

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 1 June 1999

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

POKER MACHINES

A petition signed by 20 residents of South Australia requesting that the House support the legislation on poker machines that supports measures to give local residents the power to object to their installation, bans on their advertising and have them phased out was presented by Ms Bedford.

Petition received.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

A petition signed by 202 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government not to establish a radioactive waste repository in the Billa Kalina region was presented by Ms Breuer.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 26, 46, 53, 68, 94, 119, 134, 141, 146, 153, 160 and 173; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

EDS CONTRACT

In reply to **Mr FOLEY (Hart)** 28 October 1998.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: The bulk of the ('\$100 million') savings arising from the State's contract with EDS (Australia) Pty Ltd refers to savings achieved by reason of the adoption of the policy to outsource the provision of IT infrastructure services.

In the year 1993-94 (prior to the signing of the contract with EDS), the cost to the State for IT infrastructure services was in the order of \$78 million. The projected cost to the Government for the first two years of the contract (had it not outsourced), was of the order of \$152 million.

The cost to Government of baseline services for the first two full years of the contract has been approximately \$135 million. Thus the result for the first two full years of the contract has been a price paid to EDS of some \$17 million less than the projected cost that would have been incurred had the baseline services not been outsourced.

The contract for EDS has a nine year term and, as the Government's business relationship with EDS progresses, the Government expects the total amount paid to EDS to increase. This will be because the Government will be making greater use of technology to improve service delivery to the community. Market competitive pricing is secured through independent benchmarking.

WATER SUPPLY

In reply to **Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens)** 24 November 1998.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: SA Water's and United Water's records indicate only one call has ever been made to SA Water in regard to this property. The call was received on 12 October 1995 at 11.45 a.m. to repair a leaking stopcock and the matter was attended to on that same day. The meter at this property was removed on 16 March 1998.

On 24 November 1998, the property was visited in response to the question raised in Parliament by the honourable member. It was noted that the stopcock had a minor leak and this was repaired.

MOTOROLA

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)** 9 February.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: The Minister for Information Services has advised that the first part of the question referring to the so-called 'blow-out' of \$50 million to \$100 million is based on a false hypothesis. During Estimates, in June 1998, the Treasurer gave what he called a 'ballpark figure' of between \$150 million and \$200 million. The Treasurer did not purport to give a comprehensive or considered estimate of the total projected costs of the Government Radio Network over the seven years of the proposed contract with Telstra.

The latest estimate of the Government Radio Network included costs such as:

- hedging the State's pre-contract foreign exchange exposure;
- developing and running a billing system within Government for the use of the Network;
- the provision of contingency costs over the seven year life of the contract;
- leasing radio sites;
- installation and maintenance of terminal equipment; and
- the replacement of existing agency terminal equipment.

Given that the first part of the question is falsely based, it is unnecessary to answer the second. However, the following information is furnished on the subject of so-called 'coat-tailing'.

In 1992, the New South Wales Government signed a contract with Telstra to establish a government radio network in that State. As part of that bid, Telstra proposed the use of Motorola trunking equipment, and in doing so, negotiated a competitive pricing structure with Motorola. The NSW contract made provision for the purchase of equipment by other States in accordance with standing State and Commonwealth arrangements. After analysing the process used, the South Australian Government took advantage of these provisions.

In his recent report on matters pertaining to Motorola, the retired Chief Magistrate, Mr J. Cramond, stated that:

The evidence I have read... satisfies me that the process (coat-tailing) was not to the disadvantage of the State. Indeed, it achieved a beneficial price structure for the equipment which it might otherwise not have achieved.

In reply to **Mr FOLEY (Hart)** 9 February.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: The Minister for Information Services has advised as follows:

It is assumed that the question relates to the issues reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 9 February 1999 and apparently raised by Mr Richard Mann, Communications Division General Manager of Plessey Australia. It is understood that the report related to the supply of console equipment for the NSW Police Communications Centre.

The South Australian Government has been advised that there are a number of methods for interfacing console equipment to the proposed Government Radio Network in this State and that manufacturers other than Motorola are able to interface their equipment to the network.

WATER OUTSOURCING

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** 17 February.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: SA Water initiated the engagement of a consultant, in response to the obligations that SA Water has under the outsourcing contract for United Water to be fully involved in the upgrading of plant and equipment they operate and maintain in metropolitan Adelaide.

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was engaged on 3 June 1996. Its final report was received on 13 September 1996.

BCG considered a number of factors:

Examples of commercial practice indicated an evolution in sourcing arrangements, including capital improvements to plant and equipment.

Competitive tendering was recognised as the effective strategy for standard plant upgrades, but is less effective where specialist expertise and familiarity of the systems performance is required and where customised products or projects are involved.

Incorporating design makes good commercial sense given the decreased risks and improved efficiencies resulting from increased coordination of the total project.

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)—

SABOR Ltd—Financial Statements, 1997-98

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

Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia—
Report 1998

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

Legal Practitioners Act—Rules—Legal Practitioners
Education and Admission Council, 1999.

TAXATION REFORM

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Last week I spoke to the House about the need for tax reform. Since then we have seen a breakthrough in negotiations between the Commonwealth and the Australian Democrats, and that is welcome news. I am a long-term advocate of fundamental taxation reform, as is the Liberal Party in South Australia. The current tax system was designed for the 1930s to suit the Australian economy that existed between the Wars, not the international economy we are part of today.

As I said last week, tax reform is more than the GST. It is about tackling the mess of inefficient taxes that the States have been forced to rely on for their income. It is about providing an effective and efficient stream of income to fund our hospitals, schools and other essential services. This, not the GST, is the most crucial area of Australia's move towards a new tax system.

The political compromise necessitated by the balance of numbers in the Senate has prevented the Federal Government from introducing the transparent and competitive type of tax system that I certainly would have preferred to see. In its original form, the package offered significant economic benefits to all Australians. However, this has been eroded somewhat.

I am concerned about the impact of the new GST exemptions on small business in particular. However, politics is the art of the possible, and we must focus on the package as a whole, and it is clear that limited tax reform is better than no reform at all. Officials from Treasury and Finance are meeting with their Commonwealth Government counterparts today to examine the details of the revised tax package. I hope to be able to discuss this matter with the Prime Minister when I meet him tomorrow. The States and Territories should have input into the decision-making process which will be necessary as a result of the revised package.

However, let us make no mistake about the impact of tax reform on South Australia. The most important goal for this State, the abolition of wholesale sales tax, has been achieved under the agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Democrats. From 1 July next year, the tax that has added between 4 per cent and 6 per cent to the cost of our vital automotive exports will be gone. This will be a significant boost for Holden, for Mitsubishi and for all the firms that make up this industry and employ some 17 000 South Australians.

Manufacturing is this State's most important industry sector. Abolishing wholesale sales tax will help its competitiveness in both local and overseas markets and protect South Australian jobs and South Australian families. That can only be seen as good news for our State. I note that the Leader has called on the Democrats to reject the tax agreement reached last week. I gather that means that he supports the retention of wholesale sales tax, the burden on South Australian products going onto the international markets. I gather he believes that our State's automotive exports should have this tax.

It is remarkable that the South Australian ALP can reject a tax package that has such clear benefits for one of the most important sectors of our economy—the automotive industry—and, I would have thought, one of the most important parts of, in fact, its own constituency. It shows how the carefree world of opposition has removed the Labor Party from reality. The contrast between the Democrats and the Opposition could not be clearer. The Labor Party made a conscious decision to play no constructive part in the tax debate.

It decided to make itself an irrelevancy. We are now waiting for detail on how the new agreement impacts on the States. The principles reached at the Premiers' Conference last April must remain. We are not going to let an agreement that ends more than 50 years of disagreement between the States and the Commonwealth over revenue slip. We cannot allow an agreement that locks in guaranteed funds for South Australia through a system of horizontal fiscal equalisation to fail. The GST has been the focus of the tax debate, but these issues of State taxes and a guaranteed share of revenue for the States are the crucial matters of taxation reform. They are the matters that will decide if the States have the money available to meet their obligations with health, education and other community services. I look forward, with the other Premiers, to completing the tax reform process and finalising an intergovernment agreement that will protect the interests of this State and its people.

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I bring up the thirty-third report of the committee, on the pilchard fishery, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the Premier's ministerial statement today that the principles reached at the Premiers' Conference last April must remain, is the Victorian Premier wrong in saying that the GST agreement signed by the Premiers in April is 'fundamentally dead in the water', and will the Premier now demand new negotiations with the Commonwealth on the GST package to secure South Australia's financial base and,

at the same time, claw back the \$47 million that the Premier himself said he had lost during the last round of negotiations?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It was historic one day but he lost the deal the next.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Last week the Premier described the GST deal struck in April as a 'historic agreement' that ended disputation between the Commonwealth and the States and would end taxes on financial transactions that put Australian enterprises at an increasing disadvantage. The Premier repeated that statement in the House today. On 1 June 1999, following the deal between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Democrats, the Victorian Premier (Jeff Kennett) said that the April agreement was 'dead in the water' and that a new agreement must be struck now between the Federal Government and the States to preserve the States' position.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It is elementary: if changes are made to an agreement you rewrite the agreement, and that is going to occur. Let me go on to expand on the ministerial statement. Obviously, the Leader had his question prepared and, given the ministerial statement, was not quick enough on his feet to change it for today. Let me pick up the last point of the Leader's question about the \$47 million he claims I gave away in the last Premiers' Conference. As the Leader full well knows, at the Premiers' Conference there was a report from the Commonwealth Grants Commission. One contained a three year review; the alternative was a five year review. The recommendation was left to the Premiers' Conference.

South Australia had negotiated with every State and Territory bar one to support the five year review that would have meant \$47 million in benefit for South Australia. Which was the one State that stood up and objected? It was the New South Wales Labor Premier, Bob Carr. The person who has denied South Australia the \$47 million is Bob Carr, a colleague of the Leader of the Opposition. The Prime Minister accepted the precedent that, unless there was unanimous agreement—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: When they quieten down wanting to make the noise I will go on. The position clearly is that we reached agreement with all States and Territories, but it was blocked by the Labor Government in New South Wales because New South Wales was a short-term beneficiary. And what did New South Wales do with the \$166 million it got (which is why New South Wales would not support South Australia)? It pocketed \$166 million. New South Wales immediately took the \$166 million off payroll tax, that tax on jobs, and that has disadvantaged employees in this State because we cannot afford to reduce our payroll tax on business, that tax on jobs.

For almost a year in this Parliament we had been indicating that, unless we made some fundamental changes, such as the ETSA sale or lease option, we would not be able to compete with either New South Wales or Victoria, and that will put at very significant disadvantage our manufacturing industry and jobs in this State. We will see the reinvestment going interstate rather than maintaining that reinvestment here. Our whole strategy and policy is about building the economic base of this State again for the future and for jobs.

In relation to the inter-Government agreement, we have broken through a taxation system, as I said in the ministerial statement, that was more suitably applied between the First

and Second World Wars, not to an economy such as Australia's that is about to move into the next millennium, the next century, as an international global trading partner. What does the Leader of the Opposition want to say to the production line at General-Motors Holden as the workers are leaving, or down at Mitsubishi as the workers are leaving the plant: that he, the Leader of the Opposition, is happy for a tax to be placed on a Mitsubishi going to the market, or for a Holden Vectra going to the Middle East or Brazil, or for an airconditioner from Air International at Tea Tree Gully going to Korea, or a steering column? Is the Leader of the Opposition happy for those goods to have a 4 per cent to 6 per cent wholesale tax placed on them.

On a number of occasions that 4 per cent to 6 per cent is the difference between whether we—our companies here—get a contract to sell the air-conditioners or the steering columns to Korea, or the engine block back to Tokyo, or the Vectra out at Salisbury to the Middle East or to Brazil. That 4 per cent to 6 per cent can make or break an international contract. What will you tell the 700 additional workers that are being put on at the work force at Elizabeth to make those Vectras if you also maintain a tax that disadvantages them in selling that product into the international market? This is about ensuring that our manufacturing base is protected for the future and, in that, jobs in this State for the future. As I mentioned, we have 17 000 workers in the automotive industry in South Australia and, as best I can, I will protect every one of those jobs in the future.

We have a work force and a product going out of this State that we ought to be proud of. The quality of the product going into the international markets is something for which this State can be proud. But it is a global marketplace and if we do not get the input costs down to the same as elsewhere—whether it is the 4 per cent to 6 per cent of wholesale sales tax or whether it is reducing the cost of electricity, so that they are paying the same cost of electricity here as they are in Melbourne, producing a Ford or a Toyota, or the same cost of electricity as applies overseas—we will put at risk investment and jobs in the industry in this State.

I will not walk away from preserving, protecting and looking after the interests of the work force. And I would have thought that one of the fundamental tenets of the Labor Party was to look after the work force: that is what it claims to stand for. But its policy direction at the moment is putting at risk those very jobs in the industry.

In relation to the inter-Government agreement—the abolition of financial institutions duties—that is to be delayed some six months as a result of this agreement. In addition, bank debits tax that was also to be abolished will, as I understand it, now not be abolished, because of the arrangements that have been put in place. As I said in my ministerial statement, Treasury officials are in Canberra today and they will give me a report, hopefully later today, on the implications.

It is not a desirable outcome. The better outcome was the tax deal that was on the table—and I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that his counterparts, the Premier of New South Wales, the Premier of Queensland and the Premier of Tasmania, all Labor Premiers, signed the agreement. The only Labor Leader who seems to be out of kilter is this Leader of the Opposition in South Australia. The fact is that, in the past, there was no wholesale sales tax on mining, financial services or tourism, which meant that Western Australia with mining, Queensland with tourism and New South Wales with financial services did not have a wholesale

sales tax. South Australia and Victoria, with a manufacturing base, have. This will correct the disproportionate tax take amongst the States. We have been disadvantaged for 30 or 40 years: at last, we look like correcting it.

STATE EXPORTS

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Premier advise the House of South Australia's export performance this financial year?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I thank the member for Flinders for her question. Her electorate, of course, has been contributing substantially to the export effort of this State and, importantly, has an industry sector in the aquaculture industry that is growing substantially and positioning South Australia in the future, and also giving a great impetus to the country and regional areas of the State for job creation in this new industry sector.

South Australia's economy continues to show some positive signs, despite the difficult financial crisis in our Asian markets and, I guess, almost an Opposition determined to dampen economic growth in any way possible. Recent export figures for the past nine months of 1998-99—that is, through to the end of March 1999—show that South Australia's exports were up by 7.1 per cent compared to the same period for the previous year. That is an increase of something like \$264 million over last year.

Importantly—and this is the comparison—national exports over the same nine month period were down .2 per cent. As members can see, South Australia shows a significant increase, amidst a national downturn or *status quo*. Total South Australian exports in the period were \$3.98 billion and, if exports continue at this rate, the State's record export total for any financial year of \$5.01 billion, which was in 1996-97, will be easily exceeded this year. The South Australian performance relative to that of other States is even better than these figures show. Since it appears that we have been hit harder than others by the Asian crisis, South Australia's exports to East Asia in these nine months were down 13 per cent. This shows that we have been much more successful than other States in diversifying markets. Our exporters have responded proactively to the Asian crisis and identified new and different markets to ensure the future of their businesses.

I have advised the House previously that the recent ABS figures (I think they were) indicated that we are exporting to more destinations internationally than is any other State in Australia. South Australia, with a population of one and a half million, goes to more markets than does New South Wales, which has three or four million people and a bigger base, and that is something that, once again, demonstrates South Australian innovation, creativity and determination.

For example, in the nine months our exports to the European union were up by 8.6 per cent; to New Zealand, by 9.4 per cent; to the United States, our biggest market, by 3.3 per cent; and, to the Middle East, by a staggering 88 per cent. I put that down to the success of Holden's Vectra going into the Middle East market and other commodities. The food sector performance is particularly impressive. Our wine exports are up 21 per cent to \$489 million, and this is on top of over 40 per cent growth last year. Fisheries exports were up 10.6 per cent to \$194 million, and processed food and beverage exports were up 3.3 per cent. This shows that the Food for the Future initiative we have in place is starting to produce results.

The exports in our automotive sector have also increased dramatically. Exports of cars and components have increased by 26.4 per cent to \$506 million. Our automotive sector is clearly very internationally competitive already, and I would hope that the anti-GST Opposition would understand the importance of reducing that tax on that industry sector. There is one final major policy initiative that we need to put in place for this State to break free, and that is for the Parliament to give consideration to the leasing options for ETSA, to reduce the debt and to enable us to have the capacity to reinvest in industry in the future. What this Government is about and has been about is rebuilding the economy decimated by the Labor Party.

We still have a \$7.4 billion outstanding debt. I do not know how on earth you allowed your financiers to sign a deal with dentists in Belgium for 15 per cent, which was locked in and which we, the taxpayers, have to pay. That is what you gave us. We want to get rid of that. We want the capacity to break free from that debt of the past and actually build and invest in new industry sectors for the future: we want to invest in biotechnology and, with regard to IT, we want to enable the whole of South Australia to tap into the information age of the next century. We want to position this State with industry sectors that can grow, and you cannot do it unless you have investment funds. Just as Tom Playford did with the manufacturing industry of the 1950s, we want to put in place an industry of which we will be proud today and 50 years later and which will still be employing and contributing to the economy of this State. It is a matter of looking at natural strengths and investing in those natural strengths for new industry sectors. This Parliament has now an ideal opportunity to let this State move forward, forget and move past the debt of the past.

STATE TAXES

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Given that under the new Liberal-Democrat GST deal the Federal Government can no longer guarantee the abolition of State taxes, does the Premier agree with the Victorian Premier (Jeff Kennett) that States will be forced to maintain a raft of dysfunctional taxes, and will the Premier tell the House which State taxes will now be retained and how much this will cost South Australians? An article in the *Financial Review* of 31 May 1999 says that, under the deal hammered out between John Howard and Meg Lees, there are no guarantees that GST revenue will grow enough to allow the abolition of State taxes. The article states that the abolition of FID has been delayed from January 2001 until July 2001 and that there is no guarantee that the debits tax will ever be abolished.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I presented a ministerial statement to the House and I have answered the question from the Leader of the Opposition. Every one of the Deputy Leader's questions has already been answered.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Employment advise the House what the Government is doing to generate employment growth in South Australia?

Ms Breuer interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The House, I hope, will be aware of the statements made by the Premier and the

Treasurer last week and will have read the employment statement released by this Government. That puts this House in sharp contrast with Jan McMahon who, as Secretary of the Public Service Association, claimed last week on radio that the budget does not deliver better outcomes for those currently unemployed. It is obvious that the General Secretary has not read the Premier's employment statement, nor bothered to read the *Hansard*, which clearly says, as the Premier has stated repeatedly, that employment is among the highest priority issues to be tackled by this Government. The 1999 employment statement builds—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Peake, rather than make light of other people's unemployment, might do better to listen.

Mr Conlon interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: And I will have to look up the word.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will get on with his reply or I will withdraw leave.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The 1999 employment statement builds on a three year \$100 million package per year of initiatives that was announced in last year's statement. This year's statement not only recommits \$100 million a year but adds another \$28.5 million over three years to that package and will provide employment for an additional 7 400 people. That is notwithstanding the fact that the Premier, when he originally announced the statement, said that he was seeking with that \$100 million to provide 4 500 jobs as a target over two years. In the first year we have achieved 3 500 jobs so we are already, thankfully, well ahead of the levels we set ourselves, but we are still prepared to make a further commitment.

The 1999 employment statement renews the Government's fight against unemployment and is a programmed package that seeks to create jobs, improving job seeker employability, and to better coordinate the delivery of Government services and enhance the competitiveness of South Australia's regions and businesses. The latest employment package reflects the key issues emerging through these consultations (which we had through the jobs workshops last year) and through the report of the Regional Development Task Force, and through the Premier's Partnership for Jobs forums. They are these: assisting development; assisting regions; assisting business; and assisting people.

Ms Breuer: Well, why don't you—

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Because this Government has a broader vision and is not on a single railway track that heads nowhere. It is looking at the needs of all South Australians. The Premier just stated to this House that it is a matter of looking at our natural strengths and investing in them. This House is a debating Chamber, but I would ask every member of this House, including every member of the Opposition, to think on the Premier's statement. If the natural strength of South Australia is not its people, what then is it?

The Premier and every member of this Government calls on the Opposition to do what the Leader of the Opposition has much vaunted in the past, and that is to take a bipartisan approach to employment. If the Leader of the Opposition or any member opposite has a better idea, a better strategy for employment, let them put it on the table. Let them not wait until some mythical time in which they seek to be in government. People are unemployed now. We need good ideas now. If you want to be bipartisan, be bipartisan and put those ideas

on the table. Otherwise stop knocking and let us get on with the job in the best interests of South Australia.

WINE TAX

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier guarantee that the State's vital wine industry will not face a punitive 29 per cent Liberal wine tax on top of the GST? Will the Premier now support the Federal Opposition's stand on this tax and is the Premier taking this up with the Prime Minister tomorrow? The wine industry has estimated that the 29 per cent wine equalisation tax to be levied in addition to the GST will add significantly to the cost of premium wine, hit sales and cellar door trading, and cost jobs. Federal Labor is in favour of a lower 24.5 per cent tax rate and exempting the first \$100 000 in cellar door sales.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I point out to the Leader that he did not acknowledge in his remarks that South Australia has had a very significant win in that the Commonwealth Government has rejected proposals for a volumetric tax on wine, which was proposed by some wine makers in Western Australia and which would have had a detrimental impact in the bulk wine regions of South Australia, the Riverland being a major producer of a number of bulk wines. So let us put clearly on the record that we have had a substantial win. The concurrence and support of the Federal Government for an *ad valorem* method of taxation rather than a volumetric tax is a significant protector of the industry base in South Australia.

In relation to the rate of tax to be established on wine sales, that has been the basis of ongoing discussions between South Australia and the Commonwealth. The Deputy Premier and I, following meetings with industry sectors in South Australia, have put to the Commonwealth Government a variation to the rate of taxation as it applies to the wine industry. The original projections of 32 per cent plus did not materialise. The rate has been set at about 29 per cent and we have argued that it ought to be about 24 per cent or 25 per cent. In discussions between officials from the South Australian Government and the Federal Treasury, it looked as though progress was being made. However, on further advice, that is not the case.

We have said consistently that cellar door sales should not be taxed because we want to support the boutique wine industry in this State, not only for the wineries themselves but for the contribution they make to the tourism potential of the regions, be it McLaren Vale, the Barossa Valley, the Adelaide Hills, the Clare Valley or the Coonawarra. It is the boutique wineries that have much traffic through them during the course of a week. Those two matters are still subject to final determination by the Commonwealth, and further consideration by the State in relation to boutique wineries.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services.

Mr Atkinson: How is your Bill going, Joe?

Mr SCALZI: It is going very well, Mr Atkinson. Can the Minister outline the details of an important new road safety measure for South Australia?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: As I am sure all members in this House would agree, road trauma and road crash is a very serious issue which has a major social impact

and also a significant economic impact on the well-being of South Australians. Whenever a new initiative is put in place by either Liberal or Labor Governments, I give accolades where they are due. When the Labor Party introduced speed cameras in South Australia, there was a significant reduction in the number of road deaths. Of course, that reduction in the number of road deaths is not what we would desire or aspire to as a Government or a Parliament, I am sure: that is, there are still far too many people crashing and causing road trauma on South Australian roads.

Just this week, we heard of another tragedy on rural South Australian roads. In fact, this year we have seen in excess of 50 road deaths in rural South Australia, and that is, I understand, one of the highest statistics of road deaths in rural South Australia since we have been keeping records. The existing speed cameras have clearly passed their use by date and, as many members know, it has been the intention to replace these with the new German model that is used in many countries throughout the world. The new German speed camera system called the Traffipax Speedophot Radar has been used in New South Wales for 2½ years. Today 18 of these new cameras are being introduced onto South Australian roads, 14 being used in the metropolitan area and four being taken out into rural South Australia.

It is very concerning to me as Police Minister that in the last 12 months in South Australia more than 1 150 vehicles have been detected exceeding the speed limit by in excess of 40 km/h. Interestingly enough, just near the Adelaide Oval in recent weeks, in the middle of the afternoon of a working weekday, three vehicles were detected at speeds in excess of the speed limit by 40 km/h or more, in fact at speeds of over 100 km/h. This is very concerning to the Government when it is doing everything possible to reduce the number of road crashes.

The Federal Office of Road Safety Driver Survey recently published some interesting statistics, and I will put a couple on the public record. First, 34 per cent of all motorists nominated speed as a primary crash cause, whilst 57 per cent of motorists overall nominated speed as one of the main causes. So people are starting to understand that speed creates a major increase in the number of road crashes. But what worries me is that in South Australia only 21 per cent of South Australians have slowed down compared with the national average of 26 per cent.

However, I am pleased to see that 99 per cent of drivers in South Australia agree that drivers who exceed the speed limit by 10 km/h should be fined. The bottom line is this: last year road fatalities and significant road crashes cost South Australians economically more than \$400 million. Socially, there was a major impact on hundreds of South Australian families. We do not want to see people speeding, but these new sophisticated cameras will be able to scan across four lanes and pick up speeding motorists, whether towards the vehicle or going away from it, thus they will have the capacity to catch more people if they elect to speed. The simple message is: slow down, do not incur speeding fines and get home safely to your families.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the widespread confusion about the application of the GST, will the Premier call on the Prime Minister to arrange a briefing for South Australian small business leaders and retailers to explain just what is in and what is out of the GST

deal? It is understood that, while a cooked chicken in pieces will attract the 10 per cent tax, a whole cooked chicken will not.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I can understand their embarrassment.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The parson's nose gets taxed—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN:—but the whole chook does not.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader. If he starts shouting over me again, I will name him on the spot.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, what about the interjections from the other benches.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: All right. A buttered bread roll will be taxed; a roll without butter will not be; a cake with eggs will attract the 10 per cent GST but, if it is made with eggs in the ingredients, it will not. While striking this deal, and unlike Senator Harradine who has reaped millions of dollars for Tasmania, South Australian Senator Meg Lees did not negotiate one single concession or benefit for South Australia. Apparently extra money for the railway was not on Meg's or Natasha's list.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It is interesting to see the Labor Party come out and have a go. What Senator Lees has done has given greater protection to 17 000 jobs in the automotive industry, to start off with. At least Senator Lees has a policy, which is more than you have got and more than Kim Beazley has got. I would not know what Kim Beazley's policy was, other than saying 'No' to everything and anything.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: He supports an extra \$100 million for the railway.

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I understand the Leader is having a rough day, but he can just tone it down a bit. I do not think the GST is going to make the news tonight. However, I just want to make this point: the Leader was asking about having a meeting with industry leaders. There is a meeting at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. It is a regular meeting held between the Government and a range of peak industry bodies and we will be discussing the GST and one or two other policy matters, in the light of developments, and looking at how we start moving South Australia forward. As it relates to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, I simply say that the preferable outcome would have been the GST package as originally put forward.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader for the second time for interjecting after he has been called to order by the Chair.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: That would have been the preferable package. However, as I said in the ministerial statement, politics is the art of the possible. What has been negotiated is an arrangement between the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Democrats. The Australian Democrats did take to the last Federal election support for a GST, food exempt. To that extent Meg Lees—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Peake.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:—has certainly been consistent. Importantly, I put to the House that what Meg Lees has done is fight for South Australia, perhaps unintentionally. Senator

Lees, in the package she has put forward, has enabled us to get rid of wholesale sales tax and, in addition, we will maintain horizontal fiscal equalisation. I will take every dollar that New South Wales and Victoria contribute to the maintenance and standards of education, police and health services in South Australia because that will also be an outcome of the agreement. This is a desirable outcome—not the best outcome—but a desirable outcome for South Australia.

SPORTS FUNDING

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Can the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing advise the outcome of the distribution of the management and development program funding? I understand that sporting and recreation associations have recently been notified of grants under the management and development program.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I thank the member for Colton for his question because I know that, like all members, he has a strong interest in sport and recreation matters. Members will recall that when we wound up Living Health certain funds were transferred to the Office of Recreation and Sport and to the arts for distribution by those agencies. On receiving the moneys the Office of Recreation and Sport undertook a review and generally adopted the process whereby more money would be poured into program and management development rather than signs and sponsorship. To that end, the associations—recreation and sporting—over the past three or four weeks have been notified of their allocations for the next 12 months.

