

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 29 September 1999

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

CHILD-CARE SERVICES

A petition signed by 101 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the government to allow the child-care services at the Regency Institute of TAFE to remain open was presented by Ms White.

Petition received.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY STRATEGY

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY**: I am pleased to report progress towards the government's literacy and numeracy strategy for centres, schools and institutes in South Australia. The literacy and numeracy strategy reflects the absolutely fundamental importance of literacy and numeracy as a South Australian priority and demonstrates the government's commitment to improving literacy and numeracy standards. Targeted consultations on the strategy have occurred during 1999 through meetings with stakeholders and via the Learn SA web site.

Literacy and numeracy are each priorities for all learners, for the community and for the current and future benefit of our state. Literacy and numeracy are essential components of education in the early years and throughout schooling. They form a critical base for further education and training, and for a highly skilled work force that supports the economic growth of South Australia. Successful literacy and numeracy skills also contribute to an individual's ability to participate in the life of the community and to fulfil one's aspirations.

The strategy covers all areas of the Department of Education, Training and Employment's responsibilities. In particular, it will provide information for schools to enable the improvement of practice and provide guidance to site leaders for local planning and action. It will assist in raising the profile of literacy and numeracy in the community and will clarify the department's commitment to improve learning outcomes. The literacy and numeracy strategy is a demonstration of South Australia's commitment to the achievement of the national literacy and numeracy goal; that is, that every child leaving primary school should be numerate and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level, and the subgoal, that every child who commenced school in 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years.

Schools will address improvements in literacy and numeracy learning as part of their operational planning processes and will report on outcomes in their annual reporting processes. Actions already in place that will form part of the literacy and numeracy strategy, which are essential to this state's commitment to meeting the elements of the national plan, include:

- The development of an early years strategy focusing on birth to eight years, which aims to improve learning outcomes for children and students. The aims include

improved early identification of students at risk, seamless transition between different stages of learning, and increased communication about student achievement between teachers.

- School entry assessment to identify learning already achieved by young learners and to enable connections to be made between home and school literacy and numeracy.
- Basic skills testing and benchmarking of students against national literacy and numeracy standards.
- Reporting of centrally collected student achievement information to parents.

In South Australia's schools and preschools a focus on literacy in the early years has resulted in improvements in children's learning and the teaching interventions that have been put in place. Information from individual schools and from basic skills test results over time indicates improvements in literacy standards for the majority of students. The strategy will build on the excellent work already occurring here. In order to fulfil the high literacy priority, schools will need to ensure that leadership is provided to plan programs that suit both school and individual student needs.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I bring up the first report of the third session of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

CHINESE DEVELOPERS

The **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)**: Given that the Premier's office announced in December 1998 that negotiations with the Zhong Huan Group over the redevelopment of the former tax office in King William State would be finalised during a visit to China in January of this year, and that the Premier publicly announced from China that he had signed a deal with the Chinese developers on 14 January this year, why did the Premier yesterday tell this House that the meeting was only a courtesy visit and that there were no deals in place 'at any level of any type'?

The *Advertiser* reported that the Premier had signed an agreement with the Chinese developers over the tax office redevelopment on 14 January this year. On 24 September 1999, Mr Harry Tu of the Zhong Huan Group confirmed to the media that the then Office of Asian Business CEO (Mr John Cambridge) had been instrumental in attracting Zhong Huan to buy the former tax office, and that Mr Cambridge had helped the company to reach an agreement with the state government over the redevelopment of the former tax office.

A spokeswoman from the Premier's office was quoted last December as saying that the Premier would be travelling to China to meet with Mr Tu, and said:

We are in the process of finalising negotiations with him and hope the negotiations will be completed in January.

Were all those stories about the deals signed in China wrong?

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier)**: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does not like it, does he, when you are able to attract a \$15 million new development into South Australia? He has to cast aspersions over it. Clearly, the ministerial statement yesterday in detail responded to a range

of questions, and the leader now confirms his collaboration with the *Australian* in relation to the vendetta against Mr Cambridge—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The leader will not ignore the chair, either.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Well, we certainly have a sensitive Leader of the Opposition today. I can understand why there is a level of sensitivity along the front bench considering the way in which the member for Kaurua comes in, the heir apparent, sitting on the cross benches. To come back to the question which does not have a lot of substance in it: simply the ministerial statement yesterday was clear, specific and detailed. The reason it was so detailed was to stop this habit of the opposition drip-feeding, reinventing, cutting certain sentences out of questions, painting a different concept to a question and presenting it. The member for Elder is pretty good; he is laughing because he knows exactly what I am talking about. You drop a couple of words off here, put a new sentence over here, put them together and you create a different perception from the reality. The ministerial statement says it all.

POLITICAL EQUALITY

Mr CONDOUS: Will the Premier outline to the House the government's position on equality of opportunity for all South Australians?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I am delighted to respond to this question from the member for Colton. Historically, South Australia has been at the forefront of promoting new and more inclusive social attitudes. In many respects, South Australia throughout its history has set the agenda with many social issues. For example, we were the first parliament to apologise to the stolen generation. All of us believe there had been some wrongdoing in that instance and, in a bipartisan way, a sincere apology was rendered to those who were affected. Considering that unanimous support, one can only look in disbelief at the activities of some opposite as it relates to the Aboriginal community in Port Pirie and some of the activities of the ALP. It would be interesting whether, on this occasion, the leader is prepared to give a further apology.

This government's social agenda is underpinned by a commitment to all South Australians. Irrespective of their background, they should have the same opportunities, the same choices, the right to choose and the right to freedom of political association. Our state is what it is because of the contribution of people from diverse cultural background who have made South Australia their home.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Hart interjects. The member for Hart is from the right. We have a number of factions on the other side: the member for Hart is from the right faction; the member for Elder is from the left faction; and the member for Ross Smith is left right out. Of course, the irony of this—

Mr Foley: What about your factions?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The irony is, of course, as someone has just recently put to me, that the only person financially now viable enough to stack branches is the member for Ross Smith. He has bankrupted the party in one

sense. I will move on to the question. Each and every one of those sections of the community from diverse cultural backgrounds has made a significant contribution to South Australia in making this state their home. Each and every one of them brings something unique to the state which makes a society what it is, and it has given a depth and character to this society. South Australia is proudly a community of communities which have all benefited from this, socially, economically and certainly culturally. We have argued consistently, and I was delighted to hear Federal Opposition Leader Kim Beazley express the same view in Adelaide recently, stating that we need to increase the number of skilled migrants coming to Australia and in particular South Australia. The value of the contribution of past migrants—targeted, skilled migration—will produce a better state and underpin further private sector capital in this state, and that makes a better home and provides greater surety, certainty and job prospects for all of us.

South Australians have certainly shown a willingness to extend a hand of friendship to those in need. We welcomed the Kosovar refugees to South Australia, and I was particularly disappointed that the federal government has chosen to close Hampstead barracks tomorrow and relocate those refugees to other locations prior to their returning to their homeland. We are still looking at ways in which we might be able to help those people make South Australia their home. They have become part of this community, and many of them want to stay. Some young people are medical students at Flinders Medical Centre, and I see no reason why they should not pursue their medical career here in South Australia. I have asked that the federal government consider the specific instance of the two young students concerned. I might add that the federal government has shown no consideration, latitude, tolerance or flexibility on this matter to date, and that disappoints me.

I have written to the federal immigration minister on our willingness to house, for example, East Timorese refugees in South Australia and to do our part on the basis of our humanitarian responsibility to help people suffering from tragedies that we see occurring in other countries around the world.

Examples of the government's commitment to multiculturalism is shown in volunteers, and one outcome was developing a program with Port Power, for example, where footballers will work with young people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Port Power has a high representation of Aboriginal players in its squad, and these indigenous athletes will become valuable role models for all South Australian school children. Their pride in their culture and heritage will be an important message to school children, no matter what their backgrounds are. Many of these footballers are seen as idols by young people, and to have a message that it is not smart to write graffiti or be involved in drugs in the community but that it is better to have a healthy, focused lifestyle and make a contribution I hope will help with the education of our young people and give them a greater capacity to reject peer group pressure to be involved in the drug trade, for instance, in any way.

Last night I had the pleasure to present the 1999 Student of the Year awards. The winner was a young Aboriginal woman, Elsie Fisher. Elsie, who is active in the reconciliation process, spent most of her life in foster care and has great pride in her extended family and cultural background. She was a worthy winner of that prestigious award. All in all, whether it concerns the Kosovar refugees, our willingness to take East Timorese refugees or our indigenous Australians,

that demonstrates that we have developed an inclusive society, which has been enriched because of its inclusiveness and which at no stage anybody should put at risk or asunder by activities undertaken for base political purposes.

CHINESE DEVELOPERS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Why did the Premier tell this House yesterday that the Department of Trade Chief Executive Officer, John Cambridge, had offered Mr Harry Tu of the Zhong Huan Group (Australia) the use of his inactive shelf company to satisfy Mr Tu's desire to belong to a South Australian company, when Mr Tu had set up his own South Australian based company five days before he became a director of Mr Cambridge's South Australian Golden Investment Fund?

The Premier told Parliament yesterday that Mr Harry Tu considered that he should belong to a South Australian company in some way if he was to be involved in business here and he had been offered the use of an inactive shelf company by Mr Cambridge. However, Mr Tu had registered a South Australian company on 1 October 1998—the Zhong Huan (South Australian) Group, based in Pirie Street Adelaide—which now has \$3.5 million worth of shares. That was five days before he became a director of Mr Cambridge's South Australian Golden Investment Fund on 6 October 1998. Mr Cambridge registered the SA Golden Investment Fund on 31 August 1998, only five weeks prior to Mr Tu's appointment as director of that company, even through Mr Cambridge claimed to have registered it well before he even met Mr Tu.

An honourable member: So what?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Exactly! So what? The reason for the long and detailed ministerial statement yesterday, with the minutes and the letters, all put on the table, open, out and put down, has cut across where the Leader of the Opposition was intending to go. The reason for that detailed ministerial statement is now self-evident: the wont of this opposition to pick at different components to try to create a different impression and perception than the reality of the circumstances. Try as he will—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Try as the leader will, he will not dent, despite his best endeavours, economic investment in South Australia. The leader goes on to talk about EDS and Motorola. I am sure he would have put in *Compagnie Generale des Eaux*, Vivendi or Thames U.K. He would have put in those had he had time to think about it. This is the Leader of the Opposition, who is so negative in his personal discussions with a number of these companies, that they—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Yes they do, and they report back to the government. What you are on about is not economic activity but a starving of investment. Why? It is for base political purposes for the next ballot box. That is what it is about.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Speak to Rick Allert.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I have spoken to Rick Allert.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: You should.

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The interjections of the Leader of the Opposition indicate the lack of substance of where he is going. Clearly and concisely the ministerial statement answered the question yesterday and, secondly and important-

ly, despite what the leader might say and do, and despite his interaction with major companies interstate and overseas, we as a government will continue to fight and obtain maximum private sector new capital investment in this State. Unabated will be this government's endeavour to get new investment in South Australia, because that is where the real jobs and job certainty comes from, and that is a key priority of this government.

The Leader of the Opposition makes much play of the cash registers ringing in London and Tokyo. I do not care if some cash registers are ringing interstate or overseas, because if their cash registers are ringing those companies are profitable and will reinvest in South Australia and will provide more jobs for South Australians. The Leader of the Opposition was pretty selective. He talked about London cash registers—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Leader of the Opposition said—and we have all heard it—that the water contract was about a cash register ringing in Paris and London, but he did not talk about cash registers ringing in Detroit or in Tokyo. The point is that the investment out of Paris in Orlando Wyndham and the hundreds of millions of dollars additional expenditure in the Barossa Valley are important to us. The investment out of Tokyo at Mitsubishi or Bridgestone is important to us. The investment out of Detroit in General Motors-Holden's and the prospect of an additional \$1 billion worth of expenditure to underpin the further expansion of our manufacturing industry is important to jobs. It means security and jobs expansion and is tackling the key issue: employment growth in South Australia. And despite the carping, whingeing, opposing noises of the Leader of the Opposition, we will not change tack. We will go and get new private sector capital investment and continue the economic forecast that we see currently, a 14 month employment trend line growth—14 months in a row.

The unemployment level is down now. I think it was 12 per cent when the leader was a minister for employment in the last government—12 per cent it was when he left. We have got it down to 8½ per cent, or whatever the figure is. That is not bad; we have carved almost 4 per cent off the leader's unemployment figures. In addition, we have economic forecaster Econtech in its 19 August report indicating that South Australia's economy is as robust as it has been for some time, and it has growth potential over the next two to three years. Why? Because for six years we have focused on the private sector new capital investment and rebuilding South Australia's economy from the desolate state in which it was left when we won government.

ABORIGINAL RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): My question is directed to the Minister—

An honourable member: Who wrote this?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I'm coming to you later. Can the Minister outline what initiatives—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I didn't know the honourable member was in order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will get on with his question, please.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Sir, I am rather shy and—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will ask his question.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Can the Minister for Correctional Services outline what initiatives his department has been involved in regarding the supervision of offenders in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, and can the Minister further advise the House whether he has had drawn to his attention any branch stacking that the Labor Party was up to in the Pitjantjatjara lands?

Ms HURLEY: Sir, I rise on a point of order. I do not believe that the Minister is responsible for any activities of the Labor Party or any other party in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The members on my right will come to order. I am not upholding the point of order at this stage, but I ask the minister in his reply to be well aware of the ruling I gave yesterday.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member for his question. I know the commitment over decades now that the honourable member has had in working with the Aboriginal community in the AP lands. In fact—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Isn't it disappointing that on a very serious issue such as this members of the Labor Party still have to crack jokes. It is very disappointing. For those of us who are very interested in what is happening in this state, I would like to acknowledge the commitment that the honourable member has made in the AP lands for decades. One of the first people that I met when I got off the plane last week when I went to the AP lands told me how much he appreciated Graham Gunn's commitment to the community in the AP lands. It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet with the AP lands council in the lands last week. The couple of days that I spent there have given me an opportunity to far more laterally think about the way in which Correctional Services should operate in the lands in the future. It was a long meeting with the council but, at the end of the day, it was a very successful meeting and I was delighted to be able to sign a memorandum of understanding with the AP lands council that I believe will augur well for the Aboriginal community in the lands and, indeed, for the whole of South Australia as that MOU is further developed in the future.

In 1997 our government, through the Department of Correctional Services, entered into agreements with the Aboriginal community councils in the lands with respect to community supervision for offenders who were the subject of community service orders. It was time to upgrade and take the next step forward with a new MOU, and that is what we did. The MOU provides for a number of opportunities, the first of which is the development of culturally appropriate Department of Correctional Services offender programs that reflect the real needs of the AP lands community.

Secondly, there is the delivery of offender programs which reflect restorative justice principles in meeting the requirements of not only the courts but the Parole Board and the Correctional Services Department's statutory responsibilities. Importantly, the third key point and one that took a lot of discussion concerned the potential through the Department of Correctional Services to set up a diversionary facility much

closer to the lands in order to accommodate those offenders on community service orders, etc.

One of the things that have concerned me for some time as Minister for Correctional Services is what I have seen with correctional services involving Aboriginals when they go to Port Augusta. I believe—and so does the council in the lands—that correctional services may be much better worked through with them if the partnership continues between the community in the lands and my department. I look forward to further developing and exploring that opportunity.

Further, I was in the area not only as correctional services minister but as police minister. I put on the record how much I appreciate the work of the South Australian Police Department, particularly the police aides, with the community in the lands. One of the those police aides with whom I spoke had worked 11 years as a police aide, and I was most impressed by the commitment that that person is showing in working through law and order issues with the people in the lands.

There are a couple of other matters worth putting on the record with respect to what is happening with the Aboriginal community up there—and I am sure that the minister for education will not mind my telling this story. In meeting some of the people under my portfolio I bumped into the Principal of the Indulkana school who told me that this year the first three Aboriginals will graduate through the full year 12 SAS course. One of those students is going to university and the other two are looking forward to doing a nursing course in Alice Springs. I think that is great news.

When I left the lands I went into Coober Pedy, where I met with correctional services people. I must say how much I appreciate the professionalism and genuine commitment of those departmental people working from Marla into the lands and also working from Coober Pedy with the Aboriginal community there. In fact, through community services orders the new fantastic development, the new reserve, being developed on the outskirts of Coober Pedy is coming together. The ownership, pride and commitment of the Aboriginal people I saw there and the good work being done by the community services order people in assisting with the provision of footpaths, paving and the like at that reserve is fantastic.

As a result of that, 15 of the young Aboriginal people in that reserve will graduate with a building certificate. We are now talking to them about how they may be able to work with community services order people in the lands to effect some capital improvements and infrastructure upgrades for the people in those lands. I think this is a fantastic story, which shows a commitment from our government and from the Aboriginal community in the lands, and I look forward within my capacity on behalf of our government to being able to develop further the partnership approach between our Aboriginal community and the government.

CHINESE DEVELOPERS

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier explain what happened between 3 September this year and yesterday that caused the Department of Industry and Trade to change its mind and decide that the Zhong Huan Group did not qualify for a requested \$200 000 in assistance money from the state government to redevelop the former tax office in King William Street? The Premier yesterday tabled a statutory declaration from an executive director within the Department of Industry and Trade, Mr John Frogley, which stated that on 3 September this year he had advised his

department's CEO that assistance should be provided to the company to redevelop the tax office. Yesterday, the Premier told parliament that the project was in line with current government policy, was not a high risk venture but that the department had assessed that it did not meet required assistance criteria and it was refused. On 15 September this year the first article about Mr Cambridge's business links to the Zhong Huan Group appeared in the *Australian* newspaper.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): As the honourable member should realise, not every project that is recommended is actually approved.

ABORIGINES, HEALTH

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Will the Minister for Health advise the House of the recent initiative—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member speak. The honourable member for Bragg.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Will the Minister advise the House of the recent initiatives in the human services area that will improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in South Australia?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): In answering the first question from this side today, the Premier talked about South Australia's being a state that was striving towards achieving equality. I guess there is no greater area of inequality in this state than the difference between the health of indigenous people and that of non-indigenous South Australians, and I start by highlighting some of those huge differences. Aboriginal people have a mortality rate four times greater than that of non-indigenous South Australians.

Prenatal deaths are twice as high as those in babies born to non-indigenous people, and there are 64 per cent more premature births amongst the indigenous population. They have higher rates of diabetes, asthma, hypertension, renal disease and ear, nose, throat and eye problems. Deaths from diabetes are 12 times greater within the Aboriginal community than within the non-Aboriginal community of South Australia. That is just a snapshot of the huge problem that we confront when we look at the health aspects of indigenous South Australians.

Over a number of years this government has made that one of its top priorities. In fact, in the health area it is the top priority, and so it should be. My predecessor set up the first dedicated Aboriginal health unit in the whole of Australia, headed by Brian Dixon, an Aboriginal specialist. Secondly, he set up specific targets to make sure that we had targets that we could aim towards in order to improve Aboriginal health. Thirdly, he set up very effective programs such as the petrol sniffing program up in the Pitjantjatjara lands. Some of those programs, while they were operating, were very effective indeed.

We as a government have set out to put in place a number of other new programs in the past 12 months, and I would like to touch on those. The first is the renal health program, which is specifically aimed at trying to reduce diabetes within the Aboriginal community. As I noted earlier, the death rate from diabetes is 12 times greater than for the rest of the population. Through this renal disease program we are hoping to make sure that there is better nutrition, in particular, for young mothers during and immediately after pregnancy, and also better nutrition for the Aboriginal children involved. That will increase kidney size and, therefore, very substantial-

ly reduce the incidence of kidney disease in Aboriginal people.

Another very important program was launched by me just recently. Called the Aboriginal Child Health Program, it is being jointly run by Nunkuwarrin Yunti and Child and Youth Health in this state. Every Aboriginal child, as they go into a primary school, will now undergo a very extensive health test. Equally, they will undergo an extensive health test as they come out of primary school, so we will have benchmarks as to the status of health of young Aboriginal children, how we should be working on improving that status, and seeing what the improvement is by the time they leave primary school.

We believe that one of the reasons for the very poor performance of Aboriginal children in completing secondary education is the health problems that they face during their schooling. Only 3 per cent of Aboriginal children complete year 12, and there is a very strong link between that very low rate and the health status of the Aboriginal children involved. By monitoring their health and trying to improve their health whilst they are at school, we believe we can markedly improve their education. That is another major program that we have put in place.

The third aim is to improve housing for Aboriginal people. I talked about the ear, nose and eye infection problem. One of the big problems is the unhygienic conditions in which they are living. We are trying to make a quantum shift by establishing the Aboriginal Housing Authority in this state and by now pumping a substantial amount of funds, together with the commonwealth government under the commonwealth-state housing agreement, into that housing authority.

As a specialist area, we are looking at constructing housing for older Aboriginal people. No specialist aged care facilities have been available for those who have lived beyond about 55, 60 in the past. Now, starting on the west coast, we are looking at putting in such facilities. The most recent initiative has been to tackle the mental health problems amongst people particularly in the Aboriginal lands. I have allocated special funds to allow special Aboriginal health workers who are trained in traditional medicine to work in those Aboriginal lands to try to rectify what appear to be some pretty unique mental health problems amongst the indigenous population.

This government is making a huge commitment in the Aboriginal health area. I do not expect any significant improvement for a number of years. This is a case of working on the Aboriginal children today, hopefully to see an improvement in 30, 40 or 50 years' time. The final area is to ensure that we train the indigenous people to be the health professionals for their own community. We have initiated a scholarship scheme and \$100 000 a year goes into that scheme. Currently, we have 18 indigenous people working in areas of medicine, nursing and dental surgery with the objective that they will go back and work within their own communities, and therefore have a greater understanding of the programs and to ensure that more effective programs are put in place.

We start with a huge inequality when it comes to health for our Aboriginal community. It is a program we are committed to try to rectify. It will need ongoing commitments from governments in this state for the next 20 to 30 years to even make a significant change in reducing that inequality.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Why did the Premier call off an inquiry into the business dealings of Mr John Cambridge after Mr Cambridge claimed that he could not have informed the Premier of a potential conflict of interest over the Zhong Huan Group Australia because he did not know he had been made a director of that company until February/March this year and that, in any case, it was an honorary position? According to Australian Securities and Investment Commission documents, Mr Cambridge was appointed a full company director of the Zhong Huan Group Australia on 24 December 1998, nine days after the company bought the tax office building in King William Street.

The Australian Securities and Investment Commission has informed the opposition that Australian companies law requires that a director sign a consent form prior to being appointed a director of an Australian company. The Australian Securities and Investment Commission was informed of Mr Cambridge's directorship on 7 January this year, within the two week time frame required to comply with Australian companies law. This was three days before Mr Cambridge accompanied the Premier on a trade mission to Shanghai to negotiate an agreement with that same company.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): The question posed by the deputy leader is answered in the ministerial statement yesterday and I simply ask her to read it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The deputy leader will come to order.

The Hon. J.W. Olsen interjecting:

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

SCHOOL RETENTION RATES

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Will the Minister for Education outline an initiative by the state government to increase school retention rates among young indigenous Australians?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education): One of the areas in education in which I would sincerely like to see an improvement is that of the retention rates among Aboriginal children in school. It is also an area where a great deal of work needs to be done. A few weeks ago my department, along with the Pitjantjatjara and Anangu population, released an education plan for Aboriginal children for the next five years. One of the important things in that plan is the involvement of the elders of the Aboriginal communities in discussing with the principals and teachers of those schools in the northern lands of South Australia what should be in the curriculum for their young people.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Not as yet. To retain young Aboriginal people in education, the teaching of their culture and language and some of the requirements the elders wish them to learn is a very important part of the curriculum. I believe it will help to keep young Aboriginal people interested in remaining at school and keep the absentee rate down to a much lower level. As the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services has indicated, some principals and teachers in the AP lands are doing an excellent job of delivering education in those areas and providing

excellent programs, and I commend them for the work that is being done there.

The government provides education for Aboriginal children at an early age, because Aboriginal children are able to come into preschools at the age of three years, whereas children in the rest of the community enter at the age of four years. The idea behind this is to expose young Aboriginal children to literacy and numeracy as early as possible, to develop their skills in that regard and get them ready for school and interested in their schooling. The best way to increase the retention rates and employment levels of Aboriginal people and have an impact on the number of Aboriginal people in our gaols is for them to become literate and numerate, thus having a greater chance of gaining employment within our community. One of the ways to do that is to target those early years; it is a particularly important area, as we have seen earlier. If we can achieve that, I think we will see a reduction in the absentee rate and also an increase in the retention of young Aboriginal people at school.

The government has allocated some \$20 million support for Aboriginal students over and above mainstream funding. However, it is not the only area with which we are concerned in those early years. Some recent programs worth mentioning are a land care program in horticulture, a vocational education and training plan in tourism and hospitality at Yalata and Aboriginal and Islander students career expos held at Port Augusta and Wayville Showgrounds. An Aboriginal and Islander career awareness program has been delivered to students in eight government and one independent school. A mentoring program is in place for first year teachers, and we are working on a range of fronts.

When teachers go to the northern area of this state and commit themselves to staying there for more than one year, their acceptance by the local Aboriginal population is quite incredible. They are very pleased that the teachers stay with them for more than one year, and work with them exceptionally well. I take my hat off to those Aboriginal communities that are seeking a better outcome for their young people, because they recognise that the way to do this is through better education, better retention rates for their young people and aiming that at those early years to get a really good start for their education at school.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): My question is directed to the Premier. What guarantees can the Premier give that the CEO of the Department of Industry and Trade, Mr John Cambridge, did not use any taxpayers' money whatsoever to attend, as a paid director, a general meeting of New Toyo International Holdings in Singapore during the week of September 16 this year, when he took two days annual leave while in Singapore on government business? It was reported last week that Mr Cambridge took two days annual leave to attend a regular meeting of New Toyo International Holdings in Singapore to sign off on half yearly profit figures while he was there on government business two weeks ago. Mr Cambridge was also in Singapore on September 16 last year on government business.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I have no evidence—and I do not know whether the honourable member has any evidence—that while on leave Mr Cambridge used any taxpayers' money. I will seek clarification from Mr Cambridge, and I am sure that the answer will be 'No.'

