

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

**Third Session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament
(1999)**

Parliament, which adjourned on 5 August, was prorogued by proclamation dated 26 August. By proclamation dated 26 August, it was summoned to meet on Tuesday 28 September, and the Third Session began on that date.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 28 September 1999

The House met at 12 noon pursuant to proclamation, the Speaker (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald) presiding.

The Clerk (Mr G.D. Mitchell) read the proclamation summoning parliament.

After prayers read by the Speaker, honourable members, in compliance with summons, proceeded at 12.12 p.m. to the Legislative Council chamber to hear the speech of His Excellency the Governor. They returned to the Assembly chamber at 12.36 p.m. and the Speaker resumed the chair.

[Sitting suspended from 12.35 to 2.15 p.m.]

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the House has this day, in compliance with a summons from His Excellency the Governor, attended in the Legislative Council chamber, where His Excellency has been pleased to make a speech to both houses of parliament of which speech I, as Speaker, have obtained a copy, which I now lay upon the table.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the paper be published.
Motion carried.

SPANISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM OFFICER

A petition signed by 158 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government not to abolish the position of the Spanish Language Curriculum Officer in the Department of Education Training and Employment was presented by Ms Ciccarello.

Petition received.

PRISON SENTENCES

A petition signed by 77 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to increase

prison sentences for persons convicted of robbery with violence of residential property, was presented by Mr De Laine.
Petition received.

POLICE FUNDING

A petition signed by 562 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to give a higher priority to funding additional police officers was presented by Mr Hanna.

Petition received.

MOUNT BARKER PRODUCTS

A petition signed by 265 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to relocate the foundry in Oborn Road, Mt Barker, was presented by Mr Hill.

Petition received.

HOUSING TRUST RENTALS

A petition signed by 307 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government not to increase Housing Trust rentals or other payments due to the GST related increase in pensions, was presented by Ms Thompson.

Petition received.

MEMBERS, INTERESTS

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the Register of Members' Interests for the year ended 30 June 1999.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the statement be printed.
Motion carried.

MEMBERS, TRAVEL

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the House of Assembly Members' Annual Travel Report for the year 1998-99, covering the period to 30 June 1999.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Adelaide Entertainments Corporation—Charter 1999-2000
Government Boards and Committees Information—
Boards and Committees by Portfolio, 30 June 1999
(Volume 1 & 2)
Regulations under the following Acts—
Mutual Recognition (South Australia)—Temporary
Exemptions
Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (South Australia)—
Temporary Exemptions

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

Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of SA—Report,
1998-99

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

Development Act—
City of Port Augusta—Industry (Port Augusta Power
Stations) Plan Amendment Report—Report
City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters, Kensington &
Norwood (City), Local Heritage Places (Built Heri-
tage) Plan Amendment Report
Railways Agreement 1997—First Amending Agreement
Regulations under the following Acts—
Carrick Hill Trust—Parking
Harbors and Navigation—
Certificate of Competency
Licences
Highways—Hindmarsh Island Ferry
Medical Practitioners—
Practitioners Fees
Registration
Motor Vehicles—Miscellaneous
Road Traffic—
Declared Hospitals
Driver hours
Vehicle Identification Plate
South Australian Health Commission—
Audit
Benefit Entitlement Card
Perinatal Statistics

By the Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. M.H.
Armitage)—

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare—Regulations—
Transport of Dangerous Goods
Ports Corp South Australia—Report, 1998-99
Remuneration Tribunal—Determination and Report—
Policy and Portfolio Manager, Judiciary

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

Department of Education, Training and Employment—
Report, 1998
Public Corporations (Distribution Lessor Corporation)
Regulations 1999—Charter
Public Corporations (Generation Lessor Corporation)
Regulations 1999—Charter
Public Corporations Act—
ETSA Corporation—Ministerial Directions
SA Generation Corporation—Ministerial Directions
Regulations under the following Acts—
Electricity Corporation (Restructuring and Disposal)—
Leigh Creek Coal
Financial Institutions Duty—ADI Variation
Land Tax—General
Petroleum Products Regulation—Fees
Stamp Duties—ADI Variation
Technical and Further Education—General
South Australian Superannuation Scheme—Actuarial
Report, 30 June 1998

By the Minister for Environment and Heritage (Hon. D.C.
Kotz)—

Murray-Darling Basin Agreement—Interstate Transfer of
Water Allocations

Regulations under the following Acts—
Historic Shipwrecks—General
Water Resources—Bolívar Watercourse

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

Evidence Act—Report relating to Suppression Orders,
30 June 1999

Regulations under the following Acts—
Fair Trading—General
Legal Practitioners—Interstate Practitioners
Liquor Licensing—Dry Areas—
Clare
Kadina
Police—General
Subordinate Legislation—Expiry Dates
Supreme Court—ADI
Worker's Liens—Fees

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

By-Laws—District Council—Adelaide Hills—Bird
Scarers—By-Laws
Local Government Act—Regulations—Local Government
Superannuation Board—Option.

CHINESE DEVELOPERS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I rise to make a detailed
statement in the hope that it will allow the House to move on
from what I consider an orchestrated campaign of destabilisa-
tion and so that the Parliament will not be distracted for
weeks by innuendo and inference but will concentrate its
efforts on where it should be, and that is constructively
managing issues of substance so that we—all of us—may
deliver a better lifestyle for all South Australians. However,
I admit that that might be in a vain hope, particularly with the
chuckles from the Leader of the Opposition.

Unfortunately, we live in destructive political times, with
an Opposition that will apparently go to any lengths to
discourage new investment and unsettle the business
community. As one example, it was only just over a week ago
that a major overseas power company reported back to South
Australia what appeared to be menacing comments by the
Leader of the Opposition—statements clearly designed, I am
sure, to discourage that company from any interest it may
have had in bidding for our power utilities—I might add, in
contrast to the member for Hart's discussions. Let us hope
that the Leader of the Opposition has been unsuccessful in his
endeavours.

If the House remembers, there have been allegations of
similar unfriendly statements made to National Power which,
with its \$440 million investment at Pelican Point, is, I remind
the House, one of the state's largest single investors. Is it
really the case, then, that this opposition will do everything
it can to see the state's economy falter?

That question is very pertinent today in the light of the
campaign currently being conducted against the CEO of the
Department of Industry and Trade, John Cambridge. For
almost two weeks, the *Australian* newspaper, and now the
Labor opposition, has pursued a campaign which implies that
Mr Cambridge either has been abusing, or continues to abuse,
his position for his own personal gain. I point out that
Mr Cambridge has now taken steps to commence legal action

against the newspaper and journalist, as he should, given the difference between the facts and the comments published.

I refer, first, to some points of relevance to the state's economic future. Mr Cambridge's return as CEO of the Department of Industry and Trade has occurred because he is the most capable person for this very important position. Mr Cambridge had been planning to retire at the end of this year, a fact that was no secret. However, he applied for the job because, frankly, in his absence, his former department lost focus, and this state lost major investments such as the Qantas call centre, which we had every reason to expect we could attract.

South Australia cannot afford to make such errors attracting investment. As I have said many times, the global economy in which we now operate is tough and, therefore, every Australian state works aggressively to attract such investments. Every one that we lose is another state's gain and, therefore, another hurdle for South Australia, as we continue our strenuous efforts to take unemployment down to the national level.

During Mr Cambridge's previous tenure as head of the former Economic Development Authority, South Australia had one of the more successful periods attracting targeted, successful long-term investments. We did so while offering incentive packages and levels of support lower than other states. It was the government's assessment in May this year that we again make use of his ability to negotiate contracts and especially his ability to encourage Asian investors to view our state positively. Mr Cambridge returned following a long-planned period of some three months overseas on accrued leave and agreed to delay his retirement plans. But, unfortunately, this is South Australian politics.

Mr Cambridge now finds his character and his reputation besmirched in the media. I am advised by the Acting Head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Ms Christine Charles, that investigations show that matters raised by the *Australian* are incorrect. I was first advised of this on the same day the first article accusing Mr Cambridge was published. I will now deal with the issues point by point so that the parliament and the state's media have the facts rather than falsehoods before them.

First, and most importantly, there was no deal. There is no deal at any level of any type between the Zhong Huan Group and the South Australian Government regarding the former tax office building in King William Street. The building involved was a Commonwealth Government building—not a state government building. Whether the company purchased the building from the commonwealth and what it then chose to do with the building is not the subject of any contract or incentive package with the South Australian Government. Also, Zhong Huan has received no financial assistance from the state government.

At one point, financial support of \$200 000 was indeed sought by the company. However, the Department of Industry and Trade assessed that the venture did not meet the required assistance criteria and it was refused. This request was received, as per the correct protocol, by the then Office of Asian Relations. I am advised that Mr Cambridge immediately announced a conflict of interest when the request was lodged and withdrew totally, delegating the file to a senior officer in the department to process, an officer who I am advised was made aware by Mr Cambridge of his conflict of interest. I would suggest that the decision to refuse any financial support shows that the probity of the then Office of

Asian Relations, the Department of Industry and Trade and that department's assessment processes are beyond reproach.

I now turn to the level of non-financial assistance. The help given to assist in facilitating Zhong Huan remodel the building it has acquired from the Commonwealth Government into student accommodation is in line with that delivered to other similar ventures. This is common practice. It goes no further than agreeing that government officers will assist overseas companies to work their way through our at times complex approval processes, such as with planning and with the Adelaide City Council, and that the South Australian Government will ensure that whoever the company chooses to approach for finance knows the investment is in line with current government policy; in other words, we confirm that the project is not a high risk venture. To that end, I signed a letter to this effect on 6 November last year. That is normal practice, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows from his time in government.