It is important to realise that the underlying philosophy of the distribution of the money is trying to continue to build a solid base of junior participation in both sport and recreation, which obviously is a feeding ground for the elite level of the sport. Politicians of all persuasions take great delight in congratulating successful athletes, whether they be Commonwealth or Olympic Games athletes or members of the Crows or the 36ers, netball players, members of Quit Lightening, or whatever—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Or even our croquet team which, I am advised, has won the Australian championship five times straight. It is important that a good junior development program and good management is in place to ensure that we continue to build that solid foundation. The money will certainly be targeted in that direction. The amount is approximately \$6 million, so the Government has made a substantial contribution towards recreation and sporting organisations. Some of the different levels of grants include the South Australian National Football League, \$430 000; the South Australian Cricket Association, \$230 000; the South Australian Blind Sporting Clubs Association \$12 000; and the SPARC Disability Foundation \$150 000.

In terms of the bigger organisations that rely on salaries to deliver their programs, such as the South Australian National Football League, the Basketball Association of South Australia or Tennis SA, we have made a commitment to them over a three year period subject to their meeting certain performance criteria, and that allows them to plan far better for the delivery of their programs over a two or three year period. Some changes have been made in that regard. As required, all of the programs still, of course, have a health promotion aspect to the grant funding, and with that sort of distribution we look forward to continuing success and

greater participation by the sport and recreation associations in South Australia.

WATER LICENCE, HUNDRED OF SHAUGH

Ms RANKINE (Wright): Will the Minister for Environment and Heritage advise the House when she first became aware of the application for a water licence in the Hundred of Shaugh by the former member for MacKillop, Dale Baker, and did the Minister issue any instructions, either orally or in writing, about how this application should be dealt with?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am afraid the honourable member has not given me enough and sufficient information to be able to answer her question. In the first instance—

Mr Clarke: Just ask Mitch.

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

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: —I have not been made aware of any application made in the name of Dale Baker. If company names are involved with any of these applications they come directly to the delegates of the Minister, that is, the operational managers in the field, who deal with all applications. If the honourable member is genuinely interested in getting answers to her question then I suggest she supply me with further details so that I can come back with the information that she obviously desires.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATES

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Will the Minister for Local Government enlighten the House how members may explain to their constituents how it is that they will achieve savings through their local government rates as a result of the new emergency services levy when he has given the local government sector an ultimatum that, as a result of local government no longer being responsible for emergency services funding, the State Government expects local government to contribute \$4 million annually to the coffers of the State Treasury?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I thank the member for MacKillop for his question and regret that he has not approached me privately on this matter, because time does not permit a completely full answer. However, in answer to the question, at least in part, the assumption underlying the member for MacKillop's question is quite incorrect. Also, I do take some parliamentary umbrage to the use of the word that I am trying to coerce or dragoon local government. As the shadow Minister has acknowledged in this House, we have carefully built up a cooperative relationship with local government over the period of this Government. In the context of the emergency services levy, we continue to develop and to nurture—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The shadow Minister might do well to learn: one day, by accident of God, he might well be the Minister. We are continuing to work very cooperatively with the local government sector, as we have for the past two years. In the context of the emergency services levy—

An honourable member: Just answer the question.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: If you will let me, I will. In the context of the emergency services levy we are, therefore, currently negotiating with the LGA and the entire local government sector about the benefit to be derived from the imposition of the new emergency services levy.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: There is money—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The State Government used to pay a grant. This whole House knew, and the Minister introduced it in the Bill, that local government used to pay a contribution; and fire levies used to pay a contribution. We are now talking to and negotiating with local government about the best use of that money. I can absolutely assure the member for MacKillop that they are genuine negotiations which this Government is entering into in a spirit of cooperation with local government, because local government, like the State Government, does not believe that people are divided into three. There is not someone who says, 'This is your local government bit, this is your State Government bit and this is your Commonwealth Government bit.'

We are trying to negotiate a seamless interface between the two levels of Government where both local government and State Government act to the betterment of the good governance of the people of this State. It is being done cooperatively and it is being done with extreme goodwill on the part of both parties, and I look forward later in the session to announcing to this House whatever conclusion local government and the State Government arrive at together. Therefore, the member for MacKillop will not need to explain to his electors: his local councils and this Government will.

POLICE OFFICERS, SERVICE

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Will the Minister for Police inform the House of the average number of years' service for serving police officers, how that average differs from statistics five, 10 and 15 years ago, and the breakdown of these figures for male and female police officers?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I am sorry that I am not a walking encyclopaedia, as I have often tried to indicate to the honourable member. I know that we keep a lot of good statistics in our head as a Government, but we cannot keep everything in our head. So, I will take the question on notice and report back in due time.

SCHOOL LEAVERS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): My question is directed to the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training. What action is the Government taking to ensure that school leavers are job ready?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Vocational education training in South Australia moves forward from success to success, and I am very pleased to announce that students are taking it up with great enthusiasm. Recent figures that have been given to me show that, in 1998, 13 593 South Australian secondary school students undertook vocational education programs. This includes both State and Federally funded programs: there were about 10 000 under State funding, with the balance of 3 593 being under Federal Government projects. That amounts to an increase of some 224 per cent since 1997, which I think is just an excellent outcome.

One only has to look at the comments in the *Sunday Mail* over the weekend about the Windsor Gardens Vocational College, not only from the teachers but also from the students, in terms of the outcomes that they are receiving from that college. We look forward to even more successes

from there. I do not have to remind the House of programs such as—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I have to remind the member for Ross Smith, because we just have to keep on telling him to make sure it gets through. I do not have to remind the House of such programs as the engineering employment programs that have been undertaken throughout the State. That is an extremely successful program. The Millicent High School program—and I have mentioned this before in the House—has provided 195 out of 200 students with jobs. These young people are working in and with industry to ensure that they are job and industry ready. It comes across in school based apprenticeships, in career planning, regional skills development, and key competencies for employment and enterprise education.

Of course, the other area involved is through the Australian National Authority grants of some \$500 000 to each State and the projects that are being undertaken there. Xavier College, which is in my electorate, picked up \$250 000 this year. It is undertaking a project in getting young people ready for market gardening and for the horticultural area of the northern Adelaide plains. This will ensure that there are people well trained and ready for the Bolivar pipeline and the additional economic activity that will come through food growing in that northern Adelaide area.

I would like to praise South Australia's employers, because they have also taken this up with a lot of enthusiasm, working with teachers, school councils and the Government to ensure that students get the very best out of this educational opportunity. The latest announcement in our budget is that the Government has put in a further \$13.5 million over the next three years to fund the Ready, Set, Go program, which was due to cease as at 30 June.

This just further reinstates this Government's commitment towards vocational education training. It brings back the balance in our education system that disappeared in the 1980s when the direction was that everybody must aspire towards a university education. Not so! Not everybody wants to go to university or has the ability to do so. We have young people who have very good skills in the trades, working with industry and ensuring that we have young people ready to go into the motor industry and other industries in South Australia. We want to make them and our State successful in its growing economic base.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

Mr SNELLING (Playford): Given the Partnerships 21 initiative which was recently launched, can the Minister for Education and Children's Services guarantee that no kindergartens will be forced to share campus facilities with local primary schools, and that any kindergartens that undertake a sharing arrangement will retain their separate identity and maintain services, such as early intervention programs which require specialist skills? I have been approached by a concerned parent who lives in my electorate and who has a child with special needs. He is worried that, if Ingle Farm kindergarten is forced to share a campus with the local primary school, there will be a running down of resources and his child will be unfairly disadvantaged.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: One of the great benefits of Partnerships 21 is that it is totally voluntary. The fact is that nobody—no school or kindergarten—need come into Partnerships 21 local school management unless they so

desire. There is no compulsion in this program. As I was stating to the House only last week, the problem with the New Zealand system that we looked at was that it forced everybody to go into local school management. It was the wrong decision; they admit that now. Not every school wants to take part. Moreover, any school or kindergarten that is not part of the first raft of schools that come into the program will not be disadvantaged. They can take their own time. If they want to hold out for a couple of years, by all means. If they do not ever want to come into Partnerships 21, there will be no compulsion on any school at any time.

By way of example, a collocation between a kindergarten and a primary school will be the decision of the local kindergarten and the local primary school. I am advised that some already operate on the same campus. If the kindergarten and the primary school want to join forces they can do that, similar to what we have suggested in rural schools, where there may be clusters of small schools that want one management body to oversee all those schools. Flexibility enables choice and gives back the power to the kindergarten community to ask, 'Do we want to join in with the local primary school? Are there benefits for us or not?' As the honourable member has stated, there may be particular programs that the kindergarten sees no benefit from, and it will want to stay in the same system. It will be able to do that. That is the beauty of this system: the choice is there. It places the power in the hands of that kindergarten council or the school council. If they decide to join the two together, then it is a matter of the management committee looking at the finances of the two and ensuring adequate programs for both areas.

Again, that is a matter for the local school committee or school council. There is no forced commitment on any school or any kindergarten to join this scheme. It is very different from the schemes of other Governments, from those of Labor Governments and particularly from the New Zealand Government's scheme, which people were forced to join.

SA WATER

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises advise the House of what impact the SA Water initiatives announced in last week's budget will have for the people of South Australia?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The honourable member has a longstanding and abiding interest in water, and his question gives me a great opportunity to explain the benefits that South Australia will receive as a result of the \$139 million that the Government will spend in 1999-2000 to improve the water and waste water systems. The Government's objective is to provide the best infrastructure in order to provide the best service. Unfortunately, it seems as though this objective is not favoured by members sitting opposite, because they continually carp at and criticise the strategies. Whilst the rules have changed when it comes to the supply of electricity (because of the market and so on), the Labor Party continues with its policy-free zone. But times have changed. However, leopard-like, the spots continue to appear on the Opposition.

The archaic view from opposite can be contrasted with the objectives of the Government, one of which quite clearly can be seen in this year's SA Water budget, which demonstrates an ongoing commitment to building up the future of this State in relation to improved water and waste water services. This year the capital infrastructure of SA Water represents an

increase in expenditure of \$46 million, compared with last year's budget. That will be spent on both new and ongoing works. Many of the projects focus on improving environmental quality, on water quality, and on upgrading infrastructure to ensure the reliability of the supply. A large part of the improved services will be the vastly improved environmental performance of some of the major waste water treatment plants.

This is a tribute to SA Water and to the environmental improvement program and demonstrates how hard the Government works at improving the environment through these initiatives and how important a priority it is for the Government, since obviously there are other ways in which the money could be spent. I am sure that it must be galling for the Opposition to see the vast improvements occurring in SA Water, given that during the time when the present Opposition was on the Government benches it presided over an E&WS Department that made a \$47 million loss. Not only were the people of South Australia paying for their water through their water rates, they were also paying an extra \$47 million. That was in just one year. We changed that around dramatically to the tune of a \$100 million plus profit: last year I think it was \$103 million.

The sorts of changes that have been brought about by the Government give us the opportunity to spend money where people want it, which is in better, more reliable water supplies and in environmental improvement. The Government is concerned about providing the best infrastructure and services, and SA Water is a tribute to that. The extra budgetary allocation to that sector is an indication of how importantly the Government regards these major matters.

MENTAL HEALTH

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Will the Minister for Human Services explain or order an urgent investigation into why there were no available beds in the metropolitan area for emergency mental health referrals on the evening of Sunday, 30 May 1999? The Opposition has been given details of a case last Sunday evening where carers, who sought assistance for a person with a mental illness at the Modbury Hospital, were told that no beds were available in the metropolitan area. Contrary to assurances about staffing given by the Minister last November, there were five vacant beds at Woodleigh House that could not be used because there was no doctor, and carers were told that the earliest time the ASIS team could see the patient was 2.30 p.m. the following day. The ASIS team was unable to assist with the carers' concerns for the patient's safety other than to suggest that the patient should again ring the emergency number.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The member for Elizabeth has referred to a specific case that occurred at Modbury Hospital. I will get a full report on that because I am not aware of the details and I will bring back an answer to the House.

COORONG AND LOWER LAKES

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): Can the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs explain the Ramsar management plan and in particular what this means for the River Murray's estuarine lakes of Alexandrina and Albert and the Coorong?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his continued interest in this very

important area of South Australia. South Australia is once again meeting its responsibilities and objectives for the environment. The Coorong, Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert Ramsar draft management plan will shortly be released for public comment, and that follows extensive community involvement during its preparation. As this House would know, Australia is a signatory to the international Ramsar Convention and Australia has listed 53 wetlands of international importance under that convention. Within South Australia there are a number of significant wetlands which we have the responsibility of conserving. The Coorong, Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert wetlands is one of these.

The preparation of a management plan adopting the principles of wise use of the wetlands in an ecologically sustainable manner is a commitment that this Government takes seriously. The Coorong and Lower lakes is a unique and spectacular area of our State. Some 85 species of water bird have been recorded in the region, including the rare Fairy Tern and the endangered Little Tern, which nest on islands in the Coorong. The region is also central to the Ngarrindjeri culture expressed through cultural and spiritual histories of dreaming stories. Many Ngarrindjeri live and work in that area. The lakes are an important water resource for irrigators, and water diversions for horticulture and viticulture are extremely important to the economy of that region. Both the lakes and the Coorong provide a variety of nature-based tourism activities and many opportunities in that region.

The preparation of the management plan was carried out with an emphasis on community consultation, transparency and the involvement of all relevant Government agencies. A community reference group made up of people representing relevant peak organisations with a regional focus was established. The group was chaired by Mrs Valerie Ball, OAM, formerly Mayor of Strathalbyn and now Deputy Mayor of Alexandrina Council.

Mr Lewis: An outstanding—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I agree with the member for Hammond—an outstanding person. The planning process has been significantly enhanced by the contribution made by the 21 men and women who made up this particular group. I would place on record my thanks and that of the Government for the work that they have done in this area. The draft management plan will be available for public comment until the end of September. The Government invites all South Australians to share in the vision for the conservation of this very important environmental ecological and cultural attribute of this whole area, which includes the Coorong and the Lower lakes.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): As Presiding Member of the Public Works Committee, I bring up the ninety-ninth report of the committee, being an interim report on the Strathmont Centre development, aged care facility, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Mr HILL (Kaurana): I will use the few minutes available today to draw the attention of the House and, I hope, that of the Attorney-General to a concern with the operations of the Motor Vehicles Act and, in particular, the transfer of title of motor vehicles. Recently a constituent of mine was caught out badly in this regard when in early December last year he purchased a motor vehicle from a person he believed to be a friend for, I think, \$4 000. He also gave him a \$1 000 car that he owned himself in exchange for a 1994 four-wheel drive Hi-Lux Toyota ute. This was a cash transfer. He signed the registration form and then re-registered the vehicle a week later and registered the change of ownership at that same time.

He did not think to ask whether the vehicle was currently under finance, and the Registration & Licensing Office did not bother to tell him that for \$5 he could get a finance check. After having driven the car for three months, and having spent some \$2 000 to upgrade it by purchasing tyres, installing a CD player and doing some mechanical work, he was surprised when a bailiff knocked on his door with a paper in his hand and said that the finance company (and since it was reasonably decent about the matter I will not name it) wanted the car back and that \$3 500 was owed on the vehicle. He was given until Friday 7 May to pay the \$3 500.

My constituent is a single parent, on some sort of social welfare payment, and would find it very difficult to find the \$3 500. He was caught in a terrible situation because, if he did not pay the \$3 500, he would lose the upgraded car which was now worth \$6 000 or \$7 000. One of the options was to go to the police regarding the fraud perpetrated against him. The police said, 'The guy has gone to Queensland. It is only \$4 000, not a large sum of money, and there is not much we can do to get him back into South Australia.'

The other option was to go to Legal Aid. They told him they were booked out for two weeks, but by then the car would have been sold, so he would have to go to a private lawyer. He could not afford a private lawyer, but he did get some advice, and put some sort of caveat on the property of the person who sold the car to him. He will now have to go through the complicated legal process of suing that person and trying to recover his money. There is some chance he may get his money back, but many people in similar circumstances who buy a car from a mate or somebody they meet in a pub then discover at a later date—in this case, three months later—that money is owing on the car and the finance company has the right to get the car back.

It is easy enough to say the buyer should beware, but I was not aware that for \$5 you can get a finance check carried out on any motor vehicle. Something should be done to ensure that, when a person does seek to re-register a motor vehicle in this way, officers of the Department of Motor Registration—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr HILL: Exactly. It should be automatically placed in the transfer document that a finance check should be conducted and you can do it for \$5, otherwise many more citizens will be caught out in this way, and crooks and people committing fraud will get away with blue murder. I would appreciate it if the Attorney-General—if he ever reads these comments—could chase up that matter.

The other matter I wished to raise today briefly in the time available is to do something I would not often do, and that is to congratulate a Government Minister. I congratulate the Hon. Robert Lawson in another place, in his capacity as Minister for Administrative Services, for a very good decision he made recently. Some of my constituents who live on the western side of South Road in what is now Old Noarlunga have been campaigning for some years now to have the suburb returned to its former name of Old Noarlunga. The Government, through the Government Naming Authority, had recommended that that part of Old Noarlunga be changed to Seaford.

The residents found out as a result of a local government notice being issued. They were not consulted at all about the change of name. They were most disturbed because of the effect it would have on businesses in that area, on property values and a whole range of other things. They campaigned very hard about this issue. Steve Singleton, a local resident who coordinated the activity, deserves a lot of praise for the way he went about it. Finally we went to see Mr Lawson who agreed to the transfer back to the original name. I congratulate him for that.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): A couple of weeks ago my wife and I enjoyed a very pleasant weekend in the Flinders Ranges. We were fortunate enough to spend two nights at Arkaba Station. The accommodation in the little bed and breakfast cottage on the property was superb. It was a most enjoyable occasion. On the Saturday, we were given a magnificent opportunity to observe and enjoy some of the most superb scenery that could be seen anywhere in Australia and, I would suggest, anywhere in the world. We went on the mountain top or hill top tour—I am not quite sure which it is—with young Matt Rasheed. We were fortunate enough that he was able to take us around for most of the day. It was one of the most enjoyable days we have spent for a long time. On top of that, during the day, we were expressing concern about the fact that the property was so dry and that night they saw more rain fall than had been the case for many months.

Mr Hill: That's because you're a wet!

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: It has nothing to do with my being a wet. It is understandable why Hans Heysen loved that area so much and painted so many of his well known and world renowned paintings in that area.

We also took the opportunity of once again having a look at the Wilpena development. That is another superb development and I have had the opportunity to see the development as it has progressed. This time, of course, I had the opportunity to see it almost in its completed form, including the new accommodation quarters, the upgraded accommodation facilities and the upgraded camp grounds which are all superb. I am pleased that the Minister for Tourism is in the Chamber at present because I would suggest there is a considerable need for the promised extra powered camping sites to be provided.

It is a vast and huge improvement on what was there before. The Rasheeds are doing a fantastic job, both at Arkaroola and Wilpena. I was thrilled with the interpretation centre, the visitor and information centre, a superb development, as good as any other development I have seen anywhere else in Australia. We also took the opportunity again to look at the old Wilpena Station and, if ever there were huge possibilities for development in this State, they are presented not only in the old station homestead but in the surrounding outbuildings which are quite magnificent and

which one day I hope we will see developed. I was thrilled to see the upgrading taking place of the airstrip at Hawker, because it has been on the books for a long period. Also, I understand that arrangements have been made for the upgrading of the airstrip at Balcanoona, which is now operational, to serve Arkaroola. That has been needed for some time as well.

Finally, on the way back we called in to have a delightful lunch at Bluey Bluntstone's blacksmith shop at Melrose, at the foot of Mount Remarkable. For anyone going up that way, I suggest it is a superb place for a meal. I also wanted to say how delighted I was to see the Wilpena Pound hybrid power station, the largest solar/diesel combination in the southern hemisphere. It was a great thrill to see it working and to know that it is a success, with 1 260 solar panels in all, doing a magnificent job up there. On average, it will provide between 25 and 60 per cent of the resort's power requirements. This was something we fought for a long time. It is a great asset for Wilpena, it is a great asset for South Australia, and I am delighted that so many international visitors are showing an interest in that plant.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): Last Friday I had the pleasure of visiting Southern Domiciliary Care and Rehabilitation Services on its open day, where I was able to meet some of its clients, supporters and a number of workers in the service. I indulged my interest in occupational health and safety, particularly injuries to women, in discussion with them, because I know from my previous work that the care industry is very dangerous for women and, in fact, they sustain a large number of injuries to the musculo-skeletal system, particularly the back. The member for Waite is also aware that this is a problem within the child care industry.

I saw that there was a demonstration of manutention, which I knew to be a system of manual handling that has not long been introduced to Australia. There were many hopes that it might make a significant improvement in preventing musculo-skeletal injuries, particularly in the area of handling patients because handling people is a very different proposition from handling dead weights. It is often a more dangerous proposition. I have subsequently had the chance to research the dimensions of this injury rate and found that in 1995-96 WorkCover reports show that bodily stress caused 58 per cent of all costs for women's claims at an average cost of \$2 421. Bodily stress claims for men cost an average of \$1 951.81 which, when we consider the difference between men's and women's wages, certainly indicates the seriousness of these injuries to women. These injuries mainly involve ward helpers, registered nurses, child care workers and enrolled nurses. They are the people experiencing these injuries.

Finding out more about manutention was most interesting. I saw the carer mimicking the natural body moves in order to move the weight of the patient and, in talking with the carers, sometimes they move patients weighing 15 to 18 stone who have no ability to assist in the move in normal circumstances. However, using manutention the patient is often able to help, which is something that lifts their self-esteem as well as helping the workers not to injure themselves.

The official description of manutention indicates that it was developed by Paul Dotte, a French practitioner physiotherapist. It uses physiotherapy principles and techniques from the martial arts, weightlifting and abseiling and involves pivoting, counterbalance, bracing and lunging to decrease muscular strain often associated with load handling. So, it was very interesting for me to see that this method was being

used widely and to hear that initial results are indeed very positive. For instance, in one area paramedical aides who had two days' training reduced their lost time by 80 per cent, which is something we very much want to see.

The workers at Southern Domiciliary Care who have been promoting this method, with the support of their management, are now establishing the South Australian Manutention Centre. They are developing a business plan, going through all the legal and financial ramifications and putting a proposal to the Health Commission that they should be able to establish this business within Southern Domiciliary Care. One of my reasons for speaking today is to urge the Minister for Human Services to consider this proposal with grave sympathy and also to ask the Minister for Government Enterprises, given his responsibility for workplace services, to consider the system's benefits.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to talk about the so-called Snowtown murders and related media coverage. This macabre and sorry tragedy, which needs to be reported, in my view should not be unnecessarily sensationalised. Last night's Channel 7 *Today Tonight* ran a story on the impact of the tragedy upon two very young children of one of the deceased. The two children appeared with their new guardians and the youngsters were paraded up and down before the camera, mixed with extensive repeat footage of the murder scene, complete with drums, police digging and so on. The report included a suggestion that the children should be given full details of the manner in which their mother died.

I would be surprised if the whole experience of television crews in the house, combined with the filming activity which went on, did not confuse or confound the children, let alone any children watching the report that evening on television. In my view the whole story was tasteless, if not ghoulish. I recognise that the program made some effort to handle the subject with sensitivity and that there was an appeal for funds to support the children's future. But was it really necessary to involve the youngsters at all? Did they have to be filmed? Could not the program have dealt more professionally with the subject of children grieving?

It sounded like just another angle to feed the mass murder story to the people of South Australia. I must say I share the concerns raised with me by several constituents that some aspects of the media coverage of the tragedy have been sensational and most unfortunate. I appeal to all media covering the story to revisit the approach they are taking in their coverage and ensure that it is presented in a tasteful, accurate and appropriate way to people. In particular, I appeal for children to be left out of the story as far as possible. The families of the dead, the families of Snowtown and the families of Adelaide and South Australia who have been affected one way or another by the tragedy all have a right to get on with their lives.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I would like today to refer to two or three sporting issues. The first issue I bring to the attention of the House is the decision of the Australian Cricket Board, as reported in the weekend's *Advertiser*, to take away one of the international day games at the Adelaide Oval. As you would be aware, Sir, last year South Australia lost its Australia Day long weekend test match so that it could be scheduled earlier in the program in December and, as a result, we received three one day games, which were, of course, day-night matches.

Since that decision, the Australian Cricket Board, as reported in Saturday's *Advertiser*, has decided to reduce from three to two the number of one day matches that South Australia hosts at the Adelaide Oval. I feel that this is nothing short of a disgrace: it is nothing short of a disgusting trick that has been played by the Australian Cricket Board. For years South Australia, through the Adelaide Oval, has hosted one of the most important and successful test matches, if not worldwide certainly Australia-wide. The Adelaide Oval test has long been recognised as one of the great test matches, and its rescheduling from the Australian Day long weekend to December disadvantages many South Australians. It disadvantages many in the farming community and, of course, it disadvantages young people who are unable to see all of the test match because it is played in early December during the school year.

We have copped it on two fronts over a 12 month period: first, we received bad news in terms of the poor decision by the administrators to take away our long weekend test match and schedule it in December, which disadvantages the community of South Australia; and now we have had a second hit by the Australian Cricket Board's taking away one of our one day matches, reducing our component in the international calendar from three to two one day matches.

When this decision was first speculated two or three weeks ago, I was fortunate to be a guest on 5AA and I put forward the Opposition's views in this regard. I also wrote to the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Cricket Board, Mr Speed, expressing the Opposition's concerns. The decision made on the weekend following the speculation was no great surprise, but I believe that the Australian Cricket Board has made a very bad, short-sighted decision and it deserves to be condemned for it.

I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate South Australia's State football teams for their performance on the weekend. Notwithstanding the disappointment of losing the State of Origin match, I acknowledge the efforts of the players, the coach and the administrators. Obviously, it was disappointing that the team lost the match but that is a part of competition. The weather obviously had an effect in regard to attendance figures. I also acknowledge the outstanding performance of the State team from the South Australian National Football League. That team was successful in its game prior to the State of Origin match. I acknowledge and congratulate both teams for their efforts.

I also make a strong plug for the State of Origin concept. I believe it has a vital role in football. The way in which the administrators of football at an AFL level have been conducting themselves in relation to the future of the competition is most disappointing. State of Origin matches have been occurring for 20 years. They have been a very successful part of football and it is disappointing that they are under threat. I believe that State of Origin is something we should really get behind.

Finally, I congratulate Bob Hank who has been inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame. This is a fabulous appointment and well deserved. Bob Hank had an outstanding record: he won the Magarey Medal in 1946 and 1947; he was a member of the West Torrens premiership teams in 1945 and 1953; he made the All Australian team on a number of occasions; he was the Best and Fairest for the West Torrens Football Club on a number of occasions; he represented the State; and he was also a State Captain. I congratulate and acknowledge Bob Hank upon his induction into the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

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

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I refer to the good news that we received late last week concerning the acceptance of a modified GST, and I acknowledge the Premier's statements a few minutes ago in this House. It is great that we have political cooperation and I congratulate the Australian Democrats on their cooperation to save tax reform in Australia. It was tremendous that the Federal Government and the Australian Democrats were able to shake out a deal which I believe makes for a very fair and equitable taxation system for all South Australians. It is not exactly what the Government wanted but it is certainly better than nothing.

It was particularly pleasing that the Federal Government agreed to the exemption of a rail diesel fuel excise, the same as applies to off-road users, for example, farmers, miners and pastoralists. Mr John Kirk, Executive Officer of the Australian Railway Association, said that the decision to treat rail as an off-road user and exempt rail operators from paying diesel excise is very welcome and timely. Certainly, I have brought up this subject over the whole nine years I have been in this place. I was always at a loss to explain why rail had to pay excise and other off-road users did not, because rail certainly had to be classed as an off-road user.

This decision recognises that rail operators are efficient users of fuel and as such have an important role to play in a sustainable transport network for this nation. Australia's rail operators already pay for their infrastructures through direct track ownership or through payment of track access fees to the relevant authorities. In some cases, these charges are equivalent to an additional 78¢ per litre of diesel consumed. Rail is an off-road user of diesel fuel and should not—and I emphasise this—be paying both the road user charge and the rail user charge. No wonder our roads are becoming clogged. This has been a complete disincentive and gives the wrong message entirely.