ABORIGINES, SUPPORT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs advise what the government is doing to support Aboriginal people in the bush?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I certainly thank the honourable member for his very important question. In contrast to the Labor Party's blatant exploitation of Aboriginal people, this government serves to maintain and support the dignity and welfare of Aboriginal people. I am very pleased to advise the House of the excellent work that has been done by the northern regional office of the Division of State Aboriginal Affairs (DOSAA). Over the past three weeks the northern regional office has employed two additional Aboriginal project officers.

Members may recall that early last year the senator responsible for Aboriginal affairs, Senator Herron, released a very important paper on removing the welfare shackles, and this has focused most departments of Aboriginal affairs in looking at areas to promote economic development and address the social and complex nature that underlies the removing of any welfare shackles. It is not surprising to hear that the focus of the new project officers is on economic development and domestic violence prevention, which seems to be an hilarious event to members opposite. However, as well as assisting other project officers in the areas of education and training, Aboriginal heritage and social justice, the officers are also investigating opportunities for aquaculture development in Port Lincoln and exploring a business incubator concept in Port Pirie.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: For someone who was part of blatant exploitation, I would consider that that was rather nasty in itself. One of the new officers is also working to identify and contact Aboriginal people—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Elder will remain silent.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart will remain silent. The Minister is on her feet.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I have said it outside and I am certainly quite happy to continue to say it in here: how absolutely sickening that the sensitivities of the so-called—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: What about the crocodile tears of sensitivity being apparent before you started into blatant exploitation of Aboriginal communities? Do not give it to me now—it is just too late. One of the new officers is also working to identify and to contact Aboriginal people seeking business opportunities within the IT area in Whyalla and Aboriginal cultural tourism in Coober Pedy.

In relation to domestic violence, the northern regional office is investigating education methods for youth and monitoring the development of the Port Augusta crime prevention committee. The northern regional office also recently completed two heritage projects: an upgrade of the visitor facilities at Sacred Canyon engraving site in the Flinders Ranges and the maintenance of the visitor facilities at Yourambulla Caves. The Yourambulla project was completed—

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the cameraman's attention to the rules relating to filming in Parliament.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The Yourambulla project was completed in conjunction with students of the Port Augusta TAFE Aboriginal land management course. In return for the students' assistance, a DOSAA heritage officer gave the students a full and comprehensive presentation on heritage conservation, on legislation and on DOSAA's role in conserving Aboriginal heritage through the site conservation strategy for the South Australian project.

It is very pleasing to note that staff from the northern regional office report what is certainly a growing relationship with the local Aboriginal community as services extend beyond Gepps Cross. The main focus of DOSAA's northern regional office is to make a difference for Aboriginal people through the identification of the pathways for progress. It is, therefore, very pleasing to be able to report that the officers in the northern region appear to be making considerable progress. I certainly assure the House that, under this government, such support to Aboriginal people living in regional communities will be continued with a great deal of vigour.

I would like to conclude by also commending the Minister for Correctional Services. The program is to be managed under a memorandum of understanding, which he explained today. It is certainly pleasing because I know that, in this instance, the Aboriginal people actually knew what they were signing.

ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the immense importance to South Australia's industrial export and jobs future of the Darwin to Alice Springs railway and the bipartisan support it enjoys in South Australia, which the Premier has always recognised, is he concerned about statements made by the Northern Territory Chief Minister, Denis Burke, that his government could walk away from supporting the railway? Is the South Australian government considering the allocation of extra moneys beyond the \$100 million already committed and will the Premier now lobby the Howard government to increase its commitment of funds from \$100 million to provide up to \$300 million to ensure this project becomes a reality?

Last Thursday, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Mr Burke, told the media that the consortium charged with building the railway is seeking more funds to start the project. He said:

... if we don't get to the figure we're after—we're walking away from the project.

He continued:

I've been talking on the media in South Australia and urging South Australians to get their government to put their contribution on the table and one can only hope the Prime Minister will come good with his.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): The Adelaide to Darwin rail project is a key project; it is a priority project. We have put enormous resources (and by that I do not mean financial, up to date) of government agencies and departments into ensuring the outcome, which is a positive one: that is, we get a rail link built between here and Darwin. It is important not only because of the important strategic nature of a rail link that has now been demonstrated in recent times by the issues in East Timor but also because of the economic spin-off benefits to South Australia in the construction phase of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link. These spin-offs, of

course, would be to Whyalla and other areas in the provision of parts of the infrastructure. So, we are particularly keen to ensure that this 90 odd year old promise of the commonwealth government is actually delivered at some stage.

As members of the House know, we have put \$100 million towards the construction of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link, as have the Northern Territory and the commonwealth governments. The status of the position at the moment is that there is final contract negotiation and the preferred consortium in respect of whom negotiations for best and final offers are currently being considered, as I understand it, will present its best and final offer to the Australasian Rail Corporation towards the end of this week—that is, assuming the consortium does not seek an extension of time to lodge its best and final offer. I am not aware that it is seeking an extension of time: I am simply saying that the best and final offer is due in this week but for a possible request for an extension of time, if it is its wont—and I do not know whether it is. If that were to occur, there would be delay for the best and final offers. If it does not occur, the Australasian Rail Corporation should be in a position within the next, I suppose, three to four weeks to brief both the South Australian government and the Northern Territory government on the proposal that is on the table and what steps would need to be taken by the respective governments after that.

The transcript from which the leader has quoted has been drawn to my attention, and I do not wish to comment on that at all. Whilst a body such as the Australasian Rail Corporation is in the process of negotiating to get the best deal for South Australia and the Northern Territory, we should leave it to them to conclude their negotiations with the consortium. Once they have concluded negotiations and have the best and final offer on the table, that is an appropriate time for both the South Australian and Northern Territory governments to look at that proposal and take any steps that might be considered appropriate. I do not want to anticipate what those steps might be, because one cannot anticipate what the best and final offer will comprise. Therefore, I think it is premature at this stage to speculate on the outcome or what those subsequent steps might be.

INFORMATION ECONOMY

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): My question is directed to the Minister for Information Economy. What is the government doing to bring the information economy to the migrant communities of South Australia, and how does this compare with the efforts being made in other states by their governments?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Information Economy): I thank the honourable member for a question providing an opportunity to inform the House about how the information economy will help our multicultural and ethnic communities to be greater participants in the benefits for South Australia. The government's vision for the information economy is an inclusive one. In considering the impact of the information economy, I am sure that everyone in the House has been clearly mindful of the potential for technology to overcome the tyranny of distance. But it is also important to realise that the benefits of technology as it flows into the information economy will help to overcome what we might call the 'tyranny of language', because if someone is unable to communicate with their next door neighbour they may as well live on the other side of the world.

Clearly, the first benefit of providing services to people whose first language is other than English is being able to make accessible to those people a lot of information in their own what we would term 'foreign' language but what to them obviously is not. The next wave of technology is, I think, even more exciting, because IT developers now are developing services so that users can take a piece of electronic text and convert it automatically from one language to another. Of course, this has huge potential.

Earlier this year I was most interested to see a demonstration of a software package which in this particular instance had been developed by European police as part of the Aventinus program, which allows conversion from a particular language to eight different languages. Those languages have been digitalised, and the package in this instance allows particular words to be highlighted. Clearly, the words which one might expect, such as 'drugs', etc., are the ones which are the keys, and when those come up the text is then further translated. Obviously, in the European police example it does allow the European police to combat international crime, which is using the information technological aids more and more. The European police are doing that especially in the areas of Europe which are being threatened by major social change as some of the structure of the political tapestry changes so dramatically.

Obviously with that example being very practical it is then up to us to utilise all the advantages to ensure that we capitalise on the benefits for the people in South Australia who would be able to benefit from these translation services, and there is a well recognised market opportunity in a very important niche. It is pleasing to report that innovative South Australian companies are pursuing this niche with the vigour that exists in this sector of the economy, and it is clearly an advantage for our small and smart knowledge companies. They are taking up the challenge of delivering on-line information in multiple languages automatically. In particular, I am told that C-Tel-Imageering offers a service to its web site customers whereby a single web site can be translated on the fly from English into any one of five languages, depending upon the needs of the site visitor. It is interesting to note that this whole topic of translation into second, third and even fourth languages has already come up for discussion on the government's talking point site about which I spoke only yesterday in question time.

I am aware that the provision of on-line health information in a number of community languages is a strategic direction that is emerging in the human services portfolio, and I am sure that it is indicative of an emerging trend more widely to provide on-line services that are appropriate to the entire community. It is no exaggeration to say that the information economy strategy includes all South Australians, wherever they are and whatever their background.

ABORIGINES, LIFE EXPECTANCY

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs inform the House of the latest information regarding Aboriginal life expectancy and, in light of those figures, advise whether any consideration has been given to special provisions for early withdrawal and other flexibilities from state superannuation funds for indigenous public servants?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): The statistics on Aboriginal health are something

that not one of us can be very pleased with. I think that we are all aware of those statistics, particularly the life expectancy, which is probably some 20 years fewer than that of white populations. It is an area that causes great concern and, as the honourable member is aware, many programs have been initiated throughout the health system to attempt to alleviate some of the complex problems that will lead to better nutrition and certainly better elements of living. That is still far from reaching the point where it will be effective in terms of reducing the statistics that we would all like to see reduced.

In terms of the last part of the honourable member's question, which addressed more of a financial aspect for Aboriginal communities, that is something that would need to be taken up with the Treasurer. I am quite happy to do that and bring back an answer for the honourable member.

ADELAIDE PARKLANDS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Members would recall the major local government initiatives that were debated in parliament last session. These culminated in the passage of the Local Government Bill 1999 and the Local Government (Elections) Bill 1999. However, the Statutes Repeal and Amendment (Local Government) Bill 1999 did not pass. The government has considered how it should respond to the debate concerning the Adelaide parklands which took place in the last session, and it is now appropriate to outline the government's position on this matter.

The intention of the parklands trust and parklands fund proposals (originally introduced by the member for Adelaide) was to demonstrate the government's commitment to the preservation of the parklands. Such proposals would more specifically increase and extend the Adelaide parklands open space through the land contribution aspect of a land trust. The government remains committed to confirming in legislation for the first time—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come to order.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The government remains committed to confirming in legislation, for the first time, the special place of the Adelaide parklands not only in the social history of this state but in the hearts and minds of all South Australians. This is a heritage which this government will not allow to be squandered.

Technical aspects of the effect of the proposals, in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the parliament, the state government and the Adelaide City Council and the inter-relationship between the various legislative provisions affecting the Adelaide parklands, raised concerns relating to the present and future status, the use and management of the parklands and adjoining lands. The resulting debate demonstrated the widespread and profound public interest in the uniqueness of the Adelaide parklands and a desire for a broader examination and discussion of the significant policy issues underlying more technical matters.

This heightened interest has created an opportunity to develop legislative provisions for the Adelaide parklands based on a shared, over-arching vision of their unique importance to the City of Adelaide and for present and future generations of South Australians. Representatives of the government and the Adelaide City Council have continued

to discuss this potential in the weeks since the parliamentary session closed.

The intention is to reaffirm the distinctive status of the Adelaide parklands and to ensure the establishment of a framework of clear and coordinated strategies for their future, linked to statutory strategies and plans such as the Capital City Development Program, the Planning Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide, the Adelaide City Development Plan and the City of Adelaide's strategic management plans.

Since 1880 provisions that once dealt—and I suggest the member for Spence listens to this very carefully—specifically with the care, control and management of the Adelaide parklands have been incorporated in more general statutory provisions relating to parklands administered by local government. The Local Government Act 1999 continues to recognise the Adelaide parklands as a special class of community land, the classification of which cannot be revoked. Parklands managed by other councils, generally speaking, have been the subject of a proclamation made pursuant to the Crown Lands Act, dedicating or reserving such lands as parklands.

Investigations undertaken by the government have shown that the Adelaide parklands have never been subject to such a proclamation and have specifically been placed under the care, control and management of the City of Adelaide by legislation dating back to 1849. This is significant, and special legislation for the Adelaide parklands would provide even greater clarity as to the implications that this has for the powers of the Crown and the council in relation to the Adelaide parklands.

Legislation in the form of a separate act or a schedule to the City of Adelaide Act 1998 could provide an historical statement concerning the status of the parklands and demonstrate how a strategic vision for future use and management of the parklands, which incorporates social, environmental, cultural and economic objectives, can be achieved. This could also establish processes to facilitate transfer to the parklands of land held by both the state government and the Adelaide City Council. In doing so, certain provisions of the Local Government Act 1999, which are specific to the Adelaide parklands, could be replaced and appropriate links could be made to other relevant legislation.

I believe the government and the Adelaide City Council can work together to reach accord on the expression of a vision for the Adelaide parklands and to develop the legislation required to facilitate it. The government's goal is to introduce legislation in the autumn sitting after appropriate consultation.

PAPERS TABLED, CORRECTION

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): Yesterday a statutory declaration given by Mr Frogley was tabled. That statutory declaration had an error. I now table a corrected statutory declaration before the House.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms KEY (Hanson): My grievance relates to a number of issues raised by my constituents over the break. In particular I refer to a letter I received from Mr Ernest Mcleod who lives in Glandore. His case is directed mainly towards the director of fisheries and also the minister for fisheries. In part, he says:

Discrimination against registered and licensed boat owners by fisheries and government of South Australia.

I am complaining about the manner in which 'craypots' registration was issued by authorities administering the use of craypots in South Australia.

When information was released that registration could be obtained for the use of craypots, I applied immediately, but in 1997, 1998 and 1999, I was promptly told I was 'too late' and it was uncertain whether further registration may be issued for use of craypots.

I tried to contact the authorities from 8 a.m. until 4.30 p.m. on 6 September 1999. When I finally made contact, I was informed I was . . . too late and to try again next year (2000).

In my opinion, I am being discriminated against by the government of today and the fisheries department. I was forced to pay boat and levy registration, together with a licence to operate a boat in South Australian waters. Should I use a radio for emergency purposes when fishing, a fee to use the radio was also imposed. I am also paying to launch my boat from a public road when I have already paid mass registration of two vehicles (boat and car) to use the road. Definition of road: 'road' means—'(a) a road, street or thoroughfare; and (b) any other place commonly used by the public or to which the public are permitted to have access'.

During the past eight years, I have witnessed mass increases in car and boat registration, plus the incurred cost of levies and fuel. [I] felt it is time the authorities started to give and not take from recreational fishing. All registered boat owners should have the right to have the use of equipment to obtain food to eat without greedy professionals raping and depleting our waterways of undersized fish when caught in nets.

There should be no fee imposed for the use of equipment on boats. We pay enough on other fees which I have previously mentioned. Only punished if illegal equipment is used. It is a disgrace how much we pay trying to get a meal of fish. Why do I have to pay to employ people just to catch fish, then they tell me what I can and cannot do? You have put a slur on my honesty as an Australian. If I do not get registration for a craypot I will use one and, if prosecuted, I will subpoena the minister for fisheries for discrimination against me personally. When I have tried to comply with the law.

If I am not permitted to have a registered craypot, then you are forcing people like myself to break a law. I have tried for three years to get a licence without success. How much more do I have to do to get equipment registered? I was born an Australian and I feel I have this right to fish without fear of being prosecuted by authorities whom I employ by fees I am already paying.

It is time somebody made a sensible decision on the use of equipment to be used by amateur fisher persons. Instead of greed and poor decisions that brought this state to the brink of bankruptcy, and then allowed the perpetrator to walk free. (Catch a person with an undersized fish and, if he [or she] does not pay the fine, he [or she] goes to prison.) Bankrupt this State, you can walk away a free person.

I submit this report so you can look at the big problem being created by unprofessional persons of authority within the state. I eagerly await your decision on this matter by personal interview or report.

That was sent on 14 September to both the minister and the director of fisheries. I use this letter as an example of the many complaints I have received in my electorate office in which allegations are being made about the way in which craypot licences have been issued. I have been told of people of two years and nine years of age now having licences for two craypots each. I look forward to getting the paperwork that goes with that to support this claim that this is a really unfair and ridiculous system.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): In a democracy people are entitled to join political parties if they so desire. People are also at liberty to recruit and canvass people to belong to

organisations or political parties, but they are not entitled fraudulently to sign application forms on behalf of other people. What I want to know is: where does the Leader of the Opposition stand in relation to the comments made by the member for Giles? Does the leader support the member for Giles? Will he act on her complaints? If the leader will not, what action will the shadow Attorney-General take, the person who aspires to be the chief law officer of this state? I do not know whether he has read what the honourable member had to say, but I draw it to your attention, Mr Speaker, and that of the House. I quote:

State Labor MP, Lyn Breuer, whose seat takes in Coober Pedy, says the Party's recruitment of the Aboriginal members amounts to fraud. . .

Fraud is a most serious criminal offence. She says that forged signatures or deception would have been required and she is considering involving the police, but we have not heard from the Leader of the Opposition; where is the leader on this matter? She also goes on to say that 20 people had their post office box address at 300 Coober Pedy, which is the Aboriginal community centre there. The coordinator of the ATSIC community development employment program, Mr George Cooley, a friend of mine, whom I personally put on the school council at Coober Pedy, said that members have been put on a mailing list without their knowledge. The member for Giles goes even further. This is what she has had to say:

They had no idea what these letters were about. It frightened them because a lot of these people have difficulties reading. They don't read English and they believed they were in trouble. They thought they were in trouble for not voting and perhaps were going to get fined.

These are underprivileged people who are quite trusting of people in authority. I want to know who signed these applications, who paid the money, who processed them and why they all came back to the one post office. I would suggest that a person was intercepting their mail and that that person may have been absent at the wrong time and, of course, the whole scheme fell apart.

So far, the only action we have seen is that a lot of Labor lawyers have been well rewarded. The only people to have stood up so far are the members for Giles and Ross Smith. Where is the leader on this issue? I put it to him that, if any other political organisation in this state even attempted this, he would be on his feet in indignation, putting on a star performance. We have not heard anything. I do not believe there is a more serious breach of political etiquette than to use well meaning, simple people as political cannon fodder.

Ms Hurley: Simple? How outrageous!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I know more about those communities and would have associated with more Aboriginal people in my time in this parliament than you would have. I know George Cooley and respect what he has to say. I have known him for years. It is all right for the honourable member to get touchy about it: this is a serious matter. Your own member is alleging fraud, and what have you done? Fraud is a very serious matter, and I want to know why something has not been done about it. The member for Ross Smith said he woke up one morning and had 70 more members.

An honourable member: Seventy?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Seventy members suddenly arrived. Suddenly, 2 000 members were put on the books of the Labor Party. I wish we could get another 1 000.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The honourable member has now taken some notice.
Time expired.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Two weeks ago in Victoria we saw the Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett come close to losing—and he still may lose—government on two key issues: cuts to health and lack of true accountability. Today the opposition again brought up an issue of accountability within this parliament that goes to the heart of the integrity of the government. What we have seen here today in this House is the Premier on the run from questions that seek to establish the business dealings of one of its key senior bureaucrats. The question is why; what is the Premier seeking to cover up? Mr Cambridge appears to have led a charmed existence as a senior executive in this government. When his position was demoted from chief executive officer of a government department in October 1997, he was scooped up into the Premier's Department to be appointed chief executive of the office of Asian business—an area with which he clearly has some affinity.

What we have now discovered is that, from 1 January 1997, Mr Cambridge had been a paid director of an offshore Singaporean based company, New Toyo Holdings International. New Toyo has its regular meetings to sign off on half yearly profit figures every September. Mr Cambridge just happened to be in Singapore this year for that regular meeting, and took two days leave to attend that meeting. Coincidentally, he was there last September on government business, too. Was any taxpayers' money involved in getting Mr Cambridge to Singapore to attend this month's meeting? It appears so. Taxpayers certainly paid for his air fares.

Then we find that Mr Cambridge is also a director of the SA Golden Investment Fund, a company which he set up on 31 August last year and which was intended for some kind of retirement business. Five weeks later, he and a director of another company, Mr Harry Tu, joined his SA Golden Investment Fund. Why? We do not know. Yesterday, the Premier told us it was because Mr Tu wanted to be involved in a South Australian based company. That was wrong. Mr Tu was already involved in a South Australian based company here in Adelaide, located in Pirie Street. The Premier has a responsibility to come back into this parliament and correct that statement before he can be accused of misleading the parliament.

Then, Mr Tu decided to appoint Mr Cambridge as a director of his company that bought the former tax office in King William Street, nine days after the company bought that building and three weeks before Mr Cambridge and the Premier set off on a trip to China to negotiate a deal between the state government and the company to redevelop the tax office.

The Premier put out a series of press releases about this matter, and I will read part of one from 17 January 1999, headed 'Olsen bags deals', as follows:

South Australian Premier John Olsen returned to Adelaide yesterday from his trade mission to China with contracts worth around \$155 million in his briefcase. The deals negotiated in Beijing and Shandong last week involved three major projects. The first was to refit the old taxation office at 60 King William Street to provide accommodation for overseas students.

A previous article in the *Advertiser* of 14 January states:

The Premier, Mr Olsen, will sign an agreement with the Chinese developer . . . in Shanghai today. The redevelopment required a formal agreement between the state government and the Communist Party, which owns the company.

The Premier is now trying desperately to distance himself from that deal. Both the *Advertiser* and the *Sunday Mail* announced that he had bagged a deal and returned triumphant from China with his contracts in his briefcase. Now, according to the Premier's statement yesterday, it was nothing more than a courtesy visit after the sale had gone through. Which is the truth? Why is he trying to distance himself from that deal now?

This government must be held accountable for its members, its ministers and its senior bureaucrats such as John Cambridge, who draws down a salary package of nearly \$250 000 a year: they are accountable too. The opposition will not give up calling for a full and independent inquiry into this matter so that we can all be assured of what is going on here and that this government is providing the accountability that the people of South Australia require.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): Two years into the Forty-Ninth Parliament, the Olsen government is still failing to address the fact that it is a minority government. It is still failing to consult, to listen and to learn—

Mr Clarke: You should remind them.

Mr McEWEN: —and at this moment I am reminding them. I also noted that government members are prepared to play gutter politics. They are not as pure as driven snow, and one day I might stand in this place to tell the story about the preselection process in which I was involved. If they want to play dirty linen tactics, I will put them on notice. I will contribute to that debate.

But I have not stood for that purpose today. I have stood because I am concerned about another tactic. The minority government, rather than failing to recognise that the cross benches can be part of the solution, still sees us as part of the problem, and choose their own party room to misrepresent many of the things we do. I want to give but one example.

The example I will provide is not the respite care funding alarm; not concerns about health funding, mental health and hospitals; not the recreational rock lobster pot licence fiasco; not the emergency services levy funding backflips; not the export of logs concerns; not the lack of management of our water resources; not local call access to the internet duplication; not the MF station and CFS emergency service bungle in the South-East; and not the whole of the GRNC, because I think the trunking and paging bits of it are okay, but the simplex part of the GRNC—the part where fire trucks want to talk to fire trucks, where fire trucks want to talk to command vehicles, where fire trucks want to talk to water tankers, and where fire trucks want to talk to council graders and bulldozers, because that is the crucial bit of communications in a fire.

What I am talking about here is a belief that ultra high frequency (UHF) will serve the purpose rather than VHF. UHF happens to be great in cities because the high frequency signal will actually penetrate buildings. It happens to be useless in forests, because those signals will not go through pine trees. The first person who raised that publicly was not me but Mr Sandy Haigh, a local vigneron and character extraordinaire. He got headlines in the local paper when he said, '\$250 million emergency services radio useless here.' I chose not to go public. I chose to write to the minister the next day and ask him to send some technical experts to the South-East so that we could actually look at the claims. Minister Brokenshire said he would do that, and then I heard no more. But I found out by accident that Minister Lawson sent two technical experts to the South-East, and in secret

started talking to people. He forgot to tell me that they were coming. Well, I did find out by accident.

Mr Wright: But you're the local member.

Mr McEWEN: I am the local member. I did find out by accident. I was not sent the press release. Then at short notice my office rang three or four people, because I made arrangements for the technical experts to come back. After my office rang three or four people, 33 people at short notice turned up to hear a briefing from the technical experts—the Hon. Peter Dunn and Mr Peter Fowler, the executive director of the GRN. Let me tell you that most times the answer we got to our questions was, 'We can't answer them; we are not the technical experts.' Why then did the press release from the Hon. Robert Lawson say that members of the state government's technical team working on the roll-out of the government radio network are to visit the South-East to explain technical details of the new network.

The fact of the matter remains that we still do not have answers, and we are still waiting for technical people to come to the South-East. Equally, we are waiting to see the specifications. It may be that Telstra can deliver on the specification; it may be that the specification itself is wrong. That notwithstanding, the people in the South-East are very concerned that we are told in terms of the new radio network, 'Wait and see; suck it and see.' Well, Mr Speaker, we are not prepared to spend a quarter of a billion dollars to find out—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr McEWEN: Yes, it is a lot of money. You ought to tell your colleagues that. A quarter of a billion dollars is to be spent on a radio network that we still do not believe will work.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McEWEN: We demand that they come to the South-East immediately.

Time expired.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Last week I had the opportunity to host a reception for the Ravens netball team in Parliament House in recognition of their outstanding season in 1999. In elections and many other cases in life, we know that there is no prize for coming second. Perhaps, because of that, we often overlook the fact that winning is not always everything. The participation shows that you have already cleared many of the hurdles and reached certain heights. The Ravens did not win the grand final. They were there, though, and playing sport at an elite level is hard work. It is often difficult to have recognition of an achievement, especially in an environment which continues to be dominated by men in spite of world-best performances by women as individuals or as part of a team.

