

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 28 July 1999

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

MOONTA POLICE STATION

A petition signed by 992 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to reinstate a permanent police presence at the Moonta Police Station was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

WALLAROO JETTY

A petition signed by 3 299 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ensure continued free public access to the Wallaroo jetty was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY**: Mr Speaker:

This package has much to commend it and this should be a time of celebration for State education.

These are not the words of the Government but those of the peak parent body in South Australia, the South Australian Association of State School Organisations. SAASSO is the parent group most in touch with school councils. This parent body is prepared to stand up and be counted on the merits of Partnerships 21 and has gone public in its strong support for it. It has written to school councils saying:

South Australia initially led the way in the development of school councils in 1972 but in recent years other States and countries have made developments which most people regard as improvements providing advantages for their systems.

SAASSO goes on to state that a close analysis of Partnerships 21 leads to the conclusion that this package returns this State to the position of a world leader. The association is quite adamant that Partnerships 21 is not a copy of a program from somewhere else. Some 5 000 South Australians, including the union and parents, contributed to its making. Essentially they said:

Local school management is based on three very simple ideas—

1. That locals know best what is needed locally.
2. That given the right support from Government, South Australians can manage their own schools.
3. That parents and teachers working together can create better learning opportunities for students.

It was principals in South Australia who were asking the Government to introduce this change, and principals are now looking at the fine detail of the P21 package. The parent group and many teachers and principals are now saddened and frustrated to see the teachers' own union's outrageous attempts to sabotage the very thing they had built together. It is little wonder that the union's obsessive, negative campaigns continue to drive parents away from the best resourced public school system in the country.

In fact, the ALP's own think tank, the Evatt Foundation, recognised this in its most recent publication, but that is what the Education Union does best. The union thrives not on the support of its members but on peddling half truths, by spreading misinformation and by creating fear both in its membership and amongst parents. That is the traditional way in which this union counters educational progress.

Remember the union fought the introduction of the basic skills test on the grounds that children would be scarred for life by it. Remember the unions screaming that 3 000 teachers would be sacked and 185 schools were to be closed at the time of the Audit Commission. Fear and fantasy: the familiar stunts are once again emerging. Let us look at two of their fear and scare claims. The union said:

... schools will be worse off financially. ... teachers' hard won working conditions will be lost.

What is the truth? It is an absolute commitment of the Government that schools serving disadvantaged communities will be better off under the new funding arrangements, and the Government has guaranteed that no other schools will be worse off.

And, in relation to teachers' conditions, the Government has made abundantly clear that it will respect current industrial awards and that salaries and allowances will be protected. I cannot make it plainer than that, even for the union leadership. However, the union will no doubt continue to muddy the waters and to drive many teachers to despair. The union will not tell teachers that, although local school management may have some warts on it, few teachers interstate or overseas who have experienced it choose to go back to the old system.

Indeed, while I was in New Zealand in May I could find no teachers at the schools that I visited who wanted to return to the pre local management days. Partnerships 21 is a major breakthrough in South Australian education—it is the way of the future. It has taken us 28 years to get to this point, because it is 28 years since local management was suggested in the 1971 Karmel inquiry into education. The idea was being talked about when man first walked on the moon. So, local school management has been a long time coming to South Australia. But now, as we move into the next century, it is time to make it a reality. This Government, in partnership with schools and their communities, will take a very exciting education system into the next century while, no doubt, the Australian Education Union will continue to live in the past.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The **Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart)**: I bring up the twenty-ninth report of the committee, being the Annual Report 1998-99, 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.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr **CONDOUS (Colton)**: I bring up the seventeenth report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

HEALTHSCOPE

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. Contrary to the Minister's advice to the House on 18 November 1998 that losses under the Modbury Hospital contract were Healthscope's worry, is the Minister aware that the revised contract provides for Healthscope to be paid for future losses made by the company, and will the Minister now detail how much Healthscope has claimed from the taxpayer under this provision? Section 7.3 b of the revised contract with Healthscope provides for Healthscope to claim for operating losses in any year that major metropolitan hospitals have been underfunded by the Government.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Leader has just acknowledged that there are very significant qualifications in the contract. So, let me make it quite clear—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Healthscope gets paid on exactly the same basis as every other hospital, and after that we take off a guaranteed 5 per cent. It can be more than that.

Mr Foley: You get paid for losses.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No. Healthscope gets at least 5 per cent less per equisepts compared to every other major hospital in Adelaide, because that is the basis on which it signed the contract. That stands without any alteration. In fact, it can be more than 5 per cent, but it has to be at least a guaranteed 5 per cent. The point I made—and Healthscope has cried to the stock exchange about this—is that Healthscope made a loss in excess of \$1 million. It is for Healthscope to reveal the size of that loss, but it has acknowledged its loss, and Healthscope knows that it has to wear that loss. Despite the false impression given by the Leader, we do not wear that loss: Healthscope covers that loss. The only grounds on which Healthscope can come back against the State Government is if we discriminate against Modbury Hospital and pay it deliberately a lower rate; or, if under very special circumstances, it can show that we are artificially depressing the figures that we are paying in terms of what we paid per equisepts. Both of those circumstances will not occur, because if they occurred that would be fiddling the figures on my behalf or that of the Government.

Therefore, let me make the point that Healthscope gets paid on the same basis as every other hospital. We have an equisepts figure. Healthscope gets paid according to that figure, then at least a guaranteed minus 5 per cent. Healthscope wears the \$1 million loss that it made last year. Otherwise, why has Healthscope complained to me about its losses when it knows it cannot do anything about it?

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I think that today the honourable member should be pretty careful about having conversations across the Chamber. I appreciate your guidance, Mr Speaker. So, the contract is a very good contract for South Australia, because it is delivering the same health care in the Modbury area but at a lower cost than you will find anywhere else in the whole of Australia.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training explain how Partnerships 21 school councils will be assisted to increase their skills in governance?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: School management councils have been an integral part of our State school system for many years. There is a proud history of school councils' involvement in our local schools over a long period. Indeed, Lynn Arnold, who was Education Minister in the early 1980s, was responsible for involving parents in the selection of teachers in schools. He could see the value of change—and change not just for the sake of change. South Australian taxpayers—

The SPEAKER: Order! Cameramen will cease filming members who are not on their feet.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: South Australian taxpayers own our schools, and Partnerships 21 will enable many of them to make a huge difference in the quality of education inside their own classrooms. Partnerships 21 is about expanding and building on the existing involvement of ordinary parents and supporting communities in how their school operates and functions. It is about making our own children's education better where we can, about including communities in the evolution of public education, and about becoming an active participant in the lives of future community leaders. In Partnerships 21 the prime partnership is that between the parents, the teacher and the child.

As parents grow in their relationship with the school and gain experience with its processes, they become increasingly empowered to move to higher levels of participation. For those communities that might have doubts about their own expertise and capabilities, let me say that Partnerships 21 is all voluntary. There is no compulsion for any school to come into Partnerships 21. It annoys me when I hear comments from the teachers' union such as, 'This will suit only those schools in leafy suburbs, and those schools in disadvantaged areas or in the country will be worse off'—100 per cent fiction. Although the parents might be few in number in country schools, let me assure the House from visiting country schools that parents are extremely committed to their young people's education, even more so now given the circumstances surrounding the wool market in terms of possibilities and potential for their young people at home on the farm. They are seeing that, first, their young children will have to get—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The background chatter among Government members is making it difficult for one to hear the Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I say to the member for Hart that there is as much background chatter coming from his side of the Chamber as there is from the Government side. It would augur well if all members were to remain silent so that the Minister could give his reply.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Those people in the country recognise the value of a good education for their children because of the opportunities that that gives them, both on and off the farm. For schools and preschools that may wish to opt into Partnerships 21, a range of workshops will be conducted to ensure that parents are well skilled in the responsibilities that they will undertake in Partnerships 21. Later this year, the chairs of those school management committees, school boards and school councils will be supported through four lots of training that will take place for those people who

undertake Partnerships 21. Comprehensive handbooks will also be distributed to these people to ensure that they can examine the responsibilities of the governing council. By encouraging the sharing of responsibility of our children's education, by being more closely involved with it and by making that contribution at a local level, we will ensure that we have a better educational outcome for our children. There is no doubt that Partnerships 21 will turn a good education system into a better one.

HEALTHSCOPE

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. In agreeing to amend the Modbury Hospital management contract in 1997 to include a provision to pay Healthscope for future losses made by the company, did the Government have a conflict of interest, given that losses at Modbury were devaluing Healthscope shares and that the Government, through the Motor Accident Commission at that time, was the largest shareholder?

On 1 July 1995, the Motor Accident Commission purchased 6.8 million shares in Healthscope at \$1.69 each to become the single biggest shareholder with a holding of 10.5 per cent of the company. On 8 February 1999, Healthscope announced that it would not be able to pay an interim dividend and issued a full year profit downgrade due 'to more problems with a contract to manage the Modbury Hospital'. At today's share price of 37 cents, the Motor Accident Commission has made a paper loss of \$9 million.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The question was whether the contract was modified in 1997 because the Motor Accident Commission was a major shareholder. I was not Minister at the time.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No, I was not Minister and I was not Premier at the time, but let me give an assurance as a member of Cabinet (and I know the circumstances surrounding that situation) that the shareholding of Healthscope had absolutely nothing to do with the modification of that contract. Even though I was not Minister at the time, I can give that assurance. Let me point out—

Mr Foley interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—that, in fact, Healthscope made a major statement to the Australian Stock Exchange earlier this year in which it wrote off not the loss just for this year but the losses for the next 10 years. If ever there was proof that this Government will not compensate Healthscope for its losses, it was when Healthscope went to the Stock Exchange and said, 'We are now projecting that we will make losses on the Modbury contract for the next 10 years, and we are now bringing those forward and writing them off for the next 10 years.' I refer members to that statement to the Stock Exchange by Healthscope.

The claim by the member for Elizabeth today in her question is just not correct. She said that we have agreed to pay the costs or the losses of Healthscope, but that is incorrect, and Healthscope's statement to the Stock Exchange clearly shows that it is incorrect.

I do not know who composed these questions for the Leader and the member for Elizabeth, but I suggest they should stop trying to play with the facts, trying to rewrite history and coming up here and concocting a story which clearly does not stand up to any scrutiny.

HEALTH CARE

Mr SCALZI: Will the Minister for Human Services advise the House how the Government is encouraging greater community involvement in health care?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: One of the major thrusts that we have made as a Liberal Government in health care is to ensure that there is greater involvement by the patients, by their carers and by consumers generally in the whole health care system. There are classic examples of where we have done this, and I give the example of coordinated care, which has been initiated under this Government by the former Minister and which has been expanded to include areas such as Eyre Peninsula, and Care 21.

I might add that the member for Elizabeth has spoken to me on several occasions and highlighted how valuable Care 21 is and the extent to which the general practitioners in her area very strongly support Care 21. They are examples where we have brought the patient with the illness, particularly those with chronic illnesses, into the health care system itself in a unique way. Earlier this afternoon, we heard how the Minister for Education is doing this with Partnership 21 in the education field, involving school communities in decisions within their schools. We are doing that in a whole range of areas in health.

Another classic example is that of mental health. With respect to mental health, first, I originated the mental health summit, where we established eight different workshops, and the consumers—or the patients—or their carers were some of the key people involved in those working parties as part of the mental health workshop. We have also implemented 11 different working groups in the mental health strategic development implementation group, and those 11 working groups all have consumers—or patients—or carers involved. So, we have bent over backwards in the mental health area to make sure that we do that. We have also set up what we call a consumer advisory group in mental health to make sure that they have a chance to express their views. In fact, I must say that the patients in mental health have come to me personally and said how much they appreciate our recognition of their role in the health system.

There are a number of other classic examples. I have highlighted a program that we have going at present that involves the consumers—the patients themselves—having a greater say in terms of any intervention procedures, particularly where they are undergoing serious illnesses. We have found that, through making the consumers more and better informed—in particular, by using the Internet and some video material we purchased—the consumers themselves are making some of the decisions about their health care.

Another key area is a group in the northern suburbs that has been involved in the emergency department of the Lyell McEwin Hospital. I went out and launched this service. It was the consumers—the patients—and their carers who wanted to highlight this point about how they appreciated becoming involved in that accident emergency service and how, as a result, there was a far better dialogue between the medical staff involved in that accident emergency centre and the carers who were sitting there—and, indeed, even the patients were getting more timely information about when they would be treated and the types of treatment being offered.

So, there are a number of initiatives. In fact, I think that the member for Elizabeth should go and have a talk to the accident emergency department at the Lyell McEwin Hospital

and see the extent to which the level of complaint there has dropped, the extent to which we have brought in the patients and the carers to have a say in the operation of the system and how much they have appreciated that. So, across the health portfolio (and I have given just a number of examples today) we are making sure that it is the patients themselves or their carers who have a far greater voice than they have had in the past.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. Does the Government intend to proceed with the proposal to downgrade obstetrics at the Modbury Hospital to a level one service, would such a downgrade breach contracts with Healthscope, and why has work to upgrade the maternity section at Modbury not commenced, as announced by the Minister? Capital works programs for five years—1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000—have all included provision for upgrading Modbury Hospital and, in particular, the maternity facilities in association with the establishment of a private hospital. On 10 February this year, the Minister told the House that this work was about to commence. On 16 July 1999, the Modbury Hospital Chief of Obstetrics, Dr Taylor, said that one of the centre points of the whole contract was that a new maternity unit would be provided and that if the service was downgraded there was 'the distinct possibility that Healthscope could walk away from the contract without penalty'.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I saw that statement made publicly by Healthscope—that if maternity was, in fact, downgraded it believed that could be a breach of the contract. I have asked for a legal opinion with respect to that statement—and anyone would expect me to obtain a legal opinion of that statement. Certainly, it would appear that the contract does not stop the Department of Human Services or the board of the Modbury Hospital from making decisions to change the level of service. There is nothing wrong with that, and the contract specifically provides for it.