This decision will remove a major taxation anomaly applying to Australian rail operators. It will enable the privatisation of Australia's rail freight industry to continue in an environment that will provide major benefits to all the parties. Rail customers will benefit from this, particularly farmers and miners. Rail currently transports virtually all Australia's export grain, coal and iron ore safely and efficiently from the farms or the mines to the relevant ports. It is expected that lower transport costs will improve our international export competitiveness and provide a substantial economic benefit to the nation of more than \$120 million per annum.

With these savings in mind, we should see a reduction in rail freight charges in regional Australia, particularly regional South Australia, which is much needed. I look forward to that progress. Benefits will come out of this decision. The protection of employment is a major issue. Passenger trains are a major tourism attraction in this State: the *Ghan*; the *Indian Pacific*; the *Overland*; and in my electorate the Barossa wine train. Perhaps this decision will encourage the return of many additional passenger rail services to regional South Australia: Adelaide-Pirie-Port Augusta; Adelaide-Mount Gambier; Adelaide-Riverton; and, perhaps, a daily commuter service to the Barossa. The Barossa wine train, which as we all know is a State tourism initiative, has enjoyed outstanding success since it started operating last year.

Other benefits include the reduction in environmental impacts. The original proposal for fuel excise reductions was

estimated to have caused additional emissions of approximately 500 000 tonnes per year of greenhouse gasses and particulate emissions (which are particles of carbon). The original proposal also posed the threat of a massive transfer of freight from rail to road transport, which would have further increased the risk of road accidents and fatalities. The complete removal of diesel fuel excise from rail will ensure that our rail operators are at the forefront of a competitive, reliable, innovative and environmentally friendly industry.

I applaud this initiative. If only this initiative had been implemented a decade ago, along with private ownership and operation of our railways, I believe that we would still be running on much of the old track that has since been closed and removed. I applaud the bipartisan approach of all concerned.

BARLEY MARKETING (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the Bill without any amendment.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): By leave, I move:

That the committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the House today.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON WATER ALLOCATION IN THE SOUTH-EAST

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): By leave, I move:

That the committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the house today.

Motion carried.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) (CONTINUATION) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Recognition (South Australia) Act 1993. Read a first time.

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

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages without delay.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): 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.

Section 4 of the *Mutual Recognition (South Australia) Act 1993* adopts the Commonwealth *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* for a period ending on 30 June 1999. Section 6 of the Act provides for its expiry at the end of the period for which the Commonwealth Act is adopted, that is, 30 June 1999.

These Acts were enacted as part of a national scheme of mutual recognition and are complemented by an Intergovernmental

Agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories. Under the terms of the Agreement a review of the mutual recognition scheme was conducted early in 1998, five years after the commencement of the Commonwealth Act.

The COAG Committee on Regulatory Reform undertook the review. In addition to advertisements in the national press inviting submissions, members of the Committee on Regulatory Reform undertook consultation within their jurisdictions. This review was completed late in 1998, and a report made to COAG.

The purpose of the 'Expiry of Act' clause was to ensure that a review of the effectiveness of the mutual recognition scheme take place within 5 years of its commencement. The Act's original expiry date was 1 March 1998, but this was extended to 30 June 1999 pending the completion of the review, and to allow sufficient time for South Australia to consider the review's outcome and take any necessary legislative action arising from its recommendations.

The objective of mutual recognition is to promote the freedom of movement of goods and service providers across Australia, by reducing the regulatory barriers to the flow of goods and skilled service providers across State borders. The review found overall, mutual recognition was working well to advance this objective.

The review report recommended, *inter alia*, that jurisdictions endorse the continued operation of the mutual recognition scheme in Australia, and that further reviews of the scheme occur every five years – the next to take place in 2003 in conjunction with the first review of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Scheme. South Australia accepts these recommendations.

This Bill, removes the 'Expiry of Act' clause from the legislation to enable the continuing operation of the Act consistent with the review's recommendation.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2: Amendment of s. 4—Adoption of Commonwealth Act

Clause 3: Repeal of s. 6

Clauses 2 and 3 remove the provisions in the principal Act dealing with the expiry of the Act, resulting in the Act continuing in force until repealed.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The Mutual Recognition (South Australia) Act introduced in 1993 had a clause in it requiring a review at the end of five years and, as a consequence, there was an expiry clause in the Act to ensure that that review took place. I understand that that review did, indeed, occur after that five year period, and the COAG committee on regulatory reform into the mutual recognition agreement found that the scheme was working well and considered that the agreement should continue. However, there will be another review in five years (it is due in 2003) to ensure that the agreement continues to work effectively.

The agreement basically ensures that there is recognition between the States of a variety of regulations and qualifications, and this allows goods and skilled services providers to easily transfer between all the States in Australia. Following the next review (concluding in 2003), the effectiveness of this Act will again be considered and, presumably, the agreement will continue if that is again found to be favourable. As I understand it, this amendment removes the expiry clause in the South Australian Act, so that this Bill does not, again, have any expiry clause but just allows the review process to continue. Presumably, if the review finds that it is not working well, the entire Act would be repealed or amended in some way.

It is generally understood that the mutual recognition agreement is working well and that it is important that we get this free flow of goods and services across State borders in Australia. Despite the urgency with which this Bill has been introduced, I understand that the amendment needs to be passed before 30 June 1999. I indicate that the Opposition will cooperate in that process and support this Bill.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I thank the Opposition for its support of this measure and for facilitating the passage of the legislation before the House so that by 30 June the expiry date can be removed, consistent with other Parliaments and consistent with ensuring passage of goods and also reduced operational costs thereto.

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

ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): 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 purpose of the Bill is to amend the *Road Traffic Act 1961* in order to allow for the making of regulations to introduce nationally consistent legislation to regulate the hours of driving for commercial vehicles.

Governments across Australia have agreed to develop and implement national road transport reforms which promote safety and efficiency, both within and across State borders, and which reduce the environmental impact and the costs of administration of road transport, for the benefit of road users and others in the community. The reforms proposed in this Bill are an important contribution to the development of a system of nationally uniform and consistent road transport regulation.

The passage of this Bill will contribute to meeting the obligations undertaken by the South Australian Government as a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement to Implement the National Competition Policy and Related Reforms, signed on 11 April 1995 by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The Intergovernmental Agreement makes substantial Commonwealth payments (in excess of \$1 billion over 10 years) dependent upon the State meeting its obligations under the Conditions of Payment, which include an obligation to implement the agreed national road transport reforms. The amendments in this Bill form part of those reforms.

Progress in implementing these reforms will be considered by the National Competition Council in its assessment of South Australia's eligibility for competition payments, which will occur before 30 June 1999.

National Hours of Driving legislation was approved by Transport Ministers in January 1999. With the introduction of this Bill to Parliament, the Government is pleased to be promoting South Australia as being at the forefront of national reforms in this area. This is the first jurisdiction to introduce the complete provisions in the form approved by Transport Ministers earlier this year.

The new Hours of Driving Regulations will promote a safer driving hours regime. For example, working hours are not taken into account under the current *Commercial Motor Vehicles (Hours of Driving) Act*; however, under the new national Regulations, both working and driving, as well as rest times will be recorded by drivers. A limit of 14 hours in a day is set for aggregated driving and working time. Some operators may complain that this will affect profitability, but the tightening of the permissible working hours is a step forward in road safety that will benefit the community and contribute to occupational health and safety for the drivers of commercial motor vehicles.

There is a minor loss of flexibility in the new regulated hours compared with current SA regulated hours (one day's rest in seven compared with the currently available 2 days' rest in 14). However drivers and employers may become members of a Transitional Fatigue Management Scheme to gain greater flexibility of driving hours. A Transitional Fatigue Management Scheme is an alternative compliance scheme whereby up to 14 hours driving in a day is possible, and a driver may take two days' rest in fourteen rather than the prescribed one day's rest in seven, if driver health checks, fatigue training and other requirements are undertaken. It is anticipated there will be considerable demand for membership of a TFMS scheme.

Drivers participating in TFMS will have to pass health checks to the published Federal Office Of Road Safety standards and undergo

fatigue management training to a national curriculum standard. Employers are required to manage fatigue in driver scheduling and follow up employee credentials at prescribed intervals. The health checks required are consistent with those required from 1 September 1998 as a condition of road train operation south of Port Augusta.

There may be pressures from lobby groups to carry over into the new Regulations the exemptions from regulated hours currently available in SA law for the transport of livestock or bees. There is no such specific provision in the national law, but a general exemption power will be inserted in the South Australian Regulations to allow the Minister to cater for such special situations.

The new Regulations will apply to heavy trucks over 12 tonnes Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM). This is a change from the current South Australian Act which applies to vehicles with an unladen mass of over 4.5 tonnes. Similarly, the new Regulations will apply to a bus defined as a motor vehicle with the capacity to seat more than 12 persons (this cut off point aligns with the national driver licence classes). This will result in fewer SA vehicles being required to carry a log book.

When the new Regulations are made, the repeal of the *Commercial Motor Vehicles (Hours of Driving) Act* will be proclaimed.

A log book will not be required to be carried by a driver operating solely within a 100 kilometre radius of base, as is the case under current SA law. A new national log book has been developed and printed and it is now available in South Australia in anticipation of the implementation of the new national driving hours. The introduction of the new book has been well received by industry as a step toward national consistency. Upgraded and new computer systems are being designed to manage and exchange data with other jurisdictions relating to data on both membership of the Transitional Fatigue Management Scheme and the issue of log books to drivers with valid licences.

Looking toward the not too distant future, a driver specific monitoring device (DSMD), including electronic or some other such driving hours recording device, will be able to be used as an alternative to a log book, providing it meets the specifications of the National Road Transport Commission.

Under the current SA law, no responsibility attaches to employers. Under the proposed Regulations, consignors and employers will be penalised if they knowingly cause a driver to commit a core driving hours offence.

There is also an urgent need for an increase in penalties relating to driving hours and log book offences. Drivers and operators are aware of the low penalties in South Australia and, in many cases, prefer to be the recipient of an expiation notice (\$50) and continue to drive excessive hours and avoid rest breaks. The low level of penalty can be seen as contributing to road safety concerns.

The proposed Regulations will have higher monetary penalties for breaches ranging from a fine of up to \$1 250 (\$160 expiation fee) to a maximum for a second or subsequent offence of a \$2 500 fine. In addition, there will be a corporate multiplier of 5 times the individual penalty applied if a body corporate is found guilty of an offence.

Consultation has occurred with affected parties. The National Road Transport Commission has consulted widely with industry, enforcement agencies and other affected parties, prior to obtaining the approval of the Ministerial Council on Road Transport for the content of the Regulations this Bill is designed to authorise.

It is anticipated more consultation will occur before the proposed Regulations are made and laid before Parliament.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 2: Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Clause 3: Insertion of Part 3AA

PART 3AA

DRIVING HOURS

New section 110AA.—*Interpretation*

This proposed new section defines the terms "commercial bus" and "heavy truck".

"Commercial bus" is defined as a bus that is used to carry people for reward or in a business.

In the *Road Traffic (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 1999* (yet to be proclaimed), "bus" is redefined as a motor vehicle built mainly to carry people that seats over 12 adults (including the driver). The previous definition included vehicles designed to carry over 8 persons (including the driver).

"Heavy truck" is defined as a motor vehicle of a class declared by the regulations to be heavy trucks.

New section 110AAB.—*Driving hours*

This proposed new section empowers the Governor to make regulations to establish a scheme for the management of the fatigue of drivers of heavy trucks and commercial buses.

Specific matters that may be dealt with under the regulations include—

- periods spent by drivers driving, working and resting
- record keeping
- medical examination of drivers
- attendance at fatigue management driving courses
- obligations of employers and supervisors
- inspector and police powers to ask questions relevant to the enforcement of the regulations.

Penalties of up to a maximum of \$12 500 may be fixed for breaches of the regulations.

New section 110AAC.—*Power to direct drivers to stop and to rest*

This proposed new section allows a member of the police force or inspector to stop the driver of a heavy truck or commercial bus on the road for the purpose of requiring the driver to produce his or her driving records for inspection.

A member of the police force or inspector may, to avoid an unacceptable risk to public safety, direct a heavy truck or commercial bus driver to cease driving and rest from driving for a specified period, either with immediate effect or after the driver has moved his or her vehicle to a place where it will be secure and not constitute a traffic hazard. Such a direction may be given where—

- the driver has failed to produce the driver's records required to be kept under the regulations; or
- a member of the police force or inspector believes on reasonable grounds that the driver's records do not comply with the regulations; or
- a member of the police force or inspector believes on reasonable grounds that the driver has contravened a requirement of the regulations relating to periods of driving, work or rest.

New section 110AAD.—*Power to enter and inspect records, etc.*

This proposed new section confers entry and record inspection powers on the police and inspectors.

Clause 4: Repeal of *Commercial Motor Vehicles (Hours of Driving) Act 1973*

The *Commercial Motor Vehicles (Hours of Driving) Act 1973* is repealed.

Ms HURLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LISTENING DEVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's message—that it had disagreed to the House of Assembly's amendments.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I move:

That the amendments be insisted upon.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 May. Page 1486.)

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): I rise today to talk about the Government's latest budget. This budget can be summed up simply by saying that it is an attack upon every family residing within South Australia. This budget does nothing for jobs, for education, for the unemployed, or for economic growth in South Australia. This Government has wasted the last term of Government on a feeble attack upon every person who decides to reside in South Australia. This has made South Australia the most taxed State in the country. We are trying to encourage other Australians to move to South

Australia to encourage economic growth and revenue. However, this Government has attacked every single middle class family in this State. This Government has made every house a piggy bank and every car a wallet on wheels. This Government has a single plan to tax every South Australian family out of existence.

This Government is so bereft of ideas and imagination and so inept that it had to steal the idea from the Australian Labor Party to give concessions to pensioners. This Government is so ideologically on a crusade to destroy South Australia, to impose its economic rationalist ideals on South Australia, that it could not even see that pensioners could not afford to pay the emergency services levy. The Labor Party had to embarrass and humiliate it to the point where the Government had to compromise, where the Government was forced to change its point of view on the way it attacked families and pensioners.

Today we heard the member for MacKillop ask a very interesting question of the Minister for Local Government about the doubling up of the emergency services levy. He asked whether councils will still be extracting a payment from ratepayers on behalf of the emergency services levy. He asked whether, in effect, they will be doubling up. Would householders be paying one fee to the State Government as a one-off payment, plus through their rates paid to council? We had no answer from the Minister. In his reply in his question, the Minister said, 'We're not quite sure how we will implement the emergency services levy. We're not quite sure how we will spend the money.' This Government has come into this House, introduced a devastating new tax on every household, without any idea of how it will spend the money or implement the plan.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe that the member is deliberately misrepresenting my comments, as recorded in *Hansard* today.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is always interesting to note when a member of the Opposition is making a point that Government Ministers get rattled very quickly and move their points of order to try to stop the flow of debate, which is what this House is all about. This emergency services levy will be an albatross around the Government's neck. It is the Government's crown of thorns. It will ensure that this Government will not be re-elected at the next election—which I would say is the only benefit of this emergency services levy. In its attack on middle Australia and working families in this State the Government has done two things. It has made sure that no South Australian family will be able to get ahead for the next three years. Basically, the Government is saying, 'If you live in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory or Tasmania, there is a difference. You will not have this huge impost on every household.'

However, in South Australia, we are putting on this regressive tax to attack spending in South Australia, on top of a GST which their comrades in Canberra introduced—another attack on spending. Notwithstanding, members of this Government were still sitting in this House today projecting economic growth and prosperity. Where in the budget does it show how South Australia is fitted to grow out of the slump it is in, caused by this Government over the past six to eight years it has been in office?

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: If you start at page 1 and read to about page 1 000 you will get an answer to your question, instead of flapping your gums.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is just typical of a Government Minister to come in here not knowing what he is talking about and not understanding the complexities of the emergency services levy. That was made obvious today by the Minister's inept answer to the member for MacKillop's question. It was the only question today that was truly not on notice from that side of the House and the Minister failed miserably. That shows one reason why he is in the junior ministry and not in Cabinet—because he cannot take questions without notice properly.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I would do a better job than you, mate. On top of the emergency services levy, there is the ETSA levy, and this Government says it is important to reduce debt in the State, because debt is the albatross around our neck. We must remove debt from South Australia, otherwise we cannot go ahead. However, the one thing that the Government does not mention in the glossy brochures that it mails at taxpayers' expense, to every household in South Australia, is that not one cent of the ETSA levy will be going to pay off debt—not one cent! Yet for the past three years, this Government has been telling us that debt is the most important thing to get rid of in South Australia. However, not one cent of this revenue raising tax that this Government is imposing upon every household in South Australia is going off debt.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am glad that the member for Unley is interested in my voice tone and patterns. As he is a junior Minister, there is not much more to do in his portfolio, apart from waiting outside Cabinet meetings before he can be let in for 10 minutes, give his spiel, be told what to do and then asked to be leave very quickly because he is only a junior Minister. I am glad he is filling in his time with something. It is important to see Ministers of the Crown doing something productive with their time rather than just sitting here, making fools of themselves in Question Time, not being able to answer a question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will get back to the matters contained in the legislation.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: This is important, partly because the question asked of the Minister today related to the emergency services levy. I am talking about the inept answer the Minister gave the member for MacKillop. The fact that it is fully a minority Government and has not been given the opportunity to form a majority Government in this State after a landslide victory in 1993 shows how inept this Government is. But as to the attack on families by this Government, it has set out a policy until 2003 to attack every single home owner in South Australia, and it does it with a smile. That is the one thing you have to admire about members of this Government: they do it with a smile. When they attack low income families and middle income earners, they do it with a smile. They are not upset about the impost they are putting on or about the hardship they will make families endure because they do it with a smile. This Government comes in here to talk about economic growth and all their plans for the future. After the 1997 budget, the then Treasurer Stephen Baker said, 'That's it. We're in the clear. We're in surplus. Things are rosy. After our first four years in Government, we have fixed South Australia, and we are doing okay.'

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe it is contrary to Standing Orders to misquote members in this House. The member just

said that the former Treasurer had said, 'After four score years in Government.' We have not been in Government four score years, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. If the member has misquoted that can be addressed by the member who gave the original quote in the debate.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is amazing how members of the Government do not like being reminded. They also do not like to be reminded of their terrible record, their ineptitude in Government. It was given a mandate in 1993. In 1997 they claimed to have fulfilled that mandate, but it had failed. The people of South Australia saw right through it, as I see right through this phoney, terrible budget, this budget that will attack every single family in South Australia.

The interesting thing about the emergency services levy, according to the hapless Minister for Police, the member for Mawson, is that not everyone will be worse off: there are some winners in relation to the levy. And the winners are the good people of North Adelaide. What a relief to my constituents in Torrensville, Thebarton and West Richmond! Are they not glad to know that the good eggs of North Adelaide will be better off because, according to the Minister, 'if you live in a home in North Adelaide worth \$400 000 you will be better off'. We could not have written a more damaging answer for a Minister to give in a press conference than he has given. You could see the looks on the faces of all the members sitting on the Government benches, after seeing that interview on Channel 9 with Chris Kenny. They were devastated, because they finally realised how unfair and inequitable this tax is and how damaging it is to every home in South Australia. The Minister sits there with a big smile on his face, not concerned about it. He does not care: he can afford to pay the levy on his huge income from being the junior Minister.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: How the hell would you know? That is personally insulting. You mind your own business about my financial affairs.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I would like to add to what the member for Unley just said that all members' salaries are open to the public. We know exactly what junior Ministers and senior Ministers earn. It is a part of transparent government. What the Minister is obviously trying to say now is that members of the public should not be able to see what politicians earn. I totally refute that. It is imperative for our democracy that every single citizen of South Australia knows exactly what this junior Minister—who is not allowed to sit in Cabinet until invited inside—earns. It is imperative for our democracy to know what this inept Minister makes for a salary.

The attack upon the family with this budget goes deep. There are constituents in my electorate who own a trailer and perhaps two cars, who have a house with a mortgage and who are raising two or three children, and the extra \$300 minimum that they will be worse off is a huge impost. One might ask: how are these families to find the money to pay for this extra impost? We heard the Premier say today that the GST will be the saviour of the States: we will have extra revenue coming into the State and we will be able to abolish some of these local State taxes. Unfortunately, the Premier was not able to detail to us what actual State Government taxes and charges will be reduced because of the introduction of a GST. He was not able to detail how South Australians will benefit from this new tax imposed on us by Canberra.

Might I say that a majority of Australians did not support the GST at the last election: a majority supported the Labor

Party's tax package, which was a much more fair and equitable system. But getting back to the budget, the Government has always said in its platform that the most important thing about reducing debt is the sale of ETSA. I reject that categorically. I believe that South Australians can manage ETSA profitably. I believe that South Australians can do it better than Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. I do not believe for a second that the Premier lacks so much confidence in ordinary South Australians to be able to compete with every other State that he is prepared to sell off our most valuable asset to the cheapest bidder.

This Premier's cunning plan for the sale of ETSA is to talk down ETSA as much as he can, to say that it has no value and that it will make a loss. There are questions about its making a loss, and I am sure that, once we are in government, we will find out exactly how far this Government has run down ETSA; exactly how far this Government has stopped ETSA from being able to make a profit; and how far this Government has intervened to try to stop ETSA from being competitive with its tenders compared with Western Mining and so on. This Government has dirty hands when it comes to the running of ETSA. I would not be at all surprised if this Government were caught out eventually having purposely intervened to make sure that ETSA cannot compete with generators from interstate.

I believe that this Government is so ideologically attached to selling ETSA that it has the blinkers on; it cannot see the forest for the trees. This Government is saying to every generation of South Australians growing up in this State that young South Australians are not good enough to compete with Victorians, with people from New South Wales or with foreign multinationals, and that we cannot make ETSA profitable. To prove that, the Government will run down ETSA as hard as it can. It will make sure that ETSA does not get tenders and does not get the contracts it can get. I am sure that, if this Government took its hands off the neck of ETSA and its board, ETSA would be able to compete and do better than New South Wales, Victoria and any multinationals that come in here to buy ETSA at the lowest possible price and then charge South Australians more for the right.

South Australians have already paid for ETSA: they already own it. They do not want it to be sold. What multinational company now does not carry debt? Neither the Premier nor any Minister on the front bench could name one foreign multinational company that has not carried debt, because they all know that one simple fact about borrowing and managing debt is that they can reinvest the money they have borrowed and make a higher profit than in managing that debt. But this Government is so inept and has the blinkers on so totally that it cannot see that. I cannot believe that it is talking down South Australia so much until we eliminate all debt. I cannot think of one State in Australia that is completely debt free.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: Queensland—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is not debt free. It is running a surplus. Get it right, Mark.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: Want a bet?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I do not bet: I am a Christian. This Government cannot realise the value of ETSA, not only in terms of finance and revenue but on the psyche of South Australia. If we eliminate ETSA from the public coffers, we are sending a message to every South Australian child that we cannot compete, that we are not good enough. Since the State Bank disaster, South Australia has been in a bit of a slump. The most important thing about getting out of that slump is to convince South Australians that we can do it better than

everyone else. But this Government, for its own personal political gain, has been hammering the issue of the State Bank, saying that South Australia is a failure.

They have had five years to fix it, but the continued mantra has been, 'State Bank; South Australia a failure; we cannot compete; we cannot do it better than anyone else; the only way we can get out of the slump is to pay off all the debt and sell ETSA, SA Water and every other asset we have to foreigners; it is the only way South Australia can get ahead.' I reject that categorically. I believe that South Australians can and will do it better than everyone else. I am sure that when a Rann Labor Government is in place after the next election we will show the conservatives on the opposite side exactly how to do it, and we will embarrass and humiliate them by how well we run ETSA and how well we manage our economy. Because this Government—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: I have never seen such a good example of hypocrisy in 10 years.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Look in the mirror. Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Unley interjects that he has never seen so much hypocrisy in all these years. All I would like to say to the junior Minister, who runs into Cabinet every 10 minutes to say hello and be approved like a good little boy—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to the matters that are within the legislation, relating to the budget.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am, Mr Deputy Speaker. All I am saying is that, when the Minister enters Cabinet briefly to say how he is going to spend the money he is allocated in the budget and then walks out after 10 minutes because he is a junior Minister, he does not have a real understanding of what ordinary South Australians are going through. Sitting there in the State Administration Building, the Riverside building or wherever he might be sitting in his ivory tower, he is not quite sure what families are going through. I am sure that there are families living in the electorate of Unley who own quite expensive homes simply because the area has appreciated very quickly, and many people who bought homes in Unley would have paid a relatively cheap price, probably \$120 000 or \$130 000 10 or 15 years ago. Now, of course, they have seen their investment grow to about \$400 000, but the Minister does not understand that, even though the assets of those families have increased in value, perhaps their incomes have not.

For five years this Government has failed to turn around the economy of South Australia. Because it failed to turn it around, it does not blame itself: it blames the Opposition and it blames South Australia. The only way that it feels it can fix that is by taxing ordinary South Australians. Last year this Government increased registration astronomically. It put prices through the roof, attacking small businesses such as taxis and attacking ordinary motorists, and now again this Government has increased registration by \$32 in this budget. The Government believes that every motorist is a wallet on wheels. What does the Government expect to gain out of this? How does the Government expect to generate economic growth by taxing every single consumer in South Australia simply because they reside in a house?

Ms Hurley: They don't know what they are doing.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: They do not know what to do. It is policy on the run. It is blinkered policy. Government members are ideologically bereft of any new ideas. They have no capacity to stimulate thought or ideas to get this State moving again. I condemn this Government, this Premier, all the Ministers and every backbencher that supports the

Government's policy of taxing every single South Australian. South Australians deserve better than this Government. They deserve a Labor Government and they will get it at the next election. We will beat Government members convincingly at the next election and this tax will be on their head because this tax will destroy families.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): This budget is a major disappointment to all South Australians. The budget has a number of taxing measures in it which are unfair to South Australians and which make it much more difficult for the everyday family person to survive. Make no mistake, this is a taxing budget and it is a spending budget, and I will come back to those points in greater detail during my contribution. First, I acknowledge genuinely that there are some good things in this budget, particularly in my portfolio area of tourism, where there is some good news. I acknowledge that because one has to be fair.

This budget contains some measures which the tourism industry rightly welcomes and I acknowledge the role played by the Minister. Tourism is a wealth generator and it is responsible for creating employment in this State. Although more detail will come our way, I acknowledge that there is some good news in this budget for tourism and that is very important, not only for tourism but for all South Australia. Tourism is important to South Australia. We are a small State and perhaps that makes tourism even more important than it might be in other parts of Australia. We have to make every post a winner with regard to tourism because of the benefits that are generated as a result of it and because of its multiplier effects.

I note from the information that I have so far received that there are some positive stories in this budget and they are to be welcomed. That is a good thing, and I look forward to hearing the detail from the Minister in the Estimates Committee. I note that additional money has been made available for marketing, and that is a positive step. Tourism has had a range of successes over the last 12 months. One of the productions that has created a lot of interest in the tourism industry is the *Best Kept Secrets* booklet. I have acknowledged that campaign in Parliament and in the community as being a successful marketing piece which has obviously given assistance to the tourism industry, and anything that can bring more people to South Australia and can provide encouragement and incentive for people to move around the State and take advantage of our great tourist areas is a very positive thing. I note that, for Stage 2 of the *Best Kept Secrets* marketing campaign, \$3.3 million is being made available, and I welcome that.

I also note that money is being made available for the *Shorts* program. That has also been very successful and it deserves to be acknowledged, and I do so on behalf of the Opposition today. I wish those ongoing programs every success. They are important marketing tools and, although we might be slightly at variance with the Government as to how the publications are distributed in the community, in the main we have given bipartisan support to them, and we have certainly acknowledged that the *Best Kept Secrets* campaign was very professional and of high quality. I would say that it has been successful. Perhaps it could be distributed more widely throughout South Australia, but I am really talking at the margins here.

I take delight in noticing that more money, some \$5.6 million, is being made available for international marketing activities, which is to be welcomed. More money

is also being made available for major events, which we have had outstanding success with, and we need to continue to build on these. As I understand it, money is also being made available for infrastructure, which I have spoken about in this House and which I have acknowledged. These are good news stories for tourism and I acknowledge them, as they deserve to be. Every post that we can make a winner for tourism will be a winner for South Australia. As I said, during Estimates I look forward to being able to get more detail about some of the commitments that have been made in tourism.