It is striking to think about the difficulties that elite women athletes face in achieving acknowledgment. According to a survey in *Inching Forward*, a publication of Womensport Australia, newspaper coverage of women's sport in six major daily newspapers amounted on average to just less than 6 per cent of total sports coverage, with some 88.5 per cent devoted to men's sport, the remainder being devoted to mixed sport. Front and back page coverage of women's sport also amounts to less than 6 per cent. The *Advertiser* does better than most, with 6.6 per cent coverage of women's sport as a total of sports coverage—better than most, but not really that good. According to *Inching Forward*, 'These results indicate that the front and back pages of the newspapers surveyed are the domain of men's sport.'

Not only is this amount of coverage tiny by comparison to men's sport but also the quality of coverage still tends to characterise women athletes in stereotypical terms. Again, *Inching Forward* states:

The language is often used in several ways to differentiate men's and women's sport. Women again are called 'girls', with references to a female's elegance, describing one athlete as a 'blond girl' or others as 'golden girls', and even writing about one athlete's domestic cooking routine.

Women's sport does not deserve to be limited to synchronised swimming, gymnastics and aerobics. This is not the message that we should be giving our young athletes of the future. They should be encouraged to see athletes such as the Ravens as role models. Instead, very little is done to highlight the achievements of women in sport, and young girls are quietly encouraged to pursue more traditional models of femininity.

It was found in a 1992 federal government inquiry into physical sport and education that there were significant differences in learning opportunities between boys and girls, with more sports available at school level for boys than girls, more competitive opportunities available for boys than girls at an interschool level, fewer female physical education teachers, greater access to facilities, finances and scheduling for male sports and, in some instances, girls' sport not even being offered as part of a physical education program.

In the sporting media, women remain severely under-represented. Women make up only 19.6 per cent of sports general writers; only 9 per cent of sports editors and reporters positions in the electronic media are women; and the figure is only 7.2 per cent in the print media. The failure to acknowledge the achievements of our female athletes is all the more appalling when one considers that 43 per cent of persons engaged in sport are female. How much more impressive then becomes the achievement of our elite sportswomen? Sporting teams like the Ravens are made up of women whose dedication and team spirit are more than admirable. They have persisted in the face of all the odds to succeed, and they stand as great examples for all our young up and coming athletes.

The coach who was in charge of the Ravens for both 1998 and 1999, Pat Mickan, could not be with us on the night. Coincidentally, she is competing in the Masters Games this week, and it is sad to see that child-care provisions are such as not to allow female athletes to be involved as they would like to be in the Masters Games. However, the Ravens new coach was with us on the night, and I wish Fay Walsh and her team, as well as the club's administrators—who are often the unsung heroes of any sporting group—the extra success that they strive for in 2000 that will see them truly satisfied with their year's work.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Nine years ago I raised in this chamber the issue of the head of state for Australia. It got quite a coverage at the time. Some people trivialised it, but as on some other issues I was well ahead of my time, although the suggestion I put forward has not been taken up, nor is it likely to be. As members would recall, it was based on the Swedish-Norwegian model where they worked together to continue a constitutional monarchy in Norway derived from the Swedish constitutional monarchy.

On 6 November we face a series of questions in a referendum relating to the important head of state issue. I totally reject the argument put forward by some people that it is not an important issue or that there are other issues that should take precedence. It is an important issue and intelli-

gent people can deal with more than one issue at one time. I believe it is something that will gain greater attention, and it deserves that attention.

One of the key points that I made nine years ago was that a head of state must be resident in the country. Any other proposition is hard to sustain. So, I am quite consistent now, and I affirm that position that the head of state, whatever format it takes, must be resident in the country. I fail to see how anyone can continue to argue that you have a head of state who lives somewhere else and who rarely visits. That in no way is a reflection on the present head of state, the Queen of Australia, and her representative, the Governor-General. Many members, like I, have had the privilege of meeting with the Queen, and it is fair to say that she has been an outstanding monarch.

But that is not the issue. We are not talking about a particular personality. We know that the royal family has gone through difficult times, because of the behaviour of many of its members, but that is not unusual. If you look at the history of the royal family, you will find that some of them have not always acted in a way that they should have.

The issue for us is: where do we go as a nation? I believe that, if we cannot have a constitutional monarch resident in this country the alternative is quite simple, and that is that we will become a republic. I believe that that is what will happen eventually. If not within the next year or so, it will certainly happen down the track. Members know that taxes and death are two things which are inevitable. I believe that a republic is almost in the same category. If it does not happen within the next year, it will happen very soon thereafter.

A critical aspect in this debate is that, under the proposal, we are talking about a president who is not a United States style executive type president. We are talking about a ceremonial role—someone whose task is to attend functions and to be the figurehead for this nation. So, any suggestion or comparison with the United States or other presidential systems is quite misleading and mischievous.

The proposal set out in the referendum questions defines the President's duties as 'formal and ceremonial'. The argument is put forward by many people that we are throwing out our heritage: you can never deny your heritage, but you can change direction. I am quite proud of my British heritage—my English father came here as a Barwell boy after the first world war. He died two years ago, but I still have many relatives in England, including elderly aunts in their late 80s and early 90s. I do not see a move towards a presidential system as in any way a repudiation of one's heritage, nor does it matter which country one has come from. I also have some Irish heritage.

As a nation we have to choose how we want to be seen by ourselves and also by others. At the moment there is confusion in other nations in terms of how they view us and our head of state. It is quite unacceptable in my view to have a head of state who lives outside the country.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of sessional committees.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

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

That standing orders be and remain so far suspended as to enable the introduction of government bills before the Address in Reply is completed.

A quorum having been formed:

Motion carried.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HEALTH COMMISSION (DIRECTION OF HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CENTRES) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the South Australian Health Commission Act 1976. Read a first time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The purpose of this short Bill is to provide the Minister for Human Services with the power to direct hospitals and health services which are incorporated under the South Australian Health Commission Act.

Under the South Australian Health Commission Act, the Governor can establish an incorporated hospital or health centre to 'provide services in accordance with its constitution'.

While the Act provides for the Health Commission to be subject to the control and direction of the Minister, it does not articulate a similar requirement for incorporated hospitals and health centres. Individual constitutions of some hospitals and health centres include provisions which variously require the incorporated body "to give effect to the policies from time to time determined by the Commission" or "to give effect to any directions given by the Minister and act in accordance with and give effect to the policies from time to time determined by the Commission."

The hospitals and health centres account for the largest proportion of health spending and employ the largest number of staff. In the interests of accountability, it is desirable that the Act clearly and unambiguously provides for incorporated hospitals and health centres to be subject to direction by the Minister.

It is not intended that the power be exercised capriciously – it would be reserved for matters of some policy or financial substance. There are limitations on the exercising of the power. Clearly, it is not intended to extend to individual clinical decision-making or to the sale or disposal of assets not held by the Crown. Accordingly, the amendments specifically provide that:

- A direction cannot be given so as to affect clinical decisions relating to the treatment of any particular patient; and
- A direction cannot be given for the sale or disposal of land or any other asset that is not held by the Crown.

A direction must be given in writing and particulars of any directions given must be included in the incorporated hospital or health centre's annual report.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 2: Commencement

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal.

Clause 3: Insertion of Division 1A of Part 3

Clause 3 inserts a provision into Part 3 of the principal Act to provide that an incorporated hospital is subject to direction by the Minister with the exceptions that—

- (a) a direction cannot be given so as to affect clinical decisions relating to the treatment of any particular patient; and
- (b) a direction cannot be given for the sale or disposal of land or any other asset that is not held by the Crown.

Clause 4: Insertion of Division 1A of Part 4

Clause 4 is in the same terms as clause 3 with the exception that it is in relation to an incorporated health centre rather than a hospital and so is an amendment to Part 4 of the principal Act.

Mr CONLON secured the adjournment of the debate.

TRANSPLANTATION AND ANATOMY (CONSENT TO BLOOD DONATION) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1983. Read a first time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The purpose of this short Bill is to lower the age of consent for blood donation from 18 years to 16 years.

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service—South Australia—has approached the government seeking assistance to increase its existing donor base and align current policies and criteria with interstate Blood Services.

At present in South Australia a person younger than 18 years is only allowed to donate if parental consent is obtained; a medical practitioner advises that the removal of blood should not be prejudicial to the health of the child and the child agrees to the removal. Those requirements have been interpreted as having to be followed each time a young person wishes to donate blood.

By contrast, in a number of other States, 16 and 17 year olds are able to donate. In New South Wales, for example, the Blood Service allowed 16 and 17 year olds to donate some years ago. As a result of these changes and the implementation of a school collection program, this sector now accounts for 6-7 per cent of all donations in NSW which is of significant benefit in enabling that State to satisfy the demand for blood and blood products.

Victoria has also changed its legislation and, based on 1998 performance, has been able to obtain in the vicinity of 4000 donations from the 16-18 year old market.

Based on the age profile of active blood donors in SA as at September 1998, the majority (57.2 per cent) are older than 40 years. While this provides a stable supply of altruistic donors, the Service is concerned with the future supply of blood as less than 4 per cent of all persons younger than 25 years donate blood regularly. With the ageing of the population, it is anticipated that the demand for blood will increase. The Service is putting into place strategies to address the situation, for example, healthy donors aged between 60-70 years are being recruited and lapsed donors are being encouraged to remain active donors.

The amendment, which reduces the age of consent to removal of blood from 18 years to 16 years, seeks to enable the Service to put into place a further strategy aimed at securing an adequate donor base into the future. As a matter of policy, in accordance with the Service's Donor Guidelines, no donation is taken from any person (regardless of age) if the donation is considered prejudicial to the health of the donor.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Insertion of s. 17A

17A. Interpretation

This clause inserts in Division 5 of Part 2 of the principal Act a definition of 'child' which has the effect of reducing the age of consent to blood donation from 18 to 16 years.

Mr CONLON secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (UNIVERSITIES) BILL

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Flinders University of South Australia Act 1996, the Ombudsman Act 1972, the University of Adelaide Act 1971 and the University of South Australia Act 1990. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

Amendment to each of the University Acts

The Governor of South Australia is the Visitor to each of the three Universities in this State with the powers and functions appertaining to that office. The office of Visitor is a traditional office in a university with ceremonial and dispute resolution functions. However, in recent times the resolution of disputes is considered to be more appropriately the responsibility of the Ombudsman.

The office of Visitor to a university is an archaic office with the jurisdiction extending to matters concerned with the internal management of the university. Such matters may include disputes involving members of the university, arising from the promotion or dismissal of staff, and the power to interpret the statutes of the university. The Visitor's power to order remedies is, however, quite limited.

In the past, it has been the case that the government has funded the services of a Queen's Counsel to act on behalf of the Governor as the Visitor in dispute resolution.

The role of the Governor as Visitor does not have a place in modern universities. It is more effective for disputes to be resolved by means such as the Ombudsman or other civil mechanisms.

The proposal to repeal the section in each of the University Acts that provides for the Governor to be the Visitor in no way diminishes any ceremonial role of the Governor in relation to the universities. The universities have stated their intention to continue to call on the Governor for ceremonial functions—legislation is not required for this to occur.

Full consultation has occurred with the Governor and the three universities, and all are in agreement with the proposed amendments.

Amendment to Ombudsman Act 1972

While it is appropriate to repeal the sections of the university acts which give the Governor the powers of Visitor, it is necessary to amend concurrently the *Ombudsman Act* in order that effective dispute resolution is maintained for the two universities not already covered by that Act.

The *Statutes Amendment (University Councils) Act 1996* inadvertently removed the Flinders University of South Australia and the University of South Australia from the ambit of the *Ombudsman Act*. In 1998, as an interim measure, the Governor issued a proclamation under the *Ombudsman Act* to reinstate the Ombudsman's jurisdiction over those two universities.

Consultation has occurred with the Ombudsman and the universities on the proposed amendment, and all are in agreement with the proposed changes. The *Ombudsman Act* refers specifically to the University of Adelaide in the definition of authority but not to either of the other universities. The legislation requires amendment to include Flinders University and the University of South Australia as authorities for the purposes of the Act. This amendment will enable persons in dispute with any of the universities to take the appropriate course of action.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

General comments

The amendments proposed in Parts 2, 4 and 5 of the Bill are consistent with each other. Currently, the Governor is the Visitor to each of the Universities in South Australia with the powers that accompany that position. By repealing the provision in each of the University's Acts that provides for the Governor to be the Visitor, that position will cease to be.

By including the Councils of each of the Universities in the definition of authority in the *Ombudsman's Act* (see Part 3 of the Bill), the Ombudsman will have the authority to investigate administrative acts of the Universities.

PART 1: PRELIMINARY

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 2: Commencement

Clause 3: Interpretation

A reference in the Bill to the principal Act is a reference to the Act referred to in the heading to the Part in which the reference occurs.

PART 2: AMENDMENT OF THE FLINDERS UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT

Clause 4: Repeal of s. 24

Section 24 of the principal Act provides that the Governor is the visitor of the University with the authority to do all things which appertain to such a position. This section is to be repealed.

PART 3: AMENDMENT OF THE OMBUDSMAN ACT

Clause 5: Amendment of s. 3—Interpretation

The Ombudsman has the function of investigating administrative powers of certain authorities. The Council of the University of Adelaide is already included as such an authority. The proposed amendments will also include the Council of Flinders University and the Council of the University of South Australia as such authorities.

PART 4: AMENDMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE ACT

Clause 6: Repeal of s. 20

Section 20 of the principal Act provides that the Governor is the visitor of the University with the authority to do all things which appertain to such a position. This section is to be repealed.

PART 5: AMENDMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Clause 7: Repeal of s. 23

Section 23 of the principal Act provides that the Governor is the visitor of the University with the authority to do all things which appertain to such a position. This section is to be repealed.

Ms WHITE secured the adjournment of the debate.

COMMONWEALTH PLACES (MIRROR TAXES ADMINISTRATION) BILL

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the administration and operation of the state taxing laws that are applied as commonwealth laws in relation to commonwealth places; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This Bill implements essential elements of safety net arrangements agreed between South Australia and the Commonwealth to ensure the continuation of appropriate taxation arrangements in respect of Commonwealth places situated in South Australia.

The need for these arrangements arose from the 1996 High Court decision in *Allders International Pty Ltd v Commissioner of State Revenue (Victoria)*. In that case, the Court held that State stamp duty on a lease covering part of Commonwealth land was constitutionally invalid. Consequently, the validity of other State taxes as imposed in Commonwealth places was brought into question.

As a consequence of the High Court decision, South Australia and the other States requested that the Commonwealth enact a scheme to protect the revenue derived from Commonwealth places formerly collected by the States.

In April 1998 the commonwealth government enacted a package of legislation to protect the revenue of the States. The package included a Commonwealth 'mirror tax' Act (which would apply, in relation to each State, that State's taxing laws to Commonwealth places in that State) and windfall tax legislation (to tax refunds of State taxes paid before 6 October 1997 where the refund is sought after that date on the basis of the constitutional invalidity of the State taxing law).

Under the principal Commonwealth mirror tax Act, the *Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes) Act 1998*, the provisions of State taxing laws are applied and operate in Commonwealth places as laws of the Commonwealth. For example, South Australia's debits tax, financial institutions duty, stamp duty, and pay-roll taxes apply in Commonwealth places as Commonwealth taxes (to the extent to which they cannot apply as State taxes in Commonwealth places because of the operation of section 52(i) of The Constitution). The revenue will be passed on to the respective States under agreements to be signed by the Commonwealth and States.

The South Australian Bill complements the principal Commonwealth mirror tax Act, and provides for a number of important objectives.

First, it permits an arrangement to be entered into between the Governor of the State and the Governor-General of the Commonwealth to provide for the administration of the Commonwealth mirror tax laws by officers of the State.

Secondly, it empowers State officers to exercise or perform all necessary powers and functions for the Commonwealth when

administering the Commonwealth mirror tax laws, including the collection of taxes, and enforcing compliance.

Thirdly, it allows for the modification of State taxing laws to enable them to operate effectively in conjunction with the Commonwealth mirror tax laws so that a taxpayer does not incur any additional liabilities due to two tax systems applying. Where a taxpayer is liable to both Commonwealth and State taxes, because of operations on and off Commonwealth places, the calculation and payment of taxes that apply to each place should not involve the taxpayer in additional cost or effort. For example, pay-roll tax in respect of wages paid to employees working at Adelaide Airport and employees working at other sites should not have to be broken up and paid separately by the employer to the Commonwealth and to South Australia.

The Commonwealth and the States will determine the relevant breakdown of revenues, as appropriate, to ensure that the operation of the legislation does not adversely impact on the business activities of taxpayers and is effectively 'seamless' in its operation.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

This clause sets out the commencement provisions. Clause 2(1) provides that subject to subsection (2), the proposed Act will come into operation on the day on which it is assented to. Clause 2(2) provides that when an arrangement has been made between the State Governor and the Governor-General of the Commonwealth as provided for under section 5, section 7 is taken to have come into operation on 6 October 1997. This means that the modified State taxing laws (modified, that is, by regulations made pursuant to section 7) will be taken to have come into operation on 6 October 1997. The 6 October 1997 date is tied to the date from which the Commonwealth mirror tax liability will apply. The note to clause 2 provides that under the operation of the *Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes) Act 1998* (the 'Commonwealth Act') the State taxing laws are taken to have always applied in relation to Commonwealth places in South Australia, but not so as to impose any liability for tax things that happened before 6 October 1997.

Clause 3: Definitions

This clause defines certain words and expressions used in the Bill. Key definitions are as follows:

'applied law' means the provisions of a State taxing law that apply in relation to a Commonwealth place in accordance with the Commonwealth Act (*see* also explanation of the definition of 'State taxing law', below).

'Commonwealth place' means a place in the State acquired by the Commonwealth for public purposes. Examples of such places include airports, defence bases and office blocks purchased by the Commonwealth to accommodate employees of commonwealth government departments. The Commonwealth must hold the title to the property before it falls within the definition of 'Commonwealth place'. Places merely leased by the Commonwealth, regardless of the length of the lease, are not Commonwealth places.

'State authority' is defined as the Governor, a Minister, a member of the Executive Council, a court, a member of a court, a body created by or under a law of the State and an officer or employee of the State or of such a body. For South Australia, this definition will include persons such as the Commissioner of State Taxation, and taxation officers within the Department of Treasury and Finance who will be associated with the administration of applied laws on behalf of the Commonwealth.

'State taxing law' is defined to mean a State law that is a State taxing law within the meaning of the Commonwealth Act. The Commonwealth Act provides that a State taxing law is:

- a scheduled law of the State (paragraph (a)). The South Australian laws scheduled in the Commonwealth Act as State taxing laws are the *Debits Tax Act 1994*, the *Financial Institutions Duty Act 1983*, the *Pay-roll Tax Act 1971* and the *Stamp Duties Act 1923*;
- any other State law that imposes tax and is prescribed by regulations (paragraph (b)). Although no such law has been prescribed at the present time, should other State taxes prove likely to be similarly affected by the decision of the High Court in the *Allder's* case, there is flexibility to add the relevant State laws to the mirror tax regime at a later date. This would be done by means of regulations made by the Governor-General under the Commonwealth Act. Such later prescription of other taxing laws will give those laws

retrospective effect for the purposes of the mirror tax regime and they will become State taxing laws as if they had always been listed in the Schedule. This ensures that the State revenue concerned is protected as from 6 October 1997; and any other State law to the extent that it is relevant to the laws scheduled or prescribed (paragraph (c)). As new laws that are relevant to scheduled or prescribed laws are introduced, they are automatically included as State taxing laws by virtue of this definition. Existing State legislation is automatically included so far as it is relevant to scheduled or prescribed laws.

This reflects the broad policy of the mirror taxes scheme. Under the Commonwealth Act (section 6), the provisions of State taxing laws that would be excluded from applying to Commonwealth places under paragraph 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution are taken to apply as 'applied laws' of the Commonwealth. The provisions of a State taxing law and its corresponding (Commonwealth) applied law will be identical in substance, hence the term 'mirror taxes'. By virtue of section 6 of the Commonwealth Act and paragraph (c) of the definition of 'State taxing law' in the Commonwealth Act, the applied laws will operate and be applied and interpreted in the same way as the State taxing laws they mirror. Thus, for example, South Australia's *Acts Interpretation Act 1915* and criminal administration laws, falling within the definition of 'State taxing laws' (paragraph (c)) will also become applied laws of the Commonwealth and be applied to other applied laws.

Clause 4: This Act binds the Crown

This clause provides that the Act binds the Crown in the right of the State of South Australia and, subject to the limitations on the legislative power of the State, in all its other capacities.

Clause 5: Arrangements with Commonwealth

This clause provides for the Governor to enter into an arrangement with the Governor-General for the administration of applied laws in relation to Commonwealth places in South Australia. Until such an arrangement is made, the State taxing laws applied by the Commonwealth Act in relation to Commonwealth places will not have effect. This arrangement therefore acts as a trigger for the operation of the applied laws. Should such an arrangement cease, State taxing laws would no longer have effect as applied laws.

One of the matters which may be the subject of such arrangement is the assent by the State to its authorities such as the Commissioner of State Taxation to undertake the various duties which are implicit in the applied laws. Assent is required as a result of the constitutional restrictions on the Commonwealth imposing obligations on State authorities without the agreement of the States.

Clause 5(2) provides for the variation or revocation of such an arrangement, subject to agreement between the Governor and the Governor-General.

Clause 6: Exercise of powers etc. by State authorities

This clause provides for a State authority to exercise or perform any power, duty or function that the Commonwealth Act requires or authorises it to exercise or perform despite any State law. The principal State authorities that will exercise or perform powers, duties and functions under the applied laws will be the Commissioner of State Taxation and taxation officers within the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Clause 7: Modified operation of State taxing laws

This clause provides a framework for the modification of State taxing laws, to ensure their effective operation side by side with the Commonwealth applied laws.

Clause 7(1) provides that the regulations may prescribe modifications of a State taxing law.

Clause 7(2) provides that the modifications may be made only to the extent that they are necessary or convenient either to enable the effective operation of the State taxing law, together with the corresponding applied law, or to enable the State taxing law to operate so that the taxpayer's combined liability under the State taxing law and the corresponding applied law is nearly as possible the same as the taxpayer's liability would be under the State taxing law alone if the Commonwealth places in the State were not Commonwealth places. Clause 7(2) authorises modifications for the purposes, for example, of obviating the need for the taxpayer to lodge tax returns under both the State taxing law and the corresponding applied law, or of ensuring that a taxpayer with a liability under a State taxing law and the corresponding applied law pays no more and no less tax overall than he or she would have paid had only the State taxing law applied.

The modification that is proposed in relation to South Australia's taxing laws is that each State taxing law is to be read together with

its corresponding applied law as a single body of law. The intended effect is to ensure that there is as little change as possible in the overall tax liability of a taxpayer who has a liability under a State taxing law and the corresponding applied law.

Clause 7(3) provides that the modifications may take effect from a date earlier than the publication of the regulation in the *Gazette*, however can not pre-date the commencement of the operation of the section: that is, 6 October 1997. The modifications may deal with the circumstances in which the modifications apply and with matters of a transitional or saving nature.

Clause 8: Continuation of proceedings if place found not to be a Commonwealth place

This clause provides that where proceedings have been commenced under an applied law and the court is satisfied that they should have been commenced under a State taxing law as the State taxing law is not excluded by section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution, those proceedings must continue as though they had been commenced under the State taxing law.

The definition of 'proceedings' (in clause 3) is cast widely to include any stage of judicial proceedings whether civil or criminal. It includes judicial proceedings such as enforcement, recovery, and tax appeal matters.

The effect of clause 8 is that an action commenced under an applied law in the mistaken belief that the State taxing law was excluded by section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution does not have to be restarted, nor does an action have to be redone, where there is a corresponding State taxing law. This prevents a range of possible procedural mischiefs, including the application of limitation provisions, that might otherwise arise.

Clause 9: Objection not allowable on ground of duplicate proceedings

This clause prevents objections against proceedings under a State taxing law merely on the ground that proceedings have been commenced or are pending under a corresponding applied law. It will ensure that proceedings under a State taxing law are not frustrated because a similar proceeding is also taken under the corresponding applied law. Duplicate proceedings may be instituted by a State taxing authority where, for example, it is unsure about the correct jurisdiction. There may also be merit in duplicate proceedings where part or all of the proceedings instituted under a State taxing law are in danger of offending section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution. In that case the proceedings would be taken to have been instituted under the corresponding applied law.

It should be noted that this section does not prevent a taxpayer who has liabilities under both a State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law from facing proceedings under both the State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law. For example, duplicate recovery proceedings could be instituted by the Commissioner of State Taxation against a taxpayer who owed tax under both a State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law. In such a situation, both the taxpayer and the Commissioner would be faced with the prospect of two sets of legal costs and it is likely that they would each take the steps available to them under the rules of court to either consolidate the two proceedings or have both matters heard at the same time in order to minimise the costs. It should be noted that rather than commencing duplicate recovery proceedings it may be possible for the Commissioner to pursue as a single debt, tax payable under a State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law, relying on clause 9 of the Bill.

Where a taxpayer proceeds with an appeal under both a State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law and the appeals involve the same legal issues, it is likely that the taxpayer and the Commissioner will agree to proceed with just one of the appeals and to hold the other(s) in abeyance pending the outcome of the test case, again, rather than pursue as a single appeal the issue that is in dispute under both the State taxing law and the corresponding applied law.

In the case of a prosecution where an act or omission constitutes an offence under both a State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law, it would be possible for the taxpayer to be charged with an offence under both the State taxing law and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law. For example, a taxpayer might provide the Commissioner with a document that contains false information that relates to the taxpayer's liability under both the *Pay-Roll Tax Act 1971* and the corresponding Commonwealth applied law. If a taxpayer was to be charged with two separate offences the taxpayer would not be able to object to this duplication. It is likely, however, that when determining the appropriate penalty

for each offence, the court would take into account the fact that the two offences arose out of the same act or omission.