I will now address the allegations made concerning my visit to China in January 1999. I did meet with the company during this visit, which was of course after it had acquired the building. However, what the *Australian* conveniently ignores is the fact that while there I also met with the Shanghai Fortune High Technology Group which is redeveloping the Queen Victoria Hospital into apartments. There was no favouritism shown to Zhong Huan. It was a courtesy call to someone who had indicated they were investing in our state, one courtesy call of many on such a visit to China. Culturally, it would have been considered extremely discourteous not to meet with them.

I would like to remind the House that this is a company that was investing some \$15 million in us—not the other way round. Am I to understand from the allegations that have been made that it is now a bad idea to meet with potential investors? I am sure it is a circumstance that where there is major investment it is a good idea in fact to meet potential investors for this state.

I turn to Mr Cambridge's board positions with the group. Mr Cambridge was not made a director of the company until after the company had acquired the King William Street building from the commonwealth. It acquired the building on 16 December 1998. This board position was indeed considered honorary by the Chinese company, as it confirmed publicly last week.

Both Mr Cambridge and Zhong Huan have stated publicly that Mr Cambridge received no remuneration, attended no board meetings and exercised no voting rights. I am advised that this has been confirmed as correct. That Mr Cambridge felt forced to resign his directorships last week is—there can be no doubt—a setback for some relationships with China which this State has carefully nurtured over a long period. It is regrettable that this has happened and it is more than disingenuous for us as politicians to lecture business on respecting the cultural differences of our trading partners if they wish to build long-term relationships. Yet we have our Opposition ridiculing a Chinese company for what was a cultural honour to appoint Mr Cambridge to its board. But that, of course, would not be a consideration for them or the *Australian*.

I accept the company's view that Mr Cambridge was seen by the company as only an honorary director. However, I have counselled Mr Cambridge for not advising his CEO that this had occurred—as he was obliged to do under the terms of the Public Service Management Act and also because such honorary directorships have no status under Australian

company law. Again, to correct media reports, I am advised by Ms Charles that Mr Cambridge was not obliged under the act to inform me as Premier—only his CEO. His inability to advise his CEO was an oversight that should not have occurred and today I have sent a memo to all CEOs and senior government officials reminding them of their obligations under the Public Service Management Act. I have requested they double-check immediately that all such data which they have lodged is current. However, apart from that oversight, it appears that all Mr Cambridge can be found guilty of is attracting overseas investment to South Australia.

I will now turn to the matter of Mr Cambridge's own company, the SA Gold and Investment Fund. As Mr Cambridge has already stated (and I am advised ASC records support), the company is a \$2 shelf company which is not active. Mr Cambridge informs me that his accountant advised him to set up such a company in preparation for his retirement; hence, its being formed in August 1998. I have been advised by Mr Tu of the company that they considered he should belong to a South Australian company in some way if he was to be involved in business here. Mr Cambridge offered him the use of his inactive shelf company. Whether or not that was a wise decision, the fact remains that it has no bearing on how Mr Tu's company has been treated by the government. It has delivered no gain to anyone.

I will now address the issue of the Singapore based company, New Toyo. Records indicate that I have been fully aware since 1996—as has Mr Cambridge's CEO—of his involvement with this company. As long as Mr Cambridge is assiduous in declaring his interest in this company—as I am advised he has been—we see no problem. I make the point that it is not so long ago that governments bemoaned the fact that they had to second from the private sector to effect changed management: now we are being pilloried because we have a CEO of a calibre that the private sector seeks to use.

We rent the intellectual property of our CEOs: we do not own them body and soul. As long as we are sure they deliver for us the best of their ability and ensure we know of any outside work, then we are satisfied that they uphold the terms of their contracts with us. It is not for this government to tell Mr Cambridge—or any other employee for that matter—how to use their leave or spare time. As long as the correct procedures are followed—as they have been by Mr Cambridge and New Toyo—the state government takes no issue—nor should it.

The government under the former Labor Premier John Bannon provided financial assistance to New Toyo by way of a 99 year interest free loan of \$100 000. This was fully repaid in 1996. At the time the loan was given by the then Labor Government, Mr Cambridge was working at the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing. A second loan of \$150 000 over a 10 year period was approved in 1998 by the Department of Industry and Trade's former Chief Executive, Ian Dixon. Again, it is worth stressing that Mr Cambridge was on an accrued leave when he helped New Toyo.

In conclusion, I do not accept that we must isolate our public servants. This appears to be what is being demanded. As a government we do demand that we know of any potential conflicts of interest, and Mr Cambridge has been appropriately counselled for his failure to advise of his board position with Zhong Huan. However, I repeat that he received no fees, attended no board meetings, exercised no voting rights and, despite not informing his CEO, he had certainly ensured that his own department was aware of the situation

he still considered to be honorary—and neither has the company benefited.

While this does not excuse the breach of duty to advise his CEO, it does put Mr Cambridge's omission in perspective. It also puts the current vendetta in perspective. Demanding accountability does not mean publicly victimising individuals in the hope that something—anything—unscrupulous can be found in the chaos that follows. With the ministerial statement I table 'Discourse of pecuniary and personal interests—Mr John Cambridge'.

QUESTION TIME

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given statements that the sale of ETSA would fund a \$100 million redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, can the Premier now explain plans for a major downgrade of services at the QEH? On 24 February 1998, the Minister for Human Services said:

Just imagine how delighted the people of the western suburbs would be to have the \$2 million a day for 50 days for a \$100 million redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Just wait for it. The opposition has been leaked a copy of plans—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No, you will not be laughing and neither will the people of the western suburbs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader will get on with his question.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The SPEAKER: And the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance will be silent.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The opposition has been leaked a copy of plans for the future of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital dated 14 September 1999 which states that the QEH surgical procedures will be restricted; that advanced surgery requiring intensive care support will go to the Royal Adelaide and Lyell McEwin Hospitals; that all major trauma cases will be referred to the Royal Adelaide Hospital; that obstetrics will be restricted to low risk deliveries; that cancer services will be downgraded; that the main base for renal medicine, including transplants, is yet to be decided; that dental services will be closed; that the statewide bone transplant service will be relocated; and that some teaching units will be transferred to the Lyell McEwin Hospital. Will the Premier now gut the QEH—and please do not pass the buck to Dean Brown on this question?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is now commenting.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): The only comment I would make to the Leader of the Opposition is: had he not held up the sale or lease of our power assets for 500 days, we would have been better off to the tune of \$200 to \$300 million in South Australia. If the Leader of the Opposition had had his way, we would not have even got to leasing these power utilities. It was only the actions of two principled former ALP members in the upper house that have enabled us to proceed. What forked tongue the Leader of the Opposition uses! Because he did not want this sale or lease to go through, he held it up for 18 months unnecessarily. Had we been able to pursue this on our time frame, there would be \$200 to \$300 million more in the state's coffers to spend on

a social dividend for South Australians. So the ball rests squarely in your court.

I was absolutely fascinated to hear the member for Elder talk about how we had reduced the impact of the emergency services levy and how this was another black hole. What a hide! What hypocrisy for you to talk about black holes! Who created the great black hole for South Australia? It was the Labor Party that created the black hole, and it has taken us six years of determined policy work to get us out of that black hole. As we start the next millennium, we have positioned ourselves in the non-commercial sector to become a debt free state for the first time in a couple of decades, with no help from the opposition. So, the hypocrisy and forked tongue—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will settle down. I know it is the first day, but let us settle down and start on an even keel.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The hypocrisy and forked tongue of the opposition will be seen by the broader community. Let me make two other points. First, I am informed by the minister that no plans have been finalised in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Secondly, and importantly, let me tackle part of the myth put forward by those opposite. Health spending has not been cut. In fact, we have put more money into health over the past three years. Let me state the facts. In 1996-97 funding increased by \$129 million; in 1997-98 funding increased by \$124 million; and in 1998-99 funding increased by a further \$34 million. That puts this matter in context, and it puts this opposition in perspective. It has no plans and no ideas where to take South Australia: it is interested only in carping, opposing and criticising for the sake of it.

PATHWAY SA

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Premier advise the House of the benefits to all South Australians which will be delivered through the Pathway SA initiative announced this morning?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): This is one of the most important policy initiatives that have been put in place for a long time in South Australia and, importantly, this policy initiative puts us ahead of every other state in Australia. It is a by-product of the Government Radio Network contract and Telstra. What are we delivering as a result of that contract? Through Pathway SA, we are enabling the country and regional areas of South Australia to be involved. I am pleased to outline to the House the details of this Pathway SA program which I had the opportunity to launch with the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training and Minister for Information Economy this morning at Ngapartji Multimedia Centre. This places South Australia at the absolute forefront of Internet service provision in Australia—well ahead of all the other states. In addition, it will bring benefits directly to every public school, day care centre and TAFE facility, along with additional benefits to rural and regional communities, local businesses and ISP businesses operating around South Australia.

The roll-out of the program has commenced immediately. It will be completed by May next year and will deliver local call access to every public school, TAFE and care centre from Ceduna to Mount Gambier, from Kingscote to Waikerie and from Kadina to Bordertown. South Australian students will have access to all the benefits of high speed, high capacity bandwidth, over 90 per cent centrally funded, provided through 18 new points of presence all over this vast state.

Additionally, the service delivered will be appropriately managed at both system and local levels to ensure that our students have the right tools and the right information, with the right protections in place. As Minister Buckby explained this morning, the benefits for South Australian students and teachers will be manifest. The benefits of the roll-out of this Telstra based Internet backbone will not be limited to students.

We have, through the Information Economy Policy Office and the Department of Education, Training and Employment, negotiated terms which will ensure that local ISPs can make use of the backbone at wholesale pricing—a substantial saving to those ISPs outside the metropolitan area which they can pass on to their existing customers and newly enabled regional businesses and communities.