However, I am somewhat concerned about the move to accrual accounting, and I refer to Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 1, paragraph 1.43 in regard to the portfolio statement for tourism. I have not been able to glean from the figures of the previous year just how successful we have been in attracting tourist dollars to South Australia, what the targets were for last year and whether those targets have been achieved. That is a concern. The move to accrual accounting also has its upside, but I am not able to deduce from last year's figures what was achieved and what the targets were. Because I am concerned about that, I foreshadow that I will seek further information on that area from the Minister in the Estimates Committee. In general, I am delighted that additional money has been made available for tourism. That is a positive sign and it is a good thing for South Australia, and upfront that deserves to be acknowledged.

In my other portfolio responsibilities of recreation, sport and racing, it appears from my initial reading of the budget papers that it is approximately status quo. I am still working through the detail of those portfolio areas and I will pursue those matters with the Minister as we work through Estimates. That is the good news. That is something that deserves to be acknowledged and has been acknowledged.

The bad side, however, talking generally, is that across the community people will be affected by the measures that have been put in place through new taxes and by the spending for which this Government is responsible. There is not much good news from the general areas that cut across all our portfolio responsibilities and across the community. The major concern is the emergency services tax, which will hit families and hit them very hard.

These taxes on the various pieces of property will hit families very hard. They will be a large cost to every man, woman and child in South Australia. It is estimated that approximately \$360 more will have to be paid per household. This is money that the average person simply cannot afford. It will hit the family budget very hard and it will be responsible for causing serious and significant problems throughout the community.

This is an unfair tax. It is a bad tax, and it will obviously have a major effect on families. Included in this tax are houses, cars, motorcycles, trucks, boats, caravans, jet skis, houseboats and trailers. Nearly all forms of property will be roped into this tax measure. Taxes will increase by at least \$186 million, and this will be a major impost upon every person in our community.

I also refer to what this Government is doing with regard to its expenditure. The expenditure has blown out. If I remember correctly, we have a 7 per cent increase in expenditure, some 5 per cent above the current inflation rate. We really have a Government that is out of control with regard to its spending. It is an over-spending Government and it really must address these problems and do so very quickly before it completely gets out of control.

The major concerns and problems in this budget—and I am now talking about specifics—are how major items such as health and education will be affected. It will be the responsibility largely of the respective shadow ministers on this side of the House to talk about health and education from a big picture point of view, but I would like to talk specifically about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, about which I have talked on a number of occasions in this Chamber, and which I would imagine a number of people who are responsible for electorates in the western suburbs will at some stage touch on during this opportunity that is made available to us.

Once again, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is being king hit for six in this budget. Once again it is being highlighted, picked out and treated unfairly. I can cite some specific examples with regard to how that is occurring. In this budget, an extra \$4 million is made available for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, when in June last year, less than 12 months ago, the Minister for Human Services promised \$55 million for the next three years for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Last year, in the forward estimates, \$14 million was allocated under the heading 'Accelerated Funding'. But in this year's budget we have just \$4 million. That is an absolute joke. This is a hospital in crisis which deserves far better and must receive better attention.

Only a couple of weeks ago, the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Price and I attended a public meeting at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital held in regard to the closure of the maternity section of that hospital. Can you think of anything more absurd than closing the maternity section of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? I cannot think of anything more important. Naturally emergency services is critical to any hospital, but beyond that, can you think of anything more basic to the everyday running of a hospital than the maternity section? Well, this is completely in tatters and fully exposed by this Government.

I would have thought we would have got better from the Minister for Human Services who actually does have some credibility in the area of funding for the health system. But in respect of specific funding for hospitals, there is a lot to be desired. In regard to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a hospital in crisis, the redevelopment plans have been put off by the plans to close the maternity and the cardiology services, and this is just an absolutely diabolical situation that people in the western suburbs have to face.

After six years of indecision, with failed plans to out-source and to collocate a new private hospital, Dean Brown's promise that the Government would redevelop the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a priority is completely in tatters. He has no credibility whatsoever when it comes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the Government is to be condemned for its complete disrespect both for the people in the western suburbs and for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Here is a beacon in the western suburbs that has been in existence since 1952, that has serviced the broad community of the western suburbs and beyond, that has now been king hit for six again by this Government in this budget, where it is only given \$4 million, when last year in its forward estimates it promised \$14 million under the heading 'Accelerated Funding'. Further to that, in June last year, the Minister promised \$55 million over a three year period. If that \$55 million is still coming, there is a long, long way to go, and it has to come very quickly.

Constituents in the western suburbs are sick and tired of a Conservative Government that will give no priority to the western suburbs, that will give no priority to the health

system, and will not put in place a fair and equitable system to all of the people of South Australia. If it is to be even half fair dinkum, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a priority, and stands out alone as the hospital that has serviced the western area so well, but is now being king hit for six by this Government.

I have to say that constituents in the western suburbs, especially my constituents in Lee, will just not cop it. They will not accept it. They believe that the policies being put forward by this Government in regard to health, but more specifically with regard to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, are unfair. There is no equity, and they are just a complete joke.

The other area which is very dear to my heart, which I will touch upon, is education. Being a former educator, I might say I have some bias in this area, but if we are to be a State that will move forward into the next millennium with any confidence, we must make sure that we get education correct. It is one of the key building blocks of the community. It is one of the key responsibilities of a State Government, and this State Government once again has cut into education funding. It is simply unacceptable.

In the electorate of Lee, which I have the good fortune to represent, we have one high school and four primary schools, and they are all doing it very tough. They are doing it tough partly because of the policies of this Government, because of the direction this Government is taking us with regard to education, and because of the cuts that this Government is forcing upon schools. But where do we see the areas that are most targeted? It is no surprise that it is areas in the western and northern suburbs.

Which are the areas that can least afford it? Which are the areas that can least tolerate these cuts? Once again, it is no surprise that it is the areas in the western suburbs. These are the areas with the highest percentage of school card recipients, areas where parents are doing it tough, areas where kids from one parent families are going to school. These are the areas in our education system to which we must give priority. These are the areas we should be targeting, focussing on, giving priority to, and making sure we put in place the important infrastructure to give these kids an opportunity to get a quality education.

We must provide the opportunity to educators, administrators and parents to deliver a quality appropriate education system. One thing we know for sure is that a quality education will not guarantee jobs but it will certainly enhance chances. Not only will it do that, not only will it increase the opportunities and the chances for our kids to go on to tertiary education and to go out into the marketplace to get a job, but it will give them greater confidence and it will be a building block for them as they move into the next stage of their life. It is a critical pathway as these people mature and go through to whatever they are led to down the track. If we look at the details and specific figures that the shadow Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training will highlight in the budget, we see that they all come up bad for education.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): This Government is using dishonest means to implement its obsession with cutting down the size of government. When the most recent funding arrangement was approved by the States and the Federal Government, Mr Olsen waxed enthusiastically about the great deal he had done for South Australia. I am not sure it was such a great deal but he was happy to make the most of it at the time. Of course, when he returned to Adelaide he started

speaking in black terms about the budget, shortfalls, black holes and all the rest of it. Of course, with the GST debacle which has taken place in Canberra this week, whereby the Democrats have become the GST Party, as an ally of the Liberal Government in Canberra, we do not really know the status of that arrangement between the States and the Federal Government but, clearly, it is not going to be what John Olsen thought it was.

Furthermore, the Olsen Government's record of poor economic management and waste leaves it with no authority to implement a heartless budget which penalises the households of South Australia. It is clear that the vast majority of South Australians will suffer as a result of this budget. They will suffer lower living standards in order to satisfy bean counters in the Treasury and the ideological flag bearers in the Liberal Party. The excuse that this Government has presented for almost all its appalling economic decisions has been debt reduction, but the South Australian Government's debt is not at crippling or unsustainable levels. Indeed, State debt today is less as a proportion of gross State product than it was 20 years ago under the Dunstan Government and indeed less than it was 35 years ago under the Playford Government. In fact, State debt is at historically low levels.

I refer to an article by Matthew Abraham in the *Australian* of 23 March 1998 in which he noted the cynical manner in which this Government has tried to manipulate public opinion to suit its economic policies. In referring to the debt of about \$7.4 billion at the time, he said:

This is erroneously referred to as the State Bank debt, even though the collapse and subsequent Commonwealth bailout of the State Bank in 1992 accounted for \$3.1 billion. The orderly \$2.1 billion asset sales program overseen by the now departed Liberal Treasurer, Stephen Baker, largely wiped out this debt, but the Government keeps the lump sum alive, shifting it from site to site like a caravan whenever it's needed to justify a budget measure.

The increased taxes and charges in this budget are bad for South Australia on two grounds. First, they are unfair, and I refer to three aspects. There is the emergency services levy. We do not know the full details of that but it seems at first glance that the formula which will be applied will impose itself much more harshly on lower income households relative to those who have plenty of income and, indeed, the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services himself, who has been given the dirty work of selling this levy by the Premier, has conceded that there are some people in our community who will be better off as a result of the emergency services levy. The prime example is someone who owns a \$400 000 mansion in North Adelaide. Unfortunately, it is not very reassuring to the vast majority of South Australians that such people will be better off.

Another aspect of the budget which is unfair is the ETSA tax and, at this stage, we assume that the Government is committed to that tax being imposed. It will also act regressively. When the opportunity was there, if the Government was to insist on increased taxation, it could have sought to bring about a more progressive formula in the application of the tax.

Thirdly, cuts to the critical areas of health and education always affect those people who have less in our community more harshly than those people who are comfortably off, because those people who are comfortably off usually have other options. They have private schools, private health cover and other options, whereas those people who are struggling to make ends meet each week, whether it be with a pension payment or a wage packet that has to be shared between four

or five mouths, do not have options. So, when money is taken out of the local school system or when health care is restricted so that waiting lists are longer, they are the people who do not have any other choice.

So, the budget is unfair in a number of ways. It is bad for South Australia for another reason in that it lacks sense in economic terms because, with the increased impost on households under the budget, the only real motor for economic growth in the South Australian economy at present, namely household consumption, will be hit. I expect that it will diminish over the coming year as a result of this budget. The figures show that investment expenditure has been declining over the past few years, even though the Liberal Government has now had over five years to fix whatever problems it alleges arose in the 1980s. The demand generated by household expenditure is critical to South Australia's recovery and a budget like this will damage those prospects severely.

The Government's obsession with debt will retard economic growth and that means, in other words, that it will diminish the prospects of a jobs recovery. After all, debt is not a dirty word and, as pointed out articulately by the member for Peake, all major corporations and Governments around the world operate with debt. They do so for a very good reason. It means that, as long as debt is manageable and sustainable within the constraints of ongoing income, a higher standard of living can be provided to citizens now. Not only a higher quality of life can be provided for the average citizen but also the physical infrastructure that is necessary for the efficient operation of industry and the market, for example in terms of airports, roads and so on, can be provided.

Capital in these areas obviously improves prospects for industry and therefore for the people of South Australia as well. Governments are ultimately here to protect and improve the living standards of the people in the community rather than to provide balanced budgets. Balanced budgets are a worthwhile goal depending on the circumstances but the ultimate reason why we exist is to protect and improve the living standards of people in our community. We need to adopt a long-term debt reduction strategy which maintains demand and employment rather than implementing a radical short-term cost cutting agenda which will retard economic activity and place the lives of ordinary people in hardship.

It is entirely appropriate to fund long-term infrastructure projects through debt as the assets built thereby are utilised by many generations over a long period, and these generations then contribute to the cost of such assets through their future taxation contributions.

As an aside before I finish, it is interesting to note that we still use the terminology 'conservative government' and 'Liberal Party', despite the exposure of this current Government as a group of people which collectively is quite radical in its approaches in some ways. I am reminded of the comments by the member for MacKillop, I think it was, one of our country squires, who is a true conservative. He is quite offended by a lot of the moves made by this Government, in particular in relation to the emergency services levy because, in its ideological commitment to making government smaller, this Government is demolishing not only the well being and the social wage of the majority of people in our community but it is also demolishing a lot of the State's valuable institutions, such as ETSA. So, it might be called conservative but, apart from carrying the torch for moneyed people in our society, this Government is quite radical in the measures it is willing to impose in order to make Government smaller

and thus abdicate many of the responsibilities that true conservatives actually will admit to as rightfully being the place of a responsible Government.

I assess this budget as negative and damaging for South Australia. It takes South Australia in the wrong direction. We can only hope that the people of South Australia keep this clearly in mind when they approach the ballot box in a couple of years time.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): It is interesting that, in terms of this budget debate that we are having currently, I doubt whether any Government members will get up and speak in support of the Government's budget. I have not been here in the chamber all afternoon, but my Whip confirms that no Government backbencher has yet risen to his or her feet.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: Why would they, indeed? Why would they want to get up and defend the indefensible? I am quite confident that the phones in their electorate offices have been running hot with complaints (as have ours) and howls of outrage from people on low incomes who are saddled not only with the ETSA tax but also with the emergency services tax at the rate that has been set by this Government. So, it is no wonder that no member of the Government so far has risen to their feet to defend the indefensible.

I will not go through the budget in detail, because that will be done in true style by the Leader of the Opposition when he makes his budget reply and also by our shadow Treasurer. So, I will make some passing comments. What horrifies me is that, as we all recognise, this is a very high taxing budget—very regressive taxation measures with respect to the average wage earner or those on fixed incomes or government benefits—and we will get out of the emergency services tax an additional \$100 million over and above that which was contributed by the Government and from other sources towards the maintenance of those emergency services. Yet, despite that significant increase in revenue, our health budget will be cut by \$46 million and our cuts to education are still being maintained rather than expanded upon.

If this Government had wanted to curry electoral favour, if it was to introduce such harsh taxation measures as it has done then, at the very least, it should have then expended that money with respect to those areas that concern us most—jobs, health and education. But, instead, in those two key budget areas, significant budget cuts have been introduced or have been maintained. Of course, this Government also believed that a goods and services tax, as originally outlined by the Prime Minister at the last Federal election, would be implemented in full and in accordance with the Heads of Government agreement between the Prime Minister and all State Premiers only very recently with respect to what our State and other States could expect by way of revenue share. With respect to the deal done between the Prime Minister and the Democrats, that will alter the equation considerably for South Australia and other States in relation to what revenue we can expect in the future.

I must say that, in some respects, I have some sympathy for Peter Costello—only in so far as, whilst I am opposed to the imposition of any goods and services tax, if you are to have a goods and services tax it has to be made across the board. This Democrat proposal that we can have a goods and services tax by excluding food is a nonsense. The tax is a bad tax, full stop, and should not be introduced. The current taxation system, whilst it can be altered and improved, is not

broke, when the Federal Treasury can produce a \$5.5 billion surplus for this current financial year.

The goods and services tax will be a nightmare for small business (as alluded to by the Leader in his questions to the Premier today) to determine whether a piece of bread, if it has butter on it, will be GST taxed, or whether a portion of a chicken will attract a tax but not the whole chicken. This will be replicated through a whole range of subject matters, and that will cause endless confusion to the consumer and to the small business person, who will have to spend a fortune in terms of hiring staff or investment in computer equipment and the like, to be able to comply with the law. So, I have some sympathy for Peter Costello. You either get the GST across the board and increase the level of compensation or you do not have a GST at all. But this half-baked measure is an absolute nightmare for all concerned.

With respect to the emergency services tax, what this lesson has taught all members of this Parliament is never pass any legislation unless you know what is in it first. When this legislation was introduced last year, we all remember what the Minister of the day said with respect to the emergency services tax: 'Look, don't worry about the fine details such as how much money it will be, because we do not know how much money yet. We are still working it out with our experts, we are still consulting with people and that will come through subsequently. Trust us. Pass the legislation now.' We on the Opposition side pointed out that very obvious flaw about passing taxation legislation without knowing, basically, what is in it in terms of how much money it would cost the average punter.

It is unfortunate for members opposite in the Government that they took the Minister at his word and the Government at its word when they said, 'Look, we are not seeking to raise more money, essentially, than we are already getting. It will just be a more efficient means by which to collect the tax.' At the time, I agreed with the Minister that the present system of collecting insurance levies was inefficient, in that it did not collect moneys from everyone who benefited from the services that were provided—the under insured or the non-insured, and large corporations insuring overseas to avoid having to pay their fair share. Indeed, when I was the shadow Minister for Emergency Services in 1997 I asked the then Minister (the now member for Bragg) whether or not he was even contemplating changes to the way of raising revenue to fund emergency services, and I remember his answer distinctly: it was 'No.' But that was in 1997 and, okay, the Government has changed its mind since then.

However, if we were spreading the net and ensuring that everyone was now contributing towards emergency services, one would have thought—as the member for Colton and others thought—that the overall net effect for those who were insured would be, at the very least, a slight reduction in contributions or maybe even a break even point. You would not actually have to pay any more money, because those who were not paying would be caught in the net and would help to spread the burden. So, in theory, all of us who were insured would get a slight reduction in our contribution. However, that has not happened. The opposite has happened. The emergency services taxation that will be collected is virtually 2½ times that which was collected or sought to be collected in 1998, when this legislation was first talked about.

Listening to the Minister for Emergency Services on ABC Radio last week, I thought he was paying me a huge compliment. The Minister was asked by a radio journalist why the Government did not proceed with its emergency services

legislation last week when it was listed. The Minister blamed yours truly and said that the Bill had been pulled because of me and what I had said in the Parliament last year about the tax being a wealth tax. I was right in 1998 and, no matter how you dress it up, it is still a wealth tax.

I am not opposed to it in principle. I just want it to be more progressive. I took it as an extreme compliment when the Minister said on radio that because of the words that I, a mere backbencher—on the Opposition backbenches, at that—had spoken in 1988 this Government had been thrown into such confusion and turmoil that the whole legislation had to be pulled, until they could address the issues I had raised in my speech last year. I thank you for that, Minister. I did not realise that I had the power to change the course of events such as you have described. I am sure that it will be useful for me in the years to come to realise that I have such omnipotent power.

I would like to raise the issue of how we could more effectively use our time with respect to another place—and this comes within the budget because of the money we spend on maintaining Parliament. My views on that place are well known—it should be abolished. I will not speak on that at this stage; I have done so at length on other occasions. I hope at some time I get the opportunity to speak on a Bill that will actually abolish it. It is a bit of a nonsense that, at the end of this week, this Parliament goes into a two week recess and then we come back for two weeks of Budget Estimates which involve the House of Assembly. However, the Legislative Council does not actually sit on those two weeks.

I would have thought that they would have plenty of work to do. I know that we use that Chamber for the purposes of Estimates Committee B. However, there are other places in the parliamentary precinct we can use to hold Estimates Committee B. Old Parliament House would be an ideal location, for example. The Legislative Council could proceed with deliberating on its private members' business and on its Government business.

We have yet to debate the local government legislation, and many hours of debate will take place. It is a huge Bill, as you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would be aware. However, instead, the other place will simply go into recess for that two week period and wander around like lost souls, with not a great deal to do except race out every now and again to the corner of King William Street and North Terrace, and shake hands with the odd passing constituent to remind themselves what members of the public look like.

It would be maximising the value of taxpayers' dollars—and this is what we should be about in terms of looking at the way we operate and at the budget. During those two weeks that the House is sitting in Estimates the Legislative Council should be sitting and deliberating on other Bills. I know that at certain times Ministers in the other place are required to appear before the Estimates Committees of this House, and that is a full-day session for most of them. They should be there by all means. That is no different from their being absent from the Legislative Council when they have to go interstate on ministerial business or whatever, and I am sure the rest of the Chamber could sit and deliberate on the various legislation that is piling up.

We all know that at the end of the session, in July this year, there will be a lot of late night sittings, both in the Legislative Council and in this place, while we wait for Bills or amendments to be considered and debated, and while there are conferences of both Houses on issues that cannot be resolved between the two Houses. A lot of time is wasted and

there is a lot of expense as legislation is jammed into those last few days of the last sitting week of the session.

The two week break in June this year for the other place is just not defensible, given the workload we may be confronted with in July, and the Government ought to take this suggestion on board for future years to ensure that the other place is working whilst we are deliberating in our Estimates Committee. Easy arrangements can be made for Ministers to be absent from the other place to attend before Estimates Committees. They would be required to be at one of those Estimates Committee hearings only one day out of that fortnight. Not only would we not jam so much in towards the end of the session but also there would be the consequent savings in overtime and other costs for staff. Also, quite frankly, we would not be drafting legislation in haste at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, trying to cobble together compromises at the last minute to clear the decks before we rise for a two month break.

I would like to talk about other matters, but I will conclude on just a couple of points. Whilst the Government has exempted people who live in Housing Trust homes from paying the emergency services tax, as we all know, many people on low incomes, because of the size of the waiting lists on the Housing Trust, cannot get into Housing Trust homes and are in the private rental market. Indeed, their rent is being subsidised in the private rental market by the Housing Trust and by Centrelink. Those people will be paying the emergency services tax. The landlord will simply pass on the costs in the form of increased rent to those people—people who are probably in identical financial circumstances as those who live in Housing Trust homes but who will be exempt from paying the tax, and there is no provision for relief for those persons who are in private rental accommodation on low or fixed incomes and who will have to pay the full extent of that tax when it gets passed on.

I look at the schools in my electorate, as we all no doubt do when we visit them on a regular basis, and I see the appalling backlog in maintenance. The Kilburn Primary School had to use its Back to School grants to get its support officers out of the verandahs they occupied and into a dedicated office area for those SSOs. It was an occupational health and safety matter; they could no longer work in make-shift offices that were created out of verandahs next to classrooms.

Kilburn Primary School, for example, had to pay half the cost from its back to school grant, which is not what back to school grants are for. That should have been paid for out of the minor capital works budget, but it did not get it. That is just one of many examples, not just in my electorate but replicated elsewhere, of where school communities, because of financial cutbacks by this Government, are being forced to raid their back to school grants that should be used for maintenance around the schools or for the purchase of additional computers, and the like, to provide basic services that should be covered by the Government's minor works program.

As I have written to the Minister, even a toilet block that ought to be condemned at that primary school cannot be upgraded. The girls toilet is a former boys toilet that still contains the urinals. What sort of message does that send to the girls of my local community that rough enough is good enough? It would not be tolerated in other areas. The boys and girls toilet block at that school is an absolute disgrace and has been requiring work to be undertaken under the minor works program for years; we are still waiting for that to be

demolished and replaced. I trust that the Minister will be answering favourably my most recent request with respect to that matter.

In conclusion, I will be very interested to see which Government backbenchers, particularly in marginal seats, are brave enough to rise to their feet to support the Government's budget, because they know what their constituents think of it. I see the member for Schubert on the starters' blocks: I look forward to his contribution, as no doubt does the National Party.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I accept the challenge laid down by the member for Ross Smith. I am not saying that this is a popular budget, but I believe it is a very responsible one although not necessarily a good news one. This is why we have the problems that we have. Too many Governments in the past have delivered budgets just for good news, and it has not been responsible budgeting. I have no problems representing my people in here, because some industries in my electorate understand, as they have been going through these straitened times. The Government should have been doing something many years ago. We have to wake up to reality. As the Premier said today in the House, the world is now a smaller place. We have to govern in a world sphere rather than just in the small sphere we are used to. We cannot insulate ourselves from the pressures of the world—of interstate or overseas economies.

So, I strongly take up the challenge laid down by the member for Ross Smith. As usual, as we would expect, members opposite are being negative, carping and critical: they really could not care less about the overall picture for the State. They should quietly applaud the Government for taking a tough stance, delivering a budget about which we have no choice and giving assistance and alternative policies. I hate to hark back to the economic situation that we are in and why we are in it, but it is mainly because a previous Government a decade ago ran us into this situation. When we consider the amounts of money we are talking about, \$15 million to \$20 million is a lot of money in this budget today.

Eight or nine years ago, Ministers could blow \$60 million and not even bat an eyelid. One such example was the Hon. Mr Klunder with the Scrimber program in the South-East: \$60 million went down the drain, but nary a hair was turned. In this instance, we are mindful of the budget and very careful about our single millions, rather than blowing \$60 million. I believe that this budget is responsible and is a budget for the time. Most members on both sides of this House were expecting a budget such as this. When we compare this with Labor's budgets, even with its last one in office prior to 1993, and when we compare what it budgeted for and what the State got for its money, what was delivered?

The only thing I can think of—and I am being very fair about this—that the Labor Government did that we can still see and use is the dual highway from Adelaide to Port Wakefield. That is the only tangible thing I can see that a Labor Government did—certainly for country people. I come into this House and hear the rhetoric from the other side yet, when it comes to waste, to planning and to budgeting, their record is abysmal. I do not believe that we want to harp on forever about the problem of the State Bank. In fact, the Premier laid down the challenge today in what I thought was a very fine ministerial statement. With one vote in the Upper House I believe that we can lay the State Bank debt, the history and all the bad feelings to rest.

One vote in that other House in relation to the sale of ETSA and that will all be history. Let us get the State back onto a sound economic base, so that the Government can meet the areas of responsibility that it would like to meet, particularly in education, health, regional development and all those areas where the Government is under a fair bit of pressure, as members have highlighted from time to time. Looking at the total outlays in the budget, I welcome the fact that even in these straitened times we are still increasing our outlays by 5.2 per cent. Our capital investment is planned to exceed \$1 billion in 1999-2000, which is very creditable, considering the position. Also, there will be additional funding of \$97 million over four years to meet the increased demand for human services, primarily in health care.

We all know of the problems in health care, particularly in relation to the physical conditions of our facilities. We have heard about the problems at the Royal Adelaide, the Queen Elizabeth and the Lyell McEwin Hospitals from all members on both sides of the House. I include my piece for the Barossa Valley again. The Barossa has done very well from this Government since it was elected in 1993, but a priority now is a new health facility, because the Angaston Hospital, along with the old Tanunda Hospital, will be closed in the future and we are in need of a new facility. I welcomed the announcement in this House on Thursday of last week in which Minister Brown said that we are in the final stages of arranging the purchase of land for a new Barossa health facility.

I am very pleased that in these straitened financial times this Government plays it with a straight bat. We all know that this Government does not have to go searching for votes in the Barossa but is a creditable and honest Government. Under the Opposition, I am sure that we would not get anything like that. Likewise, I believe that many members opposite think that the Government is being fair and equitable. I look forward in the next three to five years to a new Barossa health facility, which would probably be the end of chapter 1 on my list of demands that I have had of Government since being in this place for the past nine years.

I also welcome the extra \$66 million over four years that has been allocated for industry and tourism development and investment. A large share of that comes to my area of the Barossa, because it is steeped in tourism and its allied industry. I am particularly glad to see the Government's contribution to the new Four Seasons resort, which is very close to completion. If any members had seen it, they would be most impressed. The Government has had a vital part to play in that. In true bipartisan spirit, I will admit that it was the previous Government that gave to that organisation the commitment of the \$2.5 million toward infrastructure to enable that to come about. I am ready at all times to admit anything that the Opposition did when in government.

The Kinsmen project is nearing fruition, and a marvellous asset that will be for the Barossa, since the biggest thing we lack now is four and five star accommodation for our many visitors from interstate, this State and overseas. I also welcome the additional \$4.5 million per annum allocated for regional infrastructure development. We have seen in the headlines of recent days that, according to all the surveys, the bush sees itself as being completely ignored by its city cousins, and that people out there say that they really could not care.

We have also seen the rise and rise of the One Nation Party, and a number of other reactionary Parties have arisen out of pure frustration. I am pleased to see any commitment

by Government to support the rural population, particularly in the area of regional development. A few weeks ago, a report was tabled on regional development from studies that had been carried out, and I have been reading through that document. About some of it I could have said, 'I told you so', but in other areas it was a great education to me. I recommend that all members read the document because it is a very good one and I am pleased to note that the Government is acting upon it.

Turning to the Government's budget priorities, I am pleased to see in the area of primary industries and resources a \$10.5 million variation upwards in relation to expenditure. That is very worthy because, as we know, primary industries carry the State and it is a sector that will lift our economy, particularly new primary industries such as aquaculture, which we heard about in the House last week. I also note that, in the area of human services, as I said, there is an increase of \$38.7 million, which reflects the Government's intention to spend more money on upgrading infrastructure.