Clause 10: Proceedings on certain appeals

This clause provides that a court can deal with an appeal from a judgment, decree, order or sentence of a court in proceedings under an applied law as though it was commenced under the corresponding State taxing law, where the court is satisfied that the State taxing law is not excluded by section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Clause 11: Certificates about ownership of land

This clause is designed to facilitate proof of interests in land where an issue arises in proceedings under a State taxing law as to whether a particular place is a Commonwealth place. Although not determinative of the question of whether or not a place has been acquired by the Commonwealth 'for public purposes' (which is a question of law rather than one for formal proof by certificate), such a certificate may nonetheless evidence the fact that the place was 'acquired by the Commonwealth'.

To ensure that certificates are effective, there is a rebuttable presumption in favour of the conclusiveness of the certificate—that is, documents purporting to be such certificates are taken to be so unless proved otherwise.

Clause 12: Validation of things purportedly done under an applied law

This clause is designed to overcome uncertainty by ensuring that if an action is purportedly done under an applied law and the corresponding State taxing law is not excluded by section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution, it will be taken to have been done under the State taxing law that corresponds to the applied law.

The provision will, for example, validate the action of the Commissioner of State Taxation who pursues as a single debt under an applied law a tax debt that relates to a business that is partly in a Commonwealth place, and partly elsewhere in the State. It will ensure that if a taxpayer pays as Commonwealth mirror tax an amount that was properly due as State tax, the amount will be taken to have been paid as State tax so the taxpayer will not be entitled to a refund and the Commissioner will not be required to pursue a separate payment of State tax.

Clause 13: Provisions as to operation of applied law and State taxing law if a place ceases to be a Commonwealth place

This clause is a saving provision for situations where a place ceases to be a Commonwealth place, for example where the Commonwealth sells land which it acquired for a public purpose.

The effect of clause 13 is that in such circumstances, all rights, privileges, duties and liabilities that were acquired or created under an applied law while the place was a Commonwealth place, continue. Penalties, forfeitures and punishments can be imposed as though the applied law continued to have effect, and investigations, legal proceedings and remedies may be instituted or enforced in the same way.

Clause 14: Provisions as to operation of State taxing law if a place becomes a Commonwealth place

This clause is a saving provision similar to clause 13, however this clause provides for the reverse situation, that is, where a place becomes a Commonwealth place.

Clause 14 has the effect that, in such circumstances, all rights, privileges, duties and liabilities that were acquired or created under a State taxing law before the place became a Commonwealth place continue. Penalties, forfeitures and punishments can be imposed as though the State taxing law continued to have effect and investigations, legal proceedings and remedies may be instituted or enforced in the same way.

Clause 15: Instruments referring to applied law

This clause provides for references to an applied law in an instrument or other writing to be read as a reference to the corresponding State taxing law if the State taxing law is not excluded by section 52(i) of the Commonwealth Constitution. This ensures the validity of such documents and obviates the need for new documents to specify the State taxing laws.

Clause 16: Regulations

This clause sets out the Governor's regulation-making powers.

Mr FOLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (LOCAL GOVERNMENT) BILL

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to

make certain amendments to legislation in connection with the system of local government in the state; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This Bill is part the total package of legislation arising from the review of the *Local Government Act 1934*.

A Statutes Repeal and Amendment (Local Government) Bill lapsed at the close of the last session. A Local Government (Implementation) Bill has now been introduced which contains only those provisions of the lapsed Bill necessarily required to implement the *Local Government Act 1999* and the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*, and a separate statement has been made outlining how the Government will respond to the debate on amendments concerning the Adelaide Park Lands which were introduced into the lapsed Bill by proceeding to develop special legislation for the Adelaide Park Lands based on a shared vision of their unique importance for present and future generations. This Bill contains the balance of the provisions of the lapsed Bill which are acceptable to the Government.

The separation of these provisions from provisions necessary for the implementation of the new Local Government Acts makes their purpose clearer. This Bill repeals further provisions of the 1934 Local Government Act covering matters which, under this Bill or under the *Road Traffic (Road Rules) Amendment Act 1999*, are incorporated in appropriate State Acts covering the field.

As previously explained, one of the objectives for the review of the Local Government Act is that remaining Local Government Act provisions concerning regulatory regimes in which both State and Local Government have a role should, if the provisions are still required, be located in the specific legislation which deals with that function. This approach is designed to clarify respective roles, eliminate fragmentation, gaps and overlaps, or provide scope for simplification and consistency with any national standards. It should also assist councils to identify regulatory activities for the purposes of separating these from its other activities in the arrangement of its affairs, as required under the *Local Government Bill 1999*. The *Statutes Amendment (Local Government and Fire Prevention) Act 1999*, the further integration of Local Government's role in traffic management and parking control into the Road Traffic Act by means of the *Road Traffic (Road Rules) Amendment Act 1999* introducing national Australian Road Rules, and amendments in this Bill to the *Public and Environmental Health Act 1987* concerning sewerage systems are examples of this approach.

The Freedom of Information provisions of the Local Government Act 1934 are transferred to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*. The new arrangements clearly separate general public sector provisions for freedom of information as they apply to local government from those concerning access to council documents under the open governance provisions of the Local Government Act, make the freedom of information scheme consistent for State and Local Government, and bring this State's practice into line with that of all other States.

Amendments to the *Coast Protection Act 1992* and the *Harbours and Navigation Act 1993* relocate the provisions in section 886bb of the 1934 Act which deal with the Government's responsibility for the effective management of sand and the access channel in association with the construction of any boating facility at West Beach. The amendments do not change in any way the Government's previous commitments made in relation to coastal and sand management in this area but clarify the functional responsibility within the State Government.

Other amendments to the Food Act and the Highways Act similarly assist to clarify responsibilities by relocating some specific provisions of the Local Government Act 1934 in the appropriate legislation.

The Bill provides for the repeal of s 359 and other provisions of the Local Government Act 1934 dealing with the closure of roads to traffic or the restriction of traffic now covered by the *Road Traffic (Road Rules) Amendment Act 1999*. It does not include amendments introduced into the lapsed Bill which provide that the existing closure of certain prescribed roads to traffic under s 359 will cease to have effect six months after the repeal of that section.

As Parliament has previously considered the matters contained in this Bill the Government hopes it will be dealt with expeditiously. I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

The measure will come into operation by proclamation.

Clause 3: Interpretation

A reference to 'the principal Act' in this measure is a reference to the Act referred to in the heading of the relevant Part.

Clause 4: Amendment of section 18—Access to information

This amendment is consequential on the repeal by this Act of Part 5A of the *Local Government Act 1934*.

Clause 5: Insertion of s. 36A

This amendment is connected with the continuation of the effect of section 886bb of the 1934 Act, which is to be repealed by this Act.

Clause 6: Insertion of s. 28A

This clause is based on section 883(3) of the 1934 Act, which is to be repealed by this Act. The special arrangement under the new provision is to expire on 30 June 2002.

Clause 7:

Clause 8:

Clause 9:

Clause 10:

Clause 11:

Clause 12:

Clause 13:

Clause 14:

Clause 15:

Clause 16:

Clause 17:

Clause 18:

Clause 19:

The amendments contained in these clauses incorporate document access rights relating to councils in the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

Clause 20: Insertion of s. 86

This amendment is connected with the continuation of the effect of section 886bb of the 1934 Act, which is to be repealed by this Act.

Clause 21:

Clause 22:

These amendments related to the repeal of section 300a of the *Local Government Act 1934*.

Clause 23:

Clause 24:

Clause 25:

Clause 26:

Clause 27:

Clause 28:

Clause 29:

Clause 30:

Clause 31:

These clauses make various amendments in connection with the reorganisation and rationalisation of the laws relating to local government.

Clause 32:

Clause 33:

Clause 34:

These amendments are connected with the repeal of section 883, and Part 25, of the 1934 Act by this Act.

Clause 35: Amendment of s. 25—Institution of appeals

This clause will ensure that current freedom of information requests or proceedings will continue under the *Local Government Act 1934*.

Mr CONLON secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IMPLEMENTATION) BILL

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the implementation of new legislation relating to the system of local government in the state by the repeal or amendment of certain legislation and the enactment of transitional provisions; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This Bill follows from the historic passage by this Parliament of the *Local Government Act 1999* and the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*. It contains the transitional provisions and the consequential repeals and amendments necessary to bring the new Local Government Acts into operation on the 1 January 2000 as planned.

This Bill contains the provisions necessary to ensure the continuity of councils and council business in the transition to the 1999 Local Government Acts. It repeals some specific Acts, the purposes of which are covered in the *Local Government Act 1999*, repeals those provisions of the *Local Government Act 1934* which are replaced or made redundant by the new Local Government Acts, makes amendments to various Acts which are consequential on the new Local Government Acts, and provides for the repeal, as and when appropriate, of remnant provisions of the *Local Government Act 1934* which are necessary to retain for the time being.

A Statutes Repeal and Amendment (Local Government) Bill lapsed at the close of the last session. This Bill contains only those provisions of the lapsed Bill which are necessarily required to implement the new Local Government Acts. A companion Bill to this Bill – the Statutes Amendment (Local Government) Bill – contains the balance of the provisions of the lapsed Statutes Repeal and Amendment (Local Government) Bill acceptable to the Government. The Statutes Amendment (Local Government) Bill repeals further provisions of the 1934 Local Government Act covering matters which, under that Bill or under the Road Traffic (Road Rules) Amendment Act 1999, are incorporated in specific State Acts covering the field.

The introduction of two Bills—this Bill and the Statutes Amendment (Local Government) Bill 1999 reflects the dual nature of this stage of the legislative reform process—being (1) the implementation of the new Local Government Acts (effected by this Bill); and (2) the further reform and rationalisation of the statute book as it relates to the local government sector (effected by the other Bill).

All of the provisions in this Implementation Bill had been agreed to by all parties at the stage reached by the lapsed Bill, with little or no question or debate. No new implementation provisions have been added. No changes have been made to the provisions in this Bill since they were last before Parliament, except that some by-law making powers are now not to be repealed. This is because it will assist Councils' transitional process in relation to by-laws if these powers, such as powers authorising by-laws concerning nuisance or good government, remain for the time being in the remnant 1934 Act.

Preparation for the commencement of the 1999 Local Government Acts is a massive administrative task for Local Governments, State agencies, and statutory authorities such as the Electoral Commissioner. It is well underway. However, a great deal of work must still be undertaken in a relatively short time and it is critical that the legislative certainty provided by this Bill is in place at the earliest opportunity.

The Government is therefore confident that Parliament will now ensure that Local Government commences the new millennium with new Local Government Acts by approving this technical measure quickly and decisively.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

The measure will come into operation by proclamation.

Clause 3: Interpretation

This clause sets out the definitions required for the purposes of the measure. In particular, 'relevant day' is defined as a day appointed by proclamation as the relevant day for the purposes of the provision in which the term is used.

Clause 4: Acts repealed

It is proposed to make provision for the repeal of the *Klemzig Pioneer Cemetery (Vesting) Act 1983* (now to be dealt with in schedule 8 of the 1999 Act), the *Public Parks Act 1943* (now redundant) and the *Reynella Oval (Vesting) Act 1973* (now to be dealt with in schedule 8 of the 1999 Act).

Clause 5: Amendment of City of Adelaide Act 1998

It is proposed to amend the *City of Adelaide Act 1998* in order to provide consistency between that Act and the initiatives in the new *Local Government Act 1999*.

Clause 6: Amendment of Local Government Act 1934

This clause makes consequential amendments to the *Local Government Act 1934* in view of the enactment of the *Local Government Act 1999* and the other provisions of Part 3 of this measure.

Clause 7: Amendment of Pulp and Paper Mills (Hundreds of Mayurra and Hindmarsh) Act 1964

This amendment makes special provision for a cross-reference to the 1934 Act.

Clause 8: Amendment of Real Property Act 1886

This amendment is connected with the repeal of Division 3 of Part 17 of the 1934 Act.

Clause 9: Amendment of Roads (Opening and Closing) Act 1991
This amendment up-dates relevant definitions.

Clause 10: Amendment of Survey Act 1992

This amendment is connected with the repeal of Division 3 of Part 17 of the 1934 Act.

Clause 11: Amendment of Water Resources Act 1997

These amendments make special provision for cross-references to the 1934 Act.

Clause 12: Constitution of councils

All councils, council committees, areas and wards are to continue as if constituted under the 1999 Act. All persons holding office (other than returning officers) under the 1934 Act continue to hold office under the 1999 Act.

Clause 13: Structural proposals

Proceedings commenced under Part 2 of the 1934 Act may continue and be completed as if this Act had not been enacted.

Clause 14: Defaulting councils

This clause provides for the continuation of a proclamation in force under Division 13 of Part 2 of the 1934 Act.

Clause 15: Delegations

Delegations will continue to have effect on the enactment of the new legislation.

Clause 16: Registers and codes

Existing registers and codes will continue under the 1999 Act. All members of councils elected at the May 2000 elections will be required to lodge a primary return for the purposes of the Register of Interests under the 1999 Act.

Clause 17: Allowances

This clause will enable allowances payable to elected members to be fixed under the 1999 Act. It will be possible to back-date increases in allowance to 1 July 1999.

Clause 18: Staff

Current processes relating to staff will continue under the 1934 Act.

Clause 19: Elections

Electoral processes will continue under the 1999 Electoral Act, other than where an extraordinary vacancy exists in the membership of a council and a day has already been appointed for the nomination of persons as candidates.

Clause 20: Investments

Existing council investments are not affected by new provisions under the 1999 Act.

Clause 21: Auditors

Any auditor who is qualified to act under the 1934 Act but not so qualified under the 1999 Act may nevertheless continue until 30 June following the relevant day.

Clause 22: Assessment book

The assessment book will become the assessment record under the 1999 Act.

Clause 23: Rates

This clause makes specific provision for the continuation of rating processes.

Clause 24: Single council controlling authorities

Existing section 199 controlling authorities will generally become committees under the new Act. However, a council will be able to apply to the Minister to continue an authority as an incorporated subsidiary under the new Act.

Clause 25: Regional controlling authorities

Existing section 200 controlling authorities will continue as regional subsidiaries under the new Act.

Clause 26: References to controlling authorities

A reference to a controlling authority in another Act will be taken to be a reference to a subsidiary under the 1999 Act.

Clause 27: Water reserves

A grant of a water or other reserve will continue as a grant under section 5AA of the *Crown Lands Act 1929*.

Clause 28: Evidence of proclamations

Clause 29: Evidence of appointments and elections

Clause 30: Evidence of resolutions, etc.

Clause 31: Evidence of making of a rate

Clause 32: Evidence of assessment record

Clause 33: Evidence of constitution of council, appointment of officers, etc.

These clauses facilitate the evidence of certain matters, consistent with the provisions of the 1934 Act.

Clause 34: Local government land

This clause provides for the continued holding and management of local government land and makes special provision in relation to certain land that might otherwise continue as community land under the 1999 Act. The new legislation will not affect the term of a lease under Part 45 of the 1934 Act.

Clause 35: By-laws

This clause enacts special transitional provisions relating to by-laws.

Clause 36: Contracts and tenders policy

Clause 37: Public consultation policies

Clause 38: Code of conduct—members

Clause 39: Code of conduct—employees

Clause 40: Strategic management plans

Clause 41: Annual reports

These clauses provide for the 'phasing-in' of various requirements under the 1999 Act.

Clause 42: Orders

A council will be able to make an order under Part 2 Chapter 12 of the 1999 Act in respect of a circumstance in existence before the relevant day.

Clause 43: Grievance procedures

This clause provides for the 'phasing-in' of Part 2 Chapter 13 of the 1999 Act.

Clause 44: Reviews initiated by Minister

The Minister will be able to act under Part 3 Chapter 13 of the 1999 Act in respect of a matter arising before the relevant day.

Clause 45: General provisions

The Governor will be able to provide for other saving or transitional matters by regulation.

Clause 46: Further repeal—Local Government Act 1934

The Governor will be able, by proclamation, to suspend the repeal of any provision, to effect further repeals with respect to the *Local Government Act 1934*, and to repeal the *Local Government Act 1934* (if or when it is appropriate to do so).

Mr CONLON secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I move:

That the following Address in Reply to his Excellency's opening speech be adopted:

May it please Your Excellency—

1. We, the members of the House of Assembly, express our thanks for the speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to the matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

In moving this motion, I would like to put on the record how fortunate I believe we are as a state and as a government and parliament to have His Excellency as head of state in South Australia. Not only is he an excellent representative in South Australia who commands the respect of the community but he has also shown that he is an excellent representative overseas on behalf of the state.

I agree with His Excellency that there is much to reflect upon as we move into the new century and the new millennium. We as a government have laid the foundation for an optimistic future, even though there are still many challenges ahead. Our state is well placed, with the second highest level of gross state product in Australia in the last year. The ETSA lease has been a release from the burden of debt. It has given us much needed flexibility, and I would like to commend and

record my appreciation (and I am sure that the people of South Australia would agree) to the Hon. Terry Cameron and the Hon. Trevor Crothers in another place for the courageous decision that they took in enabling South Australia to have a chance for a future.

As I have said, the signs are there for a sound future. Mining and agriculture were up 20 per cent in the 1997-98 period. Job creation has been and will continue to be this government's priority, and for 14 consecutive months we have had increased employment. That is really pleasing to see. Exports again have increased by 6.5 per cent as against the national trend, which has fallen. There has been an improvement in net migration and population growth in the last five years. Population is important if we are to continue to expand consumer demand.

It is pleasing to see the building industry expand, with an increase of 5 per cent in construction in the last five years, and the increase in activity especially in the last 12 months. I am very mindful, of course (as would be members opposite and, indeed, all members), that some of the recent activity in the building industry must also be looked at with caution, as some people are trying to build before the implementation of the GST. But I believe that that aspect, as has been reported, is a only minor one. However, the signs are there. I note also the decrease in motor vehicle sales, with some people waiting until prices come down before buying a car.

These are only minor factors in the general trend for South Australia being on the move and providing us with a sound future. The foundation is there. I am proud to be part of a government that has worked hard to establish that foundation for future South Australians.

In the past two years the food industry has grown by \$1.2 billion. South Australian employment growth is pleasing, as it has increased investment, resulting in increased gross domestic product. Population growth will be essential to our future prosperity.

The South Australian government understands the importance of population growth to sustained economic and social development. To this end, the government is actively seeking to increase the proportion of those in the national migration program who choose South Australia as a migration destination. Through the Immigration SA program the government is targeting skilled migrants. In particular, the government has taken initiatives and pursued the opportunities presented by the commonwealth government's regional migration schemes.

Specific schemes include the Regional Sponsored Migrant Scheme (RSMS), which brings in skilled migrants on two-year employment contracts with South Australian employers who have had difficulty filling vacancies in the local labour market. The State/Territory Nominated Independent scheme (STNI) identifies prospective migrants who have skills demonstrated to be in short supply in South Australia. Currently, South Australia is leading the country in both these schemes. For the past two financial years 388 certifications, representing 1 005 people, came into South Australia through the RSMS. This is 56 per cent of the national intake of RSMS migrants. In addition, South Australia is the only state to actively use STNI. Since its recent inception, 55 certifications of 142 people have been processed.

The South Australian government has also actively lobbied the commonwealth government to improve the results for South Australia. For example, the success of the STNI scheme depends upon there being an adequate number of prospective migrants registered on the skill matching

database. However, Immigration SA was having difficulty finding enough potential migrants on the database. The government responded by lobbying the commonwealth government to introduce a new mechanism whereby prospective migrants who did not have quite enough points to gain an independent visa were registered on the database for a much lower fee. They remained in the database for two years and are now eligible to be considered either by the RSMS or the STNI scheme, thus increasing their chances of gaining a visa and providing Immigration SA with more skilled, quality, prospective migrants to approach. When we came into government we had 8 per cent of the population, but we did not have anywhere near 8 per cent of the migrant intake.

I know that we are in the driest state in the driest continent and that we must be always mindful of an increasing population in terms of our sensitive environment, but the problem is not just increases in population. We should ask ourselves, 'Where is that increase in population most suitable? Where is the infrastructure in place already to accommodate a greater population?' I believe it is important for Australia as a nation that the population does not continue to increase in areas surrounding Melbourne and Sydney but that migration and increases in population are directed where we already have the infrastructure. I know that the member for Giles would agree with me that we should make it easier for migrants to go to regional areas, because the structures are there and everybody would benefit from the economies of scale that it would provide.

I now refer to the year 2000 (or is it the year 2001?) and to calendars, whether it be the lunar calendar, the solar calendar, the Julian calendar or, indeed, the Gregorian calendar. We all know that the new millennium is upon us. However, has it already passed? Some scholars question the date of Christ's actual birthday. Some say that it passed about six years ago. If it has, it has passed without a hitch. Whatever the actual date or whether or not the new century should start in 2001, it is a time for reflection. It should be a time for assessment, whatever the date, because it is the beginning of a new era. We should ask ourselves, 'Who are we as a people? Where have we been? Where are we heading as a state and a nation? What is our national identity?' These are important questions that I am sure people for centuries have asked themselves as they moved to a new century.

In Australia and South Australia, despite the arguments about taxi fares on 31 December, penalty rates, overtime and the New Year's Eve parties, we are well prepared. I congratulate the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance for getting this state ready and for vaccinating us against the millennium bug. I doubt whether any of us will feel an increase in temperature or any side effects on 1 January, apart from a hangover which is not bug related or bug induced. Where have we been in our history? With the constitutional conventions of the 1890s the six independent states—and, of course, South Australia played a crucial role—got together and realised that they would be better as independent states to form a federation. So, in 1891—and I would hope all members know who was the first Prime Minister—

Mr Lewis: Barton.

Mr SCALZI: Correct. Sir Edmund Barton was the first Prime Minister. How many would know who was the first Premier of South Australia? I hope that we do not have to go to the kitchen and ask mum, as suggested in the advertisement about the referendum. Boyle T. Finniss was the first Premier of South Australia. I believe that we should put a

greater emphasis on the teaching of our history and civics so that we can put our identity into perspective.

World War I and the Anzacs were important signposts in the development of Australia, as was World War II, which brought about fundamental changes not only in foreign policy but also in our taxation system.

Members would be aware that prior to the Second World War the states levied their own income taxes, and it was only appropriate that as a nation we should change that so that we could function more as a modern nation and as a federation, especially for the war effort. How many members would know that in 1949, with the Australian Citizenship Act passed the year before, we were for the first time Australian citizens and not just British subjects?

In 1984 we created the need for people from the British commonwealth to become Australian citizens before they could enrol and vote. These were all important steps in our history. Of course, there was the 1986 Australia Act, which made Australia completely independent from all foreign powers, and the 1988 constitutional convention, which really led us to the referendum to be held on 6 November 1999. Our decision regarding the referendum is the most significant we as Australians will make since Federation. Regardless of the position that we take—and I will be exercising my conscience, as will all other Australians—we must decide whether or not we want an Australian head of state. It is simple. The other question about the preamble is non-controversial. As I said, I will exercise my conscience. I, like the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, support the notion that it is time to change our constitution by voting for a republic.

If we look at our history, there has been a general progression to this decision. However, we must be sensitive to older Australians, especially those ex-service men and women who have given so much to the development of this country. This is no time for fear campaigns: whatever the result, we must embrace it and continue to set an example as one of the most successful democracies of the twentieth century and, hopefully, of the twenty-first century.

In reflecting on where we have been and where we are going, it is important to note the type of democracy that has existed in Australia. We all know that we have a representative democracy, whereby we have elected members to represent us. We do not have citizen initiated referenda. Our representatives in parliament vote on issues and enact legislation on our behalf. The word 'democracy' comes from the two Greek words 'demos' and 'kratis', which means people power. However, if we look at our history, for too long we have been passive participants. Fewer than 2 per cent of Australians are directly involved in participation as members of political parties. Membership of major political parties has been declining—except, of course, for 26 January this year. Too often we have been involved only when it has affected us personally. I believe that not enough attention has been given to our making decisions on a wider scale and reflecting upon what would be of benefit to society as a whole.

In many ways, that apathy and lack of focus have led to political parties having campaigns that have targeted one group or another, just to get across the line. As Australians we have often been accused of being leaders in apathy and hip pocket participants. One only has to look at the campaign in 1993 when it came to the GST. We are affected when it comes to capital gains tax or superannuation tax and things that affect us personally. There is now a need for democratic

responsibility. Democracy cannot function unless there is actual participation and a willingness for the public to be involved and to be knowledgeable on a wide range of issues.

Recent events in East Timor force us to question policies such as population growth, defence preparedness and trade alliances. For too long we have been not only the lucky country but, indeed, the sleepy country. We have been fortunate in our history in that we have not had to face revolutions or invasions and, therefore, there has not been a need to reflect on what is needed for us not only as states but also as Australians. We must wake up, become alert and embrace the challenges before us. If we are prepared to be part of the future, we are less likely to fear it, but to be part of the future we must be informed. Democracy will not survive unless its participants are informed about issues.

We need to have a basic understanding of our political system and a basic understanding of economics. As a former school teacher, I have pushed for such fundamental changes and for the importance of current events and history for our students. How many people have a true understanding of chronological order and historical perspective? We have many challenges before us. We must answer the questions on, for example, health, education and social infrastructure, as well as adhering to national competition policy.

I would now like to reflect on another issue that the year 2000 has precipitated in my thinking about this Address in Reply. In this Year of the Older Person it is important to reflect on the composition of our population and its representation in parliament. I am very much concerned that we have an ageing population. For example, over 20.5 per cent of the population is over 55 years of age, whilst only 21 per cent is under 19. One only has to look at the statistics to realise that we have an increasing ageing population. It is only natural that, as life expectancy increases, our standard of living, improved technology and health provision will give us an ageing population.

However, the representation in parliament does not reflect the composition of the population. I applaud the increase in the number of women in this place. In reality, 28 per cent of the parliament in South Australia are women.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: That is one of the highest rates in Australia. The member for Peake, who is out of his seat, tells me that we have two—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will not refer to the member for Peake, who is interjecting out of his seat and is therefore out of order.

Mr SCALZI: It is true, but if we go back to 1993-94 when I was first elected to parliament—and I see that the deputy leader is here—the deputy leader would recall that she was the only woman on the Labor side in 1994 until the by-election in Elizabeth. I stood up here in 1994 and congratulated the deputy leader, and she congratulated me as she had defeated the former member for Hartley.