Regional South Australia will be able to connect to the net at local call prices and at city band width capacities—a first in Australia. I make mention and repeat that this has been enabled through the Government radio network contract and the deal with Telstra. This contract is now reaching out ahead of every other state and throughout the country and regional areas of South Australia. It is for that reason that South Australians not only will receive the best possible service but also that they will get it at the lowest possible price. For example, looking at schools alone, the average cost per school under the Pathway SA program is \$6 000, while in other states it runs from a low of \$9 130 in New South Wales to just over \$13 000 per school in Tasmania, despite the Harradine distortion in the delivery of telecommunications.

Just two weeks ago Minister Armitage launched the business channel, which delivers real business advantage and competitive advantage to South Australians. It is a first for Australia also and is being taken up now by the Commonwealth, as I understand it. Some critics chose to take the negative slant. I will quote from a media outlet in regional South Australia on this point. It states, 'That is all well and good for business in the city, but your new web site is of little use to us in the country. Out here the Internet is much too expensive and much too slow.' Problem fixed! The rollout, Pathways SA, fixes that particular issue for country and regional areas of South Australia. Today's launch answers that concern.

Just last evening Minister Lawson launched the further enhancement of the tenders and submissions site and announced the pilot program for our electronic commerce for procurement initiative—an initiative that will bring real convenience and real savings not only to government but also to the 20 000 plus businesses, large and small, that do business with the state government across this state. Today's launch supports that initiative.

As I mentioned this morning, Pathway SA makes very clear that the government has accepted fully its responsibility to deliver the future—not just to talk about it, not just to plan for it but actually to do it. The rollout has commenced and it will continue to play a fundamental and critical part leading South Australia and all South Australians into the twenty-first century.

If we are to ensure that we are an information enabled economy that includes the country and the city, we must have the infrastructure. This is putting the infrastructure in place. One of the significant issues facing this country is the information rich and the information poor—those who live in the city and those who live in country and regional areas. As we move to a global international marketplace, it is as important for our aquaculture industries on Eyre Peninsula

as it is for our horticulture and viticulture industries in the Riverland or elsewhere in South Australia to have direct Internet access to the global marketplace.

This state and its small and medium businesses have shown initiative in terms of chasing export markets. That is why we export to more locations than any other state in Australia and why we have increased our exports where nationally they have declined. This telecommunications infrastructure will be another quantum step forward in underpinning the economic rejuvenation of South Australia and, importantly, ensuring that every part of South Australia is information enabled and participating in the rejuvenation of the economy of this state.

CANCER PATIENTS

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Did the Premier receive a letter from Judith Roberts, AM, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Anti-Cancer Foundation, expressing concern that cancer patients can no longer expect to receive optimal treatment due to cuts to hospital services, and requesting the Premier to give an assurance that outcomes for cancer patients will not deteriorate? Will the Premier now rule out plans by the Minister for Human Services to downgrade services for cancer patients at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? The leaked options document for services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital states that haematology and oncology services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which are currently managed by five resident consultants and three trainees, would in future rely on visiting specialists.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Yes, I have received a letter from Judith Roberts in the general thrust as has been identified by the honourable member. I do have a concern for patients, whether they are cancer patients or patients suffering from any other disease that will impact against their personal health. Of course I have a regard—and a close regard—for that. The opposition is continuing to pursue a line that is speculative, because no decisions have been made. It is the wont of this opposition to try to anticipate worst case scenarios in almost every area, float them publicly and heighten apprehension, concern and anxiety in the community, when there is no need for them to, in fact, do so.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The honourable member knows full well that the process of assessment needs to be undertaken, and the honourable member knows full well that she is playing base political politics with issues—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I just simply say to the honourable member that we have continued to put additional funding into health. Over the life of this government we have increased health funding to the order of \$421 million over that when her party left government. In addition, there has been something like a 15 per cent increase in real terms, or thereabouts, in allocation of funds for health funding. So, this government has responded to health needs by pouring hundreds of millions of dollars additional funding into health. Let that be a statement of fact, and let us work on facts, not speculative pieces that are designed to heighten anxiety within the community. No decisions have been made in relation to this matter, as the Minister for Human Services has said. We will always have the interests, and the health interests, of South Australians to the fore in any policy decisions that are ultimately made.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Can the Minister for Emergency Services outline how the \$20.5 million reduction in the emergency services levy, announced yesterday by the Premier, will benefit South Australians?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order as well.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Foley interjecting:

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

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I thank the member for Hartley for his question. I acknowledge his input as a member of the government in giving us advice with respect to the emergency services levy. I am delighted to be able to outline to the parliament the benefits that have occurred to rural and regional South Australia with respect to the Premier's initiative yesterday, where he announced a \$20.5 million reduction in the collect for the emergency services levy, but I would also like to let all South Australians know about those benefits.

There is no-one in this Parliament who did not support the principles of the new emergency services levy, because the old emergency services levy fund was not transparent: it was inadequate and, clearly, was not fair and equitable. Why should some people have been contributing and others not contributing? Reading *Hansard*, I am certain that all members of this Parliament support the general principles and thrust of the emergency services levy.

As members of this House would also be aware, there were separate weighting factors, depending on the regions in which one lived, based on the advisory committee's recommendations to me as minister and on work done by the previous minister with respect to the steering committee. Rightly so, rural and regional South Australia always contributed less on a proportionate basis than the metropolitan area. The reason for that—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I should have thought that the member for Kaurna would understand that rural people do not have paid services like the metropolitan area. So, because of the volunteers in the rural areas, the fact of the matter is that there was a lower weighting for rural areas. As a result of this initiative, in regional towns such as Mount Gambier, Whyalla, Waikerie, Loxton, Renmark, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Maitland and Kadina—all those rural towns—there has been a reduction of close to 50 per cent in the variable rate equivalent to that in the metropolitan area. That is significant, and I will provide a couple of examples of what this actually means. It means that many houses in places such as Mount Gambier will see reductions of \$30 to \$35 on their levy, depending on the—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Meier interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Goyder to order, too.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: —capital value of their property. The greater Adelaide area and the rural areas, which always had a higher rate than regional area 2, the

general cereal country of South Australia, have seen a significant reduction in the levy, as has regional area 2, which includes the West Coast, the South-East, the Murray-Mallee and the like. I will provide some examples. Prior to the initiative being announced yesterday, if you had an \$850 000 farm on the Fleurieu Peninsula the levy rate would have been \$477. As a result of yesterday's initiative, the levy rate is now \$273. In regional area 2 an \$850 000 cereal farm would have had a levy of \$264. As of yesterday, that levy has been reduced to \$209. Clearly, whether you live in the Adelaide area, a regional town or on a farm in South Australia, yesterday's initiative will have a significant beneficial impact. This shows the absolute opposite of what the opposition—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: No. It would be good if members opposite listened for a minute. The opposition—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Well, the only ones who are panicking are the members for Kaurua, Hart and Elder, who are desperate to take over the leader's seat in the front corner. That is where the panic is, and isn't that panic high at the moment! Members opposite talk about 'Labor listens', but Labor certainly does not listen. That was proven when the honourable member did not even turn up to the 'Labor listens' campaign, because she was too busy shoring up factional support for her seat. But the opposite applies with this government: we genuinely listen.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat. The House will come to order. I know it is the first day. Surely, people do not want to be ejected on the first day. Just bring the House back to order and let us get on with question time.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: The opposite applies with the Liberal Government. We listen to and care about South Australians. As hard as it has been to address all the ineptitude—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

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

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hartley is warned.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: As hard as it has been over the past 5½ years to try to repair the black holes, the ineptitude and the absolute mess left by the Labor government, as the Premier said to the Leader of the Opposition today, if they had listened and acknowledged the reasons for the sale of ETSA a year ago, lots of other things could have happened. But now that we are getting our economy on track and seeing real opportunities for all South Australians, we have been able not only to listen but also to deliver, and yesterday's \$20.5 million reduction in the levy is being received very well by South Australians who are pleased to see that our government is prepared to listen.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

HOSPITALS, FUNDING

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. As we have just heard and given yesterday's announcement that the government has found an extra \$20 million from the privatisation of ETSA with which to fund changes to the

emergency services tax, will the minister ask the Premier to now honour his promise to boost hospital funding; will he reopen the 78 hospital beds that have recently been closed in our metropolitan hospitals; and will he rule out plans to gut the QEHL?

Today, the Governor's speech opening parliament did not mention hospitals at all: there was not one single mention of hospitals in the government's forward plans. Yesterday's media reported that the change to the emergency services tax is to be financed by a better than expected response to the lease of ETSA. Just last month, in August, the Premier told the media that the ETSA privatisation would ease the hospital funding crisis and committed the government to increased hospital spending.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): Let me first return to the series of questions that were asked about TQEH. An options paper has been put up to the staff and the staff are looking at a range of options, but it is all part of a major redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on which this government is planning to spend—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader for the second time.

The Hon. M.H. Armitage interjecting:

The SPEAKER: And I warn the Minister for Government Enterprises.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: This government is planning to spend a very significant amount of money on the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I should have thought members opposite would be celebrating the fact that we are close to finalising the planning to allow this capital redevelopment to go ahead. The member for Elizabeth was the one who came out and opposed all the plans that the former Minister for Health put forward: for about two or three years she opposed everything. In fact, if she had not opposed them they would have gone ahead and the new facility would be down there now. We know that yesterday Cabinet decided—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —to take \$20 million off the emergency services levy. The details of that have already been announced by both the Premier and the minister and in fact—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I supported it.

Mr Foley: Instead of putting it into hospitals?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I supported the reduction in the emergency services levy. In fact, one of the great concessions that we allocated yesterday will be benefits to aged-care homes within South Australia. It is a very significant benefit where half the levy for those homes will be returned to the operators of the homes. It was an area about which I was concerned. Cabinet discussed it, and we have made a very substantial concession back to aged-care homes. I would be the first out there arguing that they deserve to get a cut because they need it and because these are community services. If there had been a higher level of charge, there would have been an overall reduction in service in terms of aged-care here in South Australia. So, I support it and am quite proud of the fact that we are making that concession to aged-care homes. I hope that the opposition Labor Party in this state is prepared to come out and equally support that concession to aged care homes.