At the same time we are making sure that we have covered all the legal aspects, and an investigation is under way. As the honourable member knows, the clinical review on obstetrics has made a range of recommendations, highlighting that there should be three areas of specialisation and other potential options for Modbury. At this stage the Government has not made any final decisions on those recommendations. We have received a report on the possibility, however, of putting in place a low risk maternity centre at Modbury, and that report has been available for public comment. In fact, the report has been widely accepted by those who have seen it, because there is a strong community desire for low risk births to occur as close as possible to home, without necessarily involving a highly technical specialist centre. So, there is a choice. Those people concerning whom there may be a risk and who want a specialist centre and a specialist obstetrician present can have that. Equally, we are looking at other options, because we have found that there is a significant number of women for whom there is low risk and who are looking for other alternatives. The honourable member and some of her colleagues have raised this point.

When we were debating the Nurses Act, members opposite raised the growing importance of midwifery within the community and mentioned how a number of people want a choice. I find it interesting that the member for Elizabeth

comes into this place one day and argues one thing and the next day argues just the opposite. I ask the honourable member to be consistent, because we are very consistent in terms of what we are trying to do. We are very open in terms of the obstetrics review and the alternatives that might be considered. No decision has yet been made, because we are obtaining a legal opinion on this claim made by Healthscope.

CABINET MEETINGS

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Deputy Premier explain the Government's commitment to the people of regional South Australia and indicate why Cabinet meetings are being held in places such as Clare and shortly, I hope, in the Barossa Valley?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I thank the member for Schubert for the question and the quick bid he threw in at the end. Certainly, the Premier and Cabinet are extremely committed to holding Cabinet meetings in regional areas.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Yes. Last week the Cabinet meeting was held at Clare and it was fantastic. Previously Cabinet meetings have been held in Mount Gambier, Berri and Port Lincoln. In addition, the whole parliamentary Party has been taken to Port Pirie, McLaren Vale and Murray Bridge. It is an extremely successful concept. Not only was a Cabinet meeting held in Clare last week but some Ministers spent two days in the area. It was a terrific opportunity for them to visit many places that fit within their portfolios. Also whilst at Clare we had a lunch-time meeting with the local government representatives not only from the Clare and Gilbert Valleys but also from the surrounding councils of Wakefield, Goyder and the northern areas.

That meeting provided them with a real opportunity to raise issues with Cabinet members. During the evening local community and business leaders had the opportunity to sit down and discuss issues not just with Ministers but also with the CEOs. That was an excellent session, with many issues being raised and discussed. As the member for Ross Smith can attest, many locals enjoy a good discussion late at night. Certainly, it was a terrific opportunity for the Clare Valley community to put issues forward to Cabinet. The Clare region is going through a very prosperous time at the moment. Wine and tourism are the major drivers of what is an economic revival in the area. Indeed, it was put to us that over the next couple of years the Clare region alone will require a further 600 trained workers to pick up on the development occurring in the area.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: No, Ralph is a mate of mine. Ministers made the most of the opportunity to make visits and hold meetings relevant to their portfolios. As I said, several Ministers stayed over until Tuesday. I know that the Minister for Health visited both the Snowtown and Riverton Hospitals where aged care facilities are being established. The Minister for Education and I visited quite a few schools and displayed our fathering skills at the day care centre at Clare. It was terrific to see the new facilities that have been established in Clare, and certainly the commitment shown to additional works at both Clare and Riverton was greatly appreciated.

So, the concept of country Cabinets is well received by local people. It gives them an opportunity that they do not normally get. That, along with the Regional Development and Infrastructure Fund, the Office of Regional Development, the Regional Development Council and many other commitments

within individual portfolios really does demonstrate the commitment of this Government to regional areas.

ADOPTION AND FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Human Services review and investigate fully the procedures, practices and safeguards followed by the State Government's Adoption and Family Information Service in assisting a Ms Anne Thompson and her relatives to find their brother who had been adopted out at birth, and can he assure the House that a full apology, together with appropriate support, will be provided to all those affected by what appears to be a monumental bureaucratic bungle?

In May this year, Ms Thompson was advised that she had two brothers who were adopted out at birth—not one brother as she previously thought. The family questioned the adoption service repeatedly about the veracity of their information as their mother, who is now deceased, had never mentioned a second child, and this second child was born only nine months and three days after the first child, who was also adopted out. However, after being assured several times by the service that the second child, named Barry, was definitely her brother, the family commenced a process of contact, of bonding, and of an emotional family reunion. Ms Thompson says that this included many long distance phone calls and Barry's travelling to Sydney to meet with other members of Ms Thompson's family.

Recently, after making separate inquiries, a member of Ms Thompson's family received a copy of Barry's mother's birth certificate which showed that it was a case of mistaken identity: wrong mother, wrong brother, wrong sister, wrong family! This matter has caused enormous distress to Ms Thompson's family and also to Barry. Will the Minister review the procedures so that this does not happen again?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no need to ask the question at the beginning and repeat it at the end of the explanation.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can imagine the personal trauma that would be caused to someone if in fact that sort of inaccurate information had been made available. I will have the matter completely and thoroughly investigated and report back to the honourable member.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS PROGRAM

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Can the Minister for Tourism outline to the House how and where the Government is supporting local communities to develop key special events and festivals in both metropolitan and regional areas?

The SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Tourism.

The Hon. J. HALL: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

An honourable member: And don't take any longer than 30 seconds.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Hart for disrupting the House. It is not the second time.

The Hon. J. HALL: I thank the member for Flinders for her question, and I know that both sides of the House will be terribly interested in my response as it relates to some of these special events and festivals. I am sure the House is aware that the South Australian Tourism Commission, through the Major Events Unit, has funds that are available to support local community activities and festivals in particular. This funding is available through the Special

Events and Festivals Program, which is aimed at providing funds to develop new and innovative activities, particularly festivals, in local communities.

The Major Events Unit also seeks to provide in-kind support with planning strategies and developing marketing themes and then, in the end, helping them organise these activities at a local level. I might say that, in addition to the major hallmark events that Major Events is involved with organising and sponsoring, a number of these local events and festivals are proving to be enormous economic generators for the local communities and are hugely important in drawing tourists from not only outside of the local area but interstate and in some cases internationally.

I know that the House, but particularly the member for Flinders (because a couple affect her electorate) will be interested in some of the events that have been supported in this program. I think that some members opposite ought to be interested because some of the programs are held in their electorates. For example, we have had \$5 000 given to the Southern Star Dance Sport Spectacular. I know that the member for Mawson is particularly familiar with that. We have also provided \$3 000 for the Renmark Rose Festival. That has become a major event in this State. There is \$5 000 for an electorate that you know about, Mr Speaker, that is, for the Bay Sports Festival. The member for Flinders would be particularly interested to know that in her electorate there is \$10 000 contributed to the Ceduna Oyster Fest and there is the growing importance and significance of the Kalamazoo Cup at Cummins.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J. HALL: It is a very interesting event to attend. We also have the national ballooning sporting event at Kimba and that has attracted \$8 000. There is \$15 000 for the Festival of 1 000 Voices in the Hills and there is also \$30 000 for the Jamestown Fly In and Air Spectacular. In addition, \$10 000 has been awarded to the Festival of Waters at Port Adelaide and I know the member for Hart would be particularly interested in that.

Mr Foley: What was that?

The Hon. J. HALL: It is the Festival of Waters at Port Adelaide. These events are a great example of the importance of local events and festivals and I commend AME for its great experience and expertise in helping make these festivals become successful. It is also importance for the House to note that AME has produced a special book 'Planning Special Events and Festivals' and, in addition, it has produced a set of guidelines that are freely available for local organisers to ensure that their events and festivals are successful. I am happy to provide further information to any member if they so require it.

HANCOCK, Ms C.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism. Is the Government considering reinstating the former Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Commission, Ms Carole Hancock? If not, can the Minister explain why one of the Tourism Commission's official Internet sites, as of today, describes Ms Hancock as its current CEO and provides her full details, despite the fact that she was sacked over seven months ago and is currently suing the Government?

The Hon. J. HALL: Mr Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J. HALL: I will pursue the issue that the member for Lee has raised but, as he well knows, the question of Ms Hancock and her previous employment with the Tourism Commission is now before the courts and I cannot make any further comment on it. However, the issue you have raised I will pursue.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

Mr MEIER (Goyder): My question to the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training follows the Minister's statement earlier and the question asked by the member for Colton. Can the Minister advise the House of what safeguards and support structures the Government will put in place under Partnerships 21? Several weeks ago the Minister visited schools in my electorate and, during that visit, Partnership 21 was discussed. In most, if not all, cases the attitude of these schools towards Partnerships 21 was very positive.

An honourable member: Comment!

Mr MEIER: There is no more comment than in your Leader's comments—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr MEIER:—every time, and he never gets pulled up.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. The member will not talk over the Chair in future or he will be named on the spot.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I reiterate to the House that Partnerships 21 is totally voluntary. The member for Ross Smith might think that is boring, but let me assure him that principals in a number of schools in his electorate are extremely interested in this package. The honourable member should be interested as well, being a member who visits his school councils on a regular basis. For those who do choose to opt into this scheme, the governing council will have additional roles and responsibilities. The service role of the State office will be strengthened to ensure that those schools which undertake Partnerships 21 can adequately avail themselves of responses and of service support and information from the head office of the department.

The most important point is that those resourcing decisions will be made at the local level. As I have said before, a particular issue which is important at Ceduna might not be important at Mount Gambier, Smithfield Plains, Port Adelaide or McLaren Vale; but under Partnerships 21 school councils will be able to make those decisions that suit their own local area. There are a couple of areas of which members should be aware. First, there is a triennial service agreement and a partnership plan. Schools which enter into Partnerships 21 will sign up to a three-year contract. When they sign that contract—and prior to that—they will be aware at the end of August what will be their budgets for the next three years. That provides for an enormous advantage over the current system, because at the moment school grants and minor maintenance works grants are dribbled out during the year by the head office for the schools to spend on whatever. Most of the time, this money is set within departmental guidelines so that schools can spend it only on certain things.

Under Partnerships 21 they will be given a year 2000 budget and indicative budgets for the next two years so that they can actually undertake some long-term planning. They can ascertain their requirements; they will look at what they can plan for in the future in terms of facilities but also in terms of what particular programs they want to bring into the

school. Along with that support, an office of review will be set up to help and support schools with their decision making, looking to see how the schools in question are going and giving advice if they believe that those schools need it.

In addition, we have set up a \$28.5 million insurance fund. At the moment, for instance, if a school is subjected to a vandal's graffiti or if a vandal scratches the school windows, the repair bill comes from the school's own budget. There is no allocation in minor maintenance works: it comes out of the school's budget. Under this insurance scheme, the school will be able to claim for graffiti or fire damage; or, if at this time of the year when the flu and winter sicknesses are around and extra TRT days have to be undertaken over and above the number that have been allocated to each school, they will be able to claim on that insurance policy for those TRT days. Therefore, to cover the teachers who are ill, it means that it is no loss to the school's operating budget.

Further, we are creating an additional SSO qualification above SSO-4 level, recognising that there will be additional responsibilities so that the principal does not end up out of this with an additional work load. The higher SSO level will cater for that and enable that particular officer to undertake a lot of the administrative work that will occur in connection with this matter.

Finally, the union has been saying that schools are not indemnified, that parents who join these school councils will do so at their own risk. That is not the case. School councillors will be indemnified against any personal injury and against property damage claims. We are looking into further issues of indemnity to ensure that those school councillors are fully protected when they sit on school councils and make decisions about the direction and the role of their school. Partnerships 21 is the most significant leap forward in education for the last 20-odd years. The enthusiasm that I am seeing from principals and school councils around the State is second to none in relation to looking at the package and assessing it for themselves in terms of its suitability. I must reiterate: this is voluntary. No school will be forced into this. The schools that do not come into it will receive exactly the same resources as they have over past years. The schools that join that scheme will see significant benefits in educational outcomes for their children.

TOURISM COMMISSION

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism. Why did the Government's high profile Tourism Commission Board member, Ms Maggie Tabberer, fail to attend a single board meeting, and did she receive any remuneration for her time on the board? On 28 July 1997, just prior to the last State election, the Government announced that the high profile Maggie Tabberer was to join the board of the Tourism Commission and received extensive publicity following the appointment. The latest annual report of the Tourism Commission reveals that Ms Tabberer failed to attend a single meeting and resigned soon after the State election.

The Hon. J. HALL: I am not too sure how much detail I can provide for the member for Wright. My understanding is that she received no payment, because she did not attend any meetings. However, I will get the details for the member and provide them as soon as I can.

EMPLOYMENT, REGIONAL

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Will the Minister for Local Government outline how important it is for rural communities to have an input into the way that employment funds are spent in their regions? I would be most grateful if the Minister could give a detailed answer.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: This House would acknowledge that, in the many years he has served this House, no-one has done better for isolated and rural communities.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Whyalla says, 'Stop crawling.' If the member for Whyalla took half a leaf from the member for Stuart's book, she might be here half as long. One thing I can assure the member for Stuart is that there is a quantum shift in the thinking of this Government.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I acknowledge that opposite sits the descendent of a proud race, a race of thinkers, Aristotle and Plato—a race of sculptors! They created the Trojan Horse. However, the difference between their Trojan Horse and this one is that it had something inside. There is a quantum shift in this Government's thinking. For us, regional development is not about hurricanes in Florida, investment in property markets in New York, the purchase of South African goat farms, the purchase of 333 Collins Street or even plywood cars for the South-East but about sustainable development in regional Australia. I would have thought that at least one member opposite might be interested in sustainable development in regional South Australia—an important issue.