The average age of ALP members of the parliament is 45.5 years of age; the average age of Liberal Party members is 50.5. I note that the member for Peake is not the youngest member of parliament: the member for Playford is the youngest member in this parliament. I believe that it is important that we have youth in parliament. I note that the leader has said 'youth'. He is misleading us: he is not that young.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SCALZI: I note that only two out of the 47 members of the House of Assembly are over the age of 60, and that is a matter of concern for an ageing population. That is a matter of concern when we make so much of the Masters Games, yet we do not have adequate representation for the aged in this place.

I am really surprised that members opposite do not understand the significance of the parliamentary system. If it is truly democratic it must represent the broad cross-section of the population. I have acknowledged the fact that there are young people; I have acknowledged the fact that we are increasing the representation of women; and I have acknowledged the fact that we have more participation from diverse backgrounds—and may it continue—but let us not forget representation for age and experience.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: For the benefit of the member for Peake, I point out that the two members in the House of Assembly who are over 60—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SCALZI: —are the member for Price, Murray De Laine, and the member for Colton, Steve Condous. Who would say that these two members are past their use-by date? They have at least another 20-40 years between them to make a contribution in this place. I note today that the member for Bragg, the Hon. Graham Ingerson, has won a silver medal in the Masters Games. If we can have participation by the elderly in sport and in the Masters Games, surely we can have greater representation of the elderly in this place. I should say 'experienced', not 'elderly'.

In other countries, there is representation of experience and age. At the next election I will be 50 years of age; that is, two terms and I will qualify for a pension. I am sure that members opposite would love to give me a pension but I can assure them that I am chasing my passion and not my pension. However, I believe that we send our politicians to pasture too early. I am not ready for grazing. At 50 I believe I will have the experience—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order. The member for Hartley is the lead speaker for the government responding formally on behalf of the government in reply to the Governor's speech. I would suggest that the absolute drivel and nonsense of the member for Hartley is totally out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Hart will take his seat.

Mr SCALZI: At 50 I believe I will have the experience and capacity to make an even greater contribution, and I am sure that our ageing population would agree with me. It is sad that our former Premier Lynn Arnold and federal members such as Bill O'Chee (who is in his 30s) can leave parliament when they have done. I appreciate the contribution of the young, but I believe we should not undervalue age and experience. Societies that have failed to recognise this have been the poorer for it. It seems that in Australia we accept that the aged can participate in sport and be active while their bodies age, but we prevent or discourage them from contributing in areas of decision making where physical fitness does not really play as major a part as it does in active sport.

It is not uncommon for members of parliament overseas, as I have said, to be in their 70s. That is the case with our neighbours in this region. It is not uncommon for someone to start his or her political career well into their 50s. Members opposite would realise that if someone has failed preselection twice in either party they are regarded as political hacks. I

believe that former Premiers, for example, Lynn Arnold (for whom I have great respect), could have continued to make a contribution to our political system. Ronald Reagan was President in his 70s.

Mr Koutsantonis: Too old.

Mr SCALZI: The member opposite would say that Nelson Mandela was too old to become involved in South African politics. We should note the contribution that former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser is making on the world stage.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: The person who trivialises this Address in Reply is the member for Hart.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: As I said, only two members in the House of Assembly are over the age of 60, and the proportion in other chambers throughout Australia is not much higher.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: As His Excellency outlined in his speech, South Australia is well positioned for a great future. I am honoured to be part of a government that has laid the foundation to enable us to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all South Australians. Much has been already done. The lease of ETSA has enabled us to reduce the emergency services levy by \$20 million. I strongly advocated a rebate for pensioners and self-funded retirees because those on fixed incomes were hurting and not enough recognition was being given to them. It is great to have falling interest rates and we all applaud that, because lower interest rates means providing the capacity for many people to own their own home. But there is a need to acknowledge the difficulties facing those self-funded retirees whose real disposable income is decreasing.

I am pleased to be part of a government that has listened to and acknowledged the plight of self-funded retirees and, indeed, the difficulties that some people would have experienced with the emergency services contribution. I am pleased that as a result of the lease of ETSA we have been able to address that important issue. The relief for nursing homes (especially the Lutheran homes in my electorate) and other community organisations by this measure is very much welcomed. They were having some difficulties with the emergency services levy but we could not have given relief if we did not have the funds in place to enable us to give that relief. I acknowledge that there is more to be done in health even though there has been an increase in health spending, as the Premier outlined yesterday. The health problem is not confined to South Australia. I commend the Premier and the health minister for fighting for the state on a national level. The demand for health services has outstripped our ability to supply such services. We must acknowledge that we have to address health related issues. If a significant proportion of the population was 50 years of age 15 years ago, the people concerned would now be 65, and provisions required for the aged are different from those required for a much younger population.

We must resolve federal-state funding. Health is a national issue. The number of people who take out private health insurance is still too low to enable governments of whatever persuasion to deliver to the needy who cannot afford it. Of course, the public has expectations of the health services. With the increase in medical technology and expectations about what can and cannot be done, the health budget of every state in the nation increases. These issues must be addressed and it is not just a problem of a Liberal or Labor government: it is a problem of all governments. Indeed, the

same problem is faced by most OECD countries. As expectations increase, the ability to fund is diminished unless taxes are increased or greater funds are obtained. Despite these problems we still deliver one of the best health services in the world.

However, one of the most urgent problems to be addressed, in my opinion, is the allocation of more resources for dental treatment for the aged. Waiting lists for dentures are too long and must be reduced. I call on the government to address this important issue, and I call on health funds to be more responsible in providing some form of care at reduced rates for pensioners who have contributed to private health insurance for decades. You cannot expect someone, for example, who has made a contribution to a private health fund for 20 or 30 years to pay \$2 400 for health insurance when he or she arrives at pension age. Some consideration should be given to what they contributed in the past, and the health funds should acknowledge that and provide some basic health cover for the elderly.

I only briefly refer to my private member's bill which was defeated on the third reading in another place. I thank all members in this House who supported my bill, especially the Hons Terry Cameron and Sandra Kanck in another place for their support that enabled the bill to reach the third reading in that chamber. No doubt, I was extremely disappointed, but, unfortunately, politics is not only about what is right but also about numbers. As Professor Dean Jaensch said in an article referring to my bill:

The bill deserved to be passed rather than be used for party political gains.

I still believe that we must make a clear distinction between multiculturalism and citizenship. Members of parliament should make an unswerving commitment to Australian citizenship. Such is the case federally, and such should be the case at a state level. However, such a bill would never get through unless there was a conscience vote.

In conclusion, I, like many other members, am mindful of the privilege and responsibility that is placed upon me in these demanding times, and I would like to assure His Excellency that we will continue to work for the common good and I personally for the electorate of Hartley and for South Australia as a whole.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): It is my pleasure to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I thank the Governor, Sir Eric Neal, for his leadership and for his strong support for South Australia and all that pertains to our wonderful State. Recent visitors from interstate have commented on the optimism, the cheerfulness and the hope that is evident among the people and communities here. This is, in part, the result of six years of Liberal government that has taken South Australia from despair and the brink of bankruptcy to the top state in Australia in most indicators.

As the Governor mentioned in his opening speech yesterday, South Australia's exports increased 6.5 per cent compared with a national decline. South Australia exports to more destinations than any other state, thus insulating the state against such issues as the Asian crisis. South Australia has weathered this financial downturn in countries geographically near to us probably better than any other state. Econtech, an independent private economic forecaster, in its August issue of *Australian State and Industry Outlook*, says that South Australia's employment growth this year, 1999-2000, will be 2.8 per cent—higher than any other state or

territory and well in excess of the national average of 2.2 per cent. Econtech also predicts that the work force participation rate will rise substantially in South Australia in future years.

The Governor stated in his speech yesterday that in the area of jobs South Australia has had 14 consecutive months of increasing trend employment levels.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs PENFOLD: This government's policies and actions have stopped the population drain from South Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics' figures show a net population increase for the 1998-99 financial year, the first increase for many years. Our state is now well on the way to recovery. The initiative and enterprise demonstrated by the Liberal government fits well with the Australian ethic of having a go and battling against the odds.

This is shown in the small rural town of Lock in my electorate and my home town. The people in the town and district could easily have given in and said that the future was hopeless. Instead, they looked for solutions to their problems, one major issue being the shortage of potable water on Eyre Peninsula.

Eyre Regional Development Board, Elliston District Council, the Community Enterprise and Business Network and Eyre Enterprises worked together on the problem. Scientist Dr John Baxter invented a modular unit for the solar distillation of water that is suitable for home domestic use. The distillation units take any type of water, including sewage and salt water, and remove all bacteria and minerals to produce pure drinking water. The problem of providing drinking water to Andamooka and Cooper Pedy mentioned today on the radio may well be assisted by this innovation.

Grants were obtained to turn the invention into commercial production with the potential eventually to employ 20 people (some located in the small community of Lock) and produce a projected annual profit of \$1.5 million. Malcolm Hancock, one of the local leaders involved in the project, said that they have now employed their first full-time worker and will stage their first demonstration and information day at Urrbrae in October this year. The state government is continually encouraging research opportunities for regional communities such as the little town of Lock. Even before this new enterprise, the population drift from Lock had been slowed, if not halted. The numbers of school children are on the rise, and this equates with an additional teaching staff member, so the cycle of uplift is repeated and expanded.

The Liberal government has a strategy for the state that includes all South Australia. The sealing of all rural arterial roads by 2004 is one of the many strategies welcomed by rural South Australia and which is already bringing benefits to communities. The longest of these unsealed regional arterial roads in 1993, the Elliston-Lock road, has been the bane of council and residents for all this century. The sealing of that road has now reached the halfway mark, with local residents holding a barbecue on the road at the halfway mark this month to celebrate.

The second longest regional arterial road in the state, the Kimba-Cleve road, will be completed this financial year except for the final seal. Local roads of economic importance are the next category of road that requires urgent attention. Many of these roads now have the additional heavy truck traffic caused by the SACBH strategic silo sites that have been developed in regional grain growing areas of our state. Large trucks, combined with domestic traffic, including

school buses, need good roads to travel on if we are to make them safe.

The positive action of the government contrasts with the obstructiveness and short-sightedness of opposition and Democrat members whose attitude has robbed some regional centres of developments. Employment is essential to retain the population of regional South Australia. The opposition to the government's announcement yesterday of the reproclamation of a small part of the Yumbera National Park to allow for exploration and mining is a case that highlights this. This wonderful opportunity has been denied to our state for more than 10 years by people who do not really care about the wellbeing of people, particularly those who live and work in remote locations.

The government has allocated \$4.5 million for a rural and regional infrastructure fund to assist in delivering services to regional areas to help stimulate business enterprises and therefore jobs where they would not otherwise be likely to be viable—infrastructure that is taken for granted by many city folk.

Health has been one of the major topics this year. The Liberal state government has increased health spending from \$421 million in 1993-94 to \$587 million in this latest budget. The Australian Bureau of Statistics puts the increase at 37.2 per cent in nominal terms and 24.2 per cent in real terms. This has been done despite the constraints of the state debt.

The immediate question posed by the rising health budget is: why then are hospitals and the health service in turmoil? Several reasons can be put forward: our increased expectations; fewer people with the private health cover; the fact that we can do so much more but at a greater cost than even a decade ago; complicated funding arrangements; a lift in average life expectancy; and a higher proportion of the population in the 60s plus age range.

There is much that you and I can do. I cite Tumby Bay community as an example for the rest of the state. Patients and clients of the Tumby Bay health services are encouraged to use their private health cover when accessing health or hospital care. The successful cooperation of the community and the hospital has put Tumby Bay hospital in a sounder position financially than that of most hospitals at the present time. It is an attitude and action that can be emulated anywhere. It highlights the fact that the use of private health cover does indeed make a difference. There is no such thing as a free anything, and that applies to health as much as to anything else. Individuals can choose to pay their own way by utilising private health cover where possible, or they can choose to pay through higher taxes for the government to foot the bills. However, it was foreshadowed at least a decade ago that the advances in health science may eventually mean that we have to decide what can be funded through taxes, that is, through the public health system. Perhaps we have arrived at that time.

With 74 educational institutions within my electorate, I have been greatly interested in the opportunities offered by the introduction of Partnerships 21, a system to give to schools the control of their finances. This could be good news for schools in my electorate, which would be able to arrange their own cleaning, for instance, in preference to a multinational company contracted by the department for the whole of the state. It is quite possible that they will be able to get a better job done and also save money that can be used for educational activities of more importance to the students. I have noted with enthusiasm the Liberal state government's continued improvement of schools' infrastructure and

equipment, both of which have been neglected. New resource centres and science laboratories have been particularly welcome.

The forward thinking of Liberal ministers is apparent in their insistence on computers in schools and on computer technology. Computers have changed our society at least as dramatically as machines changed society during the industrial revolution of the 1800s. South Australian students will be well placed and trained to be part of the society of the new millennium. Yesterday's announcement of Pathway SA, which will provide high quality internet access to every country school at a local call rate, is a major breakthrough in providing quality of education in remote areas such as on Eyre Peninsula. South Australia as a state leads the nation in many fields and will continue to do so under a Liberal state government. Outsiders recognise this. I congratulate Santos on its \$25 million donation to the University of South Australia to establish a chair. The thrust of the new discipline will be on fossil fuels. It is practical acclaim for the researchers and professionals in our state's tertiary institutions.

Education is being used in some quarters to campaign for the Labor Party. Geoff Spring, the Chief Executive of the Department for Education, Training and Employment, has found it necessary to remind people that the department's budget is a public document. The three year funding for schools at the same level as in 1999, subject to enrolments, is guaranteed in all the documentation that has been issued for Partnerships 21. It is not only insulting to parents, teachers, students and the community to propagate mischievous untruths: it also denigrates what is being achieved across South Australia. I believe it also shows the titanic miscalculation on the part of those trying to politicise everything to do with education to think that people can be fooled so easily.

I place on record the achievements of primary producers in positively supporting the environment. I am angered when country people are portrayed as rapacious destroyers, when the opposite is the truth. South Australian farmers were embracing environmental agriculture long before land care became a popular issue. Reclamation of salt affected land is a case in point. I am aware of the inventive and ground breaking work done on Eyre Peninsula, where there are dramatic examples of reclaimed land. The work being done here is being watched across Australia—just one more instance of South Australians leading the nation. Farmers have relied on researchers to provide them with the technical information required for sustainable agriculture. The simple fact is that if agriculture is unsustainable then the primary producer goes broke very quickly indeed.

I pay a warm tribute to the officers and researchers in the Primary Industries and Resources Department of South Australia, Waite agricultural institute and Roseworthy college. I especially commend the people in the Minnipa Research Centre on the work they have done in dry land farming techniques, which are now applauded internationally. It is the expertise, experience and inquisitiveness of the above people that has kept this state at the forefront in dry land farming. Recent upgrades of the centre, costing in excess of \$1 million, will ensure that this good work continues. Primary producers and departments have worked together to the benefit of agriculture in this state. Few people would recognise the past farms of wheat and sheep, with a few pigs to get through the hard times that were characteristic of South Australia in the 1950s. Today the bright yellow fields in spring are flowering canola, not soursobs or dandelions. Rows of vines and olives stretch across the paddocks.

The state government for some years now has virtually stopped the clearing of land, thus preventing a number of the problems that are surfacing in other states where land clearing is not so restricted.

The state government's willingness to work with and support those who are prepared to have a go and battle against the odds is reaping positive dividends in the fishing industry. The income of about \$180 million plus, generated by the tuna industry alone, is more than the entire fishing effort for New South Wales. South Australia is now internationally recognised for its abalone and aquaculture industries. Our oyster farmers cannot meet the demand for their product. Value adding of crayfish by penning small animals and growing them out to a more appropriately marketable size is practised.

Aquaculture covers abalone, mussels, barramundi, snapper and sea horses. The sea horse project at Port Lincoln is the only one in Australia outside Tasmania. South Australia's aquaculture industry is growing at a faster rate than that of any other Australian state in terms of production, and is now the largest producer of farmed seafood by value in Australia. Aquaculture other than tuna production is now valued at more than \$100 million at farm gate. Employment in the Australian aquaculture industry is forecast to grow by 90 per cent by 2010. The value of aquaculture production in Australia is forecast to triple to \$1.4 billion by 2005, with production forecast to rise to 39 million tonnes by 2010. The state government's support in developing the aquaculture industry through the five year farm seafood initiative is helping to produce these outstanding results.

The expansion of the South Australian industry reflects what is happening with the industry at a global level. Aquaculture is the fastest growing food industry in the world, increasing in value by 9 per cent per year. At present, 25 per cent of seafood consumed world wide is farmed and this is expected to rise to 40 per cent by 2010. The initiative and forward thinking of the Liberal Government has positioned South Australia at the forefront of development, with the capacity and ability to reap the potential rewards to the benefit of our State and its people. As already stated, a solid industry policy has seen our exports increase faster than those of all other States, defying the national trend, which has seen exports fall. In addition to primary products, exports included processed foods, wine and manufactured goods.

This Government is achieving success in a number of environmental issues. Specimens of bettongs, bilbies and black cockatoos, all endangered species or considered at risk, have been reintroduced into the native habitat in national parks and reserves in my electorate. Cape Barren geese have become a pest in some instances. The community is working with officers of the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs and the RSPCA to deal with this problem. The removal of noxious plants from the islands in Spencer Gulf which are the habitat of the geese is but one aspect of the strategy to control the destruction that the increased numbers of geese are causing.

National parks and reserves are dear to my heart, as my electorate contains a large proportion of the state's parks. These have the potential to become world class and significant attractions for international tourists and the impetus therefore for many more jobs within the region. The herd of Timor ponies that has lived in Coffin Bay National Park since the 1840s is one example of this potential. Marie Bishop of Aberfoyle Park, who supported the retention of the ponies in

the park, quoted a comment written years ago by the Australian author and poet A.B. Paterson:

There are not many places in Australia where there are wild horses, but if any of you that are listening to me has a mob of brumby horses on his place I would advise him to let them alone and make a tourist attraction out of them. A mob of wild horses going across country at full speed is a great sight.

The number of horses in the park has been strictly limited for some decades, with surplus horses regularly culled and sold. I wonder where else in the world a person could enjoy all the comfort and luxury of the twenty-first century within an hour's drive of such a spectacle.

Tourism is a growth industry world wide. South Australia has a successful tourism policy in place that is seeing this State increase its share of the overseas visitors who come to Australia. In fact, it is in regional South Australia where tourism numbers are showing the strongest growth. Viewing great white sharks off Thistle Island, southern right whales at the Head of the Bight, and tuna farms at Boston Bay are examples of unique South Australian tourism attractions that attract international attention. International interest has certainly focused on Geoff and Mick Scholz of Wudinna and their tours to the Gawler Ranges in the north of Eyre Peninsula, and Alan and Patricia Payne, who run Baird Bay Charters and Ocean Eco Tours on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula. The Paynes were featured in the inaugural Channel 7 series of South Australian features screened last week. Their eco-tours enable people to swim with the sea lions and dolphins in their natural habitat, and then return to shore to feast on grilled King George whiting, oysters and crayfish fresh from the surrounding sea.

Upmarket tourism wholesalers and journalists from Europe and North America who have visited Eyre Peninsula say that what Geoff and Mick Scholz and Alan and Patricia Payne are doing is of world interest. Baird Bay Charters and Ocean Eco Tours have also been featured on the program *Wild Things*, shown across all American states. What people can experience off the coast of Eyre Peninsula in swimming with the sea lions and dolphins in their natural environment is unique in the world. One of the journalists doing the *Wild Things* program mentioned that people can swim with sea lions and dolphins in California. However, the animals are hand-fed and are partially captive.

The topic of power generation has occupied the minds of the majority of people over the past few years. What is not known is the tremendous amount of work that is going into research in power generation from wind farms. The government has encouraged this environmentally friendly and sustainable form of power generation. I am pleased to say that several groups and individuals are looking at wind farms, including Cowell Electric Supply. This leads into an aspect of politics that affects this government to a much greater extent than any previous government. This is the lead time required for delivery of policy decisions: generation of electricity by wind power is an example.

It could be some years before plants become operational. However, by then the general public has forgotten that it was this Liberal government that supported the industry. Decisions made this week can take years of unstinting effort to bear fruit—years before the electorate actually feels that any action has been taken.

The Adelaide to Darwin rail link is another example. The federal commitment to complete the line was made in 1926 or 1927 when South Australia cut off what has become known as the Northern Territory and handed it over to the

commonwealth. Part of the agreement was to complete the north-south rail link. Premier John Olsen is now much closer to achieving what others have been trying to achieve for more than three quarters of a century. This kind of achievement is all too easily lost in the day-to-day reporting of what the government is doing. Defence contracts are another example. Defence contracts have long lead times, that is, it is a long time between making the initial decision and seeing the effect of that decision. The Liberal government in South Australia had to create the correct business climate to be ready for the work now coming to the State.

Andrew Killey, of Killey Withy Punshon Advertising, in a recent speech said:

South Australia has 16 per cent of Australia's manufacturing industry with 8 per cent of the population. We have General Motors, Mitsubishi, Bridgestone Tyres. Plus we have British Aerospace, the Submarine Corporation, F.H. Faulding, Gerard Industries, Santos and Michells. We have 55 per cent of Australia's wine industry, plus 65 per cent of Australia's wine exports, 100 per cent of Penrice, which manufactures all of Australia's soda ash and exports to a number of our Asian neighbours for all their requirements.

Small companies such as Minelab make a high-tech metal detector, which is the United Nations preferred land mine detector. At Dynek they make a range of sutures, which are exported to over 50 countries world wide. Added to this we have the largest copper, silver, gold and uranium mine in the world. We have large reserves of natural gas, a rapidly growing aquaculture industry, plus the largest silver and lead smelter in the world. Coopers Brewery is the largest manufacturer of home brew in the world.

We have a lot going for us in South Australia that we seem to overlook. Andrew Killey also quoted Juliet Haslam, South Australian Olympic gold medallist, as follows:

I'm continuously having heated discussions with my team mates who come from all over the country about which is the best state in Australia. Inevitably I am the last one standing singing the praises of our great state, South Australia. Did you know that in the recent Commonwealth Games the medal tally of South Australian athletes alone exceeded that achieved by most other nations?

The Liberal government is prepared to make the hard decisions which are in the best interests of the state and its people but which may not be electorally popular. Our prime interest is that South Australia and South Australians prosper not only now but in the future, not only in the city but also in the country regions of our wonderful state. The electorate is sufficiently mature to recognise this and to give the government credit. More people are realising the truth of the ethic that we rise and fall together and that the selfish remark of 'What's in it for me?' does not deliver prosperity across the board.

I commend the state government's program, as outlined by the Governor, Sir Eric Neal. South Australia will continue to build on the optimism and cheerfulness and the hope that interstate visitors have noted when visiting our great state.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Just recently we had the Victorian elections.

Mr McEwen: We haven't noticed over here yet.

Ms HURLEY: Even in the South-East you haven't noticed that?

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: Indeed, I referred to the Victorian election earlier today in my grievance speech and I will refer to it again. It was an interesting result. The Deputy Premier asked what he did wrong. I think we know what he did wrong, because yesterday in question time we had a concentration by government members on regional issues. Today they kept mentioning the words 'fairness and equity', which is fairly unusual for government members. I think we know what went

wrong. I think the government knows what went wrong as well. It knows that the rural parts of our state, as well as the Victorian rural areas, are most unhappy at the big business orientation of Liberal governments.

We know from today that fairness and equity is also a big issue and area of discontent for voters both in this state and in Victoria. I am looking forward to seeing what happens tomorrow because, undoubtedly, the government with its close attachment to Jeff Kennett has had access to some of the exit polling it did. I look forward with great interest to the theme tomorrow. It is a case of too little too late. The new caring and sharing approach of this government will not impress the electors of South Australia.

In one sense you might well argue that in South Australia we have already seen the first tidal wave of discontent in our last election, in fact, where the members for MacKillop, Chaffey and Gordon got in. We have already seen that vast discontent in the regional areas of South Australia being expressed at our last election. I note with great interest that the member for Gordon feels that the government is not fully aware of the fact that it is a minority government. The government has shown that it is slow to learn the lessons of the last election. Undoubtedly the Victorian election result has been an additional shock to it, but it is unable to change direction now, and one of the reasons it is unable to change direction is that it lacks the policies and talent to do so.

A lot of this government's policies were pinched directly from Kennett government policies in the first instance anyway and now that its leader is gone, or is certainly a lame duck Premier if he manages to get back in, from where will this government get its inspiration? It certainly does not have the talent on its frontbench or backbench to develop the sort of caring and sharing policies that it indicated this week it wanted. Although we had the first tidal wave in the last election that saw the huge swing back to Labor after only one term of government, there is still enough in that swing to carry us through in the next election.

The vulnerable urban members are certainly the members for Colton and Hartley, who are on knife-edge margins. The speech by the member for Hartley did not inspire me, and I doubt that it will inspire the electors of Hartley to return him next time. There is further discontent in the rural areas of South Australia, and the vulnerable members we start to look at are the members for Stuart, Frome (our Deputy Premier) and Light. We can look forward to some vigorous campaigning in those seats.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: The member for Waite asks for a campaign in his seat. I assure him we will run a vigorous general campaign, but we are looking to target the Deputy Premier rather than the member for Waite. We are reasonably hopeful. When John Olsen was questioned about his change of direction following the next election in looking after regional areas, he cited the fact that cabinet meetings were now occurring in all the regions. He cited policies on food and wine. But that will not allay the concerns of those people in Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta who are screaming out for industry and assistance in their areas and not getting it. They wanted the power station, but they could not even get in to see the Premier. They are desperate for industry in their area and they are not getting the assistance through the Premier, the Minister for Regional Development or the Department of Industry, Trade and Technology. I hear constantly when I am around the regions that people are not getting the hearing that they want.