MOUNT BARKER PRODUCTS

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

Following the finding that six out of the nine people tested who lived in the near vicinity in the Mount Barker foundry showed damaged chromosomes, will the Premier now order the immediate closure of the foundry at Oborn Road and order a comprehensive public health inquiry into emissions from the foundry, and will he explain why the initial public health inquiries carried out by the government did not establish that residents had been affected? On 5 August 1999, the Premier told the House:

Let me repeat: the first priority is the interests of the residents. I have indicated twice to this House and at the meetings I have had with the residents and interest groups on a number of occasions that their health will not be compromised. . .

Let us have a full health test of all the residents concerned.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I repeat those statements which I made previously to the House and which I made publicly yesterday that the health of the residents will be the first priority. I understand that both the Health Commission and the EPA have sought access to the information in the tests that were released yesterday, so that the appropriate state government authorities can have access to the data upon which they can make further assessment of the data that has been made available. I do not know whether that information has yet been given to the government for it to undertake those tests.

I understand that there was some difficulty in accessing that data, but I hope that it will be forthcoming shortly. That will then enable the various authorities to undertake a full assessment. In relation to the position of the Mount Barker foundry and its continuation, what members must understand is that we have a 40 or 50 year old business of that nature in that area employing 40 or 50 people.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: The health of the residents must come first, John. It must come first.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I do not need a lecture from the Leader of the Opposition that health is going to come first. The simple fact is that it is. Members might recall that, when this issue was raised, after I visited the location I called the foundry operators here, where the minister and I had an initial meeting with them, giving them encouragement to take the action that they did prior to the EPA reporting, and that was for them voluntarily to take the initiative of closing down that component. I sought that from the owner and the owner cooperated with that request.

The government has been working with the various interested parties to look at how we might give encouragement to assist with the relocation. There is a fine line between health being paramount and not being compromised and how you put in place a series of steps that will enable the consideration of relocation, which does not see the company falter as a result, with 40 or 50 jobs put at risk. We are attempting to achieve an outcome that meets each of those criteria. It was never going to be an issue that could be resolved in 48 hours. A range of issues needs to be worked through, and working through them we are.

A considerable amount of departmental resource and time has been given and committed to ensuring that each of those interests is looked at and given the appropriate amount of consideration. I come back to the earlier point that the health of the residents will not be compromised in any solution to the circumstances. As I indicated, I think in a ministerial statement to the House prior to the break, the first I knew of

this incident was when the company had received council approval, had established and was operating, at which stage the residents raised the issue publicly and with me. We have taken a number of steps since that time. It is an important issue, and I can assure the House and the opposition that it will be given the continuing consideration that it deserves.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): My question is also directed to the Premier. Following the meeting on 6 August 1999 between the Premier and businesses located near the Mount Barker foundry, has the Premier received representations from any companies that the location of the Mount Barker foundry at Oborn Road has stopped plans for expansion and the creation of new jobs because of concerns about emissions from the foundry? The opposition has been told that one company has shelved plans to expand and to create 80 new jobs because of the possibility of product being polluted by emissions from the foundry.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I do not intend to inflame the situation and put at risk further expansion plans for any other collocated company in the region. I have spoken privately to the member for Kaurna in relation to this matter, and if he continues to pursue this and raise the public profile he will put at risk—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I hope that what could result from the irresponsibility of this question from the member for Kaurna does not eventuate. Suffice to say that a number of companies in the region are very important employers who are manufacturing sensitive goods that are export oriented. I want to ensure that no impediment is put in the way of those companies or of their exports. We will continue to work through this. I have indicated that we are working through a number of options that the Government will ultimately consider.

I also want to point out to the House that four or five years ago this Government established—at some cost—a cast metals precinct for the purpose of ensuring, from a health and environmental perspective, that we are able to relocate foundries, which are a source industry to the manufacturing base of this State. As manufacturing is critical and foundries are therefore equally important and critical, at some cost we established a cast metals precinct. It is our desire as a government to have relocation of foundries to that precinct that will bring economies of scale to them and, in addition, will enable them to operate 24 hours a day without any noise difficulties for neighbourhoods and will not call into question health aspects.

I am advised that a request for the test results upon which the EPA and the Health Commission could subsequently take the matter further has resulted in a reply from Genetic Consulting and Testing this day, which states:

. . . would like to advise that the results of these tests were obtained in the course of our normal clinical work. Under these circumstances any further reports would require more time on Dr Ford's behalf and therefore our charge would be \$150 per hour. A full report would take approximately four to five hours. Can you please advise if you would like Dr Ford to put together an official detailed report.

I would have thought that the results that were the basis of the press conference should have been made available immediately upon request to the EPA and other authorities, so that we can follow through with appropriate testing to ensure that the right policy decisions are made and to ensure that, as the

honourable member put to me, the health of the residents is the number one priority.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Given the failure of the EPA to ensure that the Mount Barker foundry complied with the licence issued by the EPA and the minister's announcement on 4 August 1999 that metal fume emissions exceeded permitted levels, is the Minister for Environment confident that no other foundries in South Australia are exceeding permitted levels and has any audit of emissions been conducted?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage): It is quite obvious that at this stage the honourable member and all members of this House are well advised that the EPA has placed an order on the foundry at Mount Barker and it is now closed. Therefore, at this stage we do not have to take any emissions into account. In terms of all the other foundries, there are conditions of licence, as the member well knows, which also dictate the operation. At this stage I am advised that there is no requirement for any further testing because the tests on the other foundries have not shown that there is any health risk, and nor am I aware of any recent complaints by any of the residents in the area of each of the foundries. The honourable member well knows that the tests have already been done.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Does the EPA support Mount Barker Products' option of keeping its foundry at the Oborn Road site with an engineering solution to toxic emissions or does the EPA favour relocation to another site? What new conditions will apply in either case to ensure that the foundry does not pollute the atmosphere, and will the minister order a full environmental audit of Mount Barker Products' operations?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage): The member for Kaurna well knows that, on both counts, his question is totally hypothetical. He has just heard information that discussions on relocation are under way. The outcomes of that relocation have still to be determined. Therefore, there are no means of my being able to give him a direct answer because the outcomes have not yet been determined.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is hypothetical at this stage in terms of the questions that I have just been asked. Until those determinations have been made, no answer can be given to the member for Kaurna. As to the preferred location, the honourable member has also sat in this House and heard the Premier make a statement that the area of the cast metal precincts is where we would like to see the foundries operating in South Australia located. However, the cost involved, once again, comes down to the fact, as members opposite well know, that if they had not procrastinated for 18 months and had given permission to lease ETSA we may have been able to help these foundries much more with relocation funds.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

ABORIGINAL RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs advise the House what steps the government is taking to support Aboriginal communities in rural South Australia? It has been brought to my attention—and this matter has attracted a great deal of attention through

the media—that Aboriginal people have been signed up as members of the Labor Party without their support, knowledge or concurrence. I wonder whether the minister could explain to the House what action the government will take in relation to protecting these people against this sort of political rotting.

Mr HANNA: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitchell.

Mr HANNA: First, there was the comment in the question but, secondly, sir, I bring to your attention the fact that matters have been brought up in the Supreme Court of South Australia which would render the question and the following answer sub judice. I bring that to your attention, sir, before the answer is given.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order and I do so for the following reasons. Erskine May is quite specific about the sub judice rule and particularly as it applies to a civil court and also an appeal before a civil court. I think it was thought at some stage that it did not necessarily apply to a civil court, but my understanding is that it does apply to a civil court and to an appeal to a civil court. I also understand that in some other jurisdictions such as the House of Representatives Speakers have from time to time attempted to make some variation to the ruling in Erskine May but have applied fairly strict rules in doing so, in that unless the question applied to something of national importance it could not be proceeded with.

This House traditionally has followed a fairly strong line regarding the sub judice rule, and we have not broken that rule over many years. It is not my view that this particular question is a matter of national or significant state importance. If it was, I would perhaps err along the line adopted by the House of Representatives. It is not, and it is my view that the matter is sub judice and I rule the question out of order.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I take the point of order, Mr Speaker. My question referred to the support the South Australian Government was giving to Aboriginal people. It was nothing to do with the victory that the member for Ross Smith has had in the court, even though we are particularly interested. I did not refer to a decision of the courts; plenty has been said about that already. However, we are very interested in the activities of the member for Ross Smith and the two victories he has already had, and we wish him well in that regard.

The SPEAKER: Order! From my understanding of the honourable member's remarks, it was not so much the question but the explanation that was the give-away. It was in relation to the explanation that I cast my memory back to the contents of Erskine May. The avenue is open to members of the House at any time to disagree with the chair's ruling, but at this stage my ruling is that the matter is sub judice, despite its being on appeal in the civil court. Under the rules which have been set down over 20 years in this parliament my ruling stands. If members disagree with it, they can move a motion accordingly.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

MOUNT BARKER PRODUCTS

Mr HILL (Kaurna): Will the Premier confirm that the list of relocation options for the Mount Barker foundry is being prepared by the government? Has Mount Barker Products now agreed to move and will the government

provide funding for relocation? A report today states that the government expects to have a range of relocation options for the foundry next week with taxpayers likely to help pay perhaps with local government assistance. On 9 August 1999, Mount Barker Products announced that relocation was not an option, and the opposition has been told that the Department of Industry and Trade opposes financial assistance for relocation because of the precedent that this would create.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Yes; not yet; to be determined.

TALKING POINT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Information Economy tell us about the new opportunity to expand the democratic process called Talking Point?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Information Economy): I thank the member for Waite for his question about a very important matter for South Australians. Indeed, I have spoken previously about my personal passion for the digital democracy. Talking Point is a South Australian first. It shows the government's desire and commitment to the information economy. It is a single entry point for on-line communication between the government and the public and, as far as I can determine, it is a world first. In essence it is a single entry point to a series of on-line chat sites that foster on-line discussion groups with a focus on South Australian issues. The chat sites seek to elicit public opinion and draw knowledge and experience from across the community by providing an open forum for the voice of every South Australian. With announcements such as that which the Premier made earlier today, obviously the opportunity for South Australians to provide their views on matters of importance has been greatly increased.

