority, member for Hartley, because he has not had his way. I would hope, for the sake of the sale of ETSA—

*Mr Scalzi interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hartley has been cautioned before. He is now warned.

**Mr MEIER:** I had not even heard the member for Hartley interjecting. I hope the member for Hart becomes the Leader soon so that he can exert his authority on the Labor Party and convince them that they absolutely must support the Government in the sale and/or the lease of ETSA, because it will be to the detriment of this State if they do not do so. We saw today, as I mentioned earlier, that Western Mining has decided to seek a cheaper supplier of electricity. We note that it is a \$1 million a month business: that is \$12 million a year that we will miss out on, thanks to the Labor Party. Thanks to the Labor Party for not agreeing to sell ETSA and thanks to the Labor Party for not allowing ETSA to be privatised and become a competitive company in the way that it should be.

It is pathetic to listen to their arguments. In fact, they do not have any arguments. The Labor Party would not even know what to do if it was in government. During Question Time the question was posed to it either through interjections, through the Premier or other Ministers answering questions. They were asked, 'What would be your policy?' What was their reaction? Opposition members had their heads bowed—they were like ostriches or emus with their heads in the sand. They were embarrassed, and I do not know why they keep supporting their Leader. Who is influencing them in this argument. They are hurting the people of South Australia and it grieves me and, indeed, the majority of South Australians. I hope that the Opposition sees that it is very unwise in the way in which it has ventured into this argument and debate and that Opposition members will change their minds.

There is no doubt and we make no secret of the fact that our State needs more money. We cannot afford to pay the \$2 million per day in interest. We cannot afford that, and we need extra revenue if we want to keep up the services to our hospitals, schools, police, roads, the environment and other major projects that will help create jobs.

It is a tragedy that during the last State election campaign the Opposition Leader indicated that he would seek to undertake a bipartisan approach with the Government. I tell the House that, with one exception, namely, the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, which has been bipartisan since the year 1910, he has been non-partisan and has simply been opposing, negative and the Dr No. He knows no answers to the problems, and he simply hopes that he can hang on for three years and make our legislating and our ability to balance the budget very difficult by denying the option to sell ETSA.

This very day we have therefore had to announce increases of \$150 to \$200 per annum to the average household power bill so that we can continue to govern this State in the way that we would like to govern it, in a way that will allow people to have maximum opportunity for health and education benefits, roads and proper police services and to ensure that we look after the environment and other projects.

It is a tragedy that we have had to get to this stage but, as the Premier today also announced, we would be happy to forgo any of those revenue increases if the Opposition agreed to the sale or lease of ETSA. I hope the Opposition will

rethink its situation for the sake of all people in this State, because there is no doubt that this Government has made enormous strides indeed in the past five years. In fact, I hope that I will have the opportunity on another occasion to highlight many of the developments that have occurred and the achievements that we have made in the past five years.

Oh yes, people expected us to perform miracles within the first 12 months. Well, that is not possible when the damage has been done over some 11 to 12-plus years; it takes time. But now, after five years we are starting to see some of the results, and I believe that members will find that as the years go by we will see more and more results of our economic management and our endeavouring to maintain a situation where we do not overspend, whereas year after year we overspent. People could not care less. I remember senior public servants coming to me saying, 'John, someone has to step in and stop the Government doing what it is doing.' That was when the Labor Government was in power, and those people were so thankful when we got into power. It had been an absolute tragedy for this State.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The gathering where the member for Norwood is out of her seat is generating a lot of noise and preventing the Chair from hearing the member for Goyder.

**Mr MEIER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Speaker. As I indicated, I could highlight many of these factors. In fact, I have a whole wad here that would probably keep us going for an hour and a half, but I will not take this opportunity now. I believe I have made my message very clear: the Labor Party needs to rethink its position on the sale and/or lease of ETSA. I hope it will do so and therefore the Supply Bill and the announcements that have been made today in relation to this special one-off tax can be reversed and we can get back to some commonsense between both sides of politics.

**Ms WHITE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (RESTRAINING ORDERS) BILL**

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### **CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (CONTAMINATION OF GOODS) AMENDMENT BILL**

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT DEBATE**

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

That the House do now adjourn.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** First, I want to make a couple of comments about the previous speaker's comments. I believe the Government should question how long Western Mining has committed to buy power from Victoria. It has made a decision to buy power from Victoria, but is this a long-term decision? I believe that it is not, so it is a short-term decision. If this Government were to build the power station at Whyalla instead of its proposal at Pelican Point and if it considered the arguments put forward for building the power station at



Whyalla, I am sure that Western Mining would commit itself, as it has already stated in its proposal with BHP, to building a power station in Whyalla. I am sure that it would buy its power from this power station. I have heard that most members opposite oppose a power station at Whyalla because they believe that new transmission lines would have to be built from Whyalla to Adelaide. I believe this is a fallacy. If they checked their facts a little more carefully, they would find that there is no need for this, that we can go ahead with transmitting this power from Whyalla. At every opportunity I will push for the power station to be built at Whyalla.