One area in which I am disappointed is transport and urban planning, which has received an increase of only \$3.9 million. One of my favourite subjects is roads and I would have liked to see increased expenditure of around \$10 million, but it is not forthcoming. However, even though roads expenditure is not as high as I would like, I am very pleased to note that the Government has agreed to an upgrade and the sealing of Gomersal Road. Although it is mainly in the electorate of the member for Light, it affects my electorate most, and I have been lobbying for some time to have that road upgraded. So I am pleased that the Government has seen fit to allocate \$2.5 million over two years to that project.

I am very pleased about that, as are the people of my region and the people whom the member for Light (Hon. Malcolm Buckby) represents. The road is mainly in the District Council of Kapunda Light, which the member for Light represents, but both that council and the Barossa Council, which I represent, will have to assist the shortfalls, and that will probably be about \$500 000 each. There will be a considerable shortfall because the project will cost between \$5 million and \$6 million. The remaining cost, hopefully, will be picked up by the country roads program and by other agencies that we will attract as the project develops. I do not believe that a single project in the region will attract more support and public approval than that one.

Truck movements in the Barossa Valley are heavy and increasing by the hour. The truck movements alone out of Orlando are horrific and causing all sorts of problems, not only in the valley but also as far away as Gawler. In the Gawler main street, the traffic coming down the hill from Lyndoch is causing mayhem. I also welcome the support of the Gawler Council and its Mayor (Hon. Bruce Eastick). This affair has involved three local councils and, after 25 years of lobbying, we will now have a direct route straight into the heart of the Barossa across open country. The heavy transport will come across this direct corridor, leaving the tourists to use the picturesque winding roads, which are suitable for tourists but not suitable for heavy traffic. After a long period of lobbying and with the support of the member for Light and the three councils, I am very pleased that in these straitened times the Government has seen fit to allocate this money to bring about what has been a long held dream for many people. I am very pleased and I very much thank the Minister (Hon. Diana Laidlaw) for her endeavours in this matter.

I also note the increase of \$27.6 million in the area of education, training and employment. That is welcome

because it is a special and very important area of high priority for this Government. To remind members of that fact, a couple of days ago I visited the yet to be officially opened special education unit now attached to the brand new Tanunda Primary School. To say that I was impressed is an understatement. There are currently five students in the unit and that number is being increased all the time. They are being brought in one at a time so that they can acclimatise. Gradually the unit is being built up to a workable number of 15 to 20 students.

I had the privilege of meeting one student whose name is Riley. The teachers said that in the three weeks that he had been there the difference in his behaviour had been heartening. The facilities in the unit to help the teachers handle these children are fantastic. Riley cannot move at all but, with such things as lifts or hoists on tracks on the ceilings and the extra attention given by teachers to these children, a wonderful environment is created for them. It is built right alongside the primary school and all the children run around it. I was also most impressed by the way the primary school kids look after the kids with special needs. I was pretty impressed and I told the Minister so today. I know that, in a few weeks, he will have the honour of opening that unit. Years ago such children would have had little hope. Today these children with magnificent minds locked in unworkable bodies know that we appreciate them and we love them, and in facilities like this we can extend their potential to the maximum.

I also note a huge increase in the Government's expenditure in industry and trade of \$46.2 million. I welcome that because it is very important to South Australia and, as has been quoted in this House many times recently, this Government is getting runs on the board. We lead Australia in many areas and the areas that we have chosen to promote are paying dividends for South Australia. It is all about jobs, it is all about future and, if we have no industry, it does not work. The Government has its priorities right there.

Let us hope that the sensible thing happens and the ETSA sale gets that one final vote. If so, I believe that all these figures could change, although I put on the record that the Government's first and foremost responsibility is to pay off the debt. However, I believe things will ease in all these areas to enable the Government to upgrade and increase funding, particularly in the areas of job creation, industry and sustainable development. It is easy to be gloomy and negative about the budget, but I believe that we have done the right thing and I think that members would agree that we are coping quite well. It is better than emergency management but I am optimistic that we will shortly be able to sell ETSA and then the whole situation will be freed up.

My electorate of the Barossa and regions north and south is particularly pleased with what the Government has done for it in the last few years, and I refer particularly to the project that I led for clean water for the Barossa. Not a day goes by without my constituents reminding me that they still have not got over the clean water that now comes out of the tap. Many other areas of regional Australia are the same. Now, when they turn on the tap, clean water comes out. People living in Adelaide take that sort of thing for granted, but people in country areas do not. The next priority for my electorate is the roads. Some of the roads are not up to standard and I hope that, by 2005, the Government will have addressed most of the arterial roads.

The Barossa Performing Arts Centre is going well. It has taken some months to get off the ground and for people to realise it is there, but it is being utilised more all the time. The

Wine and Tourism Association Centre is fully utilised and we now have excellent management under Barry Salter and it is now doing what the people who set it up hoped it would do. It is attracting a wide area of expertise and is a great source of information not only in tourism but also in industry. I congratulate those people.

The new Tanunda Primary School is functioning well. It has modern architecture and is a modern school, but it is so good it is already full even though it has been open for only a year. Hopefully the Government in the months ahead will look to increasing the accommodation. I believe it will bring on a few transportables; that brings a smile from some people. Hopefully in the next year or two as the population settles, as it is increasing quickly, we will have extra facilities there.

I note the completion and opening of the new Nuriootpa High School facilities, which are extremely popular; the Government got good value for money. It is a magnificent facility and it, too, has a special education unit attached to it. The only area we need to attach now in relation to special needs is the early intervention part of it. I visited the kindergarten last Friday and will bring up the matter with the relevant Minister. Although the budget is not popular, it is responsible and most members would expect such a budget.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): In speaking to the Appropriation Bill this year I will refer to the bulk of people in the south who are ordinary South Australians: they work hard for their living and work hard with their children to develop them to have a stable and productive life, enjoying some recreation. Many people choose to live in the south because of their recreational preferences. They like the sea and the hills close by. They like the fresh air and the general friendliness and community spirit that exists in the south. Some of these people who have chosen to live in the south to indulge their boating habit are among those who are wondering about how much more their boating habit will cost them and whether they can continue to afford this intense recreational pleasure that they have been enjoying.

It is these ordinary people—police officers, small business operators, nurses, public servants and many other people in the south—whose future depends on the vehicle manufacturing industry and various aspects of the automotive industry and all its associated products. They are feeling some underlying tension as the continuing debate over tariffs proceeds. They are feeling increasingly edgy that they will have to find another \$1 a day to pay out in Government levies and charges. The tax of \$360 a year is \$1 a day with five days off for good behaviour, and it adds up. A dollar makes a difference to most families, whether they are trying to struggle on incomes under \$15 000 or whether they have achieved some measure of success and affluence, as have quite a number of people in my area, and are living on incomes in the \$70 000 to \$90 000 bracket. Nevertheless, they will not find it easy to find \$360 or \$1 a day because they are already committed—their expenditure is determined. Most of us live on our income plus 10 per cent and these people who are trying to build themselves nice homes, furnish them and provide an education for their children have already told us that they will find it difficult to find \$1 a day.

The people at the lower end of the scale—those who often have been knocked about by the reconstruction in our industry and are now living on social security or casual wages—are desperate. They have no idea how they will find \$1 a day and what out of their meagre budgets they will have

to do without. Despite the very happy and successful people in the south, we cannot ignore those who are struggling all the time.

Recently I asked for some figures about School Card entitlement in the south. We looked at the comparison between 1988 and 1998. I am sure that you know, Mr Acting Speaker, that there was a major revision of entitlement to School Card in 1996-97 so that about 20 000 families in the State at that time lost School Card. Despite that, every school in the electorate of Reynell has had an increase in the number of children for whom School Card is received. In fact, nearly all of them have over 50 per cent of their students entitled to School Card. Among the only ones that do not is the Reynella Primary School (in one of the more modern more affluent areas), but families there are finding it tough, too, because in 1988 only 9.63 per cent of students received School Card. In 1998 that had gone up to 28.68 per cent. The local Catholic school—the Antonio School—had an increase in School Card entitlement from 14.42 per cent in 1988 to 35.21 per cent in 1998.

The other two schools with less than 50 per cent of children on School Card are Morphett Vale High, which has gone from 18.12 per cent in 1988 to 44 per cent in 1998, and the Reynella South Primary School which went from 22.58 per cent to 49.59 per cent—just falling below the 50 per cent mark. That leaves eight schools in the Reynell electorate where more than 50 per cent of students are entitled to School Card. That gives some idea of the struggle those families have each and every week in trying to pay the gas bill, ETSA and the council rates as well as providing the basic food for their children and themselves. We certainly have many people coming to us on a regular basis who cannot pay their water, gas and ETSA bills.

We also have a huge number of people desperate for housing because they can no longer meet the commitments they have made in relation to their mortgages or rent as their circumstances change or as the prices rise much faster than their fixed income. For so many of the people in our area who have done well or are doing well, some of the pressures on their budget come directly from the Liberal Governments at Federal and State level. They are supporting their children for much longer as they have now to support them until 24 years of age in many cases when they are studying. They are paying incredibly high fees for TAFE, which is a very popular form of further education in the south as it relates very well to the sort of jobs that many families are used to and to which many children aspire.

Some of them are renting out an additional property as their superannuation because they are being told that the State can no longer provide for them and they have to provide for their old age. These people are not sure how the budget will work when they pay the emergency services levy on that extra property because they know that they will have difficulty passing that on to their tenants who will have trouble paying that bill.

Many small business operators in the area are feeling very distressed. They face the extra burden of paperwork from the GST and the many costs that is likely to bring, and then they find that they are getting more State Government hits, with very little in the budget that I can see that will help small business. I would be very pleased to learn of any details in the budget that show support for small business in the south. I hope that will come out during the Estimates process.

One of the biggest issues that we have to deal with in our electorate office is housing. I am very pleased that the

Minister for Human Services responded to a plea from the member for Kaurana and me at a recent Southern Partnership meeting and has established a working party to look at crisis accommodation in the south. Crisis accommodation is some of the need; long care accommodation is an additional and separate need.

At the meeting on crisis accommodation we got some idea of just how desperate the housing situation is under the new Commonwealth-State arrangements. One of the agencies had 426 young people seeking housing over the past 12 months, and it was able to house only somewhere between 80 and 90 of these people (the figures get a bit indefinite because of the periods that are involved). That means that over 300 young people were not able to be placed by this emergency youth service. They followed up to try to find out what is happening to those young people and found that 155 are staying with friends, thus quite often placing a burden on the families of those friends; 73 have no fixed address; 23 are in other emergency services, in their car, in a caravan or in a tent; 137 are still at home in very unsatisfactory situations; and 38 have just gone missing.

In this day and age we should be able to do better by our young people. They are facing a very complex life. They are having demands placed on them to be able to perform and plan their future that were certainly never placed on me. This morning at one of the schools in my electorate I learned that children in reception are already talking about their career planning and trying to find out more and more about different jobs in the community. I did not start working out what job I might like to have until I was well into high school. I never planned that I would end up in Parliament. In those days I thought that I was going to have four children and retire to the home.

Mr Venning: Four?

Ms THOMPSON: Four children, and I had their names planned. But that did not happen, and I am very pleased that, instead, I am able to stand up here and speak out for some of my community who cannot speak out for themselves. These children are having that sort of burden placed on them—at the ages of five and six they must start thinking about their career. Then we have the situation where, with the complexities of family life and the lack of support for so many parents, it ends up with these young people not being able to live at home but having to do so all the same.

What really shocked me was the number of families who have come into my office seeking accommodation. One family with four beautiful young girls came in one day with nowhere to sleep that night. They had been in private rental accommodation, but he had lost his job so the lease was not renewed. They desperately tried to get other accommodation but, with no job, no emergency housing and huge waiting lists with the Housing Trust, nothing was available. On that day we were able to produce a miracle and find somewhere to house that family that night. They subsequently came in to thank us, absolutely full of relief and joy. But they were still going to face an uncertain future because, while we had found emergency housing, in six months they were going to have to find somewhere else to live. This was an ordinary Australian battling family, usually doing okay, usually able to look after themselves but, on this occasion, because of loss of work, they felt all the degradation, humiliation, fear and frustration of too many families for whom housing is a basic need that is just not being met.

I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Human Services for establishing a task force to look at crisis

accommodation in the south, but I plead with his colleagues, particularly with the Treasurer, to rethink the priorities and direct more money to housing. It is such a basic need in our community.

I now turn to some specific issues in the south. I am very pleased to see that the Noarlunga Hospital will be upgraded, particularly in the accident and emergency area. Unfortunately, this does not meet all the needs of the Noarlunga Hospital. This is an excellent hospital, and it is very interesting to note that, at a time when a private hospital run by a private company in the area is closing down because it has not been able to do satisfactory business, has not been able to run itself well enough, the private wards at the Noarlunga Hospital are always full. I believe that this represents the excellent track record of the public sector managers who generally run the Noarlunga Hospital. I will be addressing that issue in a Public Works Committee hearing soon, so I will not go into detail, but I hope that the current plans meet all the needs. However, indications so far are that they fall far short.

Another area I was looking for information on in the budget relates to the TAFE college at Onkaparinga, particularly the hospitality area in relation to food and beverage operations. Mr Acting Speaker, you will know that the Fleurieu is seeking to develop its reputation as a producer of food and wine. We are placing greater emphasis on tourism, and the City of Onkaparinga Council, together with a number of business organisations, is looking at how it can promote growth in these areas to tourism and general food and wine promotion, because we produce some excellent products. The John Reynell Restaurant at the Onkaparinga College of TAFE has traditionally been the training restaurant where some of the students, in a very nervous and hesitating manner, produce fine food and pretty fine service which I try to sample each term.

However, the restaurant does not look very much like a restaurant despite its beautiful view. The school, which is providing this much needed and excellent training, has been seeking an upgrade in its facilities for some time now. The teachers feel that students will have a better education if the restaurant looks like a restaurant. However, some fears have been expressed recently that not only might the restaurant not be upgraded, it might not exist at all. I have not been able to find anything in the budget, so far, which can reassure me on this matter, so I hope this will come out in Estimates.

I also cannot find anything about expenditure on the vocational education college which has been promised for the south and I hope that this is simply because the new system of accounting does not provide much detail. It certainly was not mentioned in the Treasurer's speech. Yet we have had about three announcements so far that this vocational education college is coming to the south, and both private and public schools have worked together to put forward two proposals for excellent delivery of service to enable our young people to maximise their chances of getting good jobs. Again, I hope I find that information during the Estimates process.

Another facility which the south has been looking for and which has not yet been identified is an access changeover centre. The Minister for Human Services has shown much interest in this facility and has been trying to work with the Commonwealth; perhaps it is in the Commonwealth budget, but we have not yet heard anything about it. There is also a great need for support for parents, providing resources to the many organisations within the south that try to assist parents in their very difficult job. So many parents today have not had

the opportunity to see others parenting and have little support—

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

Ms KEY (Hanson): My comments with regard to the budget will be on two levels: first, the portfolio areas I represent and, secondly, specific issues which have been raised by constituents and which are obviously relevant to the electorate. In looking at the budget papers I found the lack of information overwhelming. As usual, I had to refer to documents made available through the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), and the many different community agencies, including the United Trades and Labor Council which does an analysis with the unions on the budget. To set this into context, like the member for Lee I have tried to be positive when looking at the budget because I believe that members on both sides are looking at South Australia's going forward. I am positive that most of my colleagues on the other side certainly want to ensure that people do have a reasonable standard of living in South Australia.

But in saying that, I think we have ideological differences that change the approach of both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. The comment has been made a number of times by people outside our Parties that there is not much difference between the Liberal and Labor Parties. There is a distinction in our policy not only in the industrial relations arena but also on many social justice issues. The point that sticks in my mind in addressing this issue of the budget and supply is one of Peter Reith's many comments. On 9 July at a business lunch, Mr Reith said:

Never forget the history of politics and never forget which side we're on. We're on the side of making profits; we're on the side of people owning private capital.

I am not sure what Peter Reith's other comments were at that lunch, but that comment made my blood run cold and make me wonder about some of the Liberal Party's social justice policies. Certainly, as I said, many members on the other side of the House have made it very clear that they have a commitment to social justice. I can only hope that Peter Reith's comments do not reflect the views of members of the Liberal Party in South Australia.

As I said earlier, I have had to rely on different publications on the budget that are made available through the community sector to get some sort of sense of where we are going. I am particularly drawn to an ACOSS document, 'Australians living on the edge'. A national survey found that 65 per cent of community welfare agencies experienced an increased demand for their services over the past six months with 73 per cent expecting a further increase in demand over the next six months. That is on two levels; first, community non-government agencies are now bearing larger responsibility for some of the social issues and services in our community and, as a result of winding down, privatisation, outsourcing, commercialisation, etc. of what were considered State infrastructure and services, it is no wonder that community welfare agencies are shouldering such a huge burden.

They say that the major reason for this rise in demand is not only the points I have just mentioned but also the fact that their clients have been referred from Government agencies, including the offices of members of Parliament, to seek this assistance. One of the concerns of the community welfare

sector is that it is not able keep up with demand and in some cases it has had to turn away people from these services.

The other reliable indicator in relation to how people are living in Australia, and certainly South Australia, is the Henderson poverty line. I will refer briefly to the poverty lines and the definition to make my point clearer. A document from the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research states that poverty lines are calculated on a benchmark of \$62.70 for the September 1973 quarter. This was established by Professor Henderson, as many members would be aware, in 1973. So, in 1973 we were using a benchmark of \$62.70. The document states:

The benchmark income was the disposable income required to support the basic needs of a family of two adults and two dependant children. Poverty lines for other types of family are derived from the benchmark using a set of equivalence scales. The poverty lines are updated to periods subsequent to the benchmark date using an index of *per capita* household disposable income.

The document then sets out the different poverty lines in Australia in the September quarter 1998. I will refer to the level there because it helps us when looking at South Australian poverty levels, having regard to the definition I have just outlined. The document continues:

The poverty line for a family income unit comprising two adults and two dependant children where only the head of the family is working and including housing costs is \$453.72 per week (December 1998). This is a rise of \$3.53 per week from the poverty line for the previous quarter (September 1998).

Obviously, the issue of poverty lines is relevant when we hear from the community welfare sector that the need for their services has increased and, in fact, trebled in many instances. In 1998, 47 per cent of the South Australian population were in receipt of some form of Government allowance. Over one year from 1997 to 1998 there was a 9 per cent rise, so we now have 53 470 people (in the 1998 figures) receiving a disability support pension or some form of Government allowance. In the years from 1986 to 1996, the number of South Australian households with incomes below 60 per cent of the average weekly earnings rose from 25.8 per cent to 41.7 per cent. I think members would have to agree that that is a very worrying figure for South Australia.

Again, I refer to the poverty line. The number of families and individuals living on the poverty line has increased. In 1996, 22.8 per cent of all South Australian households had incomes below the Henderson poverty line. The table outlined in the South Australian Council of Social Service Inc. budget submission for 1999-2000 shows, on details prepared by Anglicare, that 107 328 households, comprising 191 616 South Australians, are in poverty, and of those (and I am sure figures can easily be put to one side) 39 884 children were covered. We are talking about South Australia, our State, not a Third World country.

Among single parent households, 45.2 per cent, or 33 845 households, were below the Henderson poverty line. Lone person households did not fare very well, either, with 52 707 people classified as being in poverty. I must say that we have a big case to answer for when we look at the distribution of poverty amongst South Australian families. I say 'we', because I believe that this is something that we as representatives of people in South Australia should be working towards changing.

The South Australian Council of Social Service Inc. also notes that some of the poorest regions in South Australia are the Yorke Peninsula and Lower North regions (which, I am sure, would be of interest to the members representing those

areas) and that, for many reasons, of which I am sure the members are aware, the per capita income is very low. The average for the Yorke and Lower North regions was \$15 090 in 1996. I know that some of those families may have some assets on which they have to rely, but certainly as far as the cash flow is concerned SACOSS raises grave concerns. They also say that one third of rural families in South Australia have annual incomes below \$16 000 per annum. As I said, even if those families in the country have a number of assets, there is certainly a real concern for people generally in South Australia.

When comparing South Australia with what is happening nationally, I think most of the indicators show that we are doing very badly as far as our standard of living and provision of services are concerned. I represent the seat of Hanson, which comprises the western suburbs of Adelaide. What has been interesting about this last budget process is that constituents have contacted my office saying that they have grave concerns about the emergency services tax and the ETSA tax. They point out how their cost of living has increased over the past year in particular. A number of older people have said that they have found it very difficult even to feed themselves because of some of the increases that they have been asked to pay and are terrified by the concept of even more taxes decreasing their weekly or fortnightly budget.

A number of the younger members of the Hanson electorate have raised issues about school fees and also eligibility for School Card. One can almost tell by their age what issue people will be raising about this latest budget. Quite often most of the population do not seem to have an interest in the budget, other than where it hits them in the hip pocket—and I must say that is probably a pretty reasonable way of assessing a budget. However, at my office (as the members for Reynell, Ross Smith and Lee who spoke previously have said), constituents are ringing up complaining about the problems they have with accessing services and paying their bills. A number of them are really concerned that, at the end of the month, they have no money left to pay their water or electricity bills. I would have to say, judging by my constituents' complaints—and may I say my own budget—that a lot of these costs are starting to bite.

With the news of the GST and the nonsense about some foods being taxed and some foods not being taxed, I have real concerns about whether some of the homeless people in South Australia will be fed. We have a number of street kids whose survival depends on a van pulling up in Hindley Street and giving them soup each night. Having been out on that van a number of times with colleagues of mine from the trade union movement who perform that work every night, it is really worrying to see the age of the people who line up for soup. Most of them tell me that they spend their money on drugs—and, certainly, that is not something that I condone or support—and, because of their circumstances, they cannot afford to eat or to live anywhere. It is obvious from just standing next to them that many of them do not have the luxury of bathing, either. They are a pretty sorry sight when you see them lining up for the soup. I know that we have had some hard times in Australia before, but it is absolutely disgraceful to know that we in Adelaide have young people lining up to be fed every night. These kids have nowhere to go; they have big problems.

My other shadow portfolio area which is a very difficult area and with which I have been trying to grapple is that of youth affairs. Just looking at the unemployment facts is

enough to make one wonder where we are heading in this State. We also need to look at some positive programs to ensure that the 8 700 people between 15 and 19 years of age who are unemployed in South Australia and the 89 600 people aged from 15 to 19 years who are unemployed nationally receive training and obtain some meaningful work.

South Australia is the only State to see a decrease in employment numbers, with 22 800 jobs being lost in South Australia between 1997 and 1998: 15 100 part-time jobs disappeared and nearly 8 000 full-time jobs were also lost. Obviously, the very high unemployment rates that South Australia suffers are of great concern.

The picture for South Australia is very grim when one looks at the figures on employment rates to which I referred earlier and the number of people living on a Social Security wage, in concert with the fact that the social welfare agencies are absolutely bursting to the seams trying to provide services. Although, as I said earlier, I am very concerned about getting negative, I think some definite programs need to be implemented to ensure that we provide employment and dignity to people so that they can earn some money and have a reasonable living. For every job vacancy in South Australia, 27 people can apply—and these are just the registered unemployed. As we know, a huge number of people make up the hidden unemployed and they, too, could apply for that job vacancy. It is obvious that we are doing something wrong, and we really need to look at our labour market programs to ensure that we have some big increases.

A number of concerns were raised by the various youth organisations in South Australia relating to the budget. However, there were some ticks with regard to the State Government trainee program. I should have hoped that the numbers would go back to at least the 2 500 figure. That seems to have been missed by the Minister, and I do not doubt that the Minister for Youth Affairs is concerned about employment for young people. However, one of the success stories is that the trainees—and most of us have had the honour and the opportunity of having trainees in our office—obtain jobs and participate in our community.

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

EXPLOSIVES (BROAD CREEK) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the Bill without any amendment.

LISTENING DEVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

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

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

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council granting a conference as requested by the Council; that the time and place for holding it be the Plaza Room at 10 a.m. on Thursday 3 June; and that Messrs Atkinson, Conlon, Evans, Hamilton-Smith and McEwen be the managers on the part of the House of Assembly.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

Ms KEY (Hanson): In summary, I hope that Peter Reith's comments regarding the making of profits and people owning capital are not a reflection of the State Liberal Party's philosophy. Although I understand that we obviously need to encourage industry in South Australia, that we do need to make profits, that we do need infrastructure investment and that we need people who own private capital, I also believe that we need to look at people who are not in that category and who have to survive either on the social wage or on very low incomes. I am very sad to say that the most recent State wage case brought down last Friday, whereby the workers who are the most vulnerable and unorganised in our South Australian community were told that they could have a meagre pay rise but that they might have to put off getting that \$10 a week pay rise for another 18 months, did not seem to be the sort of philosophy we in South Australia should be looking for.

In terms of the industrial relations Bill that was before this House last week, the introduction of youth wages and the new scheme for people to negotiate their living wage is of great concern to the Opposition and does not contribute to the philosophy that we should make sure that we have a working brief to improve the standard of living in South Australia and access to jobs and training. This does not seem to be reflected in the associated legislation now before us.

Mr SNELLING (Playford): This budget is a budget of plenty of pain but, unfortunately, no gain. In South Australia people are not stupid, and they would be willing to undergo some hardship in order to get South Australia's books back in order, that is, to reduce the debt that this State Government faces. But whilst this budget inflicts plenty of pain and whilst people are expected to undergo a great deal of hardship, there is no real gain in terms of repaying debt; in fact, the State has a small budget deficit—a further contribution to the debt it already has.

In 1997, before the last State election, we were told that the finances had rounded the corner, that things were looking bright again, that the Liberal Government had broken the back of the debt, that there was plenty of sunshine and that South Australia had a bright future to look forward to. However, straight after the election, the truth was revealed: the Government had not made any contribution to getting the State's finances back in order and, as a matter of fact, we were in trouble similar to the trouble we were in all along. It is not good enough to say now that we are back where we started.

I briefly want to run through some of the areas in which people in my electorate are being forced to suffer because of this Government's financial incompetence. Many people come into my office, and one of the major problems in the community seems to involve mental health and the running down of the resources given to mental health. We are seeing people being forced out of institutionalised care, which is fine, but once they are placed out in the community and left to fend for themselves the resources that you would expect that they would get are just simply not there. They are being thrown back into the community, left to look after themselves, and left to cope with their illness without any of the resources and assistance that you would expect that they should receive.

That is reflected in a lot of problems in the community. Unfortunately, our Police Force is often being left to do the mopping up, and things are happening that could easily be prevented with just a few more resources to allow people with mental illness to live in the community but with the assistance, resources and so on that they need to enable them to do so. Otherwise it is just a false economy because, while you might be saving in one area, you are certainly suffering a lot in terms of police call-outs and various other problems accompanying mental illness when it is not being properly treated.

On average, at least once a day I have someone contact my office because they have had a bad experience with the health services of this State not because of the professional people who work in those areas but simply because those people do not have the resources they need to do their job properly. The obvious problem is that of waiting lists. Much suffering is caused because people are not treated through relatively straightforward procedures—we are not talking about triple heart bypasses—that can cure someone's problem and end a great deal of suffering. People are being forced to wait months and months—and in some cases years—to have their problem treated. As I said, these cases often involve fairly straightforward procedures.

We are also seeing ward closures and hospitals having to discharge patients who quite clearly need further treatment or at least further hospital observation. From my own personal experience, I know that at present women are being discharged a mere three days after giving birth, and there is talk in the media about women being sent home even sooner.

Those of us who have had anything to do with childbirth know full well that on the third day after childbirth a woman is often going through a pretty hard time. Her hormones are fluctuating; if she is breastfeeding, the feeding is just starting properly, and all the sorts of things associated with getting used to having a child are really starting to kick in on that third day. Yet we are seeing women being sent home on that very day when perhaps the need for them to remain in hospital is at its highest. I suggest that many cases of post natal depression could be prevented simply by giving women at least a couple more days in hospital before their being sent home.

I know that that is completely out of the question as far as this Government is concerned, because not just in this area but in so many other areas people with often quite serious illnesses are being discharged from hospital long before they should be. Their doctors would much rather that they remain in hospital under observation or under treatment for much longer, but they are being discharged simply because the hospital needs to free a bed for someone else. It is absolutely appalling that this is going on in a civilised society.