The address for the Talking Point site is <http://www.talkingpoint.sa.gov.au>. It opens up a very important aspect of the digital democracy, because it gives South Australians an opportunity to communicate directly with the government (in the vernacular) '24 by 7' on specific issues. It is important that the House note 'every South Australian', because the announcement this morning abolished the disparity in access between metropolitan areas and regional South Australia, and Pathway SA opens up a pathway for people to tell us what they think about issues of importance.

I know that members of the House and another place will be among those who will visit the chat site first, and I would frankly hope that members of the chambers would bookmark the Talking Point site as one of their favourites and visit it often. It was launched only late last week in the Gawler Library, when I was opening the Gawler Library Internet site. I know that the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training (the member for Light) was delighted to see that. Already the chat site has had 17 552 page requests from over 1 400 individual visitors. That is a stunning success. It shows—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The Leader of the Opposition laughs. Normally, when the Leader of the Opposition laughs I guess I react in some way. My reaction to the Leader of the Opposition's laughing is that I am delighted, because it shows that the Labor Party completely misses the point that South Australians are taking up this opportunity to give us their input. I would hope that, once they have given us their input, South Australians will leave

the site with a better understanding of the issues facing South Australia.

When the Talking Point initiative is aligned with Pathway SA it shows that the South Australian Government and South Australia are now at the absolute cutting edge of the information economy. The government is very proud of the fact that we are moving the people of South Australia towards the pointy edge of change. It is where we must go if we are to ensure that the people of South Australia are able to take all the advantages of the information economy.

To demonstrate the government's commitment to the openness and transparency of Talking Point, we did not seed it, for argument's sake, with questions asking the people of South Australia to give us their reaction to legislation that was passed in the last parliament. No: we went straight to one of the most politically contentious issues of the day; the very first issue that went up on Talking Point was ship breaking at Port Adelaide. As well as that, we have put up voluntarism, workplace relations and the Barcoo Outlet and seven or eight other issues of great importance to South Australians.

Despite the laughing of opposition members, the people of South Australia are telling us, because it has already had 17 552 page requests from over 1 400 individual visitors. This is a great opportunity for the people of South Australia to help guide the decisions of government in a transparent fashion and, frankly, it is an opportunity to develop the digital democracy to a point where South Australia again leads the way.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): How much in taxpayers' money was spent promoting and advertising the first version of the emergency services tax, and how much will now be spent on government advertising of the changes to the tax announced yesterday?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I will ascertain the information.

YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I direct my question to the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance. Do South Australians need to stockpile baked beans, other foods and fluids to get them through year 2000 date problems, or is such a suggestion simply a case of 'blowing in the wind'?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Minister for Year 2000 Compliance): I thank the member for Fisher for his creative question. The question has been asked with very good reason. Today in this House we have seen ministers replying to a series of questions that can be put down to nothing other than base scaremongering by the Labor Party. Putting this question up front now ensures that an answer is put on the public record so that no member of parliament, regardless of political persuasion, can endeavour to put a different spin on it and in so doing unnecessarily panic the community.

One of the most serious issues facing some nations with respect to the year 2000 date problem is not now the issue itself but rather the way in which issues such as stockpiling and contingency planning are being talked about in the media. Issues such as the continuity of power and water, availability of essential services, food, banking infrastructure, health services and transport infrastructure are important matters that underpin the very fabric of our society. It has therefore been a fundamental drive of this government to ensure that

those services are in place, and that it will be business and service as normal come the year 2000. We can say with confidence that those services will be in place and will continue as normal, uninterrupted, come the change in millennium. Therefore, there is no need for the community to take stockpiling precautions.

Having said that, I must say that there are varying reports about different parts of the world and, for that matter, different parts of Australia as to how preparations are occurring. In reading those reports, members need to be aware of what normal precautions would need to be taken in those parts of the world or Australia, regardless. If we consider just the normal precautions that members of the community take in case of any eventuality, it is usual that South Australians have candles and matches in their cupboard in case there is a power blackout. That always occurs, and that is about the level of precaution that is always taken in Adelaide, perhaps apart from a long weekend, when South Australians may have shopping for an extra day or two in the cupboard because shops are not usually open, or they might have taken extra money out of the bank so that they can enjoy their long weekend and spend a little more. Those are the sort of precautions that we would expect people to be taking at the end of this year, as they have at the end of every other year.

If, on the other hand, we were to go to parts of Queensland where the cyclone season occurs, we would see that those parts of Australia normally take significant precautions for that part of the year and will, of course, do so again during that part of this year. Those things should not be confused with the year 2000 date problem, and regrettably that is what has been occurring in some parts of the world. I have been concerned to see some media tout the year 2000 date problem as being comparable with the preparation that is needed for cyclones. However, that is clearly not the case in South Australia. I would dispute avidly that sort of comparison being made now. The reason is simple: as a government, state and nation we are prepared. In fact, government preparedness as at the end of August reached 97 per cent, with four months to go at that stage to complete the remaining 3 per cent of preparations.

That means that we can with confidence tell people in our community that electricity, gas, water, sewage, telephone infrastructure, banking, finance infrastructure, emergency service infrastructure, health and transport will all continue as normal. Certainly at the large corporate sector end work preparation is being done to ensure business as normal. Because of this effort the work that now remains is simply work to reduce the magnitude of any problems at the minor end of the scale and those essentially are in the small to medium sized business end. If members of Parliament wish to take messages into their community, I encourage them to take messages to the small and medium size businesses in their electorate to ensure that they and their businesses are ready.

The message from members of Parliament to their electorates is that there is no need to take stockpiling precaution or any need to panic. The only need they have is to work through the simple issues in their home.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The member for Schubert points out that the Leader of the Opposition is gone. Regrettably that is always the case. It is important that I place on record my disappointment that the Leader of the Opposition has been offered, for the past 12 months, numerous briefings individually and for his Caucus on the year 2000 date problem and its implications. He continually indicates that

they will take up the briefing. Despite frequent phone calls from my office to his and discussions between him and me, that offer is yet to be taken up. On an issue of this nature, particularly a bipartisan issue, it is disappointing the offer has not been taken up. I put the offer to all members of the Labor Party today that, if they individually would like briefings and would like their caucus to have a briefing and an alternative leader is prepared to stand up and accept a briefing, that briefing is available. Staff who are non-partisan, who are employees of Government, are prepared to provide that briefing at any stage, but it would seem that the Labor Party is too preoccupied with counting rather than worrying what will happen next year.

PORT RIVER

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The Environment Protection Authority in May of this year, in conjunction with the Dolphin Research Foundation, contributed to funding a coast care project to measure the concentrations of PCBs and heavy metals in the Port River. The Dolphin Research Foundation had undertaken an analysis on the dolphins shot in the Port River and following this analysis the EPA initiated a three part program to assess the findings in greater detail and determine possible sources of contamination. The first part of the EPA's program was to test tissue samples of dolphins found in different areas of South Australia. Tissue samples from 13 dolphins were tested by the nationally accredited Queensland Health Scientific Services Laboratory for PCBs and mercury. The purpose of the work was to see if the levels found in the Port River dolphins are substantially different from those found elsewhere in the State. The results show that background levels in the liver tissue of dolphins are frequently very high—above 400 parts per million, even in animals found in remote areas.

The results of the analysis undertaken by Dr Mike Bossley of the Dolphin Research Foundation, which found 465 parts per million in the dolphin HiLo and which had been shot in the Port River, are therefore not inconsistent with these findings. The independent analysis shows that levels of mercury above 400 parts per million are not unusual. Doctor Bossley claimed in his media release of 21 September 1999 that his analysis of the dolphin HiLo found 'the highest level of mercury contamination ever recorded in a bottlenose dolphin anywhere in the world'. We all know and appreciate Dr Bossley's fondness for our dolphins. However, in this instance Dr Bossley's statement is simply untrue.

Three significant papers have been published on mercury levels within dolphins in the past eight years, all of which recorded mercury levels far greater than those recorded in the Port River. Liver samples from four bottlenose dolphins were analysed in the north west Mediterranean for a paper published in *Science of the Total Environment 1992*, with a maximum mercury level in one dolphin of 4 385 parts per million. Sampling of striped dolphins in other accredited studies were similarly found with mercury levels far in excess of those found to date in the Port River. Therefore, the declaration that the Port River dolphin held the highest reading of mercury in the world is at the very least mischievous and at worst a damaging misinterpretation of fact.

Mercury and cadmium do occur naturally in the environment as well as from industrial and stormwater discharges,

and accumulate in the liver and kidney of dolphins. Older animals are likely to have higher levels than young animals. The dolphin Dr Bossley analysed was 30 years old. The second part of the EPA program for the Port River was a survey of sediment samples collected from 26 sites, including major stormwater drains leading into the Port River and areas adjacent to the river where PCBs may have been used. The samples were again tested by a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities for this work. The results showed that some sites have moderate or high zinc and lead contamination. Again this is not surprising as samples were taken from stormwater drains. Road run-off contains lead and zinc from vehicles. The sumps of the drains are designed to trap some of the contaminated sediments and these were specifically sampled in the survey. The sumps are cleaned out regularly by local councils. The survey also recorded the presence of mercury, copper and PCBs at a number of sites which had possibly accumulated over many years. Past practices have undoubtedly contributed to these problems. Anecdotal information supplied to the EPA by a number of people in the community include stories of mercury and PCB waste being dumped in the Port River and the estuary in the 1960s, poor welding practices 30 years ago, where oil from transformers containing PCBs were allowed to drip into the river, and the use of stormwater drains as dumps for solvents and solutions containing heavy metals. The results of the survey will assist in identifying areas to be targeted during the audit that the EPA will be undertaking for PCBs and mercury.