Every member in this place who has been here more than two minutes realises that the road to Port Augusta, to Whyalla, to Port Pirie and to regional South Australia is littered with the dreams that were concocted in this Chamber and attempted to be imposed on regional South Australia. Scheme after scheme has been announced but very few of them have come to fruition. This Government believes, in line with the regional development task force and in line with the job entrusted to the Deputy Premier, that regional South Australia is important and must be developed. But, the key to developing regional South Australia is allowing the people in the regions to grow—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

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

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I was only recalling for the member for Ross Smith that there was once a very famous instance where the honking of geese saved the city of Rome, but the honking of the geese opposite has almost destroyed this State and it is about time members opposite remembered it. It is about time that, instead of coming here with fatuous little comments Question Time after Question Time, they actually contributed to the development of policy for this State.

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, Sir.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr FOLEY: Sir, the Minister is clearly debating his answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not uphold the point of order, and I ask the Minister to get back to his reply.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The fact is that in 1999-2000 a total 1 112 jobs will be created in regional South Australia through a range of labour market programs costing in excess of \$2.174 million. The Adelaide Hills is getting \$184 000 with 119 job outcomes; Eyre Peninsula (dear to the member for Flinders) is getting \$184 000 with 104 job outcomes; Fleurieu Peninsula, \$194 000 with 121 job outcomes; Kangaroo Island, \$151 000 with 64 job outcomes; the Mid North, \$180 500 with 93 job outcomes; the Murraylands, \$151 000 with 94 job outcomes; northern South Australia, \$185 500 with 73 job outcomes; the Riverland, \$154 000 with 84 job outcomes; the South-East, \$169 000 with 84 job outcomes; Whyalla, \$164 000 with 74 job outcomes; Yorke Peninsula, \$164 000 with 69 job outcomes; Port Pirie, \$159 000 with 69 job outcomes; and the Barossa, \$134 000 with 64 job outcomes. In addition, a further 544 jobs with a total funding allocation of \$956 000 will be created in the metropolitan area and, if members opposite are interested, I can provide them with the details by breakdowns equivalent to electorates.

The important issue is that this Government is supporting regional South Australia to revitalise and redevelop itself. We have a commitment through the regional development boards. In fact, I acknowledge that my colleague the Minister for Education, on behalf of the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, is coordinating the compilation of a national report identifying collaborative strategies in each State to improve education, employment, training and children's services in rural and remote South Australia.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Thank you, Sir. We are doing many things. We have far too much time to sit and listen to the chortling opposite. We will get on with the job.

Ms Breuer interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles will contain herself.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Can the Minister for Human Services supply the figures on elective surgery for the Modbury Public Hospital, not supplied by his department for the article on page 4 of yesterday's *Advertiser*? I have been informed that the requested figures were eventually supplied to the department, and my constituents are concerned that it continues to be difficult to measure performance and assess if services are being maintained (as we are constantly being told they are) without timely, adequate and concise data.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Certainly, I am willing to obtain those figures. When we supplied the information to the *Advertiser* those figures were not available, so we could not include them. But I am willing to get that figure in terms of what the honourable member has asked for.

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Can the Minister for Environment and Heritage outline to the House how this Government is empowering local communities to manage their local environmental issues?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I think that all members of this House would be aware that, in order for human beings to repair and improve our environment, it is vital that we at least consider the phrase that is now very popular throughout environment movements, and that is to think global but act local. This Government is very keen to encourage this local step-by-step approach to environmental issues, and we are certainly empowering local communities to manage their own environmental issues and their outcomes. This Government has acted very pro-actively and strongly to protect our water resources for both present and future users—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:—through the development of locally driven water management plans by some six catchment management boards now in place around the State.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: For example, the South-East Catchment Board (on which I am happy to give the honourable member an answer) is currently preparing some six—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Ross Smith for the second time.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:—water allocation plans for all the prescribed water resources in its catchment area. The plan is being developed with the local community, and this has meant that we have seen some six water allocation planning committees established, made up of local people, to develop and evaluate water management plans. We now have in this instance some 72 local South-East residents who are actively involved in developing the water management policies for that area. Their involvement does not end just at the water allocation planning committee level; indeed, one of the major roles of the committees is to investigate the wider community views.

Another program that we are exceedingly proud of which is run in conjunction with local government is Local Agenda 21. This program delivers the decision-making responsibility to people at the local level—those, you could say, at the coalface. This is a program that fundamentally enhances local representatives' understanding of, and certainly their input to, their environment, and it is exactly this type of local input that this State Government is willing to continue to encourage. For example (and I am sure that the member for Giles will be interested and much aware of this program), the City of Whyalla has highlighted the need to diversify to an economic base to improve sustainability through the establishment of looking at renewable energy enterprise zones. The intention is to link with Whyalla's education institutions to create a Centre for Manufacturing renewable energy system. If successful, this project will greatly enhance Whyalla's economic opportunities as well as improving the local environment. More than 30 South Australian councils are now involved with Local Agenda 21, and I am very pleased to say that that number continues to grow. I am also very pleased to say that South Australian councils have reacted far more quickly to the improvements through Local Agenda 21 than almost any other region throughout the whole of Australia.

Also, in the Murray-Darling Basin, there are some 11 local action planning committees, which are incorporated community bodies made up of local people with a broad range of interests and expertise, and they are focused on addressing environment issues in their regions. With the support of State and Federal Liberal Governments, hundreds

of local people are actively involved in projects to restore and conserve the natural environment.

In the Coorong, for example, the LAP committee has undertaken a revegetation program to address dry land salinity issues. In another area, the Friends of the Parks, which has many thousands of volunteers across the State, is also empowered to take control of local issues and to determine outcomes. In the successful operation of the State's parks and reserves, the Government has actively encouraged community involvement. Community support schemes were started by the Tonkin Liberal Government in 1980, and it is exceedingly pleasing to know that in 1999 more than 7 000 volunteers are involved through the Friends of the Parks groups and consultative committees. Whilst on the subject of volunteers, I note that members opposite have also found some very unique methods of recruiting members to their voluntary organisation. However, I find it extraordinarily encouraging to see the continuing increase in volunteerism with respect to environmental matters. I assure this House that the Government will continue to encourage and empower local communities to address environmental issues throughout their local regions.

YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Ms KEY (Hanson): When will the Minister for Youth release the full review report of the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia prepared by the three young people in whom he showed so much confidence? Will the Minister confirm on the record whether the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia will receive triennial funding as promised by various Youth Ministers under the Liberal Government and as I understand is recommended in the report? In an interview conducted by Ashley Walsh from radio 5AN on 22 July, Minister Brindal was quoted as saying:

The report says the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia is good. . . the report says the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia is doing a good job and [to] put more funding into YACSA.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I thank the honourable member for finally asking a question about an issue that is getting so old. I have been waiting for days for this.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As it is a matter in which people have shown some interest, I would have expected the shadow Minister for Youth to ask a question earlier. Nevertheless, I will release the report as is appropriate after I have properly consulted my ministerial colleagues, and not before. However, if the shadow Minister would like a copy of the report I believe that, last Friday in a press release, YACSA offered to release that report (which was given to it in confidence) to anyone who would like it. I therefore suggest that the honourable member telephone YACSA.

If the honourable member wants the report so urgently and she does not already have a copy, she can get one from YACSA. In the meantime, as the Premier has asked me what is right and proper in this matter, I will do it with due diligence and in due time. As soon as I have done what I think is best, in concert with my ministerial colleagues and the Government benchers, I will advise what I intend to do to the rest of the Parliament.

INTERNET

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Information Economy explain how the Internet can be utilised

to encourage wide consultation on issues relevant to the community?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the honourable member for this very important question. The Internet has become a very powerful tool in the information age, enabling the dissemination of information to individuals. It is a tool that is well and truly being utilised. The Government actually strives to use the tools that the information age provides it in order to foster the economy in general, the community and, indeed, the society of the future in respect of what I think people will refer at a later stage as the digital democracy. I will cite a couple of brief examples of how technology is being used already.

Currently, as members in this Chamber would know, the Parliament is debating a significant piece of workplace relations legislation, and a chat site on that legislation has been established on the Internet where the legislation as it is currently drafted has been posted. We are encouraging people from across the community not only to read the legislation for themselves but to express their views on the draft and the amendments. That truly is the Internet promoting democracy in action.

The other example is a site established in relation to the proposed sale of our Ports Corporation assets. The large number of comments received at this site has been particularly gratifying, with a range of views expressed and a number of questions raised. The Government discussion paper on recreational fishing has actually been posted on that site. Just to show the sort of level of communication possibilities, the level of interest generated by the Ports Corp sale web site is, I think, quite extraordinary. Between 30 May and 29 June—in other words, one month—that site had 21 198 hits. Some 21 000 people hit that site within a month, and in the same period 884 page requests retrieved content from the site. So, it really is an example of our using the Internet to provide information to the people of South Australia.

AUSTRALIA ACTS (REQUESTS) BILL

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I table a ministerial statement on the Bill made by the Hon. K.T. Griffin MLC in another place.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): The whole question of adoption and reconciliation should be one of hope, promise, care and sensitivity. Today, I have been given an example of extraordinary incompetence, extraordinary hurt, a real tragedy that has been compounded by bureaucratic bungling. We remember the changes made to legislation in the 1980s which allowed people—natural mothers, biological fathers and children—to find and trace their origins, to find and trace lost family. But always from the start there was a belief in the Act that there needed to be delicacy, sensitivity, and a duty of care to all of those involved lest any stuff-ups like we have seen today go on to

make things worse, to compound misplaced feelings of guilt or inadequacy, or to cause further family trauma.

Both my office and that of the member for Spence were contacted by a number of citizens involved in this particular issue, and indeed the Minister was written to by the member for Spence and by one of the parties involved. My office in Salisbury was contacted by Anne Thompson in relation to her concerns about some actions of the State Government Adoption and Family Information Service. Ms Thompson informed my staff that she first contacted the service in 1986 in an effort to locate a brother who had been relinquished for adoption by her now deceased mother back in 1943.

In May this year, Ms Thompson was notified by the service that her mother in fact had given up two babies for adoption in the 1940s. Ms Thompson was informed by the service that she therefore had two brothers, including Barry, and was provided with both brothers' full details. Ms Thompson said she questioned repeatedly the adoption service officer who had contacted her for confirmation that Barry was in fact her brother, as her mother had never mentioned to any member of the family a second child who had been adopted out. It was not mentioned to her sister or to her daughter.

Ms Thompson said she also contacted her mother's sister who confirmed that, although her sister had always told her everything, no mention had ever been made of a second baby born out of wedlock. Ms Thompson said there were other factors relating to Barry's adoption certificate that created suspicion, including his birth date being only nine months and three days after the brother who had been properly identified. This caused the family to further question the Adoption and Family Information Service about whether they got it right, about whether Barry really was their brother. Had there been some stuff-up? Had there been some mistake? How could they possibly not have known as a family about a second brother who had been adopted out?

However, after being assured repeatedly by the service that Barry definitely was her brother, the family then began the process of contact—making contact, further contacts, reconciliation, bonding. Ms Thompson said this included many long distance phone calls, and Barry's actually travelling to Sydney to meet with other members of the family that he did not know about and was so joyous to have actually contacted after all these years.

Ms Thompson said that Barry had been extremely keen to meet his family. He told her that he had shown photos of his new found brothers and sisters to his work colleagues. In July this year, Ms Thompson said that a member of her family, after making inquiries, received a copy of Barry's birth-mother's certificate that provided evidence she was not Ms Thompson's mother. They were appalled at the way they were treated by the service. They were appalled that their concerns were not treated seriously.

We need to have a review of the procedures to make sure that this kind of trauma, which now requires Barry to undergo counselling and which has caused enormous distress, does not happen again. We have to make sure this is done right. Ms Thompson said that this bureaucratic mistake, now acknowledged, has had enormous negative impact on her family, on her brother who was correctly identified, and particularly on Barry, who she said is devastated and has had difficulty in coping with the situation.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): I would like to make a couple of points about the multicultural and ethnic

affairs community and a concern I have about a document that I understand had been left around at a Polish community function last weekend. Like other members in this House, for years I have attended Italian, German, Polish and Greek festivals, and in my view most of us have attended them with a fair amount of decorum and a fair amount of understanding of what multicultural and ethnic affairs is all about. I attended these functions as a shadow Minister, as a Minister and as Deputy Premier.

As we all know, the Labor Party was always well represented and often large numbers of the Liberal Party attended as well. Usually the Leader of the Opposition attended, but mostly the Opposition spokesman on multicultural and ethnic affairs would attend. As we know, the Labor Party has always been concerned about the areas of multicultural and ethnic affairs. It was always listening, always caring and, of course, always politicking, but we all understand that. That is part of the game.

You can imagine how I was shocked and surprised this morning when I opened my mail and found this particular memo. It is headed, 'Leader of the Opposition's Office, House of Assembly, Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide.' Addressed to Michael Atkinson, it is a fax dated 23 December, from Jill Bottrall, Media Adviser, Leader of the Opposition. It says:

Michael. Late this afternoon I was told about a speech you would be giving next week at the opening of the Dozynki Polish Festival. As I don't really want to go into the office next week, I found this speech given by Sumner in 1988. It is so old that they won't remember it, but essentially it has everything in it you will need in your speech. Hope this is okay with you. Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

I do not think I have ever heard a more patronising statement in relation to multicultural and ethnic affairs in all my life. Here we have an old speech being regurgitated.

Members interjecting:

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

Mr Wright interjecting:

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

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Attached to this speech happened to be two other speeches: the one given in 1988 by Chris Sumner and the other speech—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Most of them were made off the cuff, as you will remember. I understand that the second speech was delivered by Mr Atkinson—and I will give him some credit because, other than the remarks contained on the first page, the majority of the speech was fresh and new. When you look at the two speeches you will see clearly there was a halter.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: We all know how the Labor Party goes around and talks about listening, about caring and about going down the path of making sure that everything in the multicultural and ethnic affairs area is fair dinkum. However, here it says, 'It's so old they won't remember it, but essentially it has everything in it you will ever need in your speech.' I find that amazing, because it really blows open the whole position of the Labor Party on multicultural and ethnic affairs. I have been involved in this game for a long time, and for many years I have seen the two faces of the Labor Party in this Parliament. This document from the Leader of the Opposition's office suddenly arrived this morning by post at my electorate office. I think the Leader of

the Opposition ought to explain to this Parliament, and more importantly to the Polish community, his reasons for not caring about what the Polish community does.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I am the Opposition spokesman on multicultural and ethnic affairs and I attend a number of ethnic community functions and enjoy them very much. I speak at most of those functions and I write my own speech notes. From time to time—and this was a function that was held a few years ago—I seek relevant information before I make my remarks. On an occasion such as the Dozynki Festival it may be relevant to see what has been said in the past. It is perfectly proper that I would look at what my predecessors had to say.