Modbury Hospital, which is quite close to my electorate, is probably the main hospital to which my constituents go for hospital treatment if they are unfortunate enough to require it. By all reports to me from the people who are seeking treatment there, the privatisation of the management of Modbury Hospital has been a complete disaster, an abominable failure, and people are suffering terribly because of the complete failure of this privatisation experiment. I am glad to see that the experiment has not as yet been continued anywhere else, and I encourage the Government not to go down that path with any other hospitals, given the complete failure with Modbury.

Para Hills Police Station, which is in my electorate, is a very fine station which, a couple of years ago, was threatened

with closure; under Focus 21 the police force was rationalising its police stations. In the Salisbury zone there are two police stations, the recently built one at Salisbury and the longstanding one at Para Hills. There was a proposal to shift Para Hills out, move to Salisbury and close the existing Para Hills Police Station. Whilst that did happen, fortunately the Tea Tree Gully division needed a new police station and was shifted in, so the Para Hills Police Station kept going. However, as far as I am concerned, the future of the Para Hills Police Station is still unclear.

The Government has some long-term plans, I imagine, to build a new police station, perhaps in the Golden Grove area where there is a lot of growth. Whilst I would welcome that, I am very concerned about what might happen to the Para Hills Police Station when that happens. Para Hills Police Station provides a vital service in that area. It is a well-known fact that crime (particularly petty crimes such as home burglaries and so on) is significantly lower in areas where a police station exists. I am in no doubt that, if the Para Hills Police Station were to disappear, crime in my electorate would increase substantially. It provides a vital service, so I would like some guarantees to be given about the future of the Para Hills Police Station. I do not want a shopfront police station: the existing Para Hills Police Station has to remain.

I am concerned also about the running down of police services in general because, on the Saturday after Good Friday, Holy Saturday, a very nasty incident occurred in my electorate at one of the local football clubs. A young man was stabbed in the chest a number of times. It was obvious to the people at the club that a bit of trouble was brewing and that something could happen, so a call was made to the police. When a call is made to the police, it is prioritised. If it is life threatening, the police are there almost instantaneously but, if it is of lesser priority, the wait might be some minutes, hours even, depending on how serious the incident is for which police attendance is required.

On this occasion the call was made and it was given a low priority because it concerned just the threat of trouble brewing but, about 20 minutes after the call was made, someone was nearly fatally injured. I can think only that, if the police had the resources they need, they would have been able to respond to the first call. They would have been able to respond when there was the hint of trouble. If the police had been able to turn up when the first call was made, they would have been able to disperse the participants and move people along, and the young man who was stabbed would not have been so badly injured. As it is, police are stretched to the limit. However, I commend the police officers because, as soon as the person was injured, they were there almost straightaway, but it was too late. The person had already been very badly injured and I can only think that, if the police had the sort of resources they need, such a nasty incident could have been averted.

I am also very concerned about the state of education services in my electorate and the strain that teachers are put under. Increasingly, they are being forced to teach and care for more students with fewer resources. That sort of running down of public education will force parents to send their children to private schools, so more parents will have to come up with the money to send their children to a private school. That is very unfortunate because parents should have full confidence in our public education system. They should be happy in the knowledge that by sending their child to a public school they can be guaranteed that their child will be given every chance in life. I am concerned also with the Partner-

ships 21 initiative that the Minister has launched, because anything with '21' attached to it seems to be an excuse to cut costs and to run down resources available to public education or any public instrumentality. I am very concerned about that.

When I first heard about the emergency services levy that was introduced by the Government in last year's budget, I thought it had a fairly sound basis in terms of fixing the inequity that arises because only those people who insure their property and therefore pay the fire services levy pick up the full cost of our emergency services, while people who do not take out insurance are just freeloading and expect the rest of us to pick up their costs.

It seemed an equitable thing to make all property owners make some contribution to emergency services, but it has become clear over the past 12 months, particularly in this budget, that this is not correction of an anomaly or an attempt to fix an inequity but simply a blatant, undisguised attempt to raise revenue. It is simply a bare-faced attempt to raise revenue, often from the people who can least afford it. An interesting observation was made by Professor Cliff Walsh on radio on Sunday night, namely, that the levy should be set not on one's entire property value but, if it is to be for emergency services, on the improvements to one's property value, that is, just for the house and not the land as well. Even if your house burns to the ground you still have the value of your land. The house value is what disappears, so it would be far more equitable for such a levy to be set on the improved property value and not just on the value of the property itself.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr SNELLING: The member for Hartley seems a little confused—maybe I will speak to him afterwards. He is startled like a rabbit in the spotlight, ready for Labor to take him out.

With the emergency services levy I have never had so many calls to my office on a single issue. In the two years that I have had the honour to be a member of this House I have never had so many people ringing me up about a single issue. We have taken many calls over the past few days since the budget was introduced with people quite upset, annoyed, and many quite frightened by the ramifications of this measure. This measure will be the Government's death warrant. The Government will feel the full brunt of the wrath of the electorate. I draw the attention of the member for Hartley to this point, who will be the unfortunate victim of this measure.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I rise tonight to speak on the Appropriation Bill. For a number of budgets I have been the Opposition shadow Treasurer and have responded to the budget. The lead speaker will be the Leader of the Opposition, who will speak a little later—perhaps tomorrow evening. Some issues need to be addressed in this budget. From the outset I would have to say that this is a very sloppy budget. Since the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place has taken over the role of the State Treasurer one of his features has been sloppy work. I can only fear what might have gone by in years past with the education budget if the work he has undertaken as Treasurer in the past two years is any indication—very sloppy indeed. One of the concerning features of this budget is the significant overspending undertaken by this Government. We have seen a 7 per cent growth in outlays—in real terms 5.2 per cent. We can balance that with inflation expected at 1.75 per cent and State Gross Domestic Product around or a little under 2 per cent. For a Government to be increasing outlays

by 5.2 per cent in real terms is an indication of a Government unable to control its expenditure.

We have heard many lectures from members opposite about the need for budget discipline and for the realities of budget cuts but, at the end of the day, in these difficult times, with revenue increases barely keeping up with inflation, and clearly with levels of debt that require a degree of servicing, we do not need a Government that is spending beyond its means.

Mr Scalzi: Oh!

Mr FOLEY: The member for Hartley says 'Oh!'. The member for Hartley, with all due respect, would know little of budgets and would know even less of how one would tackle—

Mr Wright interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Need I say any more—an economics teacher! I fear for the students in 18 months time when he takes back to the chalk board if the member for Hartley would be any indication of the quality of teaching. As I said before, I will have a word to my colleague the member for Taylor and perhaps we can find a position for the member for Hartley where he will do little damage with the students.

The important point is that you cannot have a budget running at a 5.2 per cent real increase in outlays at a time of very low inflation and indeed extremely low gross State product growth. The member for Bragg stands there staring at me. I am not sure whether I should be concerned or uneasy!

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Listening with interest!

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: He would, and I suspect that the member for Bragg would not run his businesses with expenditure growing at 5.2 per cent if his revenues were neutral or indeed declining. The point needs to be made that all of us who have been in this place for the past five or six years have gone through a period of very difficult budgets. Former Treasurer Stephen Baker did not have an easy job, and we never said he did.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Of course we criticised him, as was our required role under the Westminster system. However, at the end of the day, I believe that Stephen Baker was able to maintain some discipline with his Ministers that clearly the current Minister is unable to do. As we pull the budget to pieces we see some significant glaring anomalies, none more than the decision to hold over dividends from SAAMC (the bad bank) from last year's budget to this year's budget. To enable this budget to balance we have had to hold over moneys from a previous year.

On top of that, we have seen for, I believe, the last two budgets an increase in the pay back period for unfunded superannuation liabilities, which are now scheduled to blow-out to some 35 or 40 years. Clearly that requirement has enabled the Government on paper to balance its budget, but the reality is that it is structurally in deficit. Here we are, after six budgets of cuts and six budgets of a Liberal Government, and our budget is still structurally in deficit.

I want to say a little about our debt and indeed issues of the debt servicing cost. I note that in the forward estimates net interest payments are scheduled to be some \$468 million on an outstanding budget debt, depending on which table you look at and which comparison you make, of somewhere between \$4.7 billion and a figure in excess of \$5 billion. That tells us that Treasury is forecasting average interest rates on our outstanding debt of roughly 9.5 per cent. I find that a little

difficult to understand, given that a considerable amount of debt was rolled over in recent years at figures of 4.5 to 5 per cent.

Much debt is due to be rolled over in the course of the next two to three years that, we would have to assume, would attract a rate much closer to 7 per cent, if not below 7 per cent. I would be interested in the Estimates Committee process to ask the question why net interest payments are forecast to be still about 9.5 per cent, if not more, given what I should have thought would be a much lower average rate of interest, and given the low interest environment we have been in now for a number of years and which is forecast to continue for some years.

Notwithstanding the obvious issue to do with managing our debt, I would have thought that 9½ per cent in three years' time was a significantly higher number than would be accounted for in our books. I make no other allegation than the fact that I think that is an issue that needs to be inquired into when assessing our situation. Because this Government has been incapable, either because it has simply been very sloppy or because the big spending portfolios or a whole raft of capital works projects have been able to get through the Cabinet process, we are now seeing the Government in a position where it has been forced to bring in two significant taxes. Notwithstanding the events of the past five or six hours, clearly the ETSA tax is a con, and I will explain why shortly, but, more importantly, the emergency services levy is a tax introduced by this Government as nothing more than a poll tax, a tax which was designed to raise much more than was ever needed or intended for emergency services but which was a neat way, in the Government's view, of being able to find more cash to fund its significant blow-out in expenditure.

With the ETSA tax, I was interested to note in the forecast of the performance of ETSA Corporation, quite apart from Optima Energy and Genco, that ETSA is forecast to have an increased tax equivalence for company tax. From my earlier calculations it is a 25 per cent increase, but how much of that is the ETSA levy flowing through to profit I have not been able to work out, but it has to be said that there is a forecast increase in profitability for ETSA Corporation because it is simply paying more tax equivalence. On the other hand, we have a decline in dividends.

I would have thought that, if a business was growing and there was an increase in company tax to be paid, indicating increased profitability, the dividend flow would certainly not be in decline but should be increasing. There are questions to be asked. Having said that, it may be somewhat academic given the events of the past few hours but still there are issues of accountability and presentation in this budget that warrant significant questioning.

I notice that the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training is in the Chamber and there has been enough in the past 48 hours about which we should be concerned with the administration of the education portfolio. I note that the Minister issued a press release yesterday morning, I think, saying that he needed more money from the Treasurer. I have to say that any Minister who, within three or four days of the budget coming down, is asking the Treasurer for more money is a Minister who is simply not on top of his job and, whilst I have little sympathy for this Treasurer, I would simply share some sympathy with the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place who must have been wiping the sweat off his brow. There we go—we have an Education Minister hitting the airwaves with a press release yesterday

morning saying that he would have to go back to Treasury asking for more money because he had obviously made an error in his budget forecast.

The Hon. M.R. Buckby interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The Minister says that that is not true. I heard it on the radio.

The Hon. M.R. Buckby: Did you read the press release—

Mr FOLEY: I heard it on the radio. Within three days of the budget, the Minister for Education is already having trouble with his budget. We have not entered the new financial year and the hapless Minister is already getting his numbers wrong. I hope that the new CEO of the Department for Education is able to balance his budget and to manage the finances of the education portfolio a little better than his Minister.

It is important that we hone in on the issue of spending because Cliff Walsh was extremely critical of this budget today and some points need to be made. When one looks at the reconciliation statement in the budget—and can I have your indulgence, Sir, as I hold up this document to read it without displaying it—net outlay increases in terms of policy changes since the last budget are averaging some \$75 million to \$80 million per year and notation D states:

... reflect Cabinet spending decisions made since the 1998-99 budget including specific high priority initiatives and provisions to meet unexpected cost pressures and any further new policy initiatives.

So, since that 1998-99 budget, this Government, this Cabinet, has authorised \$75 million of recurrent expenditure over and above what it budgeted for. That is a figure awfully close to the ETSA tax that this Government has brought in. One has to ask the question: who is in control of your budget? Looking at some of the significant increases in capital expenditure, we have talked often about the white elephant of a soccer stadium at Hindmarsh—a soccer stadium costing over \$30 million.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Bragg says that it will not be a white elephant. It might not be a white elephant during the Olympics, I will give him that—

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson: It's the same white elephant as Football Park was 25 years ago.

Mr FOLEY: The member for Bragg said that it will be the same white elephant that Football Park was 25 years ago. Well, we know what the member for Bragg was doing 25 years ago: he was trying to stop us from having lights at Football Park.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson: Sixteen years ago.

Mr FOLEY: Sixteen years ago. We all recall the member for Bragg's efforts to destroy a significant improvement in our premier sporting arena; it was a black spot on the political history or the political record of the member for Bragg as he was out there getting his petitions and royal commissions.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: And Max has never forgiven him. Well, a good mate of mine's old man was there with you; my good friend Howard Nottle's father was there with the then candidate for the seat of Albert Park. That is a sidetrack: the member for Bragg is interjecting out of his seat.

I was referring to the white elephant—the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium. The average crowd is 4 000 people and we have a stadium that will seat 25 000 people. At the end of the day, if that is the priority of this Government, so be it. But it is important for the Opposition to ensure that people understand where this Government's priorities are.

The consultants to date on the ETSA sale have cost some \$38 million. Instead of paying for teachers, nurses, doctors and police, we are paying some \$38 million to consultants such as Morgan Stanley and others. I think that indicates this Government's lack of priority. But, there are many examples of waste and many examples of significant capital works blow-outs that have cost this budget dearly.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Hartley can sit there and chirp away, but it will be the honourable member who will have to go down every street in his electorate and knock on every door and explain to constituents why the Government is unable to balance its budget and why the Government is putting painful taxes on the electors of Hartley. I can assure the member for Hartley that every door he knocks on our candidate will be knocking on shortly thereafter. As you sit on your .1 per cent—

Mr Scalzi: It's .9 per cent.

Mr FOLEY: Trust me, between .1 and .9 there is not much difference. I have it at .1 at present; it might have been .9 at the last election. Am I able to disclose some of our internal polling?

Mr Hill: It'll shock him too much and upset him; no.

Mr FOLEY: Can I give him an indication of our internal polling?

Mr Hill interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: You are about 3 per cent behind, Joe. That is 47 per cent.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: At the end of the day, I think that the people of South Australia—the people of Hartley, the people who live in the southern suburbs, the people who live in the seat of Mawson—would have to ask the question: do they really want a member of Parliament representing them who is, indeed, the tax man of this Government? The member for Mawson brought to this State a brand new tax—\$141.5 million. I dearly hope that, when the electors of Mawson go to the ballot box in 18 months, they remember that their local member—no-one else, no-one more influential, no-one more powerful and no-one more deliberately—imposed this tax. It will be our role in the Labor Party to ensure that every elector in Mawson—every family, every household—knows that their member brought to them a tax bill of many hundreds of dollars. I think that that is the least we can do to ensure that the electors of Mawson understand what their member saw as a priority. I have covered but two marginal seats but I believe that they are two important seats. Of course, I must say that we will be targeting the seat of Light.

As I said before, notwithstanding the events of the past five or six hours, it would be fair to say this has not been a good period for the Treasurer—a Treasurer who lives in another place, a Treasurer whom we invite down onto the floor of this House but once a year. The budget is sloppy work, and I think that the Treasurer himself is feeling the pressure. I do not know who the Treasurer's media adviser is, but I will just give him a tip as best I can, in a truly bipartisan spirit. When the sweat starts falling off the brow, when the Treasurer starts to feel those drops coming off the brow, I give him just a bit of advice: he should not reach for the handkerchief and wipe that sweat from his brow when he is giving his one and only keynote press conference for the whole year. I do not know whether the Treasurer's staff have told him that, but I would just take a gamble on the sweat not being picked up on television.

Mr Hill interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Yes. I think that, faced with that choice, the Treasurer would want to hope that nobody would pick up the sweat rather than to wipe his brow with a handkerchief in the way he did.

It has not been a good week for the Treasurer. Under pressure the week before last, when asked in Cabinet about issues to do with the ship breaking industry at Pelican Point, the Treasurer said, 'I was too busy closing down schools.' When I debated the Treasurer on radio the other night, I think his words were that he was a tough Minister; he got rid of 400 teachers. I say to the Hon. Rob Lucas of another place: he may regret that. I can just see the election advertisements now: 'I was too busy closing down schools,' and 'I was the one who got rid of 400 teachers.' This is a shameful budget, one about which the Treasurer should be ashamed.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I thank the member for Hart for his elementary economics lesson. This is a responsible budget. It is a budget that we had to have in order to continue with the sound base that this Government has established in this State in the past five years. It is a budget not about having recessions—and some might remember the words of a former Prime Minister about a recession that we had to have. This Government has never gone down the line of forgetting that its one objective is to create jobs and to improve the standard of living for all South Australians. I believe that slowly, given the unfortunate circumstances in which we found ourselves, or should I say in which the people of South Australia found themselves, we still have managed to get this State back on track. I could go on and refer to the pamphlet that has been delivered, but I am sure that members opposite will say that that is just propaganda.

South Australia remains an attractive place to invest as taxes per person remain the third lowest of all States and territories. Of course we want it to be better and we are planning for it to be better. We are investing in information technology. We are providing for young school leavers so that they can find employment. The hive of activity taking place in South Australia at the moment contrasts very well with what was happening in the late 1980s and early 1990s. So, things are turning around. I could go on listing the things that the pamphlet has outlined, but the reality is that we still have to pay \$2 million every day in interest on our State debt. However, members opposite will not listen to this type of argument.

In relation to jobs, the 1999 employment statement builds on four years of a \$100 million initiative announced in last year's statement. It involves new spending and an extension to programs worth \$28.5 million for the next three years which will provide a further 7 400 people with job and training opportunities. We are doing something about it. We could go on about small business, health, education, the environment and the police, with 140 police trainees by 30 June 2000. These initiatives have taken place in difficult economic circumstances. The best way in which to illustrate this to members opposite is by referring to an article in the *Sunday Mail* of 30 May—after the budget. It is always important to have someone who is objective and independent and who is not a member of Government or the Opposition, and in that context I refer to Chris Kenny. The article is headed 'Olsen operates in real world'. That is an important point, because to get anything done we have to operate in the real world. In part the article states:

Because, for all its considerable faults, the Olsen Government has a quality its opponents seem to lack—it operates in the real world. It knows debt remains the State's greatest economic threat and it has a plan to deal with the problem.

Labor, on the other hand, pretends the rest of the world will remain frozen in time, while our debt simply diminishes over a decade or two.

I think that says it all. Then there is the \$186 ETSA tax. However, it is not an ETSA tax but a tax brought about by members opposite. The Government has made a commitment that, if circumstances change, it will go.

I refer now to the emergency services contribution. It is not a levy but an emergency services contribution. Members opposite talk about it as if it is a new tax, that somehow we just grabbed it out of thin air and imposed it on the poor people of South Australia. The reality is that previously constituents paid a fire levy on their insurance, through their council rates and on their vehicles, but 30 per cent of the population was not paying that levy at all.

Of course, some people may pay a little more and some a little less, but everybody will benefit when we get the \$200 million emergency services communication radio system that is much needed. Being a member of the Public Works Committee, I know how that will benefit all South Australians when the time to respond to an accident will be reduced. Members opposite know that everybody will benefit from the money collected from the emergency services contribution—that is what I would like to call it. Members opposite know that it cannot go into general revenue; they should stop talking about a 'Government grab', because they know very well that that cannot take place. Members opposite supported it. It passed through both Houses of Parliament. Everybody who understands elementary government knows that a Bill has to pass through three stages—first, second and third readings—after which it goes to the other House and the same process takes place again. Members of the ALP were there when it went through. We might disagree on the specifics, but the reality is that the Opposition supported that Bill. Now, although members opposite threaten the members for Mawson and Hartley, they forget that they supported the Bill.

It is an emergency services contribution, not a wealth tax. Was it a wealth tax when people paid a certain percentage on their home insurance? We have not forgotten about the people who are less fortunate and who cannot pay. I was pleased when the Government announced that Housing Trust tenants will be exempt. I know how difficult it is for my Housing Trust tenants in Hartley, so I was pleased. Given that I had voiced the concerns of self funded retirees, I was pleased that for the first time they have been taken into account. The self funded retirees have struggled with interest rates in recent years. It is fair enough to have low interest rates for people who are buying their home for the first time, and we are fortunate that the Federal Government has maintained a low interest regime, but the self funded retiree was struggling. It fair that a self funded retiree who gets \$13 000 or \$14 000 of real disposable income in a year should have the same concession as a pensioner, and this Government has done that for the first time. If that is not showing understanding and compassion for the people who are having it hard, I do not know what is. I have had several phone calls, and people have accepted that; they appreciate that this Government has taken them into account.

This budget is not an easy budget, but this budget did not have the luxury of dealing with easy times. For difficult times

we need something in place that will ensure the best deal for the community. It is no good members opposite just carping at the Government, because everybody knows that you can play havoc with statistics. The Opposition uses statistics like a drunk uses a lamp post: not for illumination but for support. Members opposite were going through the specifics about the emergency services contribution.

Mr Hill: 'A stitch in time saves nine'; do you know that one too?

Mr SCALZI: I was a high school teacher. I thank the member for Kaurna for that little bit of humour, but this is not a laughing matter. This is a responsible budget, and it is a budget for the present times. Although the Government has made some hard decisions, I believe they are fair and that this budget will serve us well in the future.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I am pleased to participate in this debate. I am glad that the shadow Treasurer is in the Chamber because I would like to commend him on his very thoughtful and well researched contribution to the debate tonight. It was of his usual standard. Not only did he enlighten Government members about what the budget should be but also he outlined our electoral strategy in a number of key seats and generally rounded off the evening.

Before getting into issues relating to the budget, I want briefly to speak about the parliamentary process in terms of how we address this budget. I know this is something that has evolved over time and, as a new member, it is probably not right for me to raise these issues. However, it seems to me that it would be a lot more sensible to have this debate about the budget after we have been through the Estimates Committee procedures, because then we would know what is in the budget and we would have a few ideas. This preliminary debate, which is—

Mr Scalzi: That didn't stop the shadow Treasurer.

Mr Hill: Of course not, because the shadow Treasurer is a man of great knowledge and skill and he is able to see pretty easily through some of these procedures. It seems to me that it would be a much more straightforward and sensible process if we reversed the order of business. Anyway, I have made that point.

I would like briefly tonight to talk about some of the implications of this budget for the southern suburbs, and I wear my hat as the shadow Minister for the southern suburbs. All I can really talk about is the capital works, because the recurrent expenditure will be the same in the south, more or less, as it is in other areas.

I believe that the southern suburbs have been badly dealt with in this budget in two areas, the first of which is health. The 1998-99 budget allocation for the capital works program for southern metro facilities was \$17.5 million, and the completion date was listed as 'ongoing'. Under the current budget southern metro facilities have been itemised. We get \$3.5 million for the Flinders Medical Centre Intensive Care Unit, the completion date for which is September 2000; \$800 000 is allocated for the eye centre equipment, the completion date being December 1999; and \$7.5 million is allocated for the FMC Psychiatric Unit, the completion date for that being listed as 'under investigation'.

I assume that that \$7.5 million for the FMC Psychiatric Unit is similar to the \$7.55 million that was estimated in last year's budget for what was then called the Mental Health Unit at the Flinders Medical Centre. If that is the case, the total amount for the southern metro facilities has been reduced considerably. In addition to those three items which

I have just mentioned, the Noarlunga Hospital redevelopment is also listed, and I assume that it is part of the southern metro facilities, the allocation for which amounts to \$6.9 million. The total amount for this year's budget for those southern metro facilities, plus the Noarlunga Hospital redevelopment, is \$18.7 million, compared to last year's figure of \$17.5 million for the southern metro facilities and \$7.55 million for the Flinders Medical Centre's Mental Health Unit, a total of \$25 million.

So, there has been a cut in allocations of \$6.35 million for capital works in the health area in the southern suburbs. In addition, what was called the Mental Health Unit last year and what is now called the Flinders Medical Centre's Psychiatric Unit seems to have been put on the backburner. Last year, completion was due in February 2000; this year it is merely 'under investigation'. So, some serious questions need to be asked about the Government's commitment to the southern suburbs in the area of health.

The \$6.9 million for the Noarlunga Hospital redevelopment is grossly inadequate. Prior to the last election the Labor Party promised an injection of approximately \$23 million to meet the hospital's growth needs. That sum of money was based on the hospital board's own forward estimates. So, we have a reduction in the health allocation for the southern suburbs.

Another area that I want to talk about is roads. A number of projects were listed for work in the 1998-99 year and completion dates provided. In each case, there has been a blow-out in the completion time: in other words, these projects have been delayed. This is a process of slippage which allows the Government to pretend that it is doing more than it actually is. For example, the Murray Road-Dyson Road improvements at Port Noarlunga, which were due for completion in June this year, are now not due for completion until 2000-1, which amounts to a slippage of up to two years. The Gray Street redevelopment at Port Noarlunga, which according to last year's budget estimates was also due for completion in August 1999, is now not due to be completed until 2000-1.

The Noarlunga to Cape Jervis Road and the Kingscote to Penneshaw Road, which were due for completion in June 2000, have now slipped to 2000-1. The Noarlunga to Victor Harbor road, south of Willunga, which was due for completion in 2000-1, has also slipped to 2001-2, and the Southern Expressway, which prior to the most recent election was due to be completed at the end of this year and which according to last year's budget was due for completion in December 2000, has now slipped to 2000-1.

Whilst all those projects will continue, the budget estimates do not vary the cost very much in each of those cases. I suppose that it is difficult to do only half or part of a road, but in each case there has been slippage, and I must say that I am concerned that that slippage should not go any further. I note in passing that the cost of the Southern Expressway has blown out from an estimated \$120 million last year to \$137.6 million, which seems to me to be a fairly hefty increase in cost. I hope to ask the Minister during Estimates Committees why that is the case.

One bit of good news for my electorate about which I am pleased is that the Government has finally decided to honour its 1997 election promise to commence work on Commercial Road. As I have told the House on many occasions, Commercial Road is in urgent need of repair. Commercial Road runs from Weatherald Terrace, Port Noarlunga, through to Maslin Beach. The Government has announced that work will begin

on that project. The total cost is estimated at \$15.4 million, and it is due to be completed by 2005-6. That is much further away than I would have hoped, but at least it is on the drawing board and there is now a positive commitment. I commend the Minister for Transport for finally listening to what the electors of Kaurua have been saying to her through me and the local media. I note that \$800 000 has been committed for that project in this financial year. It is, perhaps, a drop in the bucket, but at least some work will proceed.

I note for the record some other issues regarding the southern suburbs. The Christies Beach Magistrates Court, which was due for completion in May 2000, has slipped to September 2000. That is only a few months, but there is some slippage. It takes that project from one budget year to the next, which may be convenient for the Treasurer. The railway line from Seacliff to Noarlunga Centre, which has been talked about for many years and which needs an upgrade, has gone in the reverse direction. It is now expected to be completed by June 2002, whereas it was to be completed at some time in 2003. I am not sure why that project has been given a green light, but as someone who uses that line regularly I am pleased.

I note that there is no additional money in the budget for the Aldinga sewerage scheme. Last year appears to be the last year in which money was made available for that project. There is \$2 million for the Aldinga water supply augmentation project which is due for completion in 2001, and the Christies Beach Waste Water Treatment Plant is due to receive \$2.3 million for the production of an environmental improvement plan. That plan is long overdue. It will be welcomed by residents, especially by those who intend to use the water which will be piped to McLaren Vale.

I also note that \$2.6 million has been allocated for the Seaford 6 to 12 school (stage 2B) which is due for completion in March 2000. I attended a meeting of the school council last night at which this project was discussed. A great deal of cynicism was expressed about whether this project will be completed in time for next year's school enrolments. The completion date of March 2000 will be after school begins, but I expect that date to slip some time beyond that.

The other matter I note in terms of the south is that no funds have been allocated in capital works for the Southern Vocational College. I am glad that the Minister for Education is in the House: he might be able to point out in the Estimates Committee where the funds for the Southern Vocational College, which has been promised for this year, will come from if not from the capital works budget. I hope that the Minister will find some money somewhere to allow that great project to start.