The audit is the third stage of the EPA's program on the Port River and is scheduled for completion by March 2000. This systematic testing and auditing of the Port River will give the EPA the information it requires to combat continuing sources of contaminants. So, with the assistance of the community and industry and the solid support of the South Australian Government, the EPA is working to protect the Port River environment and its people.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Today a special event will be taking place in Old Parliament House. Through your good offices, Mr Speaker, and those of the President of the Legislative Council, we will be witnessing the opening of the Parliament House visit of the travelling art exhibition *Touched by Fire*, which was launched on Sunday 15 August by the patron, Sir Donald Dunstan. Derek Walsh served a tour of duty in Vietnam as a rifleman/intelligence dutyman with the 8th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. When his stint was over he went back to his vocation as an advertising artist and illustrator until 1990. When he found that he was unable to work any longer, Derek returned to his love of art and, after a number of years and an even greater number of paintings which drew attention to his huge talent, he embarked on his dream and called it *Touched by Fire*. *Touched by Fire* is an original art work in oils, a mini mural chronologically depicting Australia's 10-year involvement in the Vietnam War from 1962 to 1973. It features portraits of the 500-plus men and women, both military and civilian, who

were killed whilst on active service or supporting our forces in Vietnam. It is scheduled for a series of national and international showings involving many veteran artists who have used their gift to express their feelings, vent their anger or show their humour and just generally tell their story.

Touched by Fire will be a lasting memorial dedicated to the memory of those who gave the supreme sacrifice and, indeed, all who served in the Vietnam War. It is anticipated that there will be a great public interest in the work, as a memorial to those who fell and suffered during the Vietnam War. This includes the close and extended families of these men and women. It will become a significant contribution to the as yet incomplete historical records relating to the service of veterans in the 1960s and early 1970s. Featured in the art work are many images and memorabilia that will be readily recognised by most veterans, and that will provide the civilian viewer of any age group with insights into the digger's very different way of life while he was over there.

Derek invited the Veterans of the Vietnam War Inc. to manage his project, and when Vietnam Veterans realised the potential of the opportunity offered they were happy to agree to do so. Here was an opportunity to expand an initiative and dream; that of providing a dignified burial for every man and woman who has served this great country of ours in time of need, when our youth answered the call, voluntarily or not. Blackwell Funerals has seen fit to support their initiative and assisted in the burial of several veterans who otherwise would have been committed to paupers' graves—which I am sure you will agree, Mr Speaker, is not a very fitting end. At the end of the day, when the dream of Derek Walsh has been satisfied, those at Veterans of the Vietnam War Inc. will have put in place a fund that will see veterans of any war whose family cannot find adequate funds laid to rest with the dignity deserved of his or her service.

Whilst the Veterans Burial Trust Fund is to be the monetary beneficiary of this project, there are several other objectives which those concerned are determined to achieve: they are to promote the respect and standing of veterans within the community; to ensure that younger generations are reminded of the sacrifices of veterans and the reality of war; to raise community awareness of significant military historic events; and to develop greater awareness of entitlements and services provided to the veteran community.

A resource booklet has been prepared by Kenny Laughton, an established author, whose recently released book *Not Quite Men No Longer Boys* has taken the literary world by storm. Kenny is a veteran who served twice in Vietnam with Royal Australian Engineers. The booklet aims to inform young people of the significance of veterans' sacrifices for future generations and the ongoing consequences and disabilities for those who served as a result of their involvement in armed conflict.

Touched by Fire has a project manager here in South Australia, Mr Lloyd Stevens, who has worked tirelessly to ensure that the project is given the sort of recognition that it deserves. We also had the assistance of Mr Peter Forbes and many others, and they will all be here this afternoon at the opening by the President of the upper house. I urge all members who are able to attend the opening to do so and to inform any of their constituents who may be interested that the exhibition will be here in Old Parliament House until the close of the house on Friday this week.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): During the past two years we have seen a dramatic change in the way in which people who

are unemployed, particularly those without much training and those with a longer term history of unemployment, are dealt with. They have been left in the hands of organisations that have sprung up to take the role of what was the Commonwealth Employment Service. One such organisation established in Murray Bridge, which comprises former employees, specialises in providing training for people from Aboriginal backgrounds. That organisation is called the Murraylands Training and Employment Association of South Australia. This state government—indeed, government agencies, to my mind—in seeking to ensure that this training is delivered to such people who have a history of unemployment, requires them now to finance the cost of the wages of the trainees from within their own resources. The companies have not been in existence long enough to have accumulated sufficient capital to do that. It would not be so bad if it was applied evenly across the board among such companies, but the present situation is simply not fair.

After being alerted to the problem, I wrote about it to the Minister for Employment and the Minister for Youth. I also wrote to other government ministers when there were other problems that had been foisted upon this new company, which consists of people who had been working in the CES and others. The Murraylands Training and Employment Association has an outstanding record, and the public service has an equally outstanding despicable record of the way in which it has treated them—despicable to the degree that it has misrepresented them and, if they had sufficient funds, I would recommend to them that they sue the public service for what it has done to them. This new company, which has always provided the service, and which has been able to do it on the basis that the funds it needed to pay the wages of the trainees were provided to it at about the time that they had to be paid to the trainees, now finds that it has to finance those wages for three months before it can get any reimbursement from the state government.

I do not think that that is the mean spiritedness of the Treasurer and other government agencies that are responsible for the provision of funds from the public purse for this purpose. I think that there are some bloody-minded bureaucrats that others in the world outside this place might like to ask some questions about—questions such as the nature of the relationship between their progenitors. I would do that, too, if I were less polite than I am. I think that it is despicable that the Murraylands Training and Employment Association should be treated in such an offhanded manner, forcing it out of business. Not only will it put at risk the services of training the young Aboriginal people in the Murraylands—indeed, it will wipe it out—but it will wipe out the jobs that that agency has been able to provide, jobs that were created when the people who formed the agency got together.

As a group training company, Murraylands Training and Employment was paid \$1 000 for each trainee or apprentice that it signed up. This money is now payable only for traineeships, not apprenticeships. Entry level training incentives are now payable for the first time trainees only. By the time some of the trainees are able to settle into work they may have had at least one previous uncompleted or unsuccessful traineeship behind them.

Entry level training incentive moneys were payable after one month's probation for trainees and three months for apprentices. Now the wait is three months for all incentives but, in reality, this equates to four or five months when you add on the length of time it takes the departments to process the invoices for the fees that have to be paid. The organisation

has devoted many hours of work, equating to hundreds of thousands of dollars, always in the belief that it was setting minimum standards for regulation of any new group training company and, more importantly, joint funding for the Murraylands Training and Employment Association. The outcome of the expensive exercise is an information booklet that the group has compiled. I could go on, but I am disappointed that—

Time expired.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): I refer to the remarks made by the Minister for Environment and Heritage when answering a question of the member for Kaurna. It surprised me that the minister said that foundries operating within South Australia are not audited and that emissions are regulated but not tested regularly. I remind the minister that the Mount Barker foundry operated under a licence and that the residents—not the EPA—discovered that the fumes emitted by the foundry were toxic.

I was also concerned by the minister's remarks today about the independent firm hired by *Today Tonight* or the residents to investigate chromosome damage or any sort of toxic damage to residents and its report being used by the EPA. When I asked the EPA if it would accept the findings of an independent firm in relation to the Mason & Cox foundry, I was told 'No,' and that only the EPA can take findings and use tests. But, because this foundry in Mount Barker is in the Premier's electorate, the Premier is bending the rules. That is fine. I do not mind that happening, because those residents deserve better. It is a shame and it is a disgraceful series of events that when it happens in the Premier's electorate we bend the rules. When it happens in non-Liberal electorates, such as the western suburbs, the rules are adhered to very strictly indeed—so much so that the EPA does not come out to inspect the fumes when it is told to. The EPA tells me that I cannot get an independent firm to look at the emissions and toxins and to measure sound levels. But when it happens in the Premier's electorate it is fine. They say, 'No problems; we will take that evidence; we will look at that evidence and act on it; but don't you dare do that anywhere else.' I could not believe that the minister was not ashamed to say that foundries operating in South Australia today are not regularly monitored by the EPA. It is shameful. Six out of nine people tested have received so-called chromosome damage, and this should have been one in 10 000. It is a disaster.

Unfortunately, the bureau of statistics only measures incidents of cancer per postcode. Along with the local residents group, I contacted the member for Hindmarsh (Chris Gallus), to investigate the incidence of cancer in Flinders Park in my electorate. Flinders Park is a very large suburb, but the incidence of cancer there was higher than the national average—just by postcode. When I asked the EPA to test emission levels in the suburbs directly surrounding the Mason & Cox foundry, including Torrensville, a very large suburb, and Flinders Park, I was told that it could not be done and that it could be done only by postcode. But today the Premier and the Minister for Environment and Heritage have no problems whatsoever doing it for the Mount Barker residents. I congratulate the Premier on that, even though he was pushed by the residents into doing it, but everywhere else it occurs we are told, 'No, we are tied down by the rules and regulations and the way we operate.' I find this amazing and disgraceful.