On Saturday night I attended the fortieth anniversary of the Dom Polski Centre and many of my friends from the Polish community were there. I had to sit next to a Liberal member of Parliament, whom I treated with perfect courtesy, but it is very disappointing that, during that occasion, my notes had been taken and they are now retailed in the Chamber. I appeal here to the Deputy Premier, as I have appealed to him in the past, and point out that there is a certain standard of behaviour which members of the Government and the Opposition ought to show towards one another and which lubricates the parliamentary process.

I have always behaved with courtesy towards members of the Government at ethnic community functions. At many functions I have enjoyed their company very much. I certainly enjoyed the company of Steve Condous and Julian and Diana Stefani very much, but it is not they who have taken these notes and brought them to the member for Bragg. I know who has brought them to the member for Bragg and it reflects great discredit on those persons. I would never have even thought of taking the speech notes of a Liberal member of Parliament at an ethnic function—taking them or even looking at them—let alone taking them and reading them out in the Chamber. As the member for Bragg concedes—

Members interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: We are talking here about a speech at the Dozynki Festival that was made a number of years ago. This is about a speech made a number of years ago, and I took along to Dom Polski with me on Saturday night, in case I was asked to speak, previous speech notes. Any member would do that in similar circumstances because sometimes, when one is invited to attend ethnic community functions and one is assured that one is not required to speak, it often turns out that in the course of the evening one is required to speak. The Deputy Premier and the Minister for Human Services nod their heads indicating that that is true.

So, when I went to Dom Polski on Saturday night I took speeches I had previously made, including a speech to the Dozynki Festival, I think two or three years ago. As it turned out, I declined an offer to speak at Dom Polski, but my Dozynki speech of a couple of years ago was written entirely by me. As the member for Bragg concedes, it is an original speech but, attached to that speech, are notes of a speech previously given by the Hon. Chris Sumner.

That a Government member would look at those notes in the course of the evening and would then pocket those notes, that is, steal those notes, and then give them to the member for Bragg who would then have the bad manners to use them in the House speaks great discredit for that member and for the member for Bragg.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: May I have them back?

Mr Foley: How low will you sink?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: May I have my notes back?

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

You can sort this out outside the Chamber. The member for Schubert.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Mr Speaker, today I wish to speak on a matter of real concern.

Members interjecting:

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

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Foley: You are an absolute disgrace.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will leave the Chamber. The member for Schubert.

Mr VENNING: I will start again. Today I wish to speak on a matter of real concern. I have been aware of this issue for some time and it was highlighted once again at a recent meeting I attended of the South Australian Farmers Federation. The issue I wish to raise is that concerning the right to farm and the need to implement proper and real action to allow people to continue that God given right of farming their own land. We can talk about this matter until the cows come home but, until a workable strategy is put in place, we are just wasting our time. People are in conflict and getting very frustrated, often ending up in court and using up valuable resources.

Urban development, particularly in the Adelaide Hills, became a concern about 25 years ago—as you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, as a member representing the Adelaide Hills—when, in the late 1980s, we had the Mount Lofty Ranges Review, a major exercise which attempted to develop a comprehensive plan for this important peri-urban region. More recently, in the early 1990s, coming from an initiative of the South Australian Farmers Federation, the Natural Resources Management Standing Committee looked at this issue again. That committee's report noted that, if rural lands continued to be alienated at the rate and in the manner permitted in the past, the State would be faced with serious conflict between commercial farmers and other land users and, ultimately, with significant losses in primary production.

This suggests that, even though the issues facing peri-urban agriculture have been with us for a long time, we have not been especially successful in coming to grips with the underlying problems. I know that a committee, known as the Peri-Urban Round Table and chaired by the Deputy Premier, has recently been formed to help solve the problems created by this issue and I will be keen to see the outcomes and recommendations of that committee. Two factors are currently forcing us to look at different approaches. First, the targets set in the food plan require us to make the best possible use of our available land and water resources.

Secondly, we must be aware of the strategic significance of peri-urban areas and that these areas are responsible for a surprisingly large share of the State's earnings from primary production. I have seen a map that shows local government areas which can be regarded as peri urban on the basis of above average population growth during the early 1990s. This area comprises only 2 per cent of our total productive land. In analysing the ABS data for these same areas it is revealed

that they average 31 per cent of the State's total value of agricultural production over the same period.

I understand that other States have responded to this issue by rejecting right to farm legislation in favour of selective improvements to land use planning controls and wider use of codes of practice. Tasmania is the only State that has passed its Primary Industries Activity Protection Act 1995, although it has never been used and apparently is now regarded as largely irrelevant in resolving agricultural-horticultural disputes. Whether the right to farm legislation is the most appropriate response under the circumstances is something that the round table could consider in the coming months. However, it is essential that primary producers are able to go about their normal farming activities without undue hindrance from neighbours. I believe that a lot of these problems could be fixed before they start. I shall quote a couple of examples.

A generational farmer inherits a home which is on a small block of land situated close to his farming operation. He sells the house and land through a real estate agent—often on the weekend, too. The purchasers thought that they were buying a lovely home in the peaceful countryside—and they were—but it was not too far down the track that they started to complain to the council about machinery noise, water run-off, spray drift—and the list goes on. It is obvious that these people were not compatible with the environment they bought into and should never have been there in the first place.

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

Mr SNELLING (Playford): I rise to protest the cessation of podiatry care to the elderly in Ingle Farm in my electorate that up to now had been provided by the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service. At the outset I acknowledge that the CEO of the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service wrote to me to advise that the service would end and provided me with a list of alternatives so that I could advise my constituents. I thank the CEO for that information and advice.

The podiatry service provided by the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service has been offered at Ingle Farm for the last 10 years, and 80 per cent of the clients of the service are elderly people who for a whole range of reasons require podiatry care. The Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service has now restricted the health service to health care cardholders who are not eligible for other podiatry services, that is, health care cardholders who are not aged pensioners.

The Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service argues that other services are available for these people in the northern area and that, in order to make the best use of the one podiatrist whom they have in their employ, the service must be restricted to people whom it regards as its core clients. However, for many of the people whom I represent in this place, it is not so simple as driving to the nearest service, as many of these people are severely restricted in their movement. One lady who contacted my office had a broken hip and was therefore unable to do her own basic foot care. Her movements are severely restricted, and it is too much to expect her to travel all the way to Modbury or Clearview, the two closest public podiatry services offered.

Another constituent who contacted me must travel by bus (she can only get around on public transport) to Ridgehaven. She worked at the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service at Ingle Farm as a volunteer for 16 years but has now been told that, because she is not considered a core client, she

will have to go to one of the other public providers of podiatry care, the most convenient being at Ridgehaven. This very elderly, frail lady has to walk for 10 minutes from the bus stop to where the podiatry care is offered at Ridgehaven. These are examples not just of people being inconvenienced but of people who are being forced to undergo real hardship.

I value the tremendous work being undertaken in my electorate by the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service—and so do those people who have contacted me. However, I must protest the restrictions that are being placed on access to the podiatry service provided by the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service. There can be little doubt that these restrictions will cause considerable distress to former clients of the service.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): Today, as members are aware, I presented petitions to this House in relation to two matters: first, the Moonta police station, from some 992 constituents; and, secondly, the Wallaroo jetty, from some 3 299 constituents. In relation to the Moonta police station, the petition drew to the attention of this House that the permanent police presence in Moonta, namely, two full-time officers, has been reduced by 50 per cent since February 1999 and that the police station is now unmanned by any residential full-time officer. Therefore, the petition urged the Government to reinstate the permanent police presence in Moonta to two full-time officers, one to be responsible for taskings and the other to maintain presence at the Moonta police station as was the case hitherto.

I am well aware of the excellent work undertaken in and from the Moonta police station over many years. In fact, it has been a two person police station, and the Moonta community has certainly needed that police presence from time to time. Certainly, in earlier periods police officers would walk the beat on the streets of Moonta. On many occasions when I was in Moonta I saw their very visible presence on the Moonta streets, and it certainly helped that community enormously. One can understand, therefore, the distress of the community that one police officer has been absent since February, I believe because of an appeal that is currently taking place.

Members would be aware that, under the previous Act, appeals could take up to two years to resolve; apparently, this is one of the problems that is currently occurring. Whilst the new Act was recently promulgated, apparently it has not applied to the police officer concerned. If that had been the case, this situation could have been resolved within 28 days. Whatever the case, this is a very important, urgent matter that must be addressed, and I am pleased that it has been brought to the attention of this House. I know that the Government has budgetary problems because of Labor's maladministration in past years and that it is not easy to address these problems straightaway. I am also aware that the number of police recruits has been increased: hopefully, that will assist. I trust that such matters will be addressed as soon as possible.

The second petition I brought to the attention of this House was from 3 299 constituents and asked that any sale or lease of the Wallaroo jetty by the South Australian Ports Corporation include a guarantee by the successful bidder to maintain free public access to the jetty throughout the year. The importance of this cannot be over emphasised. I am fully cognisant of the fact that the Ports Corp has brought jetties to a new standard, to a level that is competitive with the rest of Australia and probably with those of overseas countries. I realise that private operators will be able to increase

efficiency. In the case of Yorke Peninsula, we have three jetties at Port Giles, Klein Point and Wallaroo that are owned by Ports Corp, and it is essential that access to these jetties be maintained in the event of a sale. The Wallaroo community relies almost entirely on that jetty for much of its tourism. Many alterations have been made to the jetty to guarantee some access even when major unloading activities are occurring, say, from the rock phosphate boats. I want to emphasise that I will seek to do everything in my power to ensure that provisions are included in any sale contract to guarantee public access to the jetties—certainly of Yorke Peninsula—for future years, because their importance to South Australia and its economy cannot be over emphasised.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

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

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

Motion carried.

STAMP DUTIES (CONVEYANCE RATES) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS) BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: CONVENTION CENTRE

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I move:

That the one hundred and third report of the committee, on the Riverside precinct redevelopment—Adelaide Convention Centre extension—interim report, be noted.

In the course of making my remarks about this, I point out that the committee is most anxious to have the matter to which we draw attention today dealt with very expeditiously. The Adelaide Convention Centre was established in 1987 as the first dedicated convention venue in Australia. It was completed by the development of the Exhibition Hall in 1990. The Public Works Committee has received a referral which proposes that an extension to the centre should be constructed over the train tracks of the Adelaide Railway Station.

The committee is told that the Adelaide Convention Centre is experiencing difficulty coping with the growing number of conferences that could be booked. It is not possible to capitalise upon the size of the main auditorium due to the lack of adequate supporting space for banqueting, exhibitions or both. The committee is also told that the centre has been forced to refer—with regrets—a significant number of large events to interstate or overseas venues. In the 18 month period to April 1998, events involving approximately 40 000 delegates—and I highlight that number—were

diverted as no other venues in South Australia were able to accommodate events of their size.

The design of the proposed extensions incorporates a new multipurpose exhibition and banqueting space of approximately 7 000 square metres, including the pre-function areas. The Public Works Committee needs additional information before a final report can be tabled on a particular design option being considered. The estimated cost of the proposed design is \$85 million, and the committee has been informed that other design options were put forward and at least one of those had a substantially lower cost. Indeed, when we first heard evidence on this proposal, it was suggested to us that the cost would be about \$50 million to \$55 million or thereabouts. A financial analysis and outline of the economic benefits of alternative designs have not been provided to the committee and, in the absence of that information, it is unable to gauge whether the proposed extension is the best option to provide the design solution in the public interest.

There is a substantial history of facilities being constructed in the river bank precinct without proper regard for each other. They just seem to appear, and appear as though they were independent of their surroundings and, indeed, ignore their surroundings. Although the river bank precinct master plan is intended to avoid this in future, the committee has not been given any indication of how the substantial extension proposed will be integrated with future works over the top and north of the Festival Centre and down to the water's edge of the river, on the south bank.

The Public Works Committee has a third concern about the Adelaide Convention Centre extension referred to it: the river bank precinct master plan stresses that development should encourage access to the edge of the River Torrens. The committee's members support that objective. As a result, we are concerned to note that the submitted proposal does not appear to achieve this aim and, whilst we acknowledge that remarks were made in evidence that consultation between the Adelaide City Council and the proponents would resolve this matter, it seems that that has been overlooked, as the Adelaide City Council itself has not provided to us any indication that it was in any sense aware of the expectation the proponents had in the evidence provided in November.

The Adelaide Convention Centre provides important economic benefits to this State. The Public Works Committee recognises the need for the centre to be appropriately extended if these are to be maintained and enhanced. The committee is also aware that significant conventions are already booked in anticipation of the proposed extensions being allowed to proceed. In recognition of this, as Presiding Member of the committee, I assure the House that the proposal will be considered and quickly despatched after the project's proponents have supplied the additional information about the proposal and access to the south bank of the river that we are seeking. Accordingly, the committee recommends, and I so move:

That it be provided with the plans and costs for the construction of the soft landscape access over Festival Drive down to the river's edge as part of this project. Further, it be provided with the costs and financial analysis of all the options that were considered to achieve all the objectives of the proposed upgrade.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): In speaking to this report of the Public Works Committee, I want to make it clear from the outset that I, together with all my Labor colleagues, as well as members of the Public Works Committee, recognise that the Adelaide Convention Centre does an excellent job in

providing convention facilities for this State, for interstate visitors and for overseas visitors. Research has indicated that interstate and overseas visitors frequently stay for five days, and that is a significant economic benefit to this State, to our tourism and retail industries and, indeed, we hope, to our wine industry. It gives us a good chance to showcase the talents and skills of this State. So, there is no doubt that we need to support the Adelaide Convention Centre's ability to continue to attract the excellent rate of business that it has attracted during the period of its operation. It is recognised as one of the best 10 convention centres outside of the USA. It was the first purpose built Convention Centre in Australia and it really put Australia on the map—not just Adelaide but Australia—in terms of the convention market.