I refer to the emergency services levy and the ETSA levy, the two new taxes being introduced by this budget, because not only will they affect in a general sense everybody in South Australia but I know that they will have a big impact on electors in the southern suburbs and in my electorate. As other members have said, the number of telephone calls to electorate offices has been greater on this issue than on many other issues of moment in politics. I feel quite sad for many of the people, particularly pensioners, who have telephoned my office in this regard and who are absolutely frightened as to how they will pay these levies. These are ordinary people who have struggled to own a house. Perhaps they have one or two cars and a trailer, and they are looking at paying hundreds of dollars, which is the equivalent of one or two weeks' pension. This is something that is very deeply worrying people. A number of people have contacted my

office and said that they may have to sell their car or their house.

One lady in particular, the mother of a disabled young man, was fearful and in tears about the consequences of this levy, the ETSA levy and the motor registration increases that occurred last year. People in the suburbs are really struggling. They do not have as high an income as those of us who sit in this place. While \$100 or \$200 might not seem a lot to the Treasurer or to the Premier, to pensioners struggling on very small amounts of money it is a large sum and it does cause particular problems.

It is extraordinary that the Government has required the member for Mawson, the most junior of all the Ministers, to take carriage of this measure. It was obvious that when the Premier appointed the Minister to the position he decided to put him in the death seat, because this emergency services levy, or the 'Brokenshire tax' as I am sure it will be known in Mawson, will cause the Minister absolute damage in his electorate. It is pathetic to see him struggling to defend the indefensible, making very poor references on television to the fact that the people who will be better off will be those who live in \$400 000 mansions in North Adelaide. Of course, all these issues will be circulated far and wide in his electorate and will cause him real strife.

It is extraordinary that the Premier put the Minister in that position. One wonders why the Treasurer, who should be responsible for tax measures, was not out there defending this tax; he was very silent. No doubt, the Treasurer is a smart man. The Treasurer likes the security and safety of the other place and was able to avoid all the limelight on this issue. Of course, the ETSA levy on top of that, which is just a pure political piece of blackmail, will also have great impact on ordinary members of the public. The Government should be ashamed of these two measures.

It is certainly true that the Opposition supported the principle of an emergency services tax. It is fair that everybody should pay a little bit to cover the costs that were in the past paid for by only a few, but the extension of this levy has meant that it is just another tax grab; it is another way of filling the Government's coffers. I really believe that the Government should be ashamed of it.

I refer to capital works. In general terms, the Government makes a great deal in terms of its job strategy by saying that a large sum of money is being spent on capital works, that in this year's budget \$1.35 billion has been allocated for capital works. As we know from the past, this sum of money will not be spent on capital works in this year, because each year over the last six years or so that this Government has been delivering budgets it has trumpeted a large capital works program only to fail to deliver. In fact, over the last six years—since their first budget in 1993-94—some \$805 million which has been committed has not been spent.

Think of the number of jobs that could have been created if the Government had been true to its word and spent that money. The reason it is not spent is that projects are put in and then allowed to slip. The Government gets the good news story by saying it has a big budget, but then it puts in a time line. When the end of the year arrives, it allows the projects to slip into the following year so that it does not have to spend the capital this year. We all know how it works. It is a cynical, nasty exercise. The Government is conning people, attempting to make them believe that they are doing something for jobs in South Australia. In fact, the reverse is the case. In 1998-99, \$1.163 billion was budgeted for capital works, yet in actual fact only \$877 million was expended;

some \$286 million was not spent on valuable capital works. I have already outlined a few of those in my electorate.

I would briefly like to talk about the budget documents, the portfolio statements in particular. Over the past few days since the budget came down, I have spent some time going through the documents, in particular the documents in relation to the environment portfolio. In its second year, I can see the document taking some shape. I guess I have more of a feel for what it is attempting to do. I commend the designers of the documents, because they are potentially very helpful sources of information and may well do away with a lot of the need for some of the questions that we might otherwise ask in Estimates. I will briefly go through the document. The output classes state what was achieved in the portfolio in a particular period of time, and they are quite useful. They point to areas which you might like to ask questions about during Estimates. Then there are the portfolio outcomes which state the strategies. They are perhaps a little glib. I point out one in particular, which is rather absurd, in the Minister for the Environment's portfolio statement. Under 'Outcome: conservation and protection of natural, cultural and built heritage including the State's biodiversity', one of the strategies is:

Promote the welfare of all animals throughout South Australia in cooperation with industry, Government agencies and community organisations.

That is an extraordinary statement to have in this document, when it says 'all animals' and not classes, types or species of animals. The Minister has committed herself to the welfare of each and every animal in South Australia, yet she can hardly stand in this House and not talk about culling, euthanasing or killing one or other type of native animal or bird; for example, Cape Barren geese and a whole range of native birds last week were listed for destruction.

It is absurd to say that the strategy for achieving this conservation in biodiversity is the promotion of welfare for all animals. That is clearly not the case. In any event, the Outcomes section is reasonably sensible. It tells you the strategies that Ministers are about to go through. Then they have specific targets for 1999-2000 and the outputs that are participated. Some of those are quite interesting and point the way for questions in Estimates.

The next section in the document on which I will briefly comment is what is called Statement of Outputs, and then there is an overview of output to outcome relationship, which is one of these fancy grids that people who go to management schools like to construct and show to people. That is a particularly useless exercise; for example, in the output class Environment Protection, a number of categories go across the horizontal but in each of those categories the same four dot points are listed. It is just a perfunctory exercise to fill in the squares. It is a little like connect the dots and colour in the boxes. That was a fairly useless part of the exercise. No doubt some people might get some value out of it.

Then we go on to the output summary statements which list the expenditure in general terms under each of the outcomes. That is useful. Then we get to the output statements in detail. This year—at least in the environmental portfolio area—very little information is provided other than the boxes and charts. However, I could see that, if this were done properly over a period of years (and I would hope it is not too many years), when all the boxes have been filled in, it will be useful to be able to compare what happened last year with what is planned this year. Targets are compared and also estimated results, and then there is some explanation of

variation. This is a useful way of presenting the information. When you get to all the charts with the dollar signs and, at the end of the statement, output operating statements, and so on, I feel that some of these figures are a little confusing. It may just be my ignorance of accounting methods, but I think they are somewhat confusing, and I would like to see better clarification there.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): I rise to address the issue of supply and the budget handed down by the Liberal Government last week. I listened intently to the speech delivered by the Treasurer, and have since read with interest the glossy blue brochure delivered to every household, entitled 'Essential information for every South Australian.' In it the Treasurer states:

This budget is a necessary part of our plan for the future.

There appears to be only one way for the Government to ensure a future for South Australia, and that relies on one plan: the sale or, according to the latest model of the plan (and we have had many in the past months), lease of ETSA. There is no other plan. We have been continually bombarded with the propaganda for this sale, most recently being told that the profits of the utility will plunge over the next three years because of increased risk and competition. Why, then, would anyone buy this risky proposition?

Happily, the Treasurer has recognised and says in the brochure that more revenue is needed by the State. And therein lies the challenge faced by this State, the members of this Parliament and the men and women of South Australia. For we are all stakeholders together, and it behoves all of us to be part of the solution. Whilst the men and women who elect us may not have any involvement in the democratic process other than to elect an individual to represent their interests, it is up to the Parliament to do its utmost to act in the best interests of this State and its citizens. The centre point of this budget and therefore our next 12 months is the sale of ETSA. As the brochure says, when the money simply is not there, Governments have some difficult budget choices to make.

It goes on to say that, as soon as the Parliament allows the sale or lease of ETSA, the power bill increase will be removed. My constituents will rightly feel conned, and they are already asking the question: what will we sell to cover next year's budget shortfall? This is a hanging-on budget. It contains nothing extra, new or innovative. We must do better. That we do not is a tragedy, and that the two Party system no longer serves us is the greatest single issue that I feel condemns South Australia and, indeed, Australia, now on the verge of a GST. I have no difficulty in stating that, as has been indicated by a great proportion of the electors in this State, I believe we should retain public utilities, especially those that are left, for the benefit of this State. This means that we must make them work.

If we as a Parliament cannot deliver results for this State from the public sector, there must be grave doubts about whether Parliament should remain either as a House of Assembly or as a Legislative Council. With ETSA sold or leased there will shortly be nothing left for us to manage.

At the core of this year's budget is a conundrum. Once upon a time, Stephen Baker (the then Treasurer) told us that things were back in the black. Now we find a dramatic change in circumstances. How did this happen? Could one of the reasons be that the savage cuts to the Public Service have resulted in enormous payouts of separation packages and

accrued benefits? Could it then follow that we are now paying out enormous amounts for consultancies? Another unfortunate spin-off from this circumstance is that we have now had a brain drain that sees us poorly placed and inadequately resourced with people with the capacity and calibre to remedy the situation, the people with the sort of dynamic thinking to give us the value adding that is required to reinvigorate this State.

Of the many measures contained in the budget, none is more deplorable than the slashing of the public health system. I have listened for a great number of years to the debate on private health insurance, now so happily handed a subsidy by the Federal Government, a subsidy that could have been injected into the public health system of each State. Those funds would have seen a turnaround in waiting lists, the modernisation of facilities and the purchasing of modern equipment. Instead we have the demise of a system that once was the envy of the world, and I now see from media reports that the membership rate of the funds has not increased as expected resulting in what will be a further rate increase.

On the education front, we in South Australia have seen the introduction of Partnerships 21. This appears to be an ideological push to turn things around to the point where schools are all private and School Card will be for the children whose families cannot afford fees of any kind. I know that the Minister says that participation in the scheme is voluntary. Schools are nevertheless being encouraged to participate, as were the unfortunates on arrival at Belsen encouraged to use the ablutions block before being assigned a barrack.

The most alarming shadow of all hanging over future life in South Australia is the impact and effect of the industrial relations legislation that has been introduced into this House, should it ever become law: also under the guise of 'This will be better for you' and assurances that these measures will provide the flexibility to enable industry and business to employ more people, is a set of measures which when implemented will mean less pay for workers. Is that not what is really happening? Are those who 'have' not looking at ways to reduce the amount being taken home by the 'have-nots'?

Workers do not seek wage increases because they are greedy individuals unprepared to meet employers at least halfway. They are individuals who have been flexible and made concessions to productivity. When seeking a pay rise, they are simply doing what is necessary to provide for their families and make ends meet and, increasingly, the ends are not meeting. This is especially so for people on low and fixed incomes. A recent stark example sees pensioners in my electorate who have recently been granted an increase of around \$4.80 in their pensions, then facing Housing Trust rent increases of up to \$5.20. How can they manage the day-to-day increase in costs when their extra pension is gobbled up by a rent increase? How can they be more flexible or productive? What are they to do in the face of increases across the board? How are we to provide for them and the children who rely on us now and who are our future?

We live in a time of great and rapid change. These changes have affected greatly the way we live and work. Technological change has been the most radical, and there is no question as to how and the extent to which those changes have engulfed us and strengthened the power of big business. Change can and should be beneficial to society. How we meet our new circumstances will provide the blueprint for the future. Capitalism as a system no longer delivers to the vast

majority of the population, if it ever did, and is now so dominant in the world that as quickly as possible we need to negotiate treaties that can control the world juggernaut so we can all survive.

Eva Cox, Mark Latham and Lindsay Tanner have all picked up on the themes of seeking a third way to rebuild our confidence, that we live in a society not just an economy. Some of these communitarian ideals do not pay enough attention to the labour movement's quest for equity in industrialisation and tangible strategies to increase employment. However, the rise of interest in these notions of social capital reflect a latent desire to re-establish community trust. In this State, under the Brown and Olsen Governments, we have lost confidence in ourselves as a community. We have lost the sense of cohesion and belief in ourselves and our capacity to lead the nation in social and economic reform.

This budget represents the mean-spirited and punitive approach of the current Government, which seeks to blame the community for blocking the conservatives' complete control. Walking side by side with my community in support of our local schools and hospitals, and taking time out to visit the community activism occurring at places such as Pelican Point, I continue to be reminded of the reasons I sit in this Parliament. We are not here to manage the community to suit an increasingly difficult economy. We are here to intervene in the economy to better manage our resources, including power, to the best advantage of the community.

This budget does nothing for the community. It does nothing for an economy that would serve the community. It serves only the ideological dictates of this Liberal Government. It lets South Australia down and it lets the South Australian community down. Everybody in this House who is passionate about South Australia should reject it. We should be able to say to South Australians that this budget holds out the hope of employment for all.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Ms BEDFORD: You will be pleased to know that I wrote this myself, but I'm a bit stuck—my computer won't page down for me! This budget holds out the hope of employment for all, better education, better health services and a sustainable environment. Sadly, it offers none of these.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Florey has the call.

Ms BEDFORD: This would be my vision for a State budget at the turn of the century. Tonight, my task is to ask questions and raise issues on behalf of my constituents and the community of South Australia in the hope that those opposite can better understand the needs and aspirations of all who live in this State and hope for a reasonable existence and a better future.

The SPEAKER: Has the honourable member completed her remarks?

Ms BEDFORD: We can't get it to page down.

The SPEAKER: Either the honourable member is making a speech or she is not.

Ms BEDFORD: I have finished, Sir.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): My comments will be relatively brief. I rise tonight to speak on the Appropriation Bill. Last Friday morning, I was asked by our local ABC radio station in the South-East to do a program and field some questions on the budget from some of my constituents. I have spent the past few days trying to gauge the public's reaction to the budget.

There is a fair bit of ill feeling towards the Government over this budget, certainly in my electorate, and I think that feeling probably would apply Statewide. Personally, I think that a lot of that feeling is misdirected and due to a complete lack of understanding of the big picture of where we are in South Australia. Without being an apologist for the Government, I recognise the difficult situation that the Government faces.

When the people of South Australia sit down and analyse what this budget is doing for them and analyse the situation in South Australia, by and large they will accept the budget. The headlines have picked up on a couple of nasties in the budget. The ETSA tax, the so-called Rann tax, has been laid before the people of South Australia for a considerable time and there was no surprise there. There was no surprise in the 2.6 per cent increase in most of the fees and charges that the Government introduced, because they were flagged quite early.

Much of the odium that the Government is wearing with this budget is as a result of the new emergency services levy. In the several opportunities I have had in the House since the details of that levy were announced, I have made my position quite clear to the House so I will not go into that in too much detail.

Certainly, the people of South Australia, especially those who have supported this Government and in fact returned it to office for a second term, expected more of a Conservative Government. I think they expected that a Conservative Government would not go so far into the area of property taxes or, as I would have them called, wealth taxes. That is where a lot of the odium, particularly from the constituency of this Government, is coming from. The Government will have to continue to wear that odium into the future.

To be quite honest, I do not think the Government is handling very well the negotiations it is currently having with the local government sector in the so-called clawback of the so-called windfall gains that the local government sector has made from that particular move. As members are well aware, over the next few weeks a select committee of this House will look into some of the anomalies associated with that tax.

One particular anomaly relates to farming property. It is always hard to levy a capital based tax on farming property where you have a stepping off point, and we have a stepping off point with the emergency services levy of \$50 for each assessment, and then there is a tax on top of that which reflects the capital value. I can talk with experience in respect of farming properties, because this levy affects me. My farm consists of quite a few assessments. If those assessments happen to be contiguous, the emergency services levy that would be inflicted upon my business would be one \$50 charge and then a tax set relative to the capital value.

As my properties are not contiguous, I will be inflicted with quite a few \$50 initial payments and then the capital value tax on top of that, and that is not an uncommon occurrence in South Australia. That is certainly one anomaly which the Government should address. I say 'should address', because the political odium resulting from its not addressing that and the costs to this Government would be much more than the gain it received from that measure.

I return to the big picture of this Government. I congratulate the Government on returning another balanced budget. We should not lose sight of the fact that, when this Government came to power in 1993, there was a recurrent deficit of approximately \$300 million built into the budget. The Government should be congratulated by the people of South

Australia for turning that around and introducing balanced budgets. The forward estimates show that the budgets should be balanced for the next four years. That certainly underpins the future for South Australia, even though we do have structural problems within our budget. That certainly is a good start.

The budget provides for the basic services in South Australia—the services which are expected and which for many years have been called for by the people of South Australia. There is certainly no headroom in the budget for any entrepreneurial expenditures, any fancy footwork, or any headline grabbing stuff for the Government to actually win a great number of votes from the electorate. The room is just not there. Anyone who expects the budget to be more than a dour document at this point in our history is in fairyland, to put it mildly.

From those points of view, the Government has presented to the people of South Australia a responsible budget. One of the things which I particularly like about this budget is that the Government has expanded the expenditure on capital works. One of the problems that South Australia has had for quite a number of years is that expenditure has been transferred away from capital works and from infrastructure programs—which are what the future development of our State will be built on—into recurrent expenditure, and this Government has worked hard to actually redress that situation and put money back into capital expenditure.

Members on both sides are well aware of the situation in South Australia where much of our infrastructure is ageing and almost to the point of collapse. Indeed, one matter that has concerned me for many years has been the infrastructure in the City of Adelaide: sewers, water pipes and things underground which we do not see but which have been there for many years. We have huge problems in regional areas with electricity infrastructure, which is a matter I will talk about in a moment. We have to get much more money spent on infrastructure.

As I go about my electorate I try to visit schools as often as I can, and I am constantly being told about the run-down nature of schools and the difficulty in getting money for minor works and maintenance in those schools. Indeed, all members have probably experienced the same thing when visiting their schools and will be aware of the money needed to bring our schools up to a reasonable standard—much more money than the budget currently allows. There are calls for much more money to be put into capital works and maintenance.

The Government has probably done as well as it can in that area. At least one of the previous speakers mentioned Partnership 21 and, although the details have not yet come out, I believe it will provide a great fillip for many of the schools in my electorate, particularly isolated schools, because I believe local school communities with their local knowledge and desire to do good things for their children can drive their dollar, with respect to capital works and maintenance, much further than a dollar driven by the bureaucracy, which is often stationed far away and which has little knowledge of local conditions. I expect that schools in my electorate will embrace Partnership 21 and will make the best of it.

It is worth noting that South Australia spends \$5 417 per student in the public school system. The only Australian State which spends more than that per student is Tasmania. The South Australian branch of the Australian Education Union is extremely vocal about the effort put in by the Government

on education in this State and is constantly calling for more funds to be expended on higher pay rates for teaching staff, and I suggest that, if the people of South Australia looked realistically at the money we already pour into our public schools, they might question the way we are spending that money rather than the quantum. I urge the Minister to look at what some of the more populous States—New South Wales and Victoria—do in spending less.

True, they do not have our problem of having to spend more money per student in isolated areas, bearing in mind that we have more such students as a percentage in South Australia than other States have. Obviously, that contributes to the amount of money that we spend on education, but South Australia should work even harder to ensure that the dollars put into education are spent in the most effective way.

The health budget is one that has been talked about greatly, and health is a very emotive issue among the people of South Australia. As in all of Australia, in South Australia we enjoy an extremely good health system and generally we have as good a health system with as good results as one would find anywhere in the world today. We have the most modern techniques and extremely highly trained practitioners working in modern hospitals with modern equipment. I know it is very difficult for someone who needs a hip replacement or some other procedure to be told that they must wait six, eight, 10 or 12 months to have that procedure, but they should realise they are probably being treated in the best system in the world and that just because they are not getting instant treatment does not mean that the system is completely falling down.

Ms Rankine interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: In relation to the individuals who are in pain and who are expecting the instant treatment, one of the problems is that our expectation has been built up a little too high. Again, if we are being realistic, we should accept that we have a very good health system. Every effort should be made to invest as much of our resources as possible into health because it is one of the areas where the State should be doing well, should never be relaxing and should always be striving to do better. It is one of the fundamental services which the State Government provides to the people we are trying to serve.

A couple of dramatic events have happened in recent times. One of the things that will change the nature of the State's budgets dramatically over the next few years is, of course, the GST. As a result of the deal that has recently been cut between the Federal Government and the Democrats, it now seems likely that the GST will get up. Barring something most unforeseen happening in the next couple of weeks, I believe we will, indeed, have a GST in Australia and anyone who suggests that will not be a fillip for South Australia has not studied the consequences of the GST very closely.

Ms Breuer interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: The word is 'fillip'. As all members know, the South Australian economy is built largely on a manufacturing base and has been for some considerable time. All manufactures that we try to export out of South Australia are subject to the wholesale sales tax regime whereas Queensland's economy, for example, is based much more on services industries which are not taxed and that gives them a considerable unfair advantage over our industries. If one takes the big picture and looks at the whole economy, South Australia contributes to a much greater extent to the national accounts than does Queensland for the same amount of activity. I think the GST to some extent will redress that.

Another thing I like about the GST is that the revenue from the GST has been promised to the States. At last South Australia will, indeed, have a revenue base which is matched to the economic activity which is occurring in the State. That is something which we do not have at the moment. Our budget is a bit over \$5 billion and about half of that comes in grants, so we are only raising probably \$2.5 billion in taxes in South Australia, and about half of that is raised either as property taxes or as payroll tax. Neither of those taxes is based on the ability of the taxpayer to actually pay. The philosophy behind both those taxes, I believe, is quite tenuous and a move to a system where our tax is based on a GST (which is philosophically based on the assumption that the taxpayer will be taxed on his ability to consume) is a much better basis to tax and to raise revenue than the current situation in South Australia. I think that will be another filipp to the State of South Australia—that is, having a tax system based philosophically on much firmer ground.

The other thing which it seems will occur is that we may now have the ETSA sale—or, indeed, the lease of the power utilities in South Australia, the ETSA assets. It looks as though we will be able to liquidate those assets, turn them into cash, and put that money into reducing our State debt. The Government will now have to make good on this. The Government has been pushing this for over 12 months: that this will be one of the panaceas to our ongoing economic problems. Indeed, I hope that the bean counters who have been advising the Government have got it right and that, if that lease (as I believe it probably will be) goes ahead, we will be able to reap substantial benefits from that. That will allow the Government to withdraw the electricity tariff tax which was announced previous to this budget but which will come into play in this budget period, and I think that the tax paying public of South Australia will breathe a great sigh of relief when that happens.

Again, looking at the big picture, the people of South Australia must realise that we are a low tax State. The people of South Australia are paying \$89 per head less than the average Australian, is contributing in State taxes. I have often argued that in South Australia we must maintain a cost advantage, because we all know that, being a manufacturing State, everything we sell has to be transported to the markets, which are generally on the eastern seaboard or offshore. So, the only way in which we can compete with manufacturers in those areas is to maintain a cost advantage. One of the ways of doing that is to maintain a State taxation level considerably below those States on the eastern seaboard—and, indeed, well below the national average.

I believe that this budget is responsible, and I apply to it what I call the 'squeal test'. I think that all interest groups have squealed at about the same level. The taxpayers and the school teachers have certainly squealed loudly; I think everyone has squealed. The only people who have not squealed quite so loudly are the people involved in the emergency services. I think that, on balance, because everyone has squealed at the same rate the Government, basically, has got it pretty well right.

Ms RANKINE (Wright): As we deliberate in relation to this Appropriation Bill I am sure that I am not the only one in this Chamber to have asked over the past few days: 'What sort of Government is this?' I know it is a question that the people in my area have been asking themselves—and quite rightly so. Every family in my area, every family in this State, is about to be subjected to one of the biggest tax slugs in our

history. And why? Because the Premier and the Treasurer of this State have not been able to achieve their ideological goal of selling off one of this State's biggest assets and one of our biggest money earners.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms RANKINE: Because they have not been able to get their way, they have set themselves on a mission of inflicting as much pain and punishment on the people of this State as they possibly can. It works out to an average of \$186 per household—and, make no mistake, no matter what label the Premier wants to stick on this tax, the people of this State know where it has come from. They know who is responsible and they know why, and they will remember. They will remember every time they cannot quite make ends meet; they will remember every time they have to say 'No' to their children; and they will remember every time their power bill hits their letter boxes. Most of all, they will remember the dishonesty. How could the South Australian public ever again put its trust in this Government—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms RANKINE:—which, on two occasions, has stated categorically that the privatisation of a fundamental essential service was not an option, that it was not being considered and that it would not happen? On both occasions, within weeks, the tide turned. The Olsen proposal to sell ETSA will, as I have said before, go down in history as the biggest ever political betrayal of the people of South Australia. Many believed Mr Olsen—

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bragg is out of his seat.

Ms RANKINE: Very easily, and you know it is true and so do your backbenchers and your people in marginal seats. You might not have to deal with too many people, Graham, but there are lots who do and they are suffering.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: Their hearts are pumping, exactly. Many believed Mr Olsen when he said that circumstances changed his mind in relation to SA Water, but once bitten twice shy. They simply are not prepared to buy the same argument this time round and they do not appreciate being taken for fools. Nor do we. That is what this Government has tried in relation to the emergency services levy.

We on this side of the House voted for a fairer system, a fairer system than the levy that was attached to insurance policies. That is what we supported. That is what the public support. The people who ring my electorate office on a daily basis have been saying that they are happy to pay a little more, but they thought they were going to be paying \$40, maybe \$50 at the most. Instead what they have got is a major tax whack from this Government.

The emergency services tax will cost families in my electorate between \$150 and \$200 per household. We have had a listing of houses: for an \$83 000 house, a very moderate house, \$106; and for a \$100 000 house, \$117. Cars, motorcycles, trucks, boats, caravans, jet skis, houseboats and trailers are being hit. Mind you, the boat trailer is exempt and my father is very pleased that his electric wheelchair is also exempt, but they are the only mobile vehicles I can find that have been exempted.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson: Who caused the problem?

Ms RANKINE: You did. It is your tax and, if there is a problem, you are not fixing it. You are not fixing it with

either of these taxes. None of these taxes is going off any debt reduction. They are going on your massive spending spree—and I will get to that.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: We keep a very tidy home; I do not know about the honourable member, but we keep a very tidy home. The ETSA tax will cost \$186 per year, but this is a tax for families; it is not a tax for businesses. Mind you, businesses will suffer with the emergency services tax. However, as I said, not one cent of the ETSA tax will pay off debt. The pensioners in my electorate are living in real fear. I have to say that I am in a marginal seat, a seat that would generally be considered to be fairly reactive. I have never had such a strong reaction to any issue as I have had for the emergency services tax this Government has brought in. I have got—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: Yes, I was. I was not in this House but I was working in an electorate office and this tax that your Government is bringing in has had the greatest ever reaction that I have experienced in 14 years in the political arena. Pensioners, people on social security benefits and people on fixed incomes are in real fear of losing their homes. I will take some time at another stage to actually read their reactions into the record of this House and then perhaps members will understand what concerns people have.

What sort of Government is this? Not one cent, as I said, is going off the State debt. Where is it going? I know where it is not going; it is not going into a patrol base in the Tea Tree Gully council area. I had a look at the Portfolio Statements. If anything was ever designed to confuse anyone and to ensure that the people of South Australia do not know what is happening with money, it is the budget papers this Government has produced.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Are they too complex for you?

Ms RANKINE: No, it is not too complex for me; it is just that it is set up to tell us nothing. We will go through some of these things and maybe the honourable member can explain them. The patrol base in Tea Tree Gully was supposed to be part of the wonderful Focus 21 reform; in fact, the highlights say that the department has made substantial progress in the implementation of the Focus 21 reform initiatives, including the implementation of local services area.

Well, has that not been an amazing success in my electorate? We have fewer police; our crime rates are up; we have had our patrol base changed into a shop front police station; a patrol base has been disbanded; and a patrol base that was in our area has moved out of the area. We have had lots of promises about getting a patrol base, but nothing has happened. I think that this great vision for policing into the twenty-first century leaves a lot to be desired, and perhaps its architects need to make a visit to Laubman and Pank.

I turn to the taskings of police in the portfolio statements. We know that crime rates are going up but, in the output sections of the portfolio statements for the number of police patrol taskings for the end of year 1998-99, 340 000 are documented; and the activity level expected for the next year is exactly the same. How can that be? The number of police incident reports at police stations is exactly the same. With respect to time lines dealing with the response to calls from the public, namely, the percentage of priority taskings responded to within 10 minutes in the metropolitan area, last year's estimated result and next year's activity level are exactly the same. The same applies for priority B taskings.