When I first became involved with this group in 1996, there were eight people in the organising committee of the Mason & Cox Flinders Park residents' group. Since then, four have died of cancer. I am not an expert. I cannot attribute those cancer deaths to the foundry, but the residents make their own conclusions. Perhaps the EPA should investigate. Maybe there should be some independent testing of these residents to see whether or not, because of the government's lack of monitoring, these foundries are inadvertently poisoning residents living nearby. I hope that is not the case, but if it is the government should hang its head in shame.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Briefly, I refer to a paper tabled today by the Minister for Environment and Heritage in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, which has resolved to include measures authorised pursuant to subclause 50 of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement in a schedule to that agreement. It is a vitally important paper, which I am delighted to see tabled in this House. I must question the time it took from when this matter was discussed and concluded by the council to now, when it is actually being tabled, because I was fortunate enough to be on that council when these issues were discussed and, I thought, to a large extent resolved. Putting that aside, it is a very important paper indeed. The objects of the schedule are as follows:

- (a) to facilitate and promote the interstate transfer of water allocations coordinated by the commission;
- (b) to provide for the scheme to be implemented on a trial basis in that it will initially only apply to specific water diverters and districts and to high security water allocations and to a restricted part of the Mallee region;
- (c) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of consumptive water use in ways which facilitate environmental sustainability but which do not increase or accelerate environmental degradation;
- (d) to establish a procedural framework and set of standards so that the scheme is accountable and does not result in increased levels of salinity, reductions in environmental flows or degradation of the natural environment;
- (e) to provide for the suspension of the operation of this schedule if there is an increase in or acceleration of environmental degradation from the use of management of water that has been diverted interstate in accordance with the scheme;
- (f) to give effect to water trading arrangements in accordance with the terms of the ministerial council's decision regarding the long-term level for off-stream diversions in the Murray-Darling Basin;
- (g) to enable the commission to adjust the quantity of water to be delivered to the states as a result of the scheme.

Under part II, 'General Operational Provisions', part 6 refers to the adjustment of the water cap and states:

- (1) The water cap in respect of each contracting government is to be adjusted by the commission:
 - (a) to maintain the integrity of the overall water cap for the Murray-Darling Basin; and
 - (b) to reflect the water allocations that have been transferred interstate under the scheme. . .
- (3) For the purposes of adjusting the water cap in respect of a particular state, a water allocation that is transferred interstate under the scheme—
 - (a) is taken to have been fully used (or by such lesser proportions as may be determined by the commission) in the state of origin; and
 - (b) is taken to have been transferred for full use or by such less a proportion as may be determined by the commission in the state of destination.

The report also refers to the salinity and drainage strategy. The operation of the scheme is subject to the requirements of schedule C to the agreement and refers to salinity debits or credits arising from the dilution effects brought about by

water allocation transfers to or from South Australia. It refers to environmental and supply considerations, procedural responsibilities in relation to transfer of water allocations and to other very important matters.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am thrilled this has now been brought before the House and I hope that all members of this House recognise the importance of the Murray River, particularly to this State. The transfer of water allocations, the setting of the cap and a number of other initiatives that are referred to in this schedule can only improve the situation that we find in relation to the management of the Murray River.

Mr Lewis: It had its roots about four years ago, didn't it?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As the honourable member indicates, this has been a matter on the agenda for a long time and I am delighted that it is now being addressed.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I want to speak today about poverty and I want to do so because I noticed that in the Governor's speech today we did not hear the word 'poverty' and we did not hear the word 'poor'. We heard no commitment to people in our community who daily face the struggle of being poor, whether that be economically poor, poor in health, poor in spirit or poor in social contacts. The best we heard in the Governor's speech today was that the government was going to work for the affluent and those with special needs. If this government thinks the term 'those with special needs' covers those who are poor—and only those who are poor—it needs to think again. 'Special needs' refers to people who are rich, those who have advanced talents in education and need special support. It refers to people who are rich but who have special needs for aged care. Those people's needs must be addressed but so, as a priority, must the needs of the poor. My remarks today will draw very heavily on the work of Vicky Rowland, a financial counsellor in the south who is well known for her work in the community, her ability to work with those who are recently poor for a range of circumstances and those who have long lived in poverty. Vicky gave the address, 'The real face of poverty', to the State Anti Poverty Conference in May this year and today seems to be an appropriate time to remind the House of some issues that she raised.

She looked particularly at what poverty does. She mentions that many of the poor cannot buy food, clothing, shelter and medical care they need. Neediness causes malnutrition and poor health. It also produces feelings of frustration, hopelessness and a loss of dignity and self respect. In some cases, the poverty stricken become angry with society and turn to violence. Vicky quotes from the *World Book Encyclopaedia* on poverty as follows:

Governments and private organisations throughout the world have tried to reduce or eliminate poverty. However, it remains a widespread and serious problem.

But today I have heard no evidence—and I have seen none in the past two years—that this government is seriously trying to reduce, let alone eliminate, poverty.

I have mentioned that people can be poor in different ways and addressing the different ways in which people are poor takes understanding, commitment and determination. One needs to look at the influence of expectations and how poverty is very much a relevant issue in our community. We need to look at how poverty occurs and whether in many cases there is a straw that breaks the camel's back and sends families into poverty. It can be such matters as people who have been living on a very tight and balanced budget finding

that they need major car repairs. The whole business of establishing a home can lead to poverty when people's expectations are so great. They find that so many things are not included. They find that the letterbox, the garden hose and the encumbrance that requires that they must establish a lawn in the front garden are really more than they can manage. Yet this is not pointed out to them when they go through the process of signing up for a home.

Relationship breakdowns also cause poverty. Parents find it particularly difficult to address the issue of how their children manage at school when there are so many different expectations. Families face decisions like whether or not to buy a computer. They are told that they will be left behind if they do not buy a computer, yet they are scared that if they do they will have expenses which they will not be able to meet and which they do not know how to address.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am very pleased to be back and it is interesting to see the attention members are giving to particular issues before the House. During the break, I had a document delivered to my letterbox on 23 August 1999. I thought that perhaps this was just another roneoed document but on closer inspection I find it is headed, 'Discussion paper—Australian Labor Party—edition one'.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, already I have a winner; I have struck already. It states:

How bad is the ALP going when Bob Sneath, Secretary to the Australian Workers Union, is co-opted to make a major political statement to the *Advertiser* political editor, Miles Kemp?

This is very interesting. On the particular morning it was circulated it certainly got George Weatherill on his pushbike. I have never seen George move as quickly. The document continues:

Mr Sneath calls for the resignations of certain ALP members of parliament, many of whom would have been there before he joined the ALP. By the way, when did he join the ALP?

That is an interesting question. I am sure the member for Ross Smith will enlighten us on that in his ongoing interesting exercise—and we wish him well. It continues:

His political masters have required him to name certain members of parliament who have to go in order that Labor leader Mike Rann have new blood in parliament prior to the next election. . . Mr Sneath has named Murray De Laine, Carolyn Pickles, George Weatherill and Ralph Clarke. Well, yes, he would certainly name De Laine, Weatherill and Clarke. Why you may ask? Well, Mr Sneath has been promised a spot in the Legislative Council. In fact, George Weatherill's spot. But we are told that George won't go until his son, Jay, has been preselected into De Laine's seat of Price and of course Master Pat covets Clarke's seat of Ross Smith.

That is interesting. No doubt we will have the election signs run out again around his seat, but we are looking forward to that. It continues:

The fact that Sneath has been selected for this task is strange, for it may have the effect of looking at his suitability as a candidate for parliament. Mr Sneath has presided over the most disastrous period in the history of the Australian Workers Union. . . Mr Sneath is described as the Secretary of a 12 500 strong Australian Workers Union. Mr Sneath must have been seeing double when he claimed that membership for he would know that the real figure would be closer to 6 000. The Australian Workers Union is a standing joke in union circles in South Australia with the CFMEU having more ex-AWU members than the AWU could claim as members. The AWU is broke in all respects, and Mr Sneath is desperate to leave before the final collapse occurs.

It goes on with a heading, 'Sneath needs to go before Hansen gives him the push,' as follows:

There are many more rumours and facts emerging from the sinking ship that Sneath so desperately wants to leave behind that could bring shame on the ALP should Sneath be successful in entering parliament at the expense of decent long serving members he has named.

I assume he means the members for Price and Ross Smith. It continues:

One other fact is worth noting from the Miles Kemp article in which State Secretary Ian Hunter agrees with Sneath. Everyone knows that Hunter is. . . and should be replaced as quickly as possible before Mike Rann who presided over the second lowest vote in ALP history in the State outdoes himself when at the next election when Hunter would be cast aside. . . One final point the ALP should be considering is Senator Nick Bolkus's claim—

we all know Senator Bolkus—

'the ALP needed to revitalise its ranks and Mr Ralph Clarke should step aside.'

Nick Bolkus should be the last person to criticise others, his contribution to the ALP has been worthless, and he more than any other person has been pivotal in the decline of the South Australian branch. Nick is great at pointing the finger at decent hard working ALP politicians, when he would hate to have his past indiscretions highlighted in the press. Driven any buses, and made any phone calls lately, Nick?

I do not know who the author of this document was, but I can say that it was fairly selectively handed around the House. I have sought to clarify the authenticity of it and I am told that it is very accurate. I would like to know who the author is, but I am looking forward to the second edition. I would say that, having had two successive court cases, it is not far away.

Time expired.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I nominate the member for Hartley to move an Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening speech, and move:

That consideration of the Address in Reply be made an order of the day for tomorrow.

Motion carried.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Sessional committees were appointed as follows:

Standing Orders: The Speaker and Messrs Atkinson, De Laine, Lewis and Meier.

Publishing: Mr Hamilton-Smith, Ms Hurley, Messrs Koutsantonis, Scalzi and Venning.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT SAFETY

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

That the members of this House appointed to the committee have power to continue their consideration during this session.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON A HEROIN REHABILITATION TRIAL

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

That the select committee appointed by this House on 10 December 1998 have power to continue its sittings during the present session, and that the time for bringing up its report be extended until Thursday 21 October.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I want to pay tribute to the workers at the Clovelly Park Mitsubishi plant. I, the member for Reynell and the Leader of the Opposition (Mike Rann) toured the Mitsubishi plant at Clovelly Park, otherwise known as the Tonsley plant, last week. We were extremely impressed with the competence and obvious skill and knowledge of the work force. They treated us very well as we walked around the factory. I had not been there for about three years, and I noted a number of changes between that time and last week. In terms of the infrastructure, there have been significant improvements to the assembly line area, clear evidence of Mitsubishi's continuing investment in South Australia.