One other initiative to which the Premier referred was the setting up of a Minister for Regional Development and the Office of Regional Development. That is something for which members of the opposition have been calling for some time, because we had noticed that, particularly in estimates, whenever we asked any question about regional development, none of the Ministers in the Liberal government wanted to claim responsibility for regional development. I do not blame them, because very little was done in regional development. So, it was duckshoved from one minister to another.

However, the Deputy Premier is now the Minister for Regional Development. It is very early days in that change of circumstance, but we will see if this does, in fact, allay the concerns of rural South Australia. I think it will not and that we will see swings in those seats of Stuart, Frome and Light.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: I will, in private members' time. The member for Stuart is an interesting case. We are not sure at this stage whether he will go for another term. The member for Stuart, since not being elected as Speaker, seems to have assumed the role of the government member who gets down into the gutter whenever any issue arises that could be brought up against the opposition. It is a very interesting role for a former Speaker, I must say, and one that the member for Stuart seems to have seized with a great deal of glee.

It is interesting that we have government members complaining about the opposition being negative and being grubby, but we have no-one on this side of the House, I believe, whose role is to get down in the gutter in the same way as the member for Stuart does. Fortunately, he does not have a lot to raise. Today he tried to raise some issues of branch stacking, I think with not very much success, because it is a case of people in glass houses trying to throw stones. I think we have plenty of examples of branch stacking on the government side that we can highlight if we choose.

So, the negativity and carping seems to be mostly from government members rather than from members on this side. We have always tried to be constructive. The member for Flinders listed a number of initiatives that had occurred in the state, many of which began when, in fact, Labor was in government, and the opposition has supported in a bipartisan way some of the major projects in the last six years, including the Alice Springs to Darwin railway and the car tariffs issue. The Leader of the Opposition has only recently returned from Japan and the USA to shore up some contacts and assure certain companies of bipartisan support for many projects.

With respect to the legislative program, in his speech during the opening of the parliament the Governor referred to the initiatives of the government for this session. I must say that it could be described as thin at best. Certainly, the government seems to have run out of legislative steam and has not brought before this parliament any initiatives in rural and regional areas or initiatives that display this new found interest in fairness and equity.

The health system is in a state of crisis, and there was scarcely any mention of health in the whole speech, and certainly none of hospitals. We still have a great many problems with respect to youth unemployment, but there was scarcely any mention of that issue in the Governor's speech. We certainly are not seeing any important initiatives coming forward. We have not seen this government take any action that would make us think that it has found inspiration, other than the Kennett type reforms of privatisation, cutting back the Public Service and creating bread and circuses and, in the process, giving their mates jobs.

I would also like to dwell upon the issue of accountability. I do not think that will be the theme of tomorrow. I do not think this government will pinpoint another major issue in the Victorian election—and that is accountability. I do not think it will want to mention that at all, as was shown today by the Premier's unwillingness to answer any questions that might be raised about John Cambridge and questions of conflict of interest or whether he appropriately declared his interest to the Premier.

So, I think that accountability will still be fairly low on the agenda for this government. I think it has been fairly clearly brought home to all of us that the public—certainly the public in Victoria—is very keen on transparency and accountability in government. But I do not know how this government will dig itself out of the hole that it has dug for itself in terms of transparency and accountability. I think we will still continue to see it carry on in exactly the same way that it has in the past.

I would now like to address some issues in my own electorate with respect to the issue of accountability and consulting with people, but this time to do with local government and local government entities. There is a proposal in my electorate to build a landfill in the hills face zone just north of Blakeview. That landfill—that dump—has been approved by the Department of Planning against strident opposition from the locals and against much evidence presented by protesters of problems with the environment and problems with people in the area opposing having a dump in an area that is expected to have a significant population growth in the next 10 years. So, houses will be up to the buffer zone of 500 metres quite shortly. I do not want to go over that ground.

I have talked a good deal about why I believe that a dump should not be located in the foothills in my electorate. However, I just want to talk about the consultation that has or has not occurred in that process. I was reminded of this by an article that appeared in the *Financial Review* magazine last week. There was an article about businesses and how construction industries are forming alliances to achieve projects on time and in a cost-effective way. I was struck by a quote from one of the people involved in this sort of arrangement. The spokesperson says that, even though the legality of the tunnel project has been clearly established through a court hearing, the mission of the alliance does not allow it to wash its hands of its obligations to community groups. He goes on to say:

The community may have some fundamental objections to the particular project and under the alliance we have an obligation to deal with those issues under our control—we can't just ignore it. At the end of the day, it is no good if we build the tunnel on time and to budget if we leave behind a community unhappy because of the way we delivered it.

I was particularly struck by that passage, because it was so nice to hear a developer obviously have regard to the community and to the consultation process regardless of what the legal situation is. I am sure that there are issues to do with Pelican Point and with the Pelican Point power station as well, but I will deal strictly with the proposal in my area. Some of the protesters wrote to the state Ombudsman complaining about information put out about the landfill by the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority (NAWMA). The Ombudsman agreed to look at their complaints and investigate the way that NAWMA is putting about information. I might add that in the course of the protest the Playford council, which is one of the members of

the NAWMA consortium, actually went to the extent of suing three of the protesters for defamation. This has caused some consternation to some of those people who live on Medlow Road where the landfill is located. The obvious aim is to get them to draw back from their protests and allow NAWMA to do whatever it likes in the area.

A management committee was also set up as part of the original proposal that allowed two residents of the area to be on that committee to have a say about the way in which the landfill was developed and managed. Those residents were given strong assurances—and I was at the meeting where that happened—that they would have a direct say in the management, that they would be consulted at every step of the way. Now, members of that committee are told that they have a consultative role only, that they have no influence or ability to change the way in which NAWMA develops or administers that landfill. I shall read out the state Ombudsman's response to the residents' complaints. A letter to Councillor Ron Watts, Chairman of the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority, states:

Dear Cr Watts

Re: Publication of Allegedly Misleading Information by NAWMA.

I refer to your letter dated 24 November 1998 and advise that I responded to the three member councils with my tentative views in this matter on 8 April 1999.

You will recall from previous correspondence from my office that my investigation has been initially directed to the City of Playford, the City of Salisbury and the Corporation of the Town of Gawler pursuant to section 18(1a) of the Ombudsman Act 1972 as I have considered that NAWMA has been 'engaged in the work' of the three councils for the purposes of section 3 of the Ombudsman Act 1972. For reasons mainly of practicality, however, and with the apparent concurrence of the City of Playford, the City of Salisbury and the Corporation of the Town of Gawler and NAWMA, my office has been in direct communication with your organisation throughout my investigation. In its correspondence with my office during my investigation, NAWMA has purported to communicate 'on behalf of the member councils'.

I will go over some technical details about the Ombudsman's decision that he was able formally to conduct the investigation. He goes on to say:

Principally, my concern in this matter has been the absolute and definitive terms used within the advertisement by NAWMA, more specifically, that entitled 'Let's get our landfill right!' which I believe appeared in the Messenger Press during March 1998. Whilst I have acknowledged the information contained within NAWMA's response of 24 November 1998, I have not been dissuaded in my concern that the advertisement was unnecessarily absolute in its content. Given that the advertisement appears to have been utilised as part of the process to convince local residents that the refuse facility at Medlow Road would be acceptable, I think it to have been incumbent on NAWMA to present clear and balanced information at all times to the community. In this regard, I am aware that NAWMA has placed a number of advertisements and information bulletins before the community for consideration, most of which I have found to be both informative and appropriate in the circumstances.

Specifically, I am concerned that the statement 'No odours' has a potential to be misleading insofar as the response provided by you acknowledges that there will be odours, albeit substantially improved on traditional landfill and/or refuse facilities. In that response you refer to the amended environmental impact statement (EIS) of which I have a copy. I note that in the amended EIS dated 12 June 1997 there is an acknowledgment that the odour will be a by-product of the waste which has been transported to the site and baled. The amended EIS discusses the strategies to be implemented to minimise any impact that this odour may have on residents. I note also that there is an intention to apply chemicals in order to control any possible odours released. Presumably these chemicals themselves may be the source of some odour, albeit more desirable than that of the gases produced from the waste itself.

Therefore, whilst it may appear to be somewhat of a technical interpretation, I do not believe that the statement 'No odours' can be sustained in such an absolute manner. Therefore, my tentative view is that this aspect of the advertisement is potentially misleading, based on facts previously known to NAWMA. Similarly, the statement 'No litter to be blown by the wind' is an absolute and unequivocal statement which would be very difficult for NAWMA to conform with. In drawing this conclusion I note within your response of 24 November 1998:

'Litter has a low qualitative risk rating and the selected balefill operation will eliminate almost all litter from operations at the site. Waste arriving at the balefill will be in a baled form and tied with wire, therefore, loose waste will be minimised.'

He goes on to say that the other item complained about, 'Environment protected', was in fact a reasonable statement to make, given that the EPA has made rulings and that these would be complied with by NAWMA. This illustrates the lack of communication with the general public and the way in which NAWMA and the councils involved have sought only to be proponents for the landfill. There has been very little attempt to give a balanced view to the residents, and that has been very unfortunate in this case. Of course a landfill will always be opposed. Of course it has been through the right processes of government. I have been critical of that process, but it has been through process.

Yet NAWMA continues to brush aside the complaints and objections of residents. It continues not to hold the public meetings promised to residents as part of the process. It continues to pay for advertisements. It continues to attack on a very personal basis, including suing those members of the community objecting to this process. That is a very poor way for an organisation composed of local government members to behave. It certainly has not stopped the residents from complaining—and will not. If this all stacks up and goes ahead, the residents, particularly if any of these EPA guidelines are not followed and if the management of the landfill offends them, will continue to complain and protest.

I now refer to the landfill's financial viability. I can perfectly understand the councils wanting in place a landfill to replace a dumping facility when the Wingfield dump closes down. It is perfectly proper to look after the interests of residents and to make sure that a landfill service is available. But now—and, again, I have problems with this—two dump proposals have been approved in the northern area of Adelaide: one at Dublin and one at Inkerman. Those dumps are being developed by private managers who have a great deal of experience in waste management. They are dealing in a very competitive area. I am sure that they will be very competitive in their costs and charges, and there are already proposals at Inkerman to open additional dump sites.

I am very concerned about the financial viability of the proposed Medlow Road dump. The early figures we saw showed that the financial viability of that dump relied not only on the rubbish of the constituent councils being dumped there but also on rubbish from other councils being dumped there. We have not had access to any other financial information because, under the Local Government Act, the minutes and information on that financial viability have been suppressed by NAWMA and are unavailable either through the constituent councils or directly from NAWMA. Under the construction of the NAWMA authority, it is very difficult to direct any questions to it or to get information from it. It has not briefed me as the local member. Indeed, when a student doing a project on this came to my office, she said that when she went to NAWMA and mentioned my well-known opposition to this landfill she was told by staff of NAWMA

that I, as the local member, opposed anything good in my electorate.

It is this sort of personal attack and this partisan and unprofessional attitude to opposition within the community that worries me about the way in which NAWMA is proceeding. If it starts off this way, what happens if there are any problems as the landfill develops? If it has such a partisan attitude to the dump being developed at any cost, will it overlook some red flags that arise in consideration of the financial data? This is a very important consideration. The residents of our area need to be reassured, to be consulted and to have answers to their questions. They do not need the sort of patronising partisan attitude which has been shown by NAWMA in the past and which it continues to show.

I would really like to see an attitude such as that which I quoted previously: that it is not worth doing the job if you leave behind a community unhappy with the results. I can assure members that, if this landfill goes in, it will leave behind a community and a local member very unhappy with the result.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS secured the adjournment of the debate.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: During question time the member for Lee raised a question regarding the possible use of taxpayer funds by John Cambridge to attend a meeting of Toyo International Holdings in Singapore during the week of 16 September this year. I have sought clarification from Mr Cambridge, who has advised that no taxpayer funds were used.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I commend the Governor for his address to the parliament, and I have chosen to focus my contribution to the Address in Reply on a major challenge facing us in the year ahead, specifically the problem of Timor and our military commitment to Timor, and the associated issue of the Australian Defence Force's need to reinvest in increasing its capabilities not only in Australia but also in South Australia.

The issue of Timor is likely to transfix the Australian political debate for the next year to two years at the very least and, possibly, for much longer. At present we as a nation are enthused with the justness of our cause and with the appropriateness of our response to the human catastrophe that has befallen Timor.

We are there with the very best of intentions: helping the people of Timor, seeking to rectify the result of the referendum for independence and seeking to ensure that the people suffer no further at the hands of the so-called militia and at the hands of the Indonesian military. Time will tell whether our commitment to Timor is successful—I hope that it is—or whether it bogs down into a far more complex and muddy affair. Having commanded as a colonel in the army a peacekeeping force in Egypt, and having served for 23 years

in the Australian Defence Force; having been involved to a considerable degree in unconventional and conventional warfare and in peacekeeping operations, I must say that I am viewing the situation with considerable interest, as are many of our fellow Australians.

United Nations peacekeeping forces have their limitations: they are very effective as barrier forces and at keeping opposing parties, who genuinely want peace, apart so that peace can grow. In a sense, they are a little like a referee in a boxing match, where both parties agree to work by the rules and where both parties genuinely do not want to slug it out. They keep the parties apart and, through their good offices, create an environment in which peace can endure. However, when one party or both want to fight, when one party or both want to continue the conflict, then the role of the peacekeeping force becomes far more complex and difficult. It is very important that all Australians understand the difference between peacemaking and peacekeeping.

It is one thing to go in and, by the use of force, separate warring parties and enforce a peace, as we tried to do in Korea during the Korean war and, to an extent, in South Vietnam; it is another thing altogether to go in and try simply to help two parties that genuinely want peace to implement it. In my view, what we are doing at the moment falls into the category of peacemaking. It is my perception that what we are about to go through in Timor has more in common with our experience during the Malaysian emergency in the 1950s and early 1960s than it does with our military experience in South Vietnam. During the Malaysian emergency and the period of confrontation that we subsequently encountered with Indonesia—which I remind the House resulted in a war between Australia and Indonesia, during which many Australian soldiers were wounded and killed, mostly in the former province of Borneo—the communist insurgents in Malaya were predominantly drawn from the ethnic Chinese community.

It was possible for the British General, Templar, in command of those forces, which included Australian and New Zealand troops, to isolate the communist terrorists from their support base. It was possible to cordon off villages, to cordon off rice fields, to cordon off the source of supplies of food, of materiel support, of ammunition and of information. It was possible to put a barrier between the militia or terrorist force and their supporters. Subsequently, our military operations there were successful. Indeed, at that time in history Britain, Australia and New Zealand were probably at the forefront in terms of their expertise in counter guerilla warfare and counter insurgency warfare.

It was partly for that reason that the input of the Australians was so keenly sought by the Americans at the commencement of the conflict in Vietnam. I say 'the commencement of the conflict in Vietnam' because, as many members of the House would know, the first Indochina war fought between the French colonial power and Vietnam, which came to a head at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, was seen by the Vietnamese as simply part 1 in an ongoing struggle for their freedom. In their perception, the commitment of American forces into Vietnam in large numbers in the 1960s was but a continuation of an ongoing conflict. Of course, that was not our perception, and it is not my perception or that of many Australians. However, that was how the Vietnamese saw it.

That guerilla war saw many guerilla fighters—call them terrorists if you will, militia or whatever you like—able to access extensive popular support from the people of South

Vietnam. It was, indeed, far more difficult for those of us fighting against those who were called the Viet Cong to put a barrier between them and their supporting infrastructure.

It would appear that a large percentage of the population in Vietnam at that time supported the guerilla force and was able to ensure that it had ammunition, food and information which they could use against Americans, Australians and New Zealanders in fighting that conflict. For that reason, it is important for Australians and the House to appreciate how a guerilla war is fought.

I will briefly explain that, in essence, most guerilla wars involve a guerilla force or a militia which does the fighting; secondly, an auxiliary force which ferries forward food, ammunition and information, and supports and sustains the guerilla force or militia; and, thirdly, an underground component, which is a far more covert organisation. This underground could simply involve, say, grandparents walking past a sentry post innocently noting when the sentries change duty and reporting that information to the auxiliary so that, ultimately, it finds its way to the guerilla force or the militia so that it can attack that sentry post.

Recognising these three components of guerilla warfare is necessary in order to understand what is going on in Timor and to help to explain why in my view we will be successful. If the popular vote in Timor told us one thing it told us that the vast majority of Timorese support independence: the figure is nearly 80 per cent. It is my view that the militia (the guerilla force or the terrorists) will have difficulty in establishing an auxiliary and an underground. They will have difficulty getting food, ammunition and information. They will have difficulty remaining secretly hidden within the community. They will have a lot of people in the community actively working against them and working with us to ensure their defeat. For that reason I think that ultimately we will be successful. The issue is how long will it take and how many lives will be lost to ensure that it is so.

Another issue is the sponsor, who inevitably is behind a guerilla war and who provides the money, information, ammunition and often the means of transportation so that the auxiliary, the underground and the guerilla force can all achieve their mission. There has been a debate in the media about the extent to which the Indonesian Army is in fact that sponsor and whether it will be able to continue to be that sponsor operating from West Timor or from other parts of Indonesia, even as we occupy and attempt to bring peace to the province of East Timor.

For all these reasons, going back to General Templer in Malaysia and Colonel Ted Serong (who led the first Australian training team component to Vietnam in the early 1960s and who was highly regarded by the American General in Command), I anticipate that we will be successful and that we will achieve our military mission in Timor. But, of course, it is one thing to achieve your military mission: it is another thing to achieve your political objective.

Will it sour? Will we take casualties? In such a conflict those casualties are often the consequence of mines, booby traps and unpleasant methods implemented by guerillas who rarely come together in one location so that they can be attacked in force by conventional forces. They often use hit and run style tactics. If these are the tactics that we face over an extended period, it is my view that it is quite likely that we will take casualties.

It will be interesting for us to consider for a moment, once the freshness of our commitment is over and once the campaign has dragged on for some time, how the resolve of

the Australian people will endure if we take a considerable number of casualties and suffer considerably in the years ahead. I believe that our cause is extremely just and that we are standing up for what is right. I believe, too, that we needed to make the commitment that we have made and that we need to carry it through to its conclusion, but I am pragmatic enough to understand that if the pain becomes extreme some people in the community will start to question our commitment. I will not be one of them, but I think it is a prospect that we need to consider.

Indeed, we should be very proud of our young people in East Timor at the moment. General Peter Cosgrove, with whom I served as an officer in the Army, and other soldiers up there whom we have seen through the media and through other reports, are in my view doing an outstanding job. The young Australians who constitute the force are people of whom we should be proud. They are every bit as good as the young Australians who landed at Gallipoli—and we should always remember that. They have committed themselves to their duty as members of the ADF in the full knowledge that they may need to put their life on the line at some time. The country has called and they are there.

It is appropriate, however, that we stop to consider where this conflict could lead. The interests of Australia would not be served by an extended conflict with Indonesia, a country of nearly 204 million people which straddles our northern sea and air approaches and a country predominantly Muslim involved in a conflict in East Timor which is predominantly Christian.

I remember when I was peacekeeping in the Middle East in 1993 having discussions with my Muslim friends who would raise arguments with me about the crusades. They would say, 'Remember the crusades; remember what you Christians did to us during the crusades.' I would say, 'What do you mean?' and they would say, 'Well, you Christians tried to wipe us out during the crusades. You came out here determined to eradicate Islam from the Middle East.' I would say to them, 'That is not my recollection of history.' Then they would say, 'Then why did the crusaders land in the area now known as Gaza, break up their boats, move their army across the Sinai, reassemble their boats in the Red Sea, sail through the Straits of Tiran to Medina and Mecca and attack the holy shrines of Islam?'

I came to realise that if you look at situations from the other man's point of view you often see a different view of history. I wonder how some Indonesians view the conflict in Timor and how the Christian church views it and whether they each see it as part of a struggle which has been going on since the time of the crusades or whether they see it as a more contemporary conflict. Therefore, I ask the question whether, from an Indonesian's point of view, Timor is the first domino to fall and whether they imagine that the provinces of Aceh, Ambon and West Irian may be the next dominoes to go. I wonder whether they anticipate with some trepidation the deconstruction of their country which has hitherto been held together largely by the Indonesian Army, and I ask the House to consider what implications that possible future may hold for us here in Australia.

Having suffered perhaps more severely than any other country in South East Asia under the Dutch, their colonial masters, the Indonesians may now view a predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon and largely European force in East Timor paving the way for a free and independent Timor as a return to the past.

I make no judgment on these observations other than to wonder where this whole situation may lead us. I also congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alexander Downer, who, in my view, has done an absolutely outstanding job of bringing about a peace keeping initiative in Timor whilst not allowing our relationship with Indonesia to deteriorate to a far more concerning state. I think it has been an amazingly clever job to bring the situation to the position it is today. I could talk at some length about the way in which the opposition in Canberra has dealt with the matter, but I will not, given the time.

I move on to the associated issue of how the Australian Defence Force will cope with this commitment in Timor and South Australia's part in it. It is my view that the Army and the defence force in general will now need to expand in a way we can barely imagine. To maintain one brigade of a few thousand men in Vietnam, we had to maintain an army of over 40 000 men and we had conscription! I joined an army that was in Vietnam. We now have a force twice the size of our commitment in Vietnam, in Timor. How will the Army maintain that commitment for any period? There will need to be massive growth.

I wrote to the Premier in February 1999 suggesting a range of measures that might attract further ADF investment to our State. I note that the government has subsequently given considerable attention to it. I now believe that the situation in Timor has brought forward the timetable for us to consider South Australia's place in the future defence structure within this country. It is my view that South Australia is missing out. The bulk of the defence force is located in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, and even in Victoria which has a major logistics and training base. In South Australia we have the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), the P3 Orion force from the RAAF Base Edinburgh and 16 Air Defence Regiment at Woodside with a small Army Reserve element.

I believe that in both dollar terms and human terms we are at the bottom of the pegging order in terms of the ADF's investment here. I ask in this federation whether we can do more and whether we South Australians can put up a better argument to the federal government and to the ADF for further ADF investment in this state. I have a range of suggestions as to the sorts of capabilities that possibly could be relocated here if we put up good operational and governmental arguments to support the relocations. If members look at the map as I have, South Australia is extremely well placed to be a centre for command, control, communications and intelligence. We are the hub of Jindalee, the over the horizon radar. We are geographically and strategically central. Adelaide is far closer to Timor, Indonesia and Darwin than are Sydney and Melbourne; even in the case of Brisbane, we are not much farther away. We are at the centre of Australia. We are much closer to the west coast and to the Indian Ocean theatre of operations.

A major collocation of the Army, Navy and Air Force operational headquarters is being contemplated to form a new headquarters called Commander Joint Forces Australia (it may now be termed by another name). That joint headquarters could well be based in Adelaide. It is a great place to live and work, land is available, and all the command control and communication facilities are here. I suggest that it might be a capability that could be attracted here.

Air capabilities include the airborne warning and command capability, the AW&C project. Depending on who is the successful tenderer, could some of that activity and

capability find its way to South Australia? The C130 force of Hercules aircraft presently based at RAAF Base Richmond in Sydney and scheduled to move at some time in the short to medium future could well be relocated to Adelaide rather than to another location such as Queensland. When members look as I have at the map and the flying times from Adelaide to Darwin and compare them to the flying times from Sydney to Darwin or from Amberley to Darwin and then look at the flying times from Adelaide to Perth, Tindal, Timor and Indonesia generally, and New Guinea, they will find that Adelaide looks very logical as a base for transport aircraft if flying hours is the major cost driver.

I put it to the House that Adelaide could be a very good future base for the C130 aircraft. If such a capability decision was made, we would see a doubling in the size of RAAF Base Edinburgh, with hundreds upon hundreds of families and jobs created and with a flow on economic effect of almost unimaginable proportions for the northern part of Adelaide. I ask why not?

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: What about Woomera—

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: As my colleague the member for Unley points out, we have the base at Woomera. We have training bases at Port Augusta, Cultana, El Alamein, Murray Bridge and the Woodside area. All these training bases are outstanding locations for both the Air Force and Army, particularly given that the wet season in north Australia provides very poor conditions for training by the Army. With the new Adelaide to Darwin railway those troops could simply move straight down to Woomera or elsewhere in South Australia for training.

South Australia could become a hub for logistics and transport. Once the railway is in place we will be the centre point for road, rail and air transport to the west coast, north coast and east coast. It is a completely logical location for the further development of our capabilities. Flowing on from that, South Australia could become the home for the new ADF logistics distribution system. I envisage warehouses in Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla and Adelaide holding stores and distributing them to the Army in the north, the west and the north-east. It is a logical place. It is secure and well removed from any future theatre of operation, but at the hub of command control communications and transport. The Air Force also has an air navigation and training school presently based at Sale, in Victoria. Could that be moved here? The Army has an airborne battalion group represented by the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, which used to be based at Woodside and which left in the early 1980s. Could that capability be relocated here, particularly if the C130s were here? Adelaide would be a logical point from which a strategic reserve could be mounted. These measures would result in hundreds of families moving to the Adelaide area, perhaps back to Woodside or some other location, but I ask whether it could not be so.

A number of army schools could be relocated to South Australia and, in particular, the Army Reserve could be considerably enhanced. The Navy has an airborne trials establishment in NAS Nowra (Naval Air Station Nowra). Could that be collocated with ARDU (Aeronautical Research and Development Unit) at RAAF Base Edinburgh? Could the Naval Reserve and other naval administrative and communication functions be relocated here? I suspect they could.

I have talked about the defence integrated distribution system for logistics operations which is a \$150 million per annum undertaking. Could it be located here? Simulation and modelling radar and electronic air warfare—all of these

possibilities could possibly be relocated to Adelaide. The possibilities for regional development, local industry development and our universities to develop schools of excellence and chairs of excellence in a range of areas linked to such defence growth in this State is apparent. However, I want to talk specifically about the Army Reserve because that is where considerable growth can occur in this state and I ask questions such as this. If we are having trouble working out how we will maintain a capability in Timor once our regular battalions have to come home, why can we not mobilise our Army Reserve battalions?