But, when you are on a good thing others try to get onto it, too. So there have been developments in convention centres in other States and there have also been developments in the nature of convention business. The committee was told that conventions now increasingly require exhibition space for the trade fairs that accompany those conventions. This could be something quite small, as it might be for a pharmaceutical or computing convention. It could also be very large, as it would be for agricultural machinery or the motor trade. So, the fact that we have quite a small exhibition space compared with other States and overseas competitors has meant that our Convention Centre has had to turn away business. That is not something that any South Australian likes to see.

It was quite commendable for the Government to recognise that there was a need for the Convention Centre to be developed. In November last year, the project proponents had the foresight to warn the Public Works Committee about a proposal in this area and to give us a preliminary briefing which focused, in particular, on the need for the exhibition space, the need for improved dining facilities, and the desire to integrate the Convention Centre into the riverbank development and the riverbank master plan which was being talked about at the time.

In November, we were told that Cabinet had approved a budget of \$55 million for the expansion of the Convention Centre. Being a backbencher representing an area of great need, I always think about other ways in which \$55 million might be spent. I recognise the need for the economic development incentive of the extensions to the Convention Centre, but I was hoping that we might be able to get out of it for something under \$55 million, which is, indeed, a lot of money and which would build something like 1 000 Housing Trust homes for those in our community who need cheap accommodation. I was hoping that, when the detailed cost estimates came back to us later, we would find that the \$55 million had been a little high and that, indeed, the proponents were able to come back with a better option. But, I was shocked to find that the option that they came back to us with was one involving \$85 million.

We need an extension to the Convention Centre, but do we need \$85 million worth of extension? That is the question on which the committee would like more information, because we have not been provided with any financial information about the benefits of other options. We were advised that three options—one in the vicinity of \$55 million, one for \$85 million and one for over \$100 million—were presented to Cabinet and that Cabinet chose the \$85 million version. However, we have been provided with no information whatsoever about the financial returns of the other options

and their ability to meet the needs of the expanding convention market.

This is not consistent with what happened, for instance, in the case of Noarlunga Health Services, which we recently considered and which, hopefully, we may be considering further later today. In that case, the project proponents provided us with detailed costings of the three options that were considered—do nothing; the option that was chosen; and a further more elaborate option. We were able to consider, as is required by the Act, whether the option chosen was truly in the public interest. In the case of the Adelaide Convention Centre, when we are talking about a difference of \$30 million (that is, about 400 Housing Trust homes), we were provided with no information as to the economic returns that this State might expect by spending the additional \$30 million. However, we were told that this option was something like the Sydney Opera House. In fact, one witness said:

I have read comparisons with the Sydney Opera House with this project and those comparisons, to a point, are fair in so far as this is potentially and arguably a site which, in terms of the city's existing fabric and structure, is the equivalent of the Sydney Opera House in terms of its prominence as a site and in terms of its importance and how it is integrated with other important civic and cultural buildings on North Terrace and the CBD itself.

I actually see no resemblance between a site that will cover in the railway lines and the prominent position of Bennelong Point. Bennelong Point is a naturally significant landscape which is set against the backdrop of one of the icons of the world, Sydney Harbor Bridge. Comparing our what should be functional Convention Centre with the Sydney Opera House I regard as a flight of fancy and, if this is the material that is being put about by the project proponents, I think we need to get them to come down to earth with a few facts and figures.

The other issue relates to what has been described as the grand stairway, which is a process of covering over Festival Drive and, then over the covering on Festival Drive, building a terrace down to Torrens Lake and calling that the grand staircase in that it is a series of ramps going east-west which one might mount in a grand way, presumably. This is designed to connect the rear of the Convention Centre, as planned, to the riverbank and to provide a means of access between North Terrace and the riverbank. I quite sympathise with the notion of having ready access along more points between North Terrace and the riverbank. It seems like a nice idea. We have a great riverbank, but nice ideas cost money and the price tag on this nice idea is apparently \$10 million. So, on top of the \$30 million we have had in increased costs in relation to the Convention Centre itself, we are now told that, so that the Convention Centre may not end in a balustrade above Festival Drive, it will cost about \$10 million.

Who will bear that cost is another question. In November we were told that it was the Adelaide City Council and that the project proponents were hoping that the council would come up with the \$10 million in order to have the Convention Centre connected to the riverbank. In evidence we heard this month, there is no indication whatsoever that the City Council is even contemplating spending \$10 million on this.

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

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I have an amendment to the motion. May I just have a minute or so, Sir, with your indulgence?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has the call to speak, and she can move the amendment at the end of what she wants to say, if she so desires.

Ms STEVENS: I would like to amend the motion. I will place the amendment on the record and then speak to it. I would like to move that the report and its recommendations be adopted, and then add the words 'in terms of the recommendations'. The recommendations are:

(1) the plans and costs for the construction of the soft landscaped access over Festival Drive down to the river's edge as part of this project; and

(2) it be provided with the costs and financial analysis of all the options to achieve all objectives of the proposed upgrade.

I apologise for the muddle here. I would like to add—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Elizabeth intend to move to amend the motion?

Ms STEVENS: I do, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the honourable member indicate clearly to the House how she wishes to amend that motion?

Ms STEVENS: The current motion is that the report be noted. I would like to add the following:

The committee recommends to the Minister that it be provided with:

(1) the plans and costs for the construction of the soft landscaped access over Festival Drive down to the river's edge as part of this project; and

(2)—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the member for Elizabeth that if she wishes to speak, unless anyone else wishes to speak on this subject, she might like to have someone bring her amendment to the Chair.

Ms STEVENS: That is a very good suggestion, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member may wish to continue her remarks.

Ms STEVENS: Thank you, Sir. That is a very appropriate solution to our dilemma. Some months ago, the other members of the Public Works Committee and I were taken on a tour to look at the proposed works that were to occur in the redevelopment of the Adelaide Convention Centre. Just recently, the committee received some information. I must say that I and other members of the committee were very surprised to hear the announcement of the \$85 million that is now to be spent on the Convention Centre, because we were under the impression (as it was part of the evidence with which the committee was initially provided) that work on the Convention Centre would cost \$55 million. Committee members were quite surprised to hear in the media that the total cost of this project is now \$85 million.

The committee has put together an interim report for the consideration of the House, because it has some concerns about the information that was put to it in the initial phase. The committee is putting up this interim report, with some clear recommendations accompanying it, to ensure that it obtains the full information that it requires in order to do its job properly. I would like to add to the motion after 'noted' the words 'and the recommendations be adopted'. I placed those recommendations on the record earlier for the House to consider.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded?

Ms THOMPSON: Yes, Sir.

Mr MEIER: Sir, I rise on a point of order. I am unclear with respect to exactly what has been moved. I thought that the honourable member moved an amendment earlier; then at the end of her speech it seemed that she moved a much

simpler amendment. Can I have a copy of that amendment in writing, please, so that I know what is before us?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understand that a member is bringing something to the table. So that there is no confusion, the amendment that has been moved is to add the words 'and the recommendations be adopted'.

Mr MEIER: I rise on a further point of order. I wonder whether that is in order, given that it is an interim report. I query whether the recommendations of an interim report can be adopted. I seek clarification with respect to whether such an amendment can be moved.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair is in the hands of the House. The Chair can see no reason why that amendment cannot be moved. The amendment has been moved and seconded. The House will now vote on that amendment. Are there any further speakers?

Mr MEIER: I move:

That this item be adjourned and resumed on motion.

Motion carried.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: NGARKAT CONSERVATION PARK

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

That the twenty-eighth report of the committee, on the Ngarkat Conservation Park fire, be noted.

Earlier this year lightning strikes caused a fire in the Ngarkat Conservation Park. Approximately 92 000 hectares of the park were burnt during the fire. The total cost of fire suppression to the State is estimated to be around \$500 000. In March 1999, the Economic and Finance Committee resolved of its own motion to undertake an inquiry into the recent fire in the Ngarkat Conservation Park in order to address community concerns about how the fire was controlled. The inquiry primarily examined the decision making process in relation to fire suppression. Another essential issue that the committee addressed was whether the firefighting resources in and around the Ngarkat Conservation Park were sufficient enough to provide efficient control of the fire.

The evidence provided to the committee revealed that section 54 of the Country Fires Act 1989 in its current form creates a certain degree of legal uncertainty in relation to who exercises primary control over fire suppression activities on Government reserves. The major recommendation made by the committee is that section 54 of the Country Fires Act 1989 be amended to provide an express statutory power to Country Fire Service officers to assume ultimate control over fire suppression on Government reserves, and the committee looks forward to a positive response to it.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank all people who have participated in the inquiry, including witnesses and those who provided submissions to the committee. I would also like to thank all members of the committee for their contribution and the committee staff who ensured a successful conclusion of this inquiry.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I am pleased that the Economic and Finance Committee has looked into this matter. Of course this is not the first time that a report of a select committee of this Parliament has been handed down into the handling of fires, and specifically fires occurring in national parks. Certainly some concern has been expressed in my constituency and, I believe, in other constituencies, about the way in which firefighting has been handled in

national parks in the past throughout the State. A few years ago a major report was handed down into a major fire in the Flinders Chase National Park on Kangaroo Island and, from memory, 64 recommendations were made.

To my knowledge very few, if any, of those recommendations were adopted. That report was handed down in the days of a Labor Government. As far as I know the recommendations were not adopted by that Government and have not been adopted since. Some of those recommendations were specifically aimed at some modifications to the Country Fires Act and specifically in relation to who should manage fires in, on or even near Government reserves. Ngarkat is largely in my electorate. It is located on the northern boundary of my electorate and I believe some of it extends into the electorate of Hammond.

Following the Ngarkat fire I received many telephone calls at my office as well as my home from concerned CFS personnel who had been involved in that particular fire and, to put it mildly, many were irate at the way the fire was handled; they were irate at the management of the fire; and they were irate at what they believed to be confusion over who should have been handling the management decisions of that fire. They were very concerned that some of those decisions were taken out of local hands and they were also concerned that they were limited in the methods they were able to use in that fire.

Since that time quite a few debriefing sessions have been held both in Adelaide and in the local communities. I certainly attended at least one meeting other than those held in Adelaide. Certainly one meeting was held at Keith and I understand that a similar meeting was held at Lameroo to debrief the community on the fire—a meeting which I, unfortunately, could not attend. It emerged at those meetings that National Parks had a fire management plan which included the firefighting methods that would be used within that park and which apparently was approved prior to the fire season. It was updated late last year.

However, many CFS personnel and the community were unaware of that particular fire management plan and were unaware at the time of the adoption of that plan. They also believed they did not have any input into the adoption and formulation of that plan and that is where much of the angst within the local community arose. The Ngarkat Conservation Park has a long history of fires. In fact, people in that region say that they expect a fire in that park virtually every summer. If one looks at the available maps that show the fire history one can see that that is certainly the case.

My understanding, having spoken to some of the local people who have intimate knowledge of firefighting in that park, is that areas of the park that are burnt during a fire do not sustain a wildfire or a bushfire for a number of seasons (some times as long as 10 years) after a fire because not enough dry material has built up to sustain a fire. However, because of the large extent of the park, over the past 10 or 15 years considerable areas have always been ripe for a wildfire scenario and, indeed, that has happened on many occasions.

One problem which many locals fear and which hampers their ability to control fires in that park is that the park management of the National Parks and Wildlife Service has a policy that does not allow bare earth firebreaks to be constructed around the perimeter of fires. It is believed that disturbing the soil will hinder or upset the environmental situation in the park and that bare earth will allow for erosion and the introduction of weed species, and so on. There are very good reasons for that policy. However, on the other

hand, certainly in the case of the recent fire last summer, the cost of remedial work to bare earth firebreaks that might have been made would have been considerably less than the actual cost of fighting that fire, which lasted a bit over a week, not to mention the environmental cost of the destruction of a huge portion of that park—I believe it was over half of the South Australian part of that park.

One problem I have been able to identify is that middle and lower management of the CFS are unaware of their powers under the CFS Act. The CFS Act stipulates their powers and who should have what powers in the case of a fire in a Government reserve; but it is very wordy, it is convoluted and, because of that, I believe that people, even as high as group officers, are very concerned about their exact powers. Certainly in the case of the Ngarkat fire this year the local group officers, deputy group officers and brigade captains were unaware of their powers.

They were of the opinion that most of the management of the fire would be at the behest of the National Parks and Wildlife people; that they would have no say as to how the fire would be managed. I believe that is one reason why the initial attack on the fire did not occur on the night the fire broke out: it did not occur until the next day. Locals in that area who have fought fires for many years inform me that the best and only way to fight fires in the Ngarkat Park is to fight them at night when there are low wind and low temperature conditions. Firefighters can get close to the fire and physically fight the fire, but during the day, especially if the wind gets up, firefighters cannot get anywhere near the fire.

A firebreak must be built a considerable distance from the fire. That is traditionally done by rolling down the mallee scrub a considerable distance from the fire and you hope that, when it comes up against that rolled area, the fire is moving so slowly that it will not jump it. Of course, the conditions the day after the fire broke out this year were such that the fire turned into a wildfire very quickly and moved many kilometres within a very short period, making any attempt to put out the fire almost impossible. In fact, the fire burnt for more than one week. If practitioners in the CFS were more *au fait* with their powers under the Act and more certain of their position relative to the National Parks and Wildlife managers, their decisions on that first night might have been different.