How can this be when we are constantly getting complaints? Case upon case comes into our offices where people are waiting 20, 30 and 45 minutes for patrols to attend serious incidents. I mentioned in the House the other day that a local shopping centre had to wait for a patrol to come from Port Adelaide. This is our wonderful vision for policing into the twenty-first century. What sort of Government is this?

I have looked at the transport statement. There is no improvement whatsoever to the Golden Grove Road in my electorate. It is one of the busiest roads; it is a major road. Rapid development is taking place along Golden Grove Road; it has the Industry Park and the Golden Grove development, and one of the most prestigious estates is coming over the hill to Golden Grove Road. It has heavy traffic with heavy B-doubles, and people cannot use the bus stops along Golden Grove Road. You would think you were on a country track using that road, but I can find nothing in the budget papers that refers to it.

Another issue in relation to transport is the intersection of Grove Way and Bridge Road. I have written to the Minister on a couple of occasions in relation to this. I would have to say that it is one of the most dangerous intersections I have ever come across. In fact, I was contacted recently by one woman who was involved in an accident there in March, when her young daughter sustained serious injuries, and by another woman whose three children, sadly, were involved in a fatal accident last year at that intersection.

Only a week or so ago an article appeared in the Messenger press as a result of the activity of some women in my electorate, and we have received hundreds of responses about that intersection. People want something done, but all I get from this Government are silly responses that not enough traffic is using these roads to warrant traffic lights. Anyone who goes out there or who knows the area realises that this has to be an absolute nonsense.

The Grove Way is the major arterial road from Salisbury into Golden Grove. We have traffic lights on residential streets leading onto that road, yet we cannot get them from one major road to another. In fact, lots of people have told me that they avoid the intersection. They travel some kilometres around so that they do not have to use it. It is absolutely imperative that something be done to make this intersection safe.

Another matter that causes me some concern in relation to transport is the Golden Grove Interchange. Golden Grove has a reasonable level of public transport and, under this Government, the suburban link bus service was introduced. That has caused some concerns in some areas but I congratulate TransAdelaide for surveying all residents in one particular area as a result of those concerns, although it would have been better if it had done that survey prior to implementing the service. Nevertheless, TransAdelaide has assessed the usage and acceptance of that service. But the interchange itself cannot cope. It is a feeder from the Golden Grove area to the O-Bahn service and it simply cannot cope with the large articulated buses and the smaller MAN buses that are now using it.

I have sat and watched children leaving the Golden Grove High School to catch the buses and it is an absolute nightmare. There is not enough room for the buses to use the interchange and there is no car parking. Again, this issue must be addressed. The Portfolio Statements (page 6.15) state that 15 big bus stops will be installed around our city. I hope that one of those bus stops will be located at the Golden Grove interchange.

In the area of human services, members will know that, on a number of occasions, I have raised in this House the issue of smoke alarms and the need to assist our aged and disabled to install them and to comply with the legislation that comes into force on 1 January 2000. I simply cannot get an answer from this Government. The first time I raised this matter I was told that \$100 000 would be made available and that that was the first instalment. A few weeks later I was told, 'We are preparing a report.' Now, I cannot get a copy of the report and I cannot get any details of it. But what I have been able to find from the Portfolio Statements—again buried deep—is that the Government will provide assistance towards smoke alarms for hearing impaired persons—but nothing for the aged. I want to know what happened to the \$100 000 that was announced by this Government in March last year.

Another major concern to me is the area of disability services. I have had many discussions with a range of people in relation to this area. The document, under the heading 'Care for people with disabilities', states that there will be direct care intervention support services and goods provided from a variety of sources to assist persons with disabilities and their carers to maintain quality of life in the wider community. It details a snapshot of respite care, other respite and recreation day programs in home support, case management and brokerage. For all those areas, there is no increase. Regarding accommodation for people with disabilities, there is no increase. This is an absolute outrage.

A woman came to see me who is reliant on an electric wheelchair as a result of a mishap during an operation. She was given a five year old wheelchair. That wheelchair has broken down. She is totally reliant on that wheelchair and she has been told that she will have to wait for five years. I wonder whether the Minister for Disability Services could cope without his car for five years, or whether he could cope without shoes on his feet for five years, which is the equivalent of what he is expecting this woman to do?

I recently attended a forum organised by Parent Advocacy in relation to the urgent need for accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities. It is an absolute disgrace that I cannot find anything in these budget documents that shows any increase in the help that is being provided to these people. Under the heading 'Crisis accommodation' there is no target for 1999-2000. There is no target for young offenders. What sort of Government is this? This is the Government that slashed moneys to public schools and it slashed moneys to our hospitals—14 000 beds were slashed.

The member for MacKillop referred to hip operations and said that people need to realise that they have the best health system, possibly, in the world. Let the honourable member tell that to the lady whom I visited and who, because of the pain, had to crawl around her house to tend to her duties. Let him tell her how lucky she is. We are talking about our youth and our sick people. What sort of a Government is this? This Government happily spends millions of dollars but not on things that are essential to people's lives (the lives of my constituents). They spend it on consultants, soccer stadiums, and blow-outs for radio networks: a further \$448 million in extra spending, but none of those vital issues that I have mentioned have been covered.

This Government needs to get its priorities right. I was heartened yesterday to hear an address by Rex Jory of the *Advertiser*. He said that he felt that the decisions of Governments (both Federal and State) are creating a sense of people losing control of their lives. He was critical of members of

Parliament for their lack of knowledge of what impacts on the lives of people in our community. This Government needs to get out there and listen to the people whom it was elected to represent.

I return to my question: what sort of a Government is this? I think this Government is embarrassed. How could it not be when it produces this explanation of its budget? You can tell that the Government is embarrassed because the Premier does not have his photograph on page 1 or 2 but right at the end of the document. He does not want to take the blame for this document, which is one that amounts to an apology for what this Government is doing to the people of South Australia. This Government has lost its way. It is dishonest with the people whom it has been elected to serve. It is inept and illogical. It is a Government of black holes of its own making, and it is a Government of dark lies that will come back to haunt it.

Ms BREUER (Giles): I have been through the budget papers—they help me to sleep at night—and I can find very little reference to regional South Australia other than a few small sections which refer to regional development. Members on the other side of the House disgust me. There are many country members on the other side of the House, but what do they really care about regional development? They are all closeted close to Adelaide. The member for Stuart came into the House for a minute and a half, had a look around, decided that there was nothing worth looking at and took off again. The member for Stuart should be here talking about regional development tonight. Budget Paper 2 refers to major budget initiatives and states:

The 1999-2000 budget includes funding to implement high priority initiatives that will: provide an additional stimulus to the economy. . . boost employment opportunities, particularly for youth; provide a regional development focus; and enhance core community services.

What does that mean: 'provide a regional development focus'? I refer to page 4.12 of Budget Paper 2 which, under the heading 'Regional Economic Conditions', states:

Employment in non-metropolitan South Australia fell by 2 800 over this period—

blah, blah, blah—

in the Yorke and Lower North, Eyre and Far North regions of the State. This area encompasses the Iron Triangle—

have members opposite not yet learnt that no-one uses the term 'Iron Triangle' any more; it is the 'Spencer Gulf Cities area'—

of Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta which have experienced considerable reductions in manufacturing employment, railway closures and the accompanying spiral of a loss of banking and Government services and a drift in population levels. This region also has the highest unemployment rate in the State—11.5 per cent in the year to March 1999.

We also find that an additional \$4.5 million has been allocated for regional development. Page 1.5 of Budget Paper 2 refers to other major expenditure initiatives. I refer to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital redevelopment, \$4.3 million. Fine, I am happy about that. There is the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital redevelopment, \$10.4 million; State Library redevelopment, \$21.3 million; Southern Expressway, \$34.1 million; and the Botanic Garden Wine and Rose Development, \$13 million. Tell the people in northern South Australia about these amounts of money. Next, there is the regional infrastructure development fund, \$4.5 million; and \$.7 million for an office of regional development. One

statistic to which I referred was the Southern Expressway, \$34.1 million.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Hear, hear! And what a good project it is.

Ms BREUER: That is wonderful. I am very pleased for the metropolitan, city residents of this part of the State. Last night, I travelled from Whyalla. I travelled between Port Augusta and Port Pirie, a patch of road of about 85 kilometres. Earlier this year there were a number of major accidents on that stretch of road, and a number of lives were lost. It is one of the most dangerous roads in this State. It is appalling to drive that section of road, particularly at night when it is dark. Not only do you struggle with kangaroos but you struggle with road trains, trucks, caravans, vehicles, etc. There is one passing lane on that stretch of road. I spent virtually the whole distance travelling at 80 km/h to 85 km/h because I was behind a truck and did not have the guts to overtake. There is only one arterial passing lane on that section of road. The Government is spending \$34.1 million on the Southern Expressway (which is not very long in terms of kilometres), while there is 85 kilometres of a major arterial road in the north of the State on which it is not spending anything. This is appalling.

I refer back to the unemployment figures. Do members know what these figures mean? Build the power station at Whyalla and not at Pelican Point. Members opposite can laugh about it. You all wait for me to say it in Question Time, and I keep saying it again and again. I work on the premise that, if I say it often enough, when Pelican Point falls in a heap you might take notice and build that power station at Whyalla. I am very sincere about this. It is not a joke. Why will the Government not consider building this power station at Whyalla? It would provide an impetus to our area; it might solve our unemployment problem; it might be a catalyst for regional development. I do not know how many members are aware that some 500 houses are for sale in Whyalla. There is a major unemployment problem in Whyalla. We have a real crisis in terms of our future. But it is a safe Labor seat. Who cares?

We have repeatedly called on the Premier and the Treasurer to listen to us. We want this power station in Whyalla—not at Pelican Point. My arguments are based on regional development and opportunity for regional South Australia, which is very dear to my heart, to go ahead. Mr Speaker, I am glad you are here tonight, because you look as though you are listening; I am not sure if you are, but you look as though you are listening—and certainly nobody else is. That is the problem we in Whyalla have: nobody will listen to us. There are a couple of larrikins opposite who are making a few comments, but I am sure they are not really listening to what I am saying: build the power station at Whyalla and not at Pelican Point. We feel like the hick country cousins up there; nobody will listen to what we are saying. We will not go away; we will keep saying this: why can we not have it? It has become a real crusade for us. We can counter every reason we are given why we cannot have that power station. These reasons are not based on fact or are not important: they are totally irrelevant. I ask: why will you not consider us? Is there some hidden reason why the Government will not consider building the power station at Whyalla? Why do the Government and John Olsen have this passion to build at Pelican Point against the feelings of all the citizens, particularly the citizens in that area who are up in arms about this. I attended a rally last week with people from Pelican Point. So, why will the Premier not consider us?

What is so sensitive and secret about it? I keep asking that. I shudder to think what the plans are for that area. Will you build a secret arms base, a nuclear power station, a nuclear waste disposal dump or perhaps a ship breaking business? Who knows!

This Government promotes itself as being vitally concerned with regional development, yet it then spends \$4.5 million—which is an absolute pittance; it is tea money for this Government—on regional development. This Government is really concerned about regional development in metropolitan Adelaide and the Hills zone. It takes me 10 hours to get to Marla, so I certainly do not consider Mount Barker or Clare to be areas of real regional development. The Government is concerned with areas that are close to Adelaide and those areas held by the Independents.

This Government has a wonderful opportunity to do something about regional development by building this power station at Whyalla. On 27 August last year, in answer to a question about progress being made in setting up the regional development task force, the Deputy Premier said:

One of the terms of reference was to devise a regional rejuvenation program to make the cities and regions more attractive to the capital investment needed to create the industries and the flow-on jobs.

The cities also requested of the Premier that the Northern Spencer Gulf be given the first priority.

It has been forgotten. On 3 March 1999, the Deputy Premier made a ministerial statement, as follows:

Regional development is particularly important to the State of South Australia and this Government is strongly committed to enhancing the economic and social well-being of rural communities.

Yet he spends only \$4.5 million on regional development! I truly believe that the State Government has missed out on a unique opportunity for real regional development with its decision to locate the power station at Pelican Point. We have a number of reasons why we want it in Whyalla, and this Government has given counter-reasons to our arguments. However, they are not true. The Government should listen to what we are saying. There is a very small transmission loss from Whyalla, but it is well within the limits that are accepted all over the world. This new power station will be a catalyst for our area in winning major programs, projects and investments in regional South Australia. It is an opportunity to tip the balance back in our favour and give us an opportunity to win projects in our region.

Mr Acting Speaker, why will your Government not respond to the protests of the people of Port Adelaide and Pelican Point and respond to the citizens of Whyalla and do something about building the power station there? I note with interest the push to establish a low level radioactive waste dump in the northern region of the State. Is this what your answer to regional development is about? Is the attitude, 'Put a dump up there; that will give them a few jobs and shut them up.' Do you want to make us all glow in the dark?

The Deputy Premier spoke about low level radioactive waste last week in Parliament when he described how safe it was, and he also said that the Government was really just looking at the project. How much can we believe? We know that there is a major push by Pangea to establish a high level dump in our part of the State. If you put the low level radioactive waste in there, it is the next step, it is a new progression.

Today I tabled a petition from the residents of Woomera, Andamooka and also Roxby Downs opposing the establishment of that dump in our part of the State. Mr Acting

Speaker, how would you like it if we dug up your backyard and stuck in a few radioactive rods? I am sure that you and the Premier would not be happy about it. You do not want it in your backyard, and we do not want it in our backyard. Some of the sites they are looking at are about 50 kilometres from settled areas in that part of the State. I know that there are not a lot of people there by your standards, Mr Acting Speaker. The attitude is, 'It is out in the bush, so who cares?' They are all probably in-bred by your reasoning anyway, so it will not make a lot of difference. However, it does make a lot of difference to us.

I have received a letter from some women in Coober Pedy. It is signed by a number of women, and some of them signed by making their mark. They are Aboriginal women from the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta Aboriginal Corporation. The petition has the marks of Ivy Stewart, Eileen Brown and Lucy Wilton; the signatures of Dianna Edwards and Emily Austin; and the marks of Angelina Wonga and Peggy Cullinan. They say:

We are Aboriginal women—Yankunytjatjarra, Antikirinya and Kokatha. We know the country. The poison the Government is talking about will poison the land. We say, 'NO radioactive dump in our ngura—in our country.' It's strictly poison—we don't want it. We were born on the earth, not in the hospital. We were born in the sand. Mother never put us in the water and washed us when we were born straight out. They dried us with the sand. Then they put us—newborn baby—fireside, no blankets; they put us in the warm sand. And after that, when the cord comes off, they put us through the smoke. We really know the land. From a baby we grow up on the land.

Never mind our country is the desert—that's where we belong. And we love where we belong, the whole land. We know the stories for the land. The Seven Sisters travelled right across—in the Beginning. They formed the land. It's very important Tjukur—the Law, the Dreaming that must not be disturbed. The Seven Sisters are everywhere. We can give the evidence for what we say—we can show you the dance of the Seven Sisters.

Listen to us! The desert lands are not as dry as you think! Can't the Government plainly see that there is water here. Nothing can live without water. There's a big underground river underneath. We know that the poison from the radioactive dump will go down under the ground and leak into the water. We drink from this water. Only the Government and people like that have tanks. The animals drink from this water—malu—kangaroo, kalaya—emu, porcupine—ngintaka, perentie—goanna, and all the others. We eat these animals—that's our meat. We're worried that any of these animals will become poisoned and we'll become poisoned in our turn.

Everywhere there is underground water. We know that. It doesn't matter what station you make the dump on or near. They've all got wells. The sheep and cattle have to drink from the bores. Of course they'll get poisoned in their turn. Can't the pastoralists see that plainly?

The poison the Government is talking about is from Sydney. We say send it back to Sydney. We don't want it! Are they trying to kill us? We're a human being. We're not an animal. We're not a dog. In the old days the white man used to put a poison in the meat—throw them to feed the dogs and they got poisoned straight out and then they died. Now they want to put the poison in the ground. We want our life.

All of us were living when the Government used the country for the Bomb. Some were living at Twelve Mile, just out from Coober Pedy. The smoke was funny and everything looked hazy. Everybody got sick. Other people were at Mabel Creek, and many people got sick. Some of the Old People got really sick and died. Some people were living at Wallatinna. Other people got moved away. Whitefellas and all got sick.

When we were young, no women got breast cancer or any other kind of cancer. Cancer was unheard of with men either. And no asthma—we were people without sickness. The Government thought they knew what they were doing then with that poison then. Now, again they are coming along and telling us poor blackfellas—'Oh, there's nothing that's going to happen, nothing is going to kill you.' And that will still happen like that bomb over there. And we're worrying for our kids. We've got a lot of kids growing up on the country and still coming more—grandchildren and great grandchildren. They have to have their life.

We've been fighting against this radioactive waste—this poison—for more than one year. Arguing about it, talking to people, asking people to help us. They might help us, but they'll really be helping themselves. Whitefellas have got kids too, we all have to live in the country.

And then—we really couldn't believe it when we heard them talk about sending the rubbish from all other countries as well! They must really want to kill us! We can't believe it! How can you live like that. They're really aiming to wipe the country out—not just us but all living things in the whole earth!

It's from our grandmothers and our grandfathers that we've learned about the land. This learning isn't written on paper as whitefellas' knowledge is. We carry it instead in our heads and we're talking from our hearts—for the land. You fellas—whitefellas—put us in the back all the time, like we've got no language for the land. But we've got the story for the land. Listen to us!

I read that to the House because I think it is very important for members to understand how Aboriginal people in that part of the State feel. I have met and spoken to a lot of those women. They feel very strongly about this. They are not motivated by rabid greenies or anything else. They feel very strongly about their land, their children and their children's future. If the Government's answer to regional development is to set up a radioactive waste dump in our part of the State, God help this State.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Minister for Year 2000 Compliance): I move:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 10 p.m.

Motion carried.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I was very deeply moved by the letter that the member for Giles read, and I think that those words should be heeded. There is a great message in them for those of us who do not know the land as well as the Aboriginal people in those regions do.

The dishonesty of this State budget is that the Government has attempted to use it to hide its own financial mismanagement of this State's finances. The Premier misled the people at the last election. The Treasurer of the day, Stephen Baker, said that the 1997 budget was on target and that we were in a fair financial position; that position was put to the people; and they voted the Liberal Government into office.

Just a few months later, the Premier, John Olsen, told us that we were suddenly in financial strife and we had to sell ETSA. It was an amazing turnaround. Someone must have been using Treasury finances to play the pokies for the Treasury coffers to plummet to the extent that the Premier said they had in just a few short months.

We now know that we were not told the truth at the last election and, because the Labor Party stands firm and seeks to honour an election commitment and keep its promise to the people of this State that we do not and will not support the sale of ETSA, the Premier tries to lay the blame on us for his own and his Government's mismanagement of State funds. He uses blackmail tactics on the people of this State by dumping a range of taxes that he knows the majority of our citizens cannot afford and, if he does not know it, he is out of touch with the community. I suspect that is partly true, and I also suspect that he knows that it will cause hardship, and he uses that as part of his pressure games. It is quite disgusting to think that such tactics are used against the people so that the Premier can achieve his ideological goals.

ETSA was backflip No. 1. Backflip No. 2 came not long after. The Premier argued that we needed to sell at the highest price and that all the proceeds of the sale would go to debt

reduction. Early in 1999, he retracted that and said that \$1 billion from the sale of the power assets would be spent on State infrastructure—infrastructure which his Government has continued to cut savagely. Now we hear that none of the proceeds of a sale, if it went ahead, would go on debt reduction. The Premier would use the money to prop up services that his Government has plundered on gross overspending on consultants' fees and squandered on some of the Government's whims.

How can the Premier expect the people of South Australia or the business sector to have confidence in the State when he so blatantly misled the people and abused parliamentary process? It is no wonder that this State is in a state of confusion. Perhaps we should put that on our numberplates.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: 'Unkind,' says the Deputy Premier—but quite true. Now we have this horrific State budget, which will impact on medium to low income families. It is an anti-family budget. It punishes the aged and those on pensions and fixed incomes. Far from being a jobs growth budget, these new State taxes, combined with the GST, are likely to adversely impact on consumer confidence in the retail and tourist sectors. Added to this is the job shedding in the public sector, which is to continue along with diminished public sector services and resources. It is the catastrophic effect that this budget will have on families on lower and fixed incomes that is just so unfair.

Households with an average family of two children are likely to face an increase of approximately \$500 a year—and this does not include the \$172 million-odd in fines and fees, which are really taxes, and the GST. That is yet to come.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: How do you call a fine a tax?

Mrs GERAGHTY: The way this Government tells us about levies and fines, they are taxes.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): Order! The Minister will not excite the honourable member.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I wonder whether the Premier has any idea of how many thousands of people are currently living in poverty and trying to manage by juggling bill to bill. Perhaps I can enlighten him as to what is happening in the real world by outlining the budget of some of my constituents who have come to me since the release of the State budget and are worrying about how they will manage in the weeks and years ahead.

Family number one consists of a couple—one being disabled—with no children. They have a combined fixed pension income of \$608 a fortnight. Their fortnightly expenses include Housing Trust rent and maintenance, \$158; food, \$200; vehicle, \$70; newspapers, \$15; ETSA, \$20; Telstra, \$10; medicines, \$10; credit account, \$30; clothes, \$10; insurance, \$20; and, excess water \$4—so everything is budgeted in. Their total expenditure is more than \$500, leaving them with a total of \$61 a fortnight for miscellaneous items and for saving to cover emergency expenses. Not everybody is able to spend \$200 on food, but we have to take into account that in some families such as this one there are special dietary needs, which cost a lot more.

The second family consists of a single parent with a two month old child. She has \$362 a fortnight plus \$120 child allowance in the alternate week. Her total basic expenditure equals \$359 a fortnight, leaving her to live on the fortnightly child allowance of \$120. Given that her child is ill and she needs to travel from the country to the city regularly, she has

little if any money left over to cover any future emergencies. In fact, she has trouble paying her bills.

Family number three consists of two adults and one child. They are financially in a better position than are families one and two. Their combined gross fortnightly income is \$1 150 and their expenditure for basic essential items is around \$700 a fortnight. They are left with \$450 a fortnight for savings and miscellaneous items. They are in a much better position, but they have no assets to sell or investments if they get into strife, and they are deeply concerned about these taxes that will range from \$300 to \$500. They are concerned about how they will manage to pay them if something happens and they get into financial difficulties or if an emergency crops up, such as the car needing a new set of tyres. This family is not on a high income, but they received an indexed pay increase recently, which put them over the allowable limit for the School Card and the Health Card.

A ministerial discretion reinstated the School Card but there was no such discretion for the Health Card. Not having access to the Health Card when earning such a low wage puts immense pressure on struggling budgets. This, coupled with the additional cost of living increases as well as increased Government taxes and, to placate the Minister, fees and charges, will cripple them, and those on much lower incomes will be simply much worse off.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: There are points about the ETSA debate that need to be raised, but I will continue on with this. I want the Premier to be able to explain to me or my constituents where the families will get the money to pay for all these Government tax increases out of budgets that are struggling now. We have pensioners who, if they are renting from the Housing Trust, are automatically hit with an increase in their rent, so that gives them little scope of being able to save money to cover any cost of living increases.

This family budget data is important because it shows a variety of households on fixed incomes who simply will not be able to afford the Government's tax hikes. There is just no room for these constituents to manoeuvre financially. Cases 1 and 2 have no fat in their budgets. The onslaught of a GST as well will mean that there will be higher transport and other costs for these low income earners and pensioners to deal with. So, it is an overall recipe for families defaulting on future bills, skimping on food which many of them are doing now, and falling into real poverty.

Quite frankly, this is just an appalling situation, especially since the Liberal Government is putting people in this situation. They will get into this situation as a direct impact of the Government's budget and, I might say, the previous ones. This is a situation over which these people have no control—well, not at this time; maybe at the next State election. Since the Liberal Government has come into office, it has increased taxes and, to placate the Minister again, fees and charges by approximately \$700 million, and this budget will probably see it tip the \$1 billion mark.

People are sick and tired of being hammered with increased taxes, even though the Government attempts to disguise the taxes as fees or charges. People are sick of it because they see no benefit coming to themselves, their family or the community. Instead, they have all seen areas such as health, education and so on continue to receive massive cuts. We have medical and dental waiting lists blowing out, and health, education, housing and a myriad of other public services and resources being seriously diminished.

I was somewhat appalled to hear the member for MacKillop make the comment that people were squawking about this budget, or something similar. Perhaps those people who are squawking are the elderly who are in great pain while waiting for a hip replacement. The biggest fraud being played out by the Government is that it has overspent its budget by some \$200 million, with more than a \$100 million blow-out on the Government radio network, \$28 million for the failed Australis Galaxy pay TV project and \$80 million per year for consultants, which includes those consultants on lavish salaries and travel expenses who were hired to promote the sale of ETSA.

Then there is the capital works budget which the Government has continually underspent since 1993 by some \$800 million. What has happened to this money? Many people in my electorate would like to see where this unspent capital works budget has gone. Earlier this year the Premier promised that \$1 billion would be taken out of the sale of our power utilities and put into social infrastructure. However, the Government said nothing about the \$800 million it held over from those successive capital works budgets over the years. In effect, the public were being offered \$200 million for the sale of a power asset. Now we see that the capital works budget has been cut, but the Premier says he is hoping to improve employment opportunities in this State.

As significant employment infrastructure spending comes through capital works budgets it is confusing to see how the Premier can achieve his jobs growth. Increases in youth and middle age employment will only barely reach the continued redundancy attrition levels from State Government departments. Small business has been hard hit by increased State Government taxes and it is now threatening a revolt against the GST which small business believes will cost jobs.

Mr Meier: I think it will help create jobs.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Goyder is out of order.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I await that with bated breath and we will see. South Australia's jobless rate is already steady at 9 per cent, with the highest youth unemployment rate sadly steady at about 36.3 per cent. The planned cuts of about \$46 million to the health budget and the overall cuts of \$108 million to the human services budget will do little for employment growth in South Australia. In fact, it will markedly increase the number of those living in poverty in this State. The national welfare umbrella ACOSS recently conducted a survey 'Australians Living on the Edge', which found that 162 000 people were living in poverty in South Australia.

The survey showed that 40 per cent of households have an annual income of below \$25 000, whilst one-third of rural families have an annual income of below \$16 000. It showed that during 1998 47 per cent of South Australians were in receipt of a Government payment or allowance. In its report ACOSS also referred to a survey that showed that, between

1986 and 1996, families living on incomes below 60 per cent of the average weekly wage rose from 25.8 per cent to 41.7 per cent. Over 107 328 households, or 587 739 people were recorded as living below the Henderson poverty line and 33 845 of these were children. The significance of this figure is that it was recorded in 1996.

Over the past three years there has been a continued upward level of unemployment and redundancies from Government and private sector corporations, placing even greater pressure on social welfare and infrastructure. The Minister's planned cuts to human services will only exacerbate the problems of those families who are dependent on welfare services. Amongst 65 per cent of community welfare organisations, the ACOSS 1998 survey showed a 73 per cent increase in demand for their services. Organisations identified the reasons for such a demand on their services as increased human need and referrals from other agencies, which include Government departments such as Family and Youth Services. I make the point about Family and Youth Services that it is referring its clients to charities and that is pretty staggering.

Further, 50.1 per cent of respondents to the survey reported that their most frequent reason for seeking assistance was the rise in expenses, particularly utility and food bills. These are exceptionally disturbing figures, but in the light of the current State budget—and we have to remember the GST—it is going to be a catastrophic situation. There is no doubt that many more thousands of people will be added to the statistics in the future and I can see that many families will go without power and hot water, as shamefully many people are right now, because they do not have money to pay for these additional imposts. Threats that this results from not selling or leasing ETSA are simply thuggery tactics because the people in South Australia know that these taxes result from the Government's mismanagement of funds, as I said before.

Once it was considered that adequate housing was a basic human right for every citizen, but that is not so now. As the Government reduces housing stock, these low income families will find it very hard, particularly those on pensions, to find suitable accommodation. I have another redevelopment in my electorate. We have lived through Hillcrest, we are going through Windsor Gardens and, in the future, it will be Gilles Plains, and this is causing a great deal of trauma. While we support what the Government is doing in redeveloping, we do not support what the government is doing in reducing stock. This budget will go down in the State's history as one of the most draconian—

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

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.17 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 2 June at 2 p.m.