I now refer to an issue which I thought would be highlighted in this House today but on which the Government has been deafening in its silence, namely, the Federal Education Minister's proposal for the introduction of voluntary student unionism legislation and the proposal to abolish compulsory student unionism. I refer to this matter tonight because I have been approached by a number of people from my local campus of the University of South Australia, the Whyalla campus, who are absolutely incensed at this proposal and who are amazed that it has been proposed, especially when you consider what this country gets from its student unions. I am not sure, but there is a lot of misinformation about what student unions do.

The University of South Australia Students Association plays a vital role in students' university experience. The services and amenities that it provides and funds enables students to maximise their time at university in a very positive and supportive environment. I know that at the Whyalla campus it is essential that the student union is there to provide these services. The association has in place both strategic and business plans that guide all its decision making, and it has a strong emphasis on maximising its responsiveness to the needs and interests of student members. The University of South Australia Student Association is recognised by the university as the preferred provider of student amenities. The association is able to offer a number of core student support services funded through the collection of their amenities fee.

In addition, it does not need to make a profit, and it means that many of its services are offered at cost or are even subsidised. The collection of amenities fees enables the association to offer services which assist students to continue to study despite financial, academic, social or personal difficulties. It ensures the maximisation of educational outcomes. It addresses the specific needs of students while in education—and these needs are so varied. It assists students to make a better transition to higher education. It enhances the university community and provides a better standard of life for the members of that community.

If anti-student organisation legislation is introduced, it will impact significantly upon the quality of the education experience of all Australian higher education students. Increasingly, institutions are looking to student organisations to provide student services, recognising that they play a key role both in the prevention of student drop out and the enhancement of their experience at university. This is particularly vital at country campuses where there are many difficulties for students. I refer to the University of South Australia Students Association Mission Statement:

The University of South Australia Students Association strives to improve the quality of student life by providing services and facilities, promoting diverse student activities and representing student interests to the university and broader communities.

What is political about that which is subversive political? As an organisation, their vision and values are: to provide effective representation of their members' interests and to offer quality services, facilities and a diverse range of activities primarily to their student members and, where appropriate, to the university and broader communities. Their vision is to anticipate and respond quickly and effectively to student needs, to new demands and environments; to service a preferred supplier of student amenities within the university; to act as the primary catalyst for community life within the university; and to facilitate effective communication with and between the student body at all levels.

In pursuing its mission and vision the Students Association is committed to being open in its decision-making and responsiveness to input from students and other stakeholders; striving to achieve the highest standards in all its activities; upholding appropriate ethical standards in all its dealings; supporting a participative organisation on workplace culture which values staff and student effort and empowers leadership and team work to function to the benefit of all; to act in a manner consistent with principles of equity and social justice and to foster a culture that builds trust and a sense of community within the student body and the university. The University of South Australia Students Association provides independent assessment of university standards. Since its establishment it has worked hard to foster a constructive relationship with the university.

The University of South Australia is the largest university in South Australia, with over 24 000 undergraduate and post-graduate students on six campuses—and I refer particularly to the campus of Whyalla, the only country campus of a university in South Australia. I quote from a statement from the Vice Chancellor, who says:

Student organisations have, for many years, been an integral part of the social and cultural life of Australian universities. They exist to provide: effective advocacy of student needs; essential services and facilities to student and campus committees; [and] activities which stimulate students' intellectual, cultural and recreational interests.

The Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia totally supports the Students Association. The University of South Australia Students Association's mission, vision and value statement is based on equality, social justice, democracy, the maintenance of the highest ethical standards and the nurturing of campus culture. Anti-student organisation legislation would seriously weaken the University of South Australia's ability to provide support and advocacy for students. The University of South Australia has not increased its amenities fees since 1993 and, in that time, substantial improvements have been made to services available to students. I believe that the model from the Federal Minister is based on the Western Australian system, where they had an 85 per cent cut in funds. This would close the student services associations in South Australia.

Why is the Federal Government planning on doing this? I believe it is an attack because the student associations have criticised the Federal Government and, like ATSI, they are now threatened with funding cuts. Such action would see the death of student associations, minimal non-academic campus activities such as leisure clubs, sporting activities, employment, accommodation, loans and other welfare services and significantly diminish university experience for all students. The legislation would also impact on over 95 permanent and 100 casual jobs, and those people would be forced to join the jobless queues. Notwithstanding the negative outcomes that

would be felt on the six campuses of this university, this severely negative legislation would make a mockery of Australia's endeavours to market its university programs and quality campus culture on the international arena, and so many of our universities are now relying on overseas students to come into our universities. I believe it is an appalling attack on the future of our universities, and I am interested in finding out from the Minister what will be the South Australian Government's approach to this legislation.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** Yesterday, I had the privilege of attending the opening of the new council chambers for Yorke Peninsula Council at Minlaton. As members would be aware, many of our councils in South Australia have undergone amalgamations during the past two years—in fact, starting just over two years ago. One of the councils that amalgamated to a greater extent than most councils was the District Council of Yorke Peninsula. The council consists of the former councils of Central Yorke Peninsula, Minlaton, Yorketown and Warooka. So, four councils came together to form one council.