I believe, therefore, that the recommendations of this committee's report into modifications of section 54 of the CFS Act are very important. I think they will go a long way to overcoming that problem without causing any adverse effects at all. Other things could have been done at Ngarkat, including the stationing of equipment such as rollers and bulldozers near the park during times of bad weather. Another is having available trucks and tractors that have stake-proof tires, so that firefighting can be carried out in a much more effective method. Some of those things came out in the debriefing sessions. I hope that the CFS, along with the National Parks management, will take on board some of those recommendations. I certainly hope that the Government accepts the recommendations of this Economic and Finance Committee report and makes the appropriate changes to the CFS Act.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I move:

That the One hundred and second report of the committee, being the Annual Report 1998, be noted.

This is the Public Works Committee's Annual Report for operation. During the period in question, the committee met on 43 occasions, amounting to a total of 128 formal meeting hours, with evidence taken from 170 witnesses for 21 new references. The committee conducted 17 site inspections. Separately, and in addition to these commitments, I and other members of the committee attended 10 openings for completed works to celebrate what South Australia is now beginning to take for granted and, more particularly, understands is an important part of the work of Government: that is, essential public infrastructure construction. The total value of the work considered by the committee exceeded \$245 million during that reporting period. The committee tabled 18 reports.

In December 1997, the Public Works Committee sought advice from the Auditor-General regarding the role and function of the committee, specifically its relationship and communications with Executive Government. This occurred as a result of both the 1997 Auditor-General's Report and the concerns that members of the committee held that appropriate checks were not occurring or arising from within Government agencies and Cabinet in relation to Public Works Committee projects.

Based on the Auditor-General's advice, and stemming from his report and our inquiries, the committee requested acquittals from Executive Government for every project referred to it. The acquittals process is now successfully in place, and through it the committee receives assurances from the Department of Treasury and Finance on the effect of the proposed public work on the consolidated account or the funds of a statutory authority. It also receives assurances from the Department of Premier and Cabinet on the compliance with established prudential management and other procedural frameworks to provide assurance of procedural regularity within Executive Government. It also receives from the Crown Solicitor an assurance through this acquittals process on the legality of the processes which are to be followed and which have been adopted.

As submissions are now made to Cabinet prior to the Public Works Committee, the committee has a greater level of confidence in the content of the material that members receive, and we have noted the improved quality of submissions being presented to us. As an aside, I say to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that on one occasion we had a submission presented to us which was incomprehensible, in that the grammar, spelling and punctuation were so appalling that it was not possible for us to understand what was really being proposed.

The committee also became concerned about the quality and extent of the financial information included in agencies' submissions provided to both Cabinet and the committee which the committee, in order to meet its obligations under section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act, required:

... to inquire into and report on any public work referred to it by or under this Act, including the present and prospective public value of the work and the recurrent or whole of life costs associated with the work, including the costs arising out of the financial arrangements that might be involved.

The committee's concerns related specifically to the provision of calculations of the net present value, the internal rate of return and/or the cost benefit ratio. Members will recall that I have explained previously how a net present value can be calculated. It is simply to take the annual costs for each year of the life of the project, the building or whatever it is, and the annual income to be derived over and above what would otherwise be derived from the construction of the work that is proposed; deduct the one from the other; and, if it is a deficit or a surplus, to shift that deficit or surplus on an annual basis for the life of the project to the present by discounting the amount involved using a stated discount rate, such that, if inflation for instance means that \$100 today will not buy as much as \$100 in a year's time, then the amount by which that \$100 in a year's time fails to buy what it can today is, in percentage terms, the discount rate. So, if you would require \$103 in a year's time to get what you can get for \$100 today, the discount rate is 3 per cent, because it is \$3 more than the \$100 required today.

In two years and three years and so on, you can discount money from future streams of revenue or deficit to the present time, sum the total, and express it over the cost of the project and multiply that by 100 over one and you will have the internal rate of return. The cost benefit ratio, showing by how much additional revenue or deficit is generated as a consequence of this investment, will be put over the cost. If the ratio is negative or less than one, you are losing money. If it is more than one, it will be an indication that it is profitable and that you are making economic growth.

There are some initial difficulties in obtaining such information from agencies, but the provision and quality of information has improved throughout the year and we know that more and more factors are now being considered by agencies in making those assessments. I have taken this trouble, and the committee has been concerned to take the trouble, because it and all members of it understand that the National Consumer and Competition Commission requires that to be part of what Governments do in future if we as a State are to get our fair share of grant moneys.

Only this day did we hear that Queensland has lost \$15 million as a consequence of failing to go through that process. The Federal Government, through its grants to the States, has said, 'Queensland, you built a dam and you did not do a prudential analysis which demonstrated what the best cost option for the location and construction cost of the dam were; you did not examine what the impact of it would be on the environment as well as your economy and, in consequence, we are going to dock you \$15 million a year because of your imprudent and (if you like) inadequate analysis of the way you are investing the money.'

Having made that explanation, I continue to point out the other matters that are contained in the report. The committee's schedule has been disrupted due to agencies allowing inadequate lead time prior to the committee hearings. This has also been attributed to Cabinet delays when agencies have made an explanation but, despite continued requests from the committee for Cabinet direction regarding project prioritisation, complete details have not been provided. However, I personally thank the Deputy Premier for his attempt to get agencies to understand the necessity for Government to give some priority to a list coming to the committee of which projects it wants considered and in what timely manner.

The committee has been placed under considerable pressure by Ministers and agencies to facilitate urgent last

minute hearings of projects, and this has often resulted in members and staff having to reexamine the priorities on the list of hearings and reschedule or rearrange the other parliamentary duties and commitments which members of the committee have, in order to accommodate the committee's business at the whim of Ministers and their agencies. It is important that the committee has sufficient time, particularly for major and/or contentious projects, properly to evaluate all references that it considers and that it is able to examine thoroughly all available evidence that is offered by the proposing agency, the major stakeholders and members of the public prior to deliberating on that evidence before making recommendations about the project to the Parliament.

The committee has become very disturbed by the differing views circulating between itself and Government agencies, particularly Crown Law, regarding the criteria which determine whether or not a project is, in law, a public work and therefore which works must be heard by the committee. The committee believes that ambiguities have led to some projects not being referred to it, despite the intention of the Parliamentary Committees Act that they should be. The ambiguities relate to land ownership and project value, and the committee is now recommending changes to the Parliamentary Committees Act that will overcome uncertainty with the present definitions.

In August 1996, the committee conducted its inquiry, for instance, into Stage I of the works for the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium. When reporting to Parliament, the committee was told nothing which would have enabled it to come to any other conclusion than that this was the only stage of the development. We were told that this work, that is, Stage I as it became known later, would be sufficient for Adelaide to secure some of the matches of the 2000 Olympic soccer competition. However, the 1997-98 budget papers indicated that additional works were planned for the site. Consequently, the committee then asked the agency to 'please explain', resulting in its commencing its inquiry into Stage II on 4 March last year.

The committee encountered many obstacles during the Stage I inquiry, and this frustration, we sadly discovered, continued throughout Stage II, particularly in relation to obtaining evidence and/or the truth. Both the Public Works Committee and the House were given misleading and contradictory information in evidence and debate on this matter. This relates particularly to the cost of temporary and permanent seating, as well as to the provision of various types of documentary evidence to the committee. A huge quantity of peripherally or almost totally irrelevant papers was provided by the Minister at the time for what real purpose is still not clear, yet any historian could be forgiven for thinking that the intention was mischievous or a snow job.

These issues resulted in the committee's being unable to recommend that Stage II works proceed. Such a concluding recommendation to a project has never before been made. During the inquiry into the second stage of the development, the Belarusian Church advised that it had serious concerns about the effects of Stage II on its worship, sacraments, ceremonies and social activities conducted at the church. These concerns caused the committee to recommend, in its interim report to the Parliament, that the Minister consider an option for complete relocation of the Belarusian Church.

The committee is pleased to report that this recommendation was adopted and a new suitable location was found. However, tenure and ownership issues relating to the new site

remain unresolved, although the committee has been assured that these matters will be addressed in the near future.

Since 1995 the Public Works Standing Committee has been conducting inquiries into the Glenelg/West Beach development and its associated works. The West Beach boat launching facility was the second stage of the development and arose as a result of the Holdfast Shores development proposal. During the inquiry the committee received evidence from witnesses that strongly disputed and challenged evidence tendered regarding the environmental, social and safety aspects of the proposal. These concerns were particularly focused on sand management and bypassing strategies.

The committee concluded that there is some uncertainty surrounding sand management aspects. However, it noted that the Government has undertaken to accept the associated uncertainties and risks and thereby the responsibility for administering sand management programs and general maintenance. On this basis, the committee endorsed it.

The Treasurer asked the committee to consider urgently a proposal to replace and strengthen the coal dumping bridge at Leigh Creek. As a result of evidence that it received, the committee recommended that the House refer the committee's concerns regarding possible adverse impacts of past and present coal mining operations on the health of workers and residents of Leigh Creek and environs to the Parliamentary Occupational Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Committee and that the House refer to the Environment, Resources and Development Committee the matter of possible commercial benefits from mining or not mining oil shale at Leigh Creek. On 3 March the House of Assembly passed a resolution adopting those recommendations.

The Public Works Committee commenced its inquiry into the Strathmont Aged Care Facility. The proposed works include the construction of a 50 place aged care facility for people who are intellectually disabled on a greenfield site at Northfield at an estimated cost of \$4.35 million. During the inquiry, the committee became concerned at the need for such services to comply with Commonwealth and State disability legislation and the fact that some residents of the proposed facility will not be elderly and that use will not be made of other generic community services such as nursing homes, aged care and community accommodation. Given that these issues fell outside the expertise of the committee, it was unanimously resolved to engage consultants to thoroughly evaluate the proposal.

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

Ms THOMPSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: NOARLUNGA HEALTH SERVICES

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I move:

That the one hundred and first report of the committee, on the Noarlunga Health Services—Emergency Services Redevelopment, be noted.

The Noarlunga Health Services—Emergency Services Redevelopment is the subject of this report. The Noarlunga Health Services commenced operation in 1985 as an integrated local community health and hospital service. It was designed to provide emergency and primary care services 24 hours a day, seven days week to an expanding outer southern metropolitan area and, importantly, to assist in alleviating the high workload of the emergency department at the Flinders

Medical Centre. The Department of Human Services proposes to redevelop the emergency department and emergency short stay facilities at the Noarlunga Health Centre. The redevelopment is planned to meet the needs of the community for the next 10 years in terms of satisfying the growing demand and increase in acuity of emergency patients as well as minimising referral or transfer of patients to other hospitals.

The estimated cost of the proposed works is \$6.9 million. The committee is told that functions of the emergency department will include: reception; triage (excluding elective admissions) and assessment; treatment of minor casualties; treatment of medical and surgical emergencies; and psychiatric emergencies. The emergency department will also secure and manage disaster patients as part of its role under the regional disaster plan for the southern region. In addition to standard treatment areas, it will incorporate specifically designed areas for: management of paediatric patients; management of trauma patients; management of psychiatric patients; management of patients subject to sexual and other abuse and assault; extended observation and management of patients; undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and training; and telemedicine. Additional facilities will be provided to facilitate teaching, administration and staff accommodation, including also in-house radiology.

On 9 June a delegation of the Public Works Committee conducted an inspection of the Noarlunga Health Centre complex. Members were able to see at first-hand the current, outdated design and layout of the emergency services section of that complex in attempting to deliver what was expected by the current population and then the limiting nature of those existing facilities. More specifically, members looked at the main entrance, the admission area, the waiting room, the main emergency casualty treatment area (consisting of six cubicles), the radiology services and the location of the mental health ward (the Marion ward). The committee was shown the location of the proposed redevelopment and expansion of emergency services which will be upgraded by way of an extension to the existing emergency services department incorporating the current ambulance and casualty entrances and part of the northern public car park. Members also inspected the on-site private hospital accommodation and were able to compare it to the accommodation being offered by the existing public hospital.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The time for consideration of Standing Committee reports has expired.

STATUTES AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (JUSTICE PORTFOLIO) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 8 July. Page 1830.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I am happy to respond on this Bill for the Opposition. I have my speech notes on a computer, so they cannot be readily carried away. The Opposition has studied this omnibus Bill most carefully and finds no fault with it—with one exception. It seems to me to make 13 changes worthy of comment. First, it compels accused in criminal matters to attend all hearings, including directions hearings, unless excused. Some accused have not been attending directions hearings, and it is thought that the Bail Act is not sufficiently specific about the accused being required to attend procedural hearings.

Secondly, it was feared that the ban on reporting hearings of charges against young offenders may not apply if the charges were heard in a higher court. The problem has not arisen in practice, but it is as well to eliminate the possibility of undesirable reporting of the hearing of youth charges. A court would still have authority to make an exception and allow reporting as is sometimes but rarely done in the Youth Court.

Thirdly, the Government continues its policy of gradually removing divisional penalties from our statute book and replacing them with nominated cash sums. This policy is silly, and the Labor Party will upon forming a Government restore divisional penalties. Just how silly the policy of fixed sums is was revealed by the blunder of last week regarding the Road Traffic Act. In that case, the maximum expiation fee that can be charged by the Government is \$300, but the Department of Transport, under the Road Traffic Act, sought to increase the expiation fee for driving more than 30 km/h over whatever was the speed limit to \$306, in line with the consumer price index. This took it beyond the fixed sum. If it had been expressed as a divisional penalty, namely, a division 6 expiation fee, the maximum penalty, there would not have been a problem.

Now, because the nominated sum exceeds the maximum for an expiation fee, about 2 500 traffic infringement notices for the quite serious offence of exceeding the speed limit by more than 30 km/h have to be handed back. It is not a matter of just reading it down to a \$300 fine: it is a matter of handing it back. Divisional penalties would have avoided that problem. The Government seems to assume that we will not have substantial inflation any more and that therefore it is okay to fix nominated sums in statutes. I think the Government is being rather optimistic. Economic conditions may change, and divisional penalties should always be there in the Acts Interpretation Act. They are easy to adjust: by changing one Act one can increase the monetary amounts within each division while maintaining in statutes the relative importance of a penalty by allocating it a division.