Why must this expeditionary force mentality endure—this approach we have had since the first and second world wars, where we have raised AIFs (imperial forces) and where, during Vietnam, we raised nine battalions in the Royal Australian Regiment specifically for Vietnam and then closed them down after the war? We have the army reserve, and the Royal South Australian, Western Australian and New South Wales Regiments. Any one of the battalions in the army reserve could be mobilised, provided the federal government took action to make the appropriate legislative changes to ensure that they had a job to come back to and that the mobilisation of the reserve could be enacted. I ask that it be done.

I particularly suggest that the 10th/27th Battalion of the Royal South Australian Regiment, located right here in Adelaide and in regional areas of South Australia, is a good example of a capability that could be mobilised and serving in Timor by next year if it was the will of the federal government that it be so. I see no sense in skimming the talent and manpower from that battalion and sending it off to reinforce regular units, when we could mobilise the unit as a whole and get it ready for service in Timor. There are problems with this initiative that I propose, but those problems exist with whatever solution we propose for the maintenance of our capability in Timor. I think it would be a very sound move to look at deploying an army reserve battalion to Timor at some stage during the year 2000 or beyond, and I put to the House that the 10th/27th Battalion is an example of such a unit.

I also say to the government that it is time to revisit the ready reserve concept. That concept was a good idea, implemented poorly by the former Labor government. It was a very good idea, but the former government messed it up. It wiped out a regular brigade in Brisbane—the 6th Brigade—and covered it up by raising a ready reserve brigade in Brisbane, calling it the 6th Brigade. It was a completely political show. In so doing it corrupted the idea of the ready reserve. Our government abolished it, because the Labor Party had mucked up its implementation. No doubt proper workable plans are now being dusted off. We have an opportunity to reintroduce the ready reserve scheme as it should have been done in the first place, with the ready reserve capability or battalion in each of the capital cities rounding out its prospective regiment. For example, we could de-link the 10th/27th Battalion of the Royal South Australian Regiment, re-raise two battalions (the 10th and the 27th) and have one of them as a ready reserve battalion. As the soldiers finished their first year of training they could go into the other battalion as reservists, and we would have a sustainable reserve capability. These are the sorts of options that I believe we need to look at if we are to sustain our operations in Timor.

In conclusion, I say that the Timor situation is likely to transfix political debate in the coming years. I say to the

House that it is time for South Australia to stand up and attract as much defence investment as it can to South Australia. At present I believe we have the short straw. We can put forward good, sound arguments and I believe we should do so on a bipartisan basis. This is not an argument to turn into a political debate: it is one in which Labor, Liberal and Independent members should get together and put up sound, reasonable arguments to attract that investment and manpower to this state.

Ms WHITE secured the adjournment of the debate.

[Sitting suspended from 5.54 to 7.30 p.m.]

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): Through our ingenuity and resourcefulness we have done astonishingly well in South Australia over the years to maintain a comfortable and civilised way of life for most South Australians, but we are not Great Britain and we are not New York. I believe that our quota of politicians is out of proportion to our population of one million voters. I am putting forward a proposal for constitutional reform that would see the Legislative Council abolished and the number of members of parliament cut from 69 to 59. We will lose absolutely nothing in the process in terms of constitutional safeguards, decent legislation and representation of a variety of political perspectives in our parliament. On the contrary, we will gain in efficiency and accountability. I have no doubt whatsoever that my proposal would meet with popular approval should it ever be put to a referendum.

Before putting the case for a unicameral parliament in South Australia, it is absolutely necessary to explore some ideas for improving the House of Assembly. We need to bolster parliament's capacity as a whole to review the actions of the executive without unduly hampering the vision and decision making power that goes with good government.

Before I begin to make any suggestions at all, it would be wise to consider the goals we wish to achieve in structuring our parliament. First, there must be fairness. Now that we have universal suffrage and uniform electoral quotas in South Australia, the key issue to be resolved in terms of fairness is the correlation between political party support and political party representation in the parliament. In a word, this is the principle of proportionality.

The second highly desirable feature of government can be summed up as 'stability'. This does not refer to extended continuity of a particular political party in office, since it is a feature of our political system that there should be a viable opposition able to regularly challenge the dominance of the executive of the day. Rather, 'stability' refers to the ability of a duly elected government to carry out its declared program.

Traditionally, a majoritarian system, based on the Westminster model, has been considered the most stable form of democracy. With the current trend in Australia towards hung Parliaments in the chambers based on single member constituencies, the argument that stability is best obtained by means of single member constituency arrangements is weaker than it was. There is, however, a tension between these two primary goals. Houses of parliament elected on a purely proportional basis have displayed an unattractively high level of fluidity. The most notorious examples are probably the Weimar Republic of Germany and the Italian parliament prior to 1993, although I am aware of other destabilising factors in those scenarios.

There are four subsidiary goals which should also be built into the constitutional equation. There should be a considerable degree of connection between particular communities and the members of parliament who represent them. Our work in suburban electorate offices necessarily brings us into contact with a wide range of people and their problems. This must be a healthy connection, even if you simply look at it as a consciousness raising experience for MPs. This goal is achieved very well in our system, whereby most MPs are elected in single member electorates.

Secondly, there should be voter choice. By this I mean that as many voters as possible should have an influence over the election of both their local representative and, on the other hand, which political party they would prefer in office. In the South Australian context, voters have a fair degree of choice if they can vote for, for example, an excellent local Labor representative, although they might prefer to see a Liberal government or a significant Democrat influence in the parliament. Thirdly, the operations of parliament must be transparent. Secrecy in committees must be kept to the absolute minimum, consistent with commercial confidentiality, intergovernmental relations and citizens' rights. Only then can we have true accountability. Fourthly, the parliament should be structured in such a way that legislation is always subject to sober and considered deliberation. Of course, this could take the form of either a second chamber reviewing the work of the first chamber or, as I would prefer, the parliament as a whole being able to effectively review the proposals put forward by the executive.

Much can be done to bring us closer to achievement of these goals with reforms to the standing orders of the House of Assembly, with or without the abolition of the upper house. The standing orders cover the day-to-day procedures of the House. They also touch on important matters such as the composition and powers of committees. If we only had one chamber in the parliament, it would be absolutely essential to build safeguards into the standing orders to prevent the party in power from riding roughshod over the opposition of the day. At present, a simple majority is sufficient to suspend the standing orders of the parliament. If abolition of the Legislative Council were to proceed, a two-thirds majority should be required before suspension of standing orders. This should be entrenched in the constitution. We cannot permit parliament becoming the tool of the executive.

It is essential to allow the members of parliament and the public adequate time to examine the legislation brought to parliament. Standing orders currently do nothing to achieve this goal in the House of Assembly. The present rules allow a bill to be introduced one day and passed through the House of Assembly the next day. I envisage a mandatory spacing between the various stages of a bill as it is dealt with in the House of Assembly.

As our House of Assembly is derived from the House of Commons in the British parliament, we too have adopted the custom of appointing the Speaker of the House from the elected MPs on the government side. As the British House of Commons has 659 members, the removal of one member to the position of Speaker is not likely to affect the outcomes of votes or the fairness of procedure. However, in this House of Assembly there are only 47 members and the outcomes of votes can be, and have been, decided by the casting vote of the Speaker. I believe that the Speaker should not be a member of parliament: thus we would have a truly independent Speaker providing impartial rulings on the parliament's

proceedings. Notable and respected individuals from outside the political parties and outside the parliamentary process would better adjudicate parliamentary disputes. This is not unprecedented within the commonwealth. The option of selecting a Speaker from outside the parliament exists in the constitutions of Malta, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent, Belize and the Cook Islands.

The Speaker should be appointed by a two-thirds majority vote of the parliament, thereby requiring bipartisan support. Appointment for a 10 year term, for example, would provide the requisite degree of independence, while reserving the right of parliament to periodically replace the parliament's presiding officer.

Question time itself should undergo change to ensure that it does not become a procession of Dorothy Dix questions with predictable rhetorical responses by the Premier or ministers. I recommend that question time be reduced to half an hour, with ministers being questioned only by non-government members. Government members always have the opportunity to raise issues in grievance time should they wish to raise questions about performance of the executive. Any serious criticisms will be raised in the party room, in any case. As for the information provided to parliament through ministers' answers to the questions of government backbenchers, there is always the option of ministerial statements.

The style of questioning needs to be freed up too. Under impartial supervision we should be able to cross-examine ministers in free-form questioning. At present, the opposition is straitjacketed into formal questions which are too easy to dismiss and avoid. The parliamentary committees system should be expanded in terms of the number of committees and the powers accorded to them. There could be a standing committee for the portfolios under each cabinet minister. Thus, the committees would be examining specific policy questions relating to those portfolios.

In addition, we may need a committee of committees to assess which bills are routine and therefore capable of being expedited through parliament on a bipartisan basis. A resolution by any two out of five committee members should enable ministers and other witnesses to be summoned before the committee to answer questions. All committee proceedings should be open, unless there are very good reasons to the contrary.

If the reforms I have suggested can be secured, the Legislative Council can and should be abolished. But that is not the end of the matter. If our parliament consisted of only 47 single member electorates, the principle of proportionality would be offended against; in other words, minority interests and perspectives would not be adequately represented. With the abolition of the upper house we should add 12 members to sit with the 47 MPs currently sitting in the House of Assembly. Those 47 would be elected as they are currently—by constituencies of equal size. I propose that the 12 new members would be elected on the same proportional preferential voting system currently applicable to the Legislative Council. They should be elected for four-year terms. There is no justification for the current eight-year terms enjoyed by Legislative Councillors.

The end result is a single house of parliament with 59 members. Approximately 80 per cent of the MPs will therefore be elected in constituencies, with the remainder being elected across the whole of the state. I strongly believe that this strikes the right balance between stability and proportionality. I came to this view prior to reading the report of the independent commission on the voting system, which

was presented to the English parliament a year ago. Otherwise known as the Jenkins report, it recommended the adoption of a mixed member top-up system similar to that which I have proposed. The striking difference between my proposal for South Australia and the Jenkins report recommendations is the formula for electing the 20 per cent of the parliament not elected by constituencies. The Jenkins model gave extra weighting to under-represented parties, that is, those parties such as the Democrats whose House of Assembly representation is consistently under the percentage of primary votes gained by that party. In other words, the additional MPs would be elected not merely on a proportional basis but on a basis which would overcome their disproportionate absence from constituency seats.

In the South Australian context, this would mean guaranteeing probably at least half of the top-up seats to the Democrats, which would mean that they would always be in power, dancing with Labor or Liberal as it pleased them. It is no wonder that the national leader of the Democrats, Senator Meg Lees, has spoken publicly in favour of the Jenkins model. But my model differs from that in that it gives more emphasis to the stability factor which I have mentioned and moderates the proportionality which would be put in place by the Jenkins model.

Let me test the model I have put forward. The proportionally elected members would have a slightly lower quota than is presently the case for our Legislative Councillors, of whom 11 are elected at each election. In a typical South Australian election (assuming there is such a thing any more) we would expect the winning major party to get five places, the second major party to get four places, the Democrats to get two, and the twelfth spot would be up for grabs, possibly to go to an independent or another minor party. The upshot is that to win a majority in parliament Labor or Liberal would have to win 25 of the constituency seats. This is one more than the current 24 out of 47 required to form government, but the trade-off for the major parties is that they would have the opportunity if they are soundly endorsed by the voters to govern without a hostile upper house. On the other hand, the Democrats are virtually guaranteed two seats, possibly picking up a third seat in some scenarios. The advantage for them is not that they will hold the balance of power more often but that when they do they will be able to wield that power much more effectively than they presently can.

I have tried to create what is theoretically impossible: a model that has something for everyone. There is actually some truth in it. It really depends on how optimistic each party is in terms of improving its vote in coming elections. Parties that do well under the proposal can do much better than they do now, but the ruling party will still have to face the tougher accountability measures I have proposed.

A quick survey of the 1997 state election results reveals that, if voting had taken place under this system, the Liberals would have had 28 MPs. With the three conservatives in country electorates (that is, the electorates closest to Jeff Kennett), there would have been a Liberal government with about the same working majority as currently exists. Of course, I put this idea forward with nothing but respect for our current legislative councillors: they put in a sterling effort. It is the structure of our parliament itself that is the subject of my criticisms. There are several advantages to adopting this proposal beyond the happy balance it strikes between stability and proportionality, between mandate politics and fairness.

One of the obvious advantages of adopting this proposal is the cost saving aspect. In these times, when we are told that there is not enough money around to properly fund our hospitals or schools, cost savings should be considered. A reduction in the number of MPs by 10 would save the taxpayer around \$2 million per year, taking into account salaries, allowances and oncosts. Another benefit is that conference committees would be redundant. These committees are formed from representatives of both houses when a disagreement arises, that is, when a different result is reached in both houses of parliament. They deliberate and produce decisions in secret. Members are bound to uphold the secrecy of the negotiations and the way in which they voted.

Invariably, these committees result in last minute compromises and hastily tacked on amendments. Not only is dodgy legislation the result but MPs are left unaccountable to the public in the process. The West Beach boat harbour legislation is one example that comes to mind. With just one house, everything will be out in the open. Further, the whole process will be easier to understand. When I take school groups on tours through Parliament House it is always a struggle to explain the elaborate process that occurs when the two different groups of MPs (that is, in the two respective houses of parliament) disagree on the solution to the problem before them.

Finally, because the elections every four years will be for all MPs—which we do not have at present—we will end up with a parliament more responsive to the preferences of voters. Bicameral parliaments are standard in most commonwealth democracies only because of our British political heritage. It is not as if we have two houses of parliament as part of some grand plan. The bicameral system, which has spread through commonwealth countries and been adopted elsewhere, is nothing more than historical accident. Originally, there was but a council of lords to assist the early kings of England in their deliberations. It was not until the thirteenth century that the kings began to regularly summon knights and burghers to meet in London.

The purpose was to negotiate the extraction of funds from the communities represented in this early House of Commons, to finance royal wars and other expenses. As the fourteenth century progressed, the House of Commons came to realise that conditions could be attached to the transfer of taxes and dues to the royal purse, so gradually they became the initiators of legislation rather than mere petitioners. By the early seventeenth century the battle lines had become clearer between the rising middle classes of England (as represented in the House of Commons) on the one hand and the House of Lords (representing the aristocracy) on the other hand.

I have run through this very brief history of the development of parliament in England only to make the point that there is nothing magical about having two houses of parliament. The original reasons for a bicameral parliament have ceased to be relevant. Consider also that unicameral legislatures function well throughout democratic nations of the world. Many small nations run with a unicameral system. Although most European national parliaments have bicameral systems, there are many significant countries with unicameral national parliaments, including the Scandinavian countries and the founding place of democracy, Greece. New Zealand has functioned for decades with a unicameral parliament. All Canadian provinces and nearly half the states of India have unicameral parliaments.

Given South Australia's size and the fiscal dominance of the commonwealth, a unicameral parliament is all we need. I suggest that it is timely to evaluate the need and effectiveness of our present bicameral system. It should be judged on its merits, not on its heritage or longevity. I propose to compare the Australian situation with the Canadian experience. The second chambers of the Australian state parliaments were all established prior to Federation in 1901. Much has changed since then. Under the Federation proposal for an Australian commonwealth, it was agreed that only certain specific powers would be allocated to the federal government, with the state legislatures retaining all residual powers.

As a result, it was felt necessary to maintain bicameral legislatures in the states to deal with the very broad range of legislative subject matter, as well as to protect class interests. We should compare our constitutional arrangements with those in Canada. Canada chose to give all residual powers to the federal government, leaving the territorial and provincial legislatures a circumscribed field of operation. Under these circumstances, Canada chose unicameral legislatures for its territorial and provincial governments.

Nearly 100 years after Federation, the balance in the constitutional system between the states and commonwealth in Australia has shifted dramatically. In practice, more and more power has been transferred to the commonwealth. In other words, we now have a situation comparable to that set up by the post colonial Canadians. The Canadians recognised that provincial second chambers duplicated legislative machinery without adding to their effectiveness. I should deal with some of the arguments that have been put against unicameralism. The strongest argument seems to be that we should have a house of review, but the backbone of the argument that I have put tonight is that, with a modified House of Assembly and much stronger standing orders and accountability built into the procedural system, parliament itself would be a sufficient review of the actions of the executive. We therefore would not need a second house to review what this house does.

Sometimes the example of Queensland is raised. Queensland, of course, had its Legislative Council or upper house abolished in the 1920s and since then it has had a unicameral legislature. We know that the notorious Joh Bjelke-Petersen ran the state something like a dictator for many years, having gained control without proper checks and balances over the police force and numerous other administrative mechanisms throughout the state. However, the phenomenon of Joh Bjelke-Petersen arose in Queensland because of the crooked electoral system whereby the bias in the electoral system was extreme towards the country electorates. Therefore, people in the cities with a more progressive point of view really had no chance of being properly represented in the Queensland parliament. It was this lack of balance that led to Joh Bjelke-Petersen's getting out of hand. I do not believe that it was because there was a single chamber. Indeed, even if there had been a second chamber, if the Queensland House of Assembly is anything to go by, Joh Bjelke-Petersen would have had control of that upper house anyway and it would have served as no brake at all.

Indeed, there is living proof of that in Victoria where Jeff Kennett has gone too far in nobbling the Auditor-General, interfering with the appointment and decisions of the DPP, and withholding information about a wide range of shonky government contracts. Well, he was able to do that even though there was a second house simply because he and his

party had the numbers in both houses. My point is that there is nothing magical or terribly secure about two houses of parliament. It does not necessarily mean that there is a proper review mechanism in relation to the actions of the executive.

As to the South Australian Legislative Council adding proportionality to our electoral system, the proposal I am putting forward clearly meets that challenge by incorporating sufficient proportionality without preventing either Labor or Liberal from ever governing in its own right again. The arguments I have put forward in relation to the Legislative Council apply with much less force, I must say, to the Australian Senate. With each state electing 12 senators, that body remains something of a brake on the trend to ever increasing concentration of political power and influence along the eastern seaboard.

In summary, my unicameral proposal has the following advantages: it is a more simple, more expeditious method of legislating; the simplicity of the single chamber is more in accord with recognised business practice—no-one would think of having two sets of directors for the same corporation; and local government decision making is not the subject of criticism on account of there being only a single set of councillors to make the decisions. We must ask why it should be any different for state parliament.

Secondly, I believe that thoroughness of consideration need not be sacrificed if proper procedural safeguards are entrenched. If this can be achieved, then a second chamber is redundant. Thirdly, there will be no further issue of delays and deadlocks in terms of the interaction between the two houses.

These reforms would boost South Australians' confidence in their parliamentary system. There is ample precedent in other countries to show that a unicameral parliament is not only workable but effective. The changes I have suggested to the appointment of the Speaker, question time and the parliament's committee system will make the government of the day more accountable through a process which allows less room for the government to manipulate parliamentary procedure. No wonder it is the policy of the South Australian Labor Party to ultimately abolish the Legislative Council.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I certainly listened to the previous speaker with a lot of interest, because I have to say that I agreed with much of what he said, which is fairly rare. Certainly I look forward to future speeches by the member on that subject.

I rise with pleasure to speak in the address-in-reply debate and welcome the opportunity to support the words of the Governor, Sir Eric Neal. I thank him for delivering the opening speech which outlined some of the government's major achievements over the past year and what we can look forward to as the government strives towards achieving many more goals and progressing the state.

I congratulate Sir Eric and Lady Neal on the job they continue to do for South Australia as our number one couple. Whilst their itineraries are extensive and exhausting, they do it with ease and dignity. I wish them both well in their position, with many years of good health, and look forward to many years of their fine stewardship. I see them often as I go about my work within the state, in my direct electorate and in the community. I feel that the people of South Australia certainly appreciate them very much, not only as our vice-regal couple but also as fine people in themselves.

I spoke about the same time last year in the Address in Reply when I highlighted job creation and debt reduction, two

of the most important issues which are critical for the state to prosper. In the employment area, I am proud to say that we, the Liberal Government, are seeing the rewards for our efforts. It has not all been exactly popular and easy going. The government's highest priority has been in the area of job creation, and it is succeeding: nobody can deny that. We have had 14 consecutive months of increasing employment level trends in this state. I congratulate Minister Brindal on working tirelessly towards this goal, and the record is there for all to see. We certainly are performing very well, particularly when compared with the other states, and particularly when you consider that we have been through a very difficult period with the Asian crisis which hardly affected our economy at all.

In speaking about debt reduction and also the ETSA lease, the other most important issue I raised a year ago was debt reduction. Thankfully that is about to take a dive in the very near future when the ETSA lease deal is finalised. I believe that negotiations are progressing well and that the benefits will soon be felt, particularly in reducing our enormous debt burden that has so long shackled our state from full development. We know why this has happened. We know of the money we have been wasting every day on interest. We know the track that we have taken since the Bannon government. So, at last, I believe that we are making the yards that we said we would make.

I also refer at this time to the debate that ensued about the leasing of ETSA. I noted the emotion coming across from the other side of the chamber. However, I noted today in the House that the member for Hart was reading the *Financial Review*. I hope he has been reading page 1 of the 9 August issue, because on the front page it gave full detail of what has happened to Pacific Power in New South Wales. All I can say is 'C'est la vie', because the Premier said that exactly the same scenario could have happened to us in dealing with the Victorians who were privatising. I ask members who have not read that article to take 20 minutes (it is a large article) to read about Pacific Power, backed by the New South Wales Labor Government, in dispute with PowerCor.

According to the *Financial Review*, it was selling power willy-nilly at below the cost of production and it sold 50 per cent more than it could possibly generate, thinking that by playing the futures market it would, in the future, buy power below that price and then sell it to the higher priced contracts. It cost \$30 per megawatt, it was selling at \$15 per megawatt, and it oversold by 50 per cent. But what happened? I am sure the Victorian privateers knew this, especially PowerCor prices went up not down. And guess what: it has had to buy more expensive power to honour the contracts that it had sold earlier. It involves quite basic futures marketing and hedging practice.

If one is playing the futures market—and anyone in this House can—and it is one's own money, one watches very carefully and one can also hedge that risk. This is shades of State Bank. It never hedged its risk but just went and did it a la Marcus Clark. Who has to pay the difference and how much? I think the figure was \$625 million. The taxpayers of New South Wales are now up for \$625 million. Pacific Power is very upset about this and the matter is now before the courts in Victoria. The Victorians are suing it for breach of 12 contracts. So, \$625 million is the minimum figure.

Members opposite can say what they like about what the Premier said and the scenario he put to us. I am so pleased that it is New South Wales and not us. The political situation works in a funny way. It is ironic that, if the Liberals had won

the New South Wales election and privatised their power utilities, it would have affected us in two ways: first, that sort of deal would not have happened and, secondly, I am sure that we would not have the interest that we do have in leasing our facilities.

I know we have five very interested parties involved in the leasing arrangement, and I am very pleased for South Australia. However, I am sorry for New South Wales because it may have to fork out its \$625 million. It will be pretty concerned, and I know that the government, a Labor government, there will have to move very quickly and will be forced to follow South Australia's lead in selling/leasing its power facilities.

I also like to deal in facts. I have read the matter in the *Financial Review* and quoted it as I read it. I ask members opposite to read it. I know the member for Hart would have read it because he had it in the House today. I hope that he read it and took it in and that he will pay the Premier some credit for getting it right yet again. I will go on now with—

Mr Hanna: By deceit.

Mr VENNING: I will not even acknowledge that comment. I merely say to the member for Mitchell that time proves many things. In this instance it has already proven that the Premier was very right. The people of South Australia can wonder and count their blessings that it is the New South Wales people and not us who are up for \$625 million, because it well could have been us. When members opposite see the Premier next time they should thank him 625 million times.

I now turn to economic growth. In the past 12 months we have had the second highest level of growth of all states and territories. Members cannot dispute these figures because they are facts. Mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing have shown 20 per cent growth over the 1997-98 period. The building industry is experiencing buoyant times. Housing starts have increased by 5 per cent over the past 12 months, whereas nationally they fell by 6 per cent. Exports have increased by 6.5 per cent, whereas nationally they have fallen.

I raise an area of concern. Housing in particular is absolutely booming, and one of the reasons for that is a GST unknown. This is causing people to rush in to build their homes. The demand on whitegoods is unprecedented. If members want to buy a new oven, they have to wait until at least December. I am concerned that the Federal Government should put in place some interim measure so that people will know what is happening afterwards, particularly in the car industry. We heard today that Ford in Victoria is laying off staff and that it has gone back to minimum shifts as people are not buying new cars apparently because of the GST.

The feds have to move in and put in an interim measure so that we can keep the market going. There must be another side to this, because if you want to buy a new Holden today you will have a five month wait. It must partly involve the product. However, the quality of a South Australian car—and I drive one myself—overcomes this problem. So I am very pleased for Holden's. Their export success here insulated them somewhat from local market fluctuations, but I am concerned for Ford, because we need both of them to do well. I hope that is only temporary and that the feds can move in and—

Mr Foley: All three of them; Mitsubishi, too.

Mr VENNING: Likewise, Mitsubishi the same. I believe it is suffering from similar problems but not to the same degree as Ford. I hope and pray that in the next few weeks Mitsubishi will choose to build its new model here. It makes

a marvellous motor vehicle. It makes particularly good engines, and the new model would be a very nice motor car to own. The state's food industry has grown from being worth \$5.8 billion to \$7 billion in the past two years, and farmers are more efficient, though they are doing it tough at present. The weather is causing all sorts of concerns. Even though the 55 points of rain in the mid north last night was a blessing to many people, it did not solve the problem; it will purely keep things alive. We are suffering because of the unusual weather patterns we are experiencing. Those patterns are causing much concern, particularly along a line above Clare-Kadina-Ceduna-Cowell which is experiencing drought conditions. The pastoralists particularly are going through a very difficult time.