I must say that I did not believe that an amalgamation of that size and extent would occur. In fact, I remember when we were discussing the benefits of council amalgamations that I said to one of the CEOs that I assumed there would probably be three councils on Yorke Peninsula. I envisaged there would be probably a combination of Yorketown, Warooka and Minlaton; Central Yorke Peninsula would stay as it was; and the former council of Northern Yorke Peninsula and Wallaroo, together with the councils of Bute and Port Broughton, would form another council. How wrong I was. Three councils were formed, but they were not the councils that I envisaged. In fact, four councils from Central and Southern Yorke Peninsula came together; in the northern area, Northern Yorke Peninsula and Wallaroo amalgamated to form the Copper Coast Council; and Port Broughton and Bute amalgamated to form Buronga West Council. Thus, we had the formation of those three councils.

One of the problems with Yorke Peninsula Council was that the meetings were held at Maitland in the northern part. It was a problem for those people who lived in the southern part. They had extensive distances to cover and not only did it take them time, but it was a significant cost. The council decided in its wisdom that it would establish a new council chambers at Minlaton and I went to the opening yesterday. It was very auspicious occasion. The council had its normal meeting day, and I was joined by the member for Wakefield, Neil Andrew, who is now Speaker of the House of Representatives, and also by the Vice President of the Local Government Association, Councillor Brian Hearn, who was representing the President of the Local Government Association, Councillor Rosemary Craddock.

I would like to thank the District Council of Yorke Peninsula for the hospitality extended to us. We were made to feel very welcome. I was delighted that the partners of the councillors were also invited to witness this auspicious occasion to formally dedicate the room as a council chamber. In earlier times, it had been the supper room of the Minlaton Town Hall and both my Federal colleague Neil Andrew and I know that supper room very well.

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** Yes, the Minister for Human Services knows it well because I remember when he, as Premier of this State, visited Yorke Peninsula and we were entertained in that room. It has certainly been brought up to an excellent

standard. My Federal colleague commented on the fact that, quite often, we as Liberal Party members have had our meetings in that supper room and that the council has decided, in its wisdom, to paint it in a predominantly blue colour which he thought was most appropriate. Far be it from me to comment on the wisdom of their selection of colours, but I certainly have no objection to their selection. It has come up very well and it is a credit to all concerned.

The previous week, the Minister for Police visited my electorate for the better part of two days. In fact, he also went to Minlaton. I thank him very sincerely for making the time to come not only to Minlaton but also to Maitland and Ardrossan.

*Members interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Lee that interjections are out of order.

**Mr MEIER:** I thank him sincerely for taking the time to visit the electorate of Goyder. It was his third visit in a relatively short time. Part of the reason for his visit was complaints from constituents about the police presence on Yorke Peninsula. That derives to some extent from the fact that Yorke Peninsula was one of the very few regions that combined under the recent policy to amalgamate police precincts. We combined with the Barossa region, so we now have one Chief Inspector looking after both the Barossa and Yorke Peninsula regions whereas previously we had our own Chief Inspector.

Before Christmas there were problems in the northern part of Yorke Peninsula and, again, I thank the Minister for coming personally to see what the problems were. I believe that many, if not all, of those have been sorted out. We will let the Minister know if they continue. There are real problems on Central Yorke Peninsula and one of the key reasons was that Maitland and Ardrossan were short of police. Ardrossan did not have police officers for some time and Maitland had only one officer instead of two. That was because the position at Maitland was subject to appeal. The reason with respect to Ardrossan was that the police officer had taken 12 months maternity leave.

The people at Maitland were very upset about a rash of break-ins, and I can understand that. It appears that it came down to one or two persons who broke into many, many residences in a town which, generally speaking, is fairly free of break-ins and robberies. The police were not able to track them. What upset people was that a second police officer had not been appointed to Maitland. The simple reason for that was that the appeal process was under way, and that took time. Under the old Act it could be a matter of years before an appeal was sorted out. Therefore, every member in this House should be delighted that the Liberal Government brought in the new police legislation, which has scaled down the appeal process so it is relatively short. I would hope that, once the regulations are through, the Act receives the Governor's proclamation and becomes law, these problems will not occur. If they do, it will only be a matter of weeks, not months. That is another great achievement of this Government.

I thank the Minister for Police, I thank the council very much for its hospitality and I congratulate it on establishing its new council chambers at Minlaton. Yorke Peninsula is very much a go-ahead place. We have a lot to offer but we need a lot of assistance, too. However, we are making great strides and I thank all Ministers who have shown an interest in Yorke Peninsula. I certainly will continue to push for Yorke Peninsula.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member's time has expired. I remind members that speaking times in the House are expressed in terms of maximum times, not minimum times.

Motion carried.

At 9.35 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 3 March at 2 p.m.