The fourth change is one to the Crimes at Sea Act. This was a schedule to give effect to a cooperative scheme among the Commonwealth, States and Territories on crimes at sea. The schedule provided that the Governor may make regulations under the scheme. That should have read 'Governor-General': accordingly, this amendment is being made. Under this Bill the Government wants to change the name of a number of public servants whose vocation is looking after prisoners, parolees or young offenders, and it wants to give them all the one name, which I understand is 'community corrections officers'. We have no particular difficulty with the Government doing that.

Another change which drew my interest involved changing the way the District Court Master's remuneration is calculated. At the moment, it is linked under the District Court Act to the salary of the magistrate in charge; but for some reason the Government wants to unhook the District Court Master's remuneration and have it determined by the Remuneration Tribunal. Again, the Opposition has no difficulty with that.

A seventh change regards costs being awarded in District Court cases against people who are not a party to the action. But it sometimes happens that a solicitor or third party is responsible for a case not proceeding as it should for time wasting and for excessive costs. I think it is appropriate that the District Court ought to be able to award costs against that non party if the non party is responsible for the mistakes and

the excess litigation. This puts the matter beyond doubt. The Supreme Court can already do it, but there is I understand a case which holds that the District Court cannot do this. It is also important to change the Act to make sure that these costs can be awarded against a non party at a time other than at the conclusion of proceedings. So, those words 'at the conclusion of proceedings' will be omitted from the Act.

Many of us are aware of the small claims jurisdiction in South Australia, whereby minor civil claims of less than \$5 000 can be heard by informal procedure—lawyers not welcome—in the small claims jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court. It has come to the Attorney's attention that a number of parties to actions having a total value of more than \$5 000 would also like to avail themselves of this small claims procedure. This amendment to the Magistrates Court Act allows those parties to agree to have their claim heard in this way. The Opposition supports that change.

Under the new arrangement for enforcement of fines, there is provision for a debtor to have his driving licence suspended for 60 days. This is an alternative to imprisoning the person who has not paid his or her fine. It often happens in these cases that the person is suspended for driving for 60 days and then gets into trouble again and has to be suspended for a further 60 days. This amendment allows a second and subsequent suspension from driving for 60 days, and in all cases it will be served concurrently rather than successively. Perhaps the Minister could explain during Committee why this is so. I would have thought that justice might require that, at the end of the first 60 days, the other 60 days commences. However, as with sentencing generally, the Government seems to favour concurrent penalties.

Another aspect of the newly inaugurated system of enforcing fines is that there is a need for an authorised officer to be able to investigate the financial position of the debtor. Obviously the Government feels that this was not made sufficiently clear in the parent legislation, and this amendment will authorise the authorised officer to investigate the financial position of the debtor. An eleventh change is to the general warrant given to police to say that the warrant should be dated and that it is effective from the date on the warrant. A twelfth change relates to prosecution procedure. Quite properly, the prosecution is expected to file and to serve on the defence all documents in the possession of the prosecution on which it will rely as tending to establish guilt in a criminal trial. In some trials, particularly fraud trials or white collar crime trials, the number of documents the prosecution has tending to establish guilt is simply enormous and mind boggling. Not all of them are strictly relevant. There are different grades of relevance, I suppose. The Government argues that it is a particularly onerous burden on the police and prosecution authorities to file all these documents and to give a copy of all of them to the defence.

They will now be divided into two kinds of prosecution documents: those of primary importance, which will still be filed and a copy given to the defence; and then a list of all other documents not of primary importance, on which the prosecution may potentially rely, and a description of what their significance may be. In that case, the defence can apply for copies of those documents if it so wishes. According to the Government this is merely bringing the law into accordance with current practice. If one goes back to 1979, one finds that the Labor Government at that time, with Chris Sumner as Attorney-General, brought in the Appeal Costs Fund Act, which has never been proclaimed. It indemnified parties to an appeal who had spent a lot of money on the

appeal by reason of an error of law by the tribunal of first instance, or where proceedings had been aborted due to the death, illness or retirement of the trial judge, or where in the criminal proceedings it was the Crown's fault that the trial aborted. The idea was to compensate those people who were on appeal for these unfortunate occurrences which incurred them legal costs.

The Bill was never proclaimed. Liberal and Labor Governments since then have never felt that the budgetary situation was so good that we could afford this kind of expenditure—and onerous expenditure it would have been. The Attorney makes the good point that people who need taxpayers' money for their legal aid are those who do not have the money to defend themselves in the first place; we ought to be providing them with lawyers to defend themselves in their criminal trials before we provide taxpayers' money to people who have had the money to go on appeal.

With those remarks, the Opposition supports the Bill, with the one exception of the further removal of divisional penalties. We will not divide on that question, but we put the Government and in particular the Public Service on notice that division penalties will have a glorious return under a Rann Labor Government.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I thank the member for Spence for his contribution. To answer his question on the disqualification running concurrently, I am advised that, if someone has a three-month disqualification, if they are 60 days into that disqualification and they fine default, this allows the officer to issue a 60-day disqualification which runs from the day it is issued, which is obviously with 30 days left. Therefore, for some of the 30 days, it runs concurrently with the three-month disqualification. This does not, indeed, amend the substance of the fine enforcement legislation.

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

MINING (PRIVATE MINES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 8 July. Page 1826.)

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I strongly advise all members of Parliament to make sure that they do remove their notes at the end of the day, given that there seems to be some evidence of the purloining of people's notes which has never been done in this Parliament and which shows that the member opposite is somewhat grubby.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to adhere to the debate before the Chair.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Anyway, we knew that. On the issue of mining, I support these changes—and so does my Party. I think it is timely in the sense that, when we think back to 1971, my friend Frank Kneebone was the Minister of Lands, and Frank, at that stage, as a Minister of the Dunstan Government, was very keen to move to clean up obsolete requirements and provisions that had been around since the 1920s and 1930s. He also wanted to modernise the Act in terms of taking into account the requirements for exploration and mining and to encourage those activities.

Members should realise that before 1889 land grants carried with them ownership of minerals on or under the land. Since that date, land grants have reserved ownership of minerals to the Crown. In 1971, there was an attempt to clean

up provisions that were still outstanding. However, I would like to refer to some things that came up in the debate because (and I think the Minister would agree with me) this is all about section 19 of Frank Kneebone's Act. In the Legislative Council on 13 October 1971, Frank Kneebone said:

The proposed amendments now presented recognise the right of those people who have inherited or acquired freehold land containing mineral ownership to receive the equivalent of royalty from minerals obtained from such land, but intend that in all other respects such land should revert to the status of freehold mineral land. There is, however, another important qualification. Under the existing Act, stone, sand, gravel, or shell are exempt from the operation of the Act on private land, whereas on mineral land, including freehold mineral land, these materials can be acquired by pegging. Because the mining of these relatively low value materials can cause hardship to land owners out of proportion to the value of the materials, it is proposed under the present Bill that on freehold land only the owner of the land can peg these materials. What we saw then was essentially a recognition of the rights of private mine owners, albeit part of a push to recognise that minerals were the property of the Crown.

Back in 1971, the Mining Act accordingly recognised two forms of mineral ownership. Land, the title to which includes mineral rights, is referred to as private land. Clause 19 provided:

... for the declaration of a private mine in the case of a mining operation currently operating (that is, established within two years), on land where the mineral rights are at present privately owned.

Subsection (7) provided that:

... royalty will be payable in perpetuity to the present owners of the mineral rights on minerals recovered from any mine established under the Act.

What we are doing today, with the Opposition's strong support (and I commend the Minister; I believe this is long overdue) is simply bringing it into, hopefully, a new century where we recognise that minerals are indeed the property of the Crown, but we also place upon private mining operators the same kinds of conditions that we expect from the mining companies. The fact is that the present Act is now some decades out of date. The provisions that the Minister is putting forward will introduce wider environmental controls than those afforded by the Environment Protection Act 1993 but will not limit or derogate from the powers of the EPA Act.

The 1971 Act came into force in July 1972 and it did resume to the Crown ownership of all minerals. However, there were still anomalies which were catered for under section 19 of the Act. What we are doing today is making sure, for instance, that those anomalies relating to the royalties and production returns are dealt with. Also, in relation to those operational anomalies, these amendments require that any operator at a private mine must operate according to the mine's operation plan, which means that such a plan can involve the rehabilitation of a mining site after mining. It imposes upon private mine owners a duty of care to avoid undue damage to the environment and gives legislative powers for inspectors legally to enter a private mine in order to make their inspections and to ensure that the Act is being complied with.

All these changes make eminent sense. I congratulate the department and the Minister, and I am very pleased to give the Bill the Opposition's support and allow it to proceed to the third reading without debate in Committee.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I support this Bill. I understand that the existing legislation does not allow inspectors of mines and authorised officers legal access to private mines for inspections or surveys and that administrative difficulties

were regularly experienced as the operations of such mines were difficult to regulate or control under the Mining Act 1971. I understand also that a mine operations plan is to be introduced under this new legislation and that this will involve strict requirements for a particular site to be environmentally rehabilitated after mining is completed. No member in this House could disagree with that. It is high time that the issue was addressed, and I certainly appreciate the mining industry's support and cooperation in that matter.

The Bill will also place an obligation on the mine operator to avoid undue damage to the environment while mining and will also allow the mines inspectors access to private mines to carry out appropriate regulatory checks, etc. This leads me to reflect on the situation with which we were faced several years ago at the Sellicks Hill Quarry Cave and when we saw a high level of controversy over the issue. As you, Sir, know, I was Parliamentary Secretary of Mines and Energy and I was also a member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee, of which I am currently Chairman. In 1995, I was a member of the committee which investigated this matter and reported to the Parliament.

To refresh members' memories, the issue was basically that a quarrying company wanted to expand its operation and to blow up or, to be technically correct, implode a cave that arguably had significant value to the State. The ERD Committee tabled in the Parliament a 152 page report which contained 38 points of recommendation. The implosion, incidentally, occurred the night before the 1993 State election, which in itself was rather unusual. The cave was all but destroyed—or so the paperwork tells us—but the question is: was it? Part of the findings and recommendations of the committee on the issue was that inadequate attention was paid to this site before the implosion. I want to quote from the report which contains the 38 recommendations. It is a very detailed report which members ought to read. Recommendation 4 states:

The committee recommends that section 34(6) of the Mining Act be amended to permit conditions which will protect caves and other items of potential environmental or heritage significance.

Further, the report states:

The committee endorses the general approach to the reporting of future incidents contained in the tenement incident procedures.

The ERD report about the Sellicks Hill Quarry Cave raised many issues, some politically and practically difficult. I will be interested to hear what the Minister has to say about this problem and whether this Act will address in any way at all the problems raised by the report, especially in relation to the protection of caves and other items of potential environmental or heritage value.

Further, the Mining Act envisaged that most of the State's mineral resources would be exploited by those holding various forms of mining tenements granted under the Act. However, where a landowner could demonstrate that the mining operations had commenced or were being planned at the time of the commencement of the Act, a private mine could be granted exempting the holders of this type of tenement from most of the provisions of the Act. So, certainly, all those that were mining at the time were granted private mine status. Over 350 private mines were established, with little or no control over their operation. As members can see, there were huge holes in this legislation. But this Bill was passed, and the subsequent regulations should introduce much broader controls. I appreciate the comments from the Leader

a few moments ago about what the Government did in 1971 in relation to introducing this Bill.

I have been speaking to mining industry leaders about this matter, particularly Mr Bob Goreing of the Chamber of Mines and Energy. The industry has given its support to this legislation. It believes that it has made considerable concessions as an industry in supporting this Bill, and it feels that this should deliver a strong message to the broader community that it does have environmental issues at the top of its agenda. The industry believes that it has taken a mature approach to this issue, particularly when it proposes to involve an open, public consultation process for the private mines in the future.

The mining industry, in its support of this Bill, is showing a more modern and appropriate style of environmental regulation, given the importance of this global issue. Some parts of the industry may find it difficult to come to terms with, but the industry as a whole is maturing in its overall approach to these issues and I certainly welcome that.

The industry is also driving initiatives to implement partial self-regulation. It proposes to form a set of guidelines that directly relate to the new mine operations plan. The industry feels that this Bill and the hard work done to formulate it is a glimpse of what lies ahead in the future.

I support this Bill—not necessarily to place tighter controls on one of our State's most profitable and most important industries, but because of its mature approach to issues that it faces and to correct the anomalies that obviously exist in the present legislation. The mining industry is shrugging off its perceived mantle of an environmental vandal. Modern mines and modern miners are environmentally aware and responsible. They are carrying on with world's best practice and deserve a higher profile when discussing their industry in relation to their place in our economy. In closing, I remind the House that everything is either grown or mined.

Ms BREUER (Giles): I want to talk about Whyalla, which has, of course, had a long association with the mining industry in this State. In fact, Whyalla was developed because of the iron ore deposits at Iron Knob, some 50 kilometres away from Whyalla. Whyalla started off as Hummocky Hill, which was a port for the ore that was taken from Iron Knob. Our steel industry was built on the deposits that were so close to Whyalla, with the low cost of transporting those deposits down to Whyalla and turning them into steel, and we are very proud of our long history in that regard. Our future depends on mining that iron ore. We in Whyalla have been given assurances by BHP that we have some 15 years left—or 14 years at this stage; this assurance was given to us about a year ago. While we are confident that we will still exist in 15 years, it is really not a terribly long time frame for us to look at, and other factors may be involved.

Whyalla's future is very much a concern of mine. The situation in Whyalla is very grim at present, and I certainly hope that we can do something about our situation so that we are not totally reliant on the steel industry. Of course, Whyalla has been there and iron ore has been mined from Iron Knob and the Middleback Ranges since the early 1900s, and many millions of dollars have gone into general revenue in this State because of the royalties from that iron ore body. I was very interested to hear the Minister for Employment today talk about how much the Government has done in regions. I actually truly believe that this Government is interested in helping our regions, but perhaps it does not have

the money available or it does not quite know how to assist in those regions.

An honourable member: A very poor Minister for Regional Development!