The other significant feature of this trip to Mitsubishi was the emphasis on the workers and their ability to make improvements to the plant. I must say I was impressed with management's emphasis on giving opportunities to workers to have their say and to contribute suggestions for greater productivity within the plant. The workers there are under a lot of pressure. It is not their fault; it is not Mitsubishi's fault. To a large extent it is the fault of international forces at work bringing pressure to bear on Australia's tariff levels. It is well known that our manufacturing industries and, in particular, our car manufacturers have relied for decades on a degree of protection.

And why should we not have that protection, is the question that I constantly ask at state level and whenever I am with my federal colleagues. Let us face it: there are workers in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia, who are paid a mere pittance. They are exploited; they are beaten down to survival level; and, as a consequence, manufacturers in those countries are able to deliver a cheaper product into Australia than we can sometimes manufacture here. But why should we support the appallingly low living standards in some of those Asian countries at the expense of the livelihood of our own workers here in Adelaide?

I have probably several hundred Mitsubishi employees living in the electorate of Mitchell, and I know that the member for Reynell has probably as many again in her area, and we hear quite frequently the concerns of those working people. I know that management at the local level would like to be able to tell them exactly what is happening. Management would like to be able to promise them that their jobs will be safe in years to come, but so much depends on decisions made in Japan, and we are waiting with bated breath to hear what those decisions are. Meanwhile I, Mike Rann and my Labor colleagues will be campaigning for no further reductions in tariffs, particularly those that affect the car industry.

I turn to the subject of police and crime. Earlier this year, with the shadow Minister for Police (Pat Conlon), the shadow Attorney-General (Mike Atkinson) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mike Rann), I held a forum concerning crime and public safety in the electorate of Mitchell. It was well attended and a great diversity of views were represented, but the overwhelming concern of people was the inability of our excellent police force to be able to respond as quickly as desired and required by local residents. We heard particularly alarming stories such as the example of police taking three

quarters of an hour to attend premises where there was clearly someone trying to break into a car in the driveway of an elderly woman living alone.

She was terrified. She turned on her porch light from inside in the hope of scaring away the intruder, but the light only made it easier for the crook to do his work. There were other stories of people dialling 11 444 and getting the engaged signal or being referred interstate to telephone operators who did not know what suburb they were talking about. The answer to this, at least in part, is a bolstering of police numbers. I drew up a reasonable petition to bring to the House of Assembly, calling on the government to ensure that there are increased police numbers to address this problem.

The point I made at the public meeting in Mitchell earlier this year and the point I make again is that the greatest deterrence to would-be burglars and car thieves is not the length of sentence which they face. Rather, it is the likelihood that they will get caught in the act and ultimately be apprehended and brought to justice before the courts. So, if we have more police who are able to respond more quickly (and I am talking not about vigilantes but about properly trained and qualified police officers), we improve our chances of reducing the crime rate, and there is a very strong desire in the community for that to occur.

I was pleased to bring to the House a petition signed by 562 residents calling for more police numbers. That is just in my electorate and without any great effort or campaigning. That petition spread like wildfire and came back to my office very quickly. I was very pleased to have the support not only of Neighbourhood Watch groups but also of many residents who would not otherwise become involved in any sort of political action or protest. I thank those people who put their names forward and I will continue campaigning within the Labor Party and the parliament for increased police numbers.

I now refer to the open space in Seacombe Heights immediately south of the suburbs of Darlington and Seacombe Heights. On the face of a hill visible from the southern plains of Adelaide is a grassy hillside which has on it a few olive trees and a few native trees here and there and which, unfortunately, for historic reasons, is zoned residential. People who have bought homes in the area over the past 20 years or so have always believed that that land was classified as hills face zone and therefore safe from further residential development.

It has now become apparent that the land is owned by Transport SA and is not required for its purposes for the southern expressway or for any other transport purpose. The option before Transport SA, and therefore the option before the government, is very clear: either they can sell off that land and perhaps maximise sale revenue at about \$3 million or they can keep it as open space. As I have said again and again to many local residents, it is a political decision. The Minister for Transport, who is also the Minister for Planning (Hon. Diana Laidlaw), ultimately will have to face the decision, that is, whether she wants to try to get another \$3 million into the state's coffers and have another piece of open space alienated from local people and, in the process, incur the anger of hundreds of local residents in my electorate, or ultimately she can decide to keep the land free and available for recreation and visual amenity and free from the extra traffic and stormwater problems that would arise should residential development proceed.

Time expired.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): The recent non-sitting period that we have just experienced gave members of parliament an excellent opportunity to work in their electorates in a way that is not possible when parliament is sitting. I must say that I really appreciated that time, and it has been a reasonably rewarding period.

One of the events that I wish to highlight today concerns the visit to my electorate by the Minister for Tourism (Hon. Joan Hall) during that period. In fact, she visited my electorate on 18, 19 and 20 August. Certainly it was a very comprehensive and action packed visit. It always disappoints me that there is insufficient time to visit all the areas that I believe require visiting and some attention. Nevertheless, in the time available, I sought to take the minister to those areas that I thought needed to be viewed so that, hopefully, she could become acquainted with many of the important tourism projects that are occurring in the electorate and so that, if possible, some assistance could be given to some areas as well.

To the people in the areas that it was not possible to visit, I say that hopefully there will be another opportunity in the not too distant future. To the people who were perhaps right next door to the minister when she said 'Hello' to people but who were not able to say 'Hello' to her personally, I hope they understand that only so many areas can be visited and so many people spoken to during a limited period.

I would like to highlight some of the areas that we visited during that period. One of those was the new development at Wallaroo, namely, the Wallaroo Copper Cove marina. It is a huge project. As I have outlined to this House previously, a minimum of 450 new allotments are being created; indeed, some have already been created. It is on schedule for water to enter the marina at the end of October, and I trust that that can be fulfilled. The scale of the project continues to amaze people who come to look at the marina, and I think members of this House would be extremely impressed and very surprised at how large the proposed marina is. I trust that both stage 1 and stage 2 will come to fruition in the coming year or two. As I said, the water should actually come into stage 1 at the end of October this year.

We also had the opportunity to visit and ride on the Yorke Peninsula Rail Preservation Society tourist train, and I thank all the people who made themselves available to be on the train with us and let the minister see at first hand how this tourist operation is going from strength to strength. Whilst currently the train runs only from Wallaroo to Kadina, permission has been given (and the railway line is being checked and cleared) for the line to go through to Bute, and there is permission for the line to run through to Snowtown. That will provide an excellent opportunity for a major tourist attraction in the Copper Coast area. The most important thing to take into account is the fact that there is sufficient spare rail, because for much of the track there is both standard and broad gauge, of which eventually only the standard gauge will be used. Sufficient rail will be left over from taking up the broad gauge to put in a new rail link from Wallaroo to Moonta. It will be quite something when the rail runs from Moonta through Wallaroo, Kadina and Bute to Snowtown, and I look forward to that occurring in future years.

We also looked at the Banking and Currency Museum at Kadina. It was the winner of the 1999 classic country Yorke Peninsula tourism award for museums and was also the winner of the 1998 classic country Yorke Peninsula award for

tourist attractions. The proprietor, Mr Mick Vort-Ronald, is a person who literally dedicates his life to that museum. It was the former bank occupied by the ANZ and is a substantial building in its own right, and Mr Vort-Ronald has an exhibition there of notes and coinage that rates at a world level. In fact, it would certainly be the best banking and currency museum in Australia and I believe it would rank with the best in the world—and it is right in our own state. It is in my own electorate of Goyder at Kadina. I compliment Mr Vort-Ronald and would urge anyone visiting the area to take the time to go through that museum. Probably an hour and a half is the absolute minimum, and one could spend considerably more time than that. Whether or not you are interested in coins and notes and their memorabilia, it is a fascinating attraction.

That completed the first day, and on the second day we started out at 8 o'clock in the morning and the Minister had an interview with Mr Peter Thompson at Gulf FM, a community radio station run by Peninsula Community Broadcasters. It is all voluntary work given to that radio station, which is certainly going from strength to strength. In fact, its signal goes out from Arthurton further down the Peninsula and it is seeking to encompass the Peninsula as a whole. While the actual output needs to increase, it is gathering a significant listening audience, and it is wonderful to see the number of young people becoming involved in that community radio station and offering their time freely, in many cases after school, bearing in mind that many of the announcers are still attending school.

Following that interview we had a good meeting with the District Council of the Copper Coast, with the Mayor, Ivan Oats, and members of his council and with the Chief Executive Officer, Mr John Shane. There was also the President of the Yorke Peninsula Tourist Association, Mr Tony Schkabaryn and the Chief Executive Officer, Ms Racheal Klitscher. We then went to Matta House, whose Chairman, Dr Tim Woods, showed us over the museum and showed us the concepts and proposals for Matta House to become a national dry land farming museum, a museum that hopefully will be on a similar footing to the cattlemen's museum at Longreach in Queensland. That will be a real achievement for South Australia and I would hope that it will come to fruition in the not too distant future.

Following that we looked at the Wheal Hughes mine at Moonta. It is an underground mine, in fact, the only underground mine that people in South Australia can go down in normal circumstances. Certainly we have the underground mine at Roxby Downs, but that has very limited access. Western Mining Corporation has put significant money into the Wheal Hughes mine and we thank it for that. Many tourist and school groups are going down the Wheal Hughes mine at Moonta and everyone wishing to look at an underground mine will be very impressed with that one.

We also took the opportunity to travel on the Moonta rail, another voluntary organisation, to look at the Moonta tourist office and also to see an impressive private development there of a four or five star accommodation centre to be established at Moonta Bay.

Time expired.

Motion carried.

At 4.42 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 29 September at 2 p.m.