Luckily, the wine industry is still going along strongly. As I said earlier, the Barossa is still booming. The Barossa is in my electorate and is a real example of economic success, with wine production being at an all time high. Five years ago we said that this could not continue, that it must plateau. We all thought we could see signs of its plateauing, but it has not happened. Our premium price wines still continue to grow. It is getting to the point that one has to curtail one's spending and watch what one drinks. One cannot be celebrating all the time. These wines are magnificent. Luckily we can get good wines in the medium price range. However, demand for the high price wines are still continuing to outstrip supply. So, while the demand is there, the price will be there, too.

The Barossa has played and continues to play a key role in helping the Australian wine industry reach the \$1 billion mark in exports. Three or four years ago, we said that we wished it could happen, but now it has happened. The Barossa alone produces 20 per cent of the nation's wine. South Australia has almost half Australia's total area under vines and produces more than half the country's wine grapes, producing nearly 70 per cent of its red wine grapes. And, being a red drinker, I am particularly pleased about that.

I wish to congratulate all those in the industry—the wine growers, the makers, the marketers, the advisers and the consumers. Our product is world class, and we should never miss the opportunity to promote it. The other week I went to Tasmania and had the chance to try some wine. I have tried wine from the other states and, although their wines are improving markedly, they are still a long way behind our wines. They have made much progress in premium quality wines—particularly using South Australian wine makers—but there is still quite a gap between their wines and our wines, and the taste test always proves that.

The Barossa is expanding and has enjoyed substantial growth over recent years. The Governor's speech indicated that the Riverland has grown 30 per cent economically over the past four years. I could not get the exact figure for the Barossa, but I have been advised the Barossa has shown substantial economic growth, well above the state's average for the regional areas. The wineries are expanding at a tremendous rate, and new storage tanks are being put in to cope with the increased production, along with more vineyards, etc.

They are putting a huge demand on posts, wire, rootlings and irrigation equipment. The demand is such that they are having to use other products to do the job. Rather than using wooden posts they are using steel posts and now plastic posts made from recycled milk bottles. So, there is always a positive side.

Gomersal Road is a subject I have brought up in this House before. Effective lobbying is a skill most MPs

cultivate and hopefully will be successful at. I am very pleased with Minister Laidlaw's announcement approving the Gomersal Road upgrade to take the heavy transports away from the Barossa Valley Way onto a safer and more direct route to the Sturt Highway. I was successful as a new young MP in this place when I took on a very large project to get the road sealed from Morgan to Burra as was promised for 60 years—even riding my bike on the road and using any gimmick at all to promote the cause. Now we know that it is fully sealed, one end to the other, at \$19.5 million. I did not have to ride my bike on Gomersal Road, but I was prepared to do that and would do so again. I am very pleased that that project is now in the system. As members will appreciate, it will take 10 minutes off the trip to Tanunda and provide a direct and safe route, where trucks will not be mixing with the tourists on the Barossa Valley Way.

This all supports the success of the Barossa, along with the government's program to have the rural arterial roads sealed by 2004. I know that a lot of the councils are trying to get roads reclassified as rural arterial so that they can get into this program. As a rural member I speak to my local government areas and I feel that we will have to address some roads that are not rural arterial. Certain roads across the state must be addressed, particularly those running east-west in the Mid North. One of those roads, which is not in my electorate, runs from Tarlee across to the Owen area, and it is very difficult route, because there is no alternative route there; and also there are east-west roads which we often use, connecting Balaklava to the north across to Nantawarra. So, we hope that we can get this program implemented through local roads programs in cooperation with local government and with any spare money left over from the state's roads program.

I am pleased with the government's continuing policy of providing filtered water to homes in as many parts of rural South Australia as practicable. I really appreciated that part of the Governor's speech, because no other issue in my electorate at all has been so prominent and so much appreciated as clean water. People in the Barossa region have always put up with filthy water. When Adelaide got its clean water about 30 or 35 years ago, the Barossa was supposed to come on next. Then, about 10 years ago a Labor government promised that it was coming next, because Myponga was finished. It never happened. In fact, clippings from the paper show that 60 years ago the Barossa was promised it would get clean water, with a filtration plant.

I am very pleased that I was the local member when this government made it happen last year. When you now turn on the tap in the Barossa Valley you get crystal clear water, the same as, if not better than, in Adelaide. When I retire from this place this is one of the things that I will remember. Was it worth my being here; did I achieve anything; did I make a difference? I can say that, on this issue, I hope I did make a difference, and that will be the proof. I hope I will live long enough to sit back and reflect on that for many years. I do not intend to retire just yet, because there are quite a few more jobs to be done. Representing an area such as the Barossa is a challenge and I as local member have been rewarded many times over for achieving this great feat.

I appreciated the Governor's comments, because there are areas in my electorate, such as Eden Valley, Springton and Mount Pleasant, which do not have filtered water, purely because the plumbing does not go there. We cannot do anything about it; to change it would be a prohibitive cost. I feel sorry for people who are still putting up with filthy

water—and I mean filthy. They are still sending me samples of the water, and it is more orange and black than brown.

It was impossible to wash whites in water like that, but there was no other choice, particularly when all other supplies had dried up, and when they could get the water supply there was not enough pressure to provide them with water. Because the Barossa Valley has filtered water and these people over the hill do not, that has caused extra angst. Without knowing the finer details of what the Governor was referring to, I live in hope and am confident that in the next two or three years these people will have filtered water, but at great expense and, I understand, tied to the availability of funds released through the leasing of ETSA.

The leasing of ETSA goes right through the whole ambience of government spending on services for country people. That was an unsolicited comment which the Governor made, and I was pleased to hear it, because I cannot go to these people in Springton and Mount Pleasant and say that it is tough luck that because their plumbing does not connect to the pipeline they cannot get filtered water. That is how it is. The member for Kavel, the Premier, has more of this problem than I. I think our constituents will be happy if we can community by community hook up to filtered water.

The galling point is that the Barossa filtration plant is situated at Swan Reach. The township of Swan Reach, which is situated across the river in the member for Hammond's electorate, does not get filtered water. This filtration plant is known as the Swan Reach filtration plant, but the people of Swan Reach do not have filtered water. That hurts. I can understand the people of Swan Reach getting a little cross about that. Hopefully, that, too, will be addressed.

I want to speak briefly about another great success story involving futuristic planning by individual people. I refer to Barossa Infrastructure Limited, which was previously called the Barossa Infrastructure Group. Water will be the most significant issue with which this state will have to deal in the future. The Chairman of Barossa Infrastructure Limited, David Klingberg, and the Managing Director, Mark Whitmore, together with other key stakeholders, have been working tirelessly to get water into the valley to allow off peak water to be taken through a pipeline during the winter months when there is excess capacity at a cheaper rate and stored on the farm.

They are now following this up by putting together a plan and a prospectus to allow growers in the Barossa to gain access to additional water from the Murray via the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline because that water is not filtered. They said that it is a bit of a waste putting filtered water on a vineyard. So, they are taking the water off half way between Adelaide and Mannum and diverting it by upgrading the pumps. They are paying for the upgrading of the pumps and the extra pipeline themselves to get the water to the Warren Reservoir, which is no longer used as potable water for the Barossa because it is stained, and then providing infrastructure from the Warren Reservoir into the heart of the Barossa to individual vineyards. This is all at growers' cost.

I congratulate the government, first, for providing the wherewithal for growers to negotiate with the government to pump the water from Mannum to the Warren Reservoir. They negotiated a price with the government. Of course, the growers initially have to buy the water quota from other users under the tradeable water quota system and then the government pumps the water to the Warren Reservoir and the growers themselves with their own infrastructure pipe that water to the Barossa.

So, the Barossa will have two systems: a clean filtered potable water system for consumers and unfiltered water from the other pumping station for the vineyard. This is a fantastic program, but it is very expensive. I wish the Barossa Infrastructure Group all the best. It is preparing the prospectus now. The growers' input will be massive, involving millions of dollars. I do not know the exact figure—I am sure that they would not want me to mention it here—but it is a major input per grower per acre per year.

I say to the growers that I hope they take up the challenge. If you have confidence in the wine industry you really have no choice because of the guaranteed supply of water and also because of the word that none of us want to use or know about 'salinity'. By using the Murray River water, we keep the salinity level low. We can mix it with the underground waters in the Barossa aquifers and, in that way, we keep the salinity at a lower level and maintain and guarantee the continuing quality of our premium Barossa wine. Certainly, it is a very challenging time for Barossa growers to commit to massive inputs such as this. I know that some growers will be liable for in excess of \$100 000—massive amounts of money and, in terms of projects, I think it is into the millions of dollars.

First, I congratulate the government for allowing this to happen; secondly, I congratulate those people, particularly Mark Whitmore and others, who had the foresight to put the plan together; and, thirdly, I am confident that the growers will take up the prospectus to ensure that our industry stays viable, that the water quality will be maintained and that our industry will be insulated against dry periods in the future. It is certainly groundbreaking legislation by government and groundbreaking activity from the growers in the area.

Certainly, the salinity problem, about which we do not talk, was the subject of a conference this afternoon convened by the CSIRO in this house. I attended the conference as did other members. It is a very serious problem for us all to face—more serious than most of us want to acknowledge. Most of our waters are subject to rising salinity, whether it be river water, underground water or whatever. Salinity will be a huge hurdle to jump over. I believe that flood irrigation in the upper Murray should be banned as soon as possible. It is about time we got tough. It is about time we got stuck into the other states. Other states cannot be flood irrigating rice and cotton. First, it is a waste and, secondly, it pollutes the water. All the nutrients, chemicals and sprays used by the cotton growers end up in the water, which flows into our prime water resource in South Australia. If we freed up the water market, I am sure that these growers could not afford to flood irrigate. The resource is too expensive, rare and valuable to waste by flood irrigating.

As was learnt this afternoon, there are no soft options when handling salinity—none at all. We must get our farmers to alter their practices. We must have a much stronger monitoring system. I do not believe that our department is doing enough in terms of monitoring. I believe that the department of primary industries, through the department of mines, should be monitoring all bores in South Australia for salinity, and the results should be published regularly, because I believe that some people are probably unaware that they may have a problem. People need to know years before they develop a problem so that they can change practices to ward off disaster. When you find salt on the surface it is often too late. The minister is in the chamber and she has given me some advice. I urge the government in all areas, particularly the area responsible for monitoring, to act.

The government must have more input in monitoring the bores and letting the people who own the land know whether or not there is a problem. The problem is that there are no soft options. It is very difficult. You need only to look around Keith in the South-East to see that the problem is very serious.

In terms of the emergency services levy, I was very pleased with the government's announcement and that it has listened to concerns raised by various members of the community, including my parliamentary colleagues and I who have worked long and hard with the Premier and Minister Brokenshire on the matter.

I must say that the lobbying has been very effective. We have almost got what we wanted but, on the way, we won several very effective side issues, and I particularly refer to a review of land valuation. I certainly appreciate that because I have been pushing the issue for some time. I always thought that it was iniquitous that a grower who did not have a vineyard and who chose to grow grain or have a few sheep but whose land ran alongside a vineyard was valued as a vineyard and rated accordingly, with about a quarter or a fifth of the income. I did not believe that that was right. That is a side issue but it will certainly be a plus.

I also appreciate that the government now intends to review what is classed 'metro' and 'country'. There has always been confusion, because people living on the outskirts of Gawler, in my electorate, are classified as 'metro' when it comes to paying high registration fees but 'country' when the advantages are the other way around. I certainly welcome that change. Overall I am pretty pleased with the whole exercise, although it has been frustrating. In the end I think that the result will be good but I want to reserve my final judgment on that until the bills are sent out. I understand that they will be released in a few weeks, but the measure is much better now.

I also appreciate the decision regarding non-contiguous farming land titles, because even if such titles are held under different names but farmed as one family farming operation they will be treated as one and will attract only one \$50 fee, as long as they are in the same council area. People will appreciate that, particularly in my region, where there are a lot of small holdings and many family farms are held in the name of all the children, which is a German tradition. They would each have attracted the \$50 premium, so I am pleased that that has been addressed.

The lobby process has been a very effective lesson for me as a politician, and I think that in the end we will be pleased. I have always been a supporter of the principle of this levy but I was not pleased with it when I saw the quantum. However, as I said, I will reserve my final judgment until the bills come in. Finally, I pay the government a great tribute over the Pathway SA announcement. It is magnificent that every South Australian, no matter where they live, will get full internet access at the same price and quality as everybody else. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): It is a great honour to follow the member for Schubert, and it is important that the House acknowledges that the member for Schubert spoke for 30 minutes in his address-in-reply speech and did not mention once the Morgan to Burra road.

Mr Venning: I did!

Mr FOLEY: I clearly was not paying attention. I thought for one moment that we had got through a speech from the

honourable member without mention of that road. I also thought, although he probably did mention this as well, that there was no mention of a railroad.

Mr Venning: No, no mention of a railroad.

Mr FOLEY: That is something that the member for Schubert and Gough Whitlam have in common—when they make a long speech they always mention a railroad or two. In my contribution tonight I will touch on a number of issues including the debate about electricity and the sale of ETSA, some budget issues and the emergency services levy and some financial scandals involving this government, and I will conclude with a wrap up of some issues in my electorate.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: If the member for Hartley wants to interject, can you ask him, Sir, to go into his place? I am happy to debate him full on if he wants, but he should sit in his own place so I can do so. There are some important points to make about the sale of ETSA. The opposition has met with a number of companies looking at the long-term lease of ETSA. We have met with companies in Adelaide and I have met with companies in the United States, and I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has also had dialogue with the same companies here and in the United States.

The government has announced that five consortia in the first round expressions of interest have put in their first indicative bids. That has not surprised members of the opposition because we have stated consistently on the record that the poles and wires business of ETSA is a very good business, so it is no surprise that there is a large amount of corporate interest in it. That is why the Labor Party argued that the poles and wires business was a good and valuable business for government. As we have acknowledged, that debate has been had in this place and another, and parliament has decided that these assets will be leased over a long term. The opposition acknowledges that that decision has now been taken. The point to be considered now is that the price of ETSA or the value that the marketplace puts on ETSA is critical. The point I make is something which I have said in the media and which I repeat.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FOLEY: The critical issue is the price that the state receives for the long-term lease of ETSA. I have always stated that the right price for the sale of ETSA will be a fair one. It is not for me as a shadow Opposition spokesperson or, indeed, for the government to be speculating on what is the right price for the sale of ETSA.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Look, you can interject on me all night, if you want, Joe.

Mr Scalzi: Well, you interject on me, don't you?

Mr FOLEY: Well, I am not talking drivel like you were.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): Order! I suggest that the member for Hart ignores the interjections.

Mr FOLEY: The important thing is that a fair price—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Sorry?

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Hart should ignore interjections because they are out of order.

Mr FOLEY: The right price for the long-term lease of ETSA is a fair price. By that I mean that there are competing interests. The government's interests are short-term political, that is, to achieve the highest price, because in its view that will be its ability to pay off as much of the state debt as

possible and to balance the unpopular decision to sell ETSA with achieving a large sum.

I pose the point to the parliament and the media that one should not be caught up in the euphoria of what the government would want with its short-term political need, namely, a very high price. That is not to say that a high price is not right, but we must understand this important fact: the poles and wires business is a regulated business and, whatever price is paid by private investors, they will want, can expect and will be able to achieve a regulated rate of return. We must understand that an overly optimistic or high value price will put upward pressure on the long-term price of electricity in South Australia.

As a parliament we must hope that whatever price is achieved in this sale is a fair one that balances the competing needs of a fair return for the taxpayer for its long-term investment in the asset with a price that will not unduly put on the taxpayers in this state, both households and business, and continually place upward pressure on pricing. The most critical issue facing the state now is the medium to long-term pricing trend of electricity.

As a state we have unique problems when it comes to the generation of electricity. Many of our unique problems are geographical in terms of our interconnection and position in terms of the national market. We cannot in the medium to long term have ourselves in a position where we are well above the market average for electricity in this state. The two factors that will drive those prices upward will be the availability of competitive power and the ability of any owner of ETSA to achieve what they consider to be an appropriate rate of return.

I simply make the obvious and simple observation that a large sale price for ETSA, whilst it would be welcomed on the one hand in terms of its ability to retire debt, must also be balanced with the upward pressure that that may put on the long-term pricing of electricity in South Australia because, as a regulated asset, whatever price is paid, there will be an expectation that a certain rate of return is achieved. That is not to say—and I emphasise this—that we should not get a fair price for ETSA. We should, and we must, because the taxpayers of this State have invested many dollars over the past 40 or 50 years and for that this state should receive, and must receive, a fair return.

I just simply want to make the observation—and it is an observation made not just by me but by many learned observers of electricity in this country; I will not name the individuals concerned, but very skilled observers and players in the game—that it is vitally important for our state that the competing interest of requirement for debt reduction and good value is balanced with the long-term pricing needs of our state. With those few words, I will watch with interest what occurs over the next two to three months with respect to the final price achieved for ETSA. As I said, the interest in ETSA has not been a surprise to the opposition because, as we said from day one, the poles and wires businesses—the distribution and transmission businesses—are very good businesses because they are regulated, they are natural monopolies and they are businesses from which both the private and the public sector would derive much income.

I now want to briefly touch on this issue of electricity pricing. I will put on the public record here today—and both the leader and I have made the point known to potential purchasers of the long-term leases for ETSA—that the opposition fully understands that this vote has been taken in this parliament. But what we want to make very clear is that

our major concern now is this issue of long-term pricing of electricity. For households it is a critical issue but, equally, for job generation, economic development and the long-term economic performance of our state, we must have a very competitive electricity pricing regime in this state.

We are not convinced that this government's preferred model of a Pelican Point Power Station is necessarily the right policy decision for the government. Putting aside its location—and, as the local member, my opposition to that location is well known—but talking in the generic sense in terms of a gas-fired power station, we are not convinced that that is the right policy decision. That has been made known to National Power and it has been made known to those companies that have approached the opposition to understand our position on it. My statements tonight and further comments by the Leader of the Opposition in the weeks ahead will make it very clear that we reserve the right, if we should be elected to government at the next state election, to conduct a review of pricing of electricity in this state. It will be an independent review, it will be a quick review and it will be a review that will enable dialogue from stakeholders in the industry. But we will want to know whether consumers, both domestic and business, are able to access the most competitive electricity pricing that should be available in our state.

If we find in two years' time that there has not been an interconnection with the eastern states, be that a regulated interconnector or be that an unregulated interconnector, and if market power is being exercised by the stakeholders in generation in this state—National Power, whoever buys Torrens Island, or whoever buys Flinders Power—that will be unacceptable to a Labor government, and we will move swiftly and with no apology to correct that. More will be said on this topic in the weeks ahead, but it is important that any potential buyer of our assets in this state understands this very point: that we are not encumbered by this government's policy mix when it comes to the issue of generation and supply of electricity. I just do not want anyone to come crying to me in government that the Labor Party has made a decision, or has made a choice of options, that were not known at the time of their purchasing assets in South Australia.

It may well be that our fears are unfounded, naive and incorrect and that we do have access to the most competitive price for electricity possible. If that is the case, we will eat a few slices of humble pie and move on. I just give that strong warning, to put a firm word on it, that in government we will undertake an immediate review and look very closely at exactly how our electricity industry is performing with respect to pricing. The point I am clearly making is that we are of the view that the arguments for interconnection are overwhelming and that for a national market to compete effectively there needs to be a significant upgrade of the interconnection. Again, limited information is available to oppositions, so I qualify everything I am saying in that we do not have access to the body of information that governments have.

But, on the information provided to us, the arguments for a regulated interconnector, particularly into New South Wales, are compelling. They are more compelling than the arguments for an unregulated interconnector. Whilst the difference between regulated and unregulated may well be lost on many members here, those, if any, who might find the time or be so interested as to read this contribution will know what I am talking about. We have to ensure that whatever interconnection is in place achieves the objective, that is, to

provide the cheapest available electricity and to be a competitive point to provide competitive pressure on domestic generators to make sure that we are driving down the cost of electricity. I do not think that is an unreasonable policy position. It is a good framework for sensible policy.

It is a pity that this government did not look at it in a better mind than it did. It chose a course of action. It may be right; I do not know. I do not think the government is right, however, and that is why we reserve our right in government to look at that policy mix. In concluding this segment of my contribution, the message to any buyer of distribution, transmission, retail or generation is that Labor reserves its right to conduct an immediate inquiry into this issue. If we find that market forces are allowing local producers of electricity to extort the market, we will take swift action to deal with that. It will cause some ructions within the power industry, for which I make no apology, because if in two years competition does not operate as it should they will deserve a government stepping in and doing whatever necessary to bring about true competition.

I want to touch briefly on the government's decision this week to reduce the emergency services levy by \$20 million a year—an absolute panic decision by this government. Clearly, the Premier has been watching the fallout and the results in Victoria with his good, close personal friend Jeff Kennett. I heard the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services say that we can afford to free up this \$20 million because 'we have five bids in for ETSA and it is looking pretty good'. I want to make two observations: first, I thought it was pretty careless of a government, within 48 hours of its bids being in, to signal to the market the quality of bids it has received. I saw the Premier both on television and in this place and heard him on the radio. They were a bit like children in the lolly shop: they could not contain themselves with their excitement. Within 48 or 72 hours they were out there saying, 'Gee, these bids look so good we can afford to chuck away \$20 million of taxation revenue.' We have said from day one that this tax was a painful tax, a tax that was hurting ordinary South Australians. I sat on the select committee for at least two months, and we were told that there was absolutely no budget flexibility, that this tax had to be raised because of the commitments to the government radio network contract and others.

Understand this: the government has already pre-spent whatever financial windfall will be gained from the sale of ETSA and the power generation companies. It has committed at least \$100 million as a budget windfall from the sale of ETSA against a budget windfall that the Auditor-General said at the most optimistic end would be \$65 million. If we put aside even the Auditor-General's claims, there is no doubt that the government's spending an extra hundred million dollars a year on its recurrent budget is at the very high end of expectation of what you will get through the sale of ETSA. But this government has gone \$20 million further each year.

That \$20 million will only be paid for in a couple of ways: by a further blowout in the budget deficit, or by cuts elsewhere in the budget or further taxes and charges, increases or fines, in the next couple of budgets. But on top of that, of course, we already have a \$100 million black hole in this budget because, if members recall, in this budget cycle that we are in, this 12 month period, the government had forecast \$100 million from its ETSA tax, which has now gone. But that will leave the \$100 million black hole. So, this whole budget is a smoke and mirrors exercise. This government is trying to trick the public of South Australia, to trick the media

commentators and, hopefully, to trick the electorate at the next state election.

That trickery will be exposed, because we are not blind to what this government is doing. It will sell ETSA, it will pay off a large proportion of our state debt and it will try to paint itself as the financially responsible party of government. What arrant nonsense, to quote a phrase that the Premier uses often. The government has not had a debt reduction strategy through the sale of its assets together with a firm fiscal policy. What this government is doing is spending, spending, spending, and blowing out the budget. Mark my words: come the next state election we may well be facing budgets running in deficit, because on the forward estimates of this government, on the financial expenditure projections of this government, it is running into deficit.

What irresponsible financial management, to be selling the state's crown jewels, the state's most precious, valuable assets, to show what it considers to be financial responsibility but, on the other side of the budget, to be blowing out its expenditure, to be getting its priorities horribly wrong. The member for Newland—the minister—can sit there and smirk, because I suspect that around the budget table her contributions are minimal, her contributions are ignored. But I hope that there are a few ministers sitting around that cabinet table who understand a little about financial management. You cannot sell your state's most precious assets, lose that income stream, and not accompany it with fiscal discipline to ensure that you are spending your money on the right priorities, making sure that you do not waste money and have future governments—Labor or Liberal—inheriting budget deficits when you no longer have income streams to pay for them.

If the member for Newland—the hapless, incompetent minister for the environment—wants to talk about financial mismanagement, I am happy to rise to the challenge. Members should take a drive down Grange Road and look at the white elephant. As the member for Hammond has so correctly pointed out, if you want to look at a shrine to this government's lack of priorities, drive down to the western suburbs and look at Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium, on which \$32 million was spent by this government. The member for Coles as a soccer ambassador mysteriously resigned as president of soccer a few weeks ago, straight after the Adelaide Sharks were dissolved.

There will be an average of 4 000 people every second or third week at that stadium. The sum of \$32 million has been spent on an absolutely disgraceful white elephant for which this government should hang its head in shame. But drive a bit further down Port Road and look at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital—the decay of that hospital, the closed wards, the disgraceful condition of that hospital—and make this observation: what are this government's priorities? It would rather waste \$32 million on a soccer stadium which no-one will attend. If you drive another five kilometres down the road, you see a hospital which is in crying need of quality service and which this government lets decay.

Well, I say to members opposite that we will make that analogy clear to the electorate from this day on until the next state election and through the four weeks of that campaign so that members opposite have to justify their priority to build a white elephant to appease the soccer community. The member for Coles was ready to take on the role of soccer ambassador but when it gets a bit hard, when things start to look a little shaky, she mysteriously resigns as President of Soccer SA. We find that a deal is put together which requires the soccer federation to pay its contribution to the white

elephant of a soccer stadium. All of a sudden it cannot pay, so on top of the \$32 million there is a few million dollars each year to be paid towards servicing debt. Let us look at how those decisions were taken and the role of Sam Ciccarello—the man who was paid many hundreds of dollars an hour.

This parliament needs to get to the bottom of this soccer scandal more thoroughly than it has to date. They are not just my words or the words of my colleagues: they are the words of the member for Hammond and Julian Stefani in another place. That soccer stadium fiasco is a scandal. It is an issue of maladministration within government. Painfully, it is a glaring example of this government's priorities. It will spend money to build a white elephant when the needy in my community in the western suburbs have to suffer substandard health care to ensure that this government can appease the community it saw as more important (that is, the soccer community) than the health and wellbeing of many in this state.

I would like to touch on a couple of local issues in my electorate. I will talk more about the ship-breaking industry tomorrow if I get the opportunity. The ship-breaking industry is still a possibility in my electorate. There is a shift towards Gillman as a preferred site. I just want to put on the record—and I will expand tomorrow—that