Ms BREUER: I am certainly aware that the Deputy Premier understands the situation out there in regional South Australia. Recently I was interested to see that the Onkaparinga City Council was upset by the fact that Mobil was looking to reduce the money that it pays to its council from something like \$1 million to about \$200 000 a year. The council has requested the State Government to look at compensating it for the reduction in the rates that it was receiving from Port Stanvac. This was of great interest to me, because BHP in Whyalla has never paid rates to the Whyalla City Council. Through its Indenture Act, it has never had to pay rates to Whyalla Council and it, in fact, pays an *ex gratia* payment of some \$90 000 a year. When one compares the amount of money that the Onkaparinga Council has been receiving from Port Stanvac (and it is upset because it is dropping down to \$200 000) with the \$90 000 that Whyalla receives from BHP, certainly, I think we have something to complain about. This is not a dig at BHP particularly, because this is the agreement and unless I am forced to pay a lot more money I will not pay extra rates or extra taxes or anything else. So, this is not a go at BHP.

I am requesting the State Government to look at the royalties that are received from the ore body in the Middle-back Ranges. As I said, over the years it has received millions of dollars in royalties from there. I ask whether we look at some way in which some of that money can be invested back into our community, back into our region, and perhaps back into the regional areas of South Australia. We need all the help we can get in Whyalla. The City Council needs all the money it can get: there has been a reduction in population in Whyalla, and our infrastructure is old. We need money to attract new industries. We cannot get the power station there; we seem to have given up on that. The Premier will not allow us to build the power station in Whyalla. There are not a lot of guarantees that BHP will build a power station there, which would service BHP in Whyalla and Western Mining. Our hopes are pretty much dashed there. I will not stop fighting; I will still keep plugging for a power station in Whyalla. I am also interested in looking at the establishment of the ship breaking business in Whyalla. If we could get some of our money back from the State Government that we truly believe we are entitled to, it would assist in this area.

The Government is doing a lot. The Federal Government hosted its regional conference in Whyalla last week, and another conference is planned for next year. They are looking at investing money in these areas, but it is pin money. When we talk about attracting industry to regional areas and development for regional areas, we need big sums of money. Perhaps members can look at the royalties that have come out of our area—and it is not just Whyalla that is in this situation; my electorate has a huge number of mining areas. If that money could be reinvested into regional South Australia, perhaps we would stop having this problem of the drift to the city of our population.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development): I thank members for their comments with respect to the Bill. The Leader of the Opposition was extraordinarily supportive—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: He was very good and very generous in his comments. I also thank the member for Schubert and the member for Giles for taking the opportunity to make some comments about Whyalla during the debate with respect to the Mining Bill.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have not totally given up on the power station at Whyalla. I think that it has always been an option, and the option is still there if someone wants to build it.

I return to the Bill. There has been an enormous amount of consultation over a long time on what has been seen as a problem area, and I think it is fantastic that we have reached the stage where the Bill was able to come to this House without its being hotly disputed and with industry and public support for what has come out of it. I certainly thank those people within the department and the industry for the way in which they have been able to band together and work through what have been some extraordinarily difficult problems. When I first took this portfolio, it was flagged to me as one that would not be easy, and it is only through an extraordinary amount of work done by many people that we have reached the stage that we have today where this legislation can go through with agreement.

I will not reiterate the intention of the amendments, as that is dealt with in the second reading explanation, but certainly the Bill is about public confidence in private mining operations and how we achieve environmental outcomes without heavy-handed bureaucracy. I thank the Opposition for its support, and I thank also the industry for its cooperation in this regard, as well as our department for its assistance in producing a Bill that allows us to proceed with private mines in a way that meets community standards, which is expected in this day and age. I thank everyone for their support.

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

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Ms KEY (Hanson): I have received correspondence from the Adelaide Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, which discusses a number of matters in the workplace. The submission's introduction talks about the commission's involvement and concern in areas relating to work and workers. I am very pleased to note that the Adelaide Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission is headed by the Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, Most Reverend Leonard A. Faulkner, DD, who also happens to be a constituent of Hanson—and a very good constituent.

The commission consists of members with expertise and experience in a number of fields, including economics, politics, education, law, Aboriginal affairs, theology, moral and political philosophy and third world development. Its task is to create awareness within the church and the wider community. The scriptures call on every person to act justly towards each other and calls on every Christian to act in the service of the poor and disadvantaged and of all who suffer injustice. Mr Speaker, you would know that the Catholic Church has always placed great stress on questions of work as the key to building a just society.

The submission states that this is why the teachings about work and the rights and duties of workers have been central

to the church's teachings about social justice. The church has continued to call attention to the dignity and rights of workers and to raise its voice in situations where dignity and rights have been violated. Over a century ago, the dignity of human labour was affirmed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*—a statement prompted by a long period of worker exploitation arising from the Industrial Revolution. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Pope Pius XI emphasised the central place of work in society and the need for the spirit of justice and charity to rebuild the social order.

In the 1960s the Second Vatican Council developed on these earlier views, commenting on the individual and collective rights and responsibilities and the need for human dignity in the workplace. In 1991 Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *On Human Work* emphasised the priority of labour over capital—the primacy of people over things. In the production process, capital is only a collection of things, he stressed, whereas workers are persons and the subject of work. In 1991 Pope John Paul II reiterated the church's commitment to social justice, emphasising the need to change unjust actions, structures and systems. He noted the important role played by the workers' movement.

The submission further talks about a number of important issues relating to the industrial arena and refers to the impact on trade unions, issues relating to the workplace and the work of trade unionists, for example, restricted right of entry to workplaces. The submission refers to the allowable matters debate which relates to what should or should not be included in awards—a debate that is occurring at both a Federal and State level. The submission talks about unequal representation and mediation, which is something that seems to have recently emerged in the industrial relations agenda in terms of how disputes can be settled.

This document also talks about payroll deductions and asks why payroll deductions for trade union membership are treated differently from payroll deductions for perhaps health benefits or other subscriptions that workers may pay. The issue of the representation of non-union workers is also discussed, as well as the impact on working conditions and employee/employer relationships. A number of quotes are included concerning the termination of wages, those quotes having been supported by various Popes over time. The document also highlights examples of workplace agreements—another issue that is currently being debated at both a national and State level.

The document discusses public holidays, relief for unfair dismissals and issues relating to people losing their jobs unfairly or harshly or being forced to resign. It also discusses the diminution of the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission—another current issue. The submission then talks about what the Catholic Church and the commission consider to be important principles in the workplace. Noting my time constraints, I will quote a couple of passages from the document that I believe would be of interest to the Chamber. I also take this opportunity to compliment the commission for having obvious insight into the plight of many workers, not only in South Australia but on a national and international level.

On the matter of the impact of trade unions, the submission states:

The church's social teachings stress the basic right of workers to form unions to represent their views, to protect their interests and to secure their rights. From the church's perspective, unions should also be seen as 'places' where workers can express themselves, as well as discuss and debate how they can better participate in decisions at

work and in society. The fathers of the Second Vatican Council were clear on this point:

Among the basic rights of the person must be counted the right of freely founding labour unions. These unions should really represent the workers and contribute to the proper arrangement of economic life. Another right is that of taking part freely in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisal. (Vatican Council II, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in The Modern World*, 1965, n. 68).

The submission makes some very interesting comments with regard to public holidays. The point has been made a number of times that public holidays originate from the observance of holy days. I know that when I spoke to my constituent, the Most Reverend Leonard Faulkner, he was quite pleased that someone in the Labor movement knew the origin of public holidays. The submission further states:

The church has consistently emphasised that workers have the right to give their bodies, minds and souls a decent rest. Workers should not be forced to do too much overtime work and are entitled to a weekly day of rest. There should be sufficient public holidays to allow for religious observance and for workers to spend time with their families and communities.

The Catholic Church does not support a holiday substitution agreement. The church indicates that the types of agreements where employees agree to work on a public holiday with that period of time counting as ordinary hours but taking time off on some other day is not an appropriate way of dealing with this issue. They say that, in other words, it is a provision which would authorise employees to work on public holidays at ordinary time rates of pay only in exchange for time off in lieu. This may result in workers being required to work at times otherwise set aside for religious observance and time with family and community. This comment really echoes the point I have made a number of times in this House and also in the media about the significance of losing public holidays.

The Opposition believes that public holidays are important not only to observe particular religious activities and to commemorate different celebrations in the South Australian community but also because they are a recognition that people do need time off to spend with their family or to attend to community or religious commitments. This document supports the fact that there needs to be a clear definition between working time and family and home time. If we do not do that, workers will be expected to be on call at any hour 365 days a year. There is a real need to make sure that we have that differentiation.

In closing, I compliment the Peace and Justice Commission and thank the Catholic Church in South Australia for showing such insight into industrial relations activities.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): Earlier today I had the opportunity to highlight two petitions that I presented to this House, one regarding the Moonta Police Station and the other regarding access to the Wallaroo jetty. Time constraints meant that I was unable to detail everything I wanted to on those two issues. Therefore, I return to the petition signed by 992 people expressing concern that the two full-time officers at the Moonta Police Station have not been there in their entirety since February this year.

The Moonta Neighbourhood Watch Group would be one of the most active neighbourhood watch groups that I have in the electorate and probably one of the most active in rural South Australia, if not in metropolitan Adelaide as well. People there are working very much as a group and they are very concerned with the safety of their community. The police have been of great assistance to them in that respect, so it is extremely disturbing that they have had only one

police officer for most of the time this year. The worst thing is that the other police officer has also had to take some time off due to sick leave, so Moonta had no permanent police presence for some time.

This meant that Moonta had to be looked after by the Kadina Police Station. Kadina is a major centre and certainly its patrol cars therefore were also deployed into the Moonta area. That might sound satisfactory, but when Kadina police are expected to cover the area from east of Paskeville through to Wallaroo, south halfway to Maitland and north to include Port Broughton, it is very difficult for them to give adequate time to any one particular place.

Some years ago I pushed very hard for a police station to be established at Wallaroo. That has not occurred and I am very disappointed about that. I realise that budgetary constraints are such that it is not possible at present, but I will not let up on seeking to have that established. I have been informed that policing can be more efficient by having mobile patrols, that they can move fast and attend at different areas, but in relation to Wallaroo, for example, when quite a lot of the misbehaviour occurs, it is reported to the police but, by the time a patrol car has arrived, the persons responsible are well and truly out of the area. I know that in the case of Moonta similar occurrences have occurred where trouble detected by locals has been reported to the police and, when local police have not been available, the distance between Kadina and Moonta is too great for the police to get there in time.

I therefore hope that the situation at Moonta can be resolved as soon as possible. I mentioned earlier today that one of the problems is that the appeals system is still working under the old Act, and apparently appeals can take in excess of a year, even up to two years, to be sorted out. This Government introduced a new Act at the end of last year. It has just been promulgated and any appeals under the new Act should be sorted out within 28 days, which is a vast improvement. It is a pity that this does not apply to Moonta at present.

I move now to the situation of the Wallaroo wharf and the seeking of guaranteed access in the event of the sale of the Wallaroo wharf by the South Australian Ports Corporation. I have had considerable discussion on this matter with those who are overseeing the sale process. Whilst they acknowledge my concerns, the concerns of council, the concerns of the traders and, I can say with all honesty now, those of some 3 299 persons who signed this petition—a very significant number of people—it is one thing to have concern for an item but it is quite another to give a guarantee that public access is assured.

I believe it would not be difficult to write into any sale contract a guarantee of public access. Hopefully, that could occur all the time, but I realise that because of occupational health and safety concerns there are periods when part of the jetty would need to be closed. In fact, that occurs at present when rock phosphate boats are unloading. But we have a spur jetty about a third of the way up the main jetty, and I was very pleased to get a walkway established on one side of the

jetty so that guaranteed access is always available for people who visit Wallaroo. Boats often come in during a holiday weekend or a holiday period.

That is the very least I would want to see written into any contract, but I would like to see access to the end of the Wallaroo jetty guaranteed under normal circumstances, and only in those cases where it is considered dangerous to the safety of the public should it be closed for a short period for perhaps an hour or two during the day, depending how long it takes for unloading or in some cases loading to occur.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the collection of the signatures on the petitions. I refer, first, to the petition for the Wallaroo jetty, which was fully supported by all traders in the area, as well as by people outside the area. Had the petitions been circulated more widely, we would have had many more thousands of signatures. I highlight also that it is very important to guarantee access to the other two jetties on Yorke Peninsula, and I refer to Port Giles and Klein Point. People come to those jetties from far and wide. Before travelling that distance, one would want to know that the jetty was open. Whilst the Klein Point jetty is used principally by the quarrying industry at Klein Point, it is nevertheless owned by Ports Corp, and certainly I would want full discussion before any leases were signed there.

I also compliment the persons who have been responsible for obtaining all the signatures for the petition relating to the Moonta Police Petition. I know that a lot of work was done by the Neighbourhood Watch Group and also interested members of the community. It is very important that the full police officer strength is restored to Moonta as soon as possible.

In the remaining minutes I wish to address the issue of grants to seniors. I want to thank the Minister for the Ageing (Hon. Robert Lawson) for visiting my electorate last week. It was an excellent visit for just over one day, and he presented cheques to many of my seniors groups. I thank the seniors groups for having taken the opportunity to apply for grants under the Grants for Seniors program.

This year I have been informed that the Goyder electorate was the most successful of any electorate as to the number of grants received and that is a reflection on the seniors groups which took the opportunity to make the application. Those grants ranging from a few hundred dollars to more than \$1 000 is money which is of great assistance to so many groups throughout the breadth and depth of my electorate, ranging from the bottom of Yorke Peninsula right across to Balaclava, including Port Wakefield.

Whilst I am pleased that the Minister made many presentations, I also had the opportunity to make a few presentations that the Minister was unable to complete during his time in my electorate. I offer sincere thanks to the Minister for his personal interest, because he also visited other places while he was in the electorate and I appreciate that.

Motion carried.

At 5.42 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 29 July at 10.30 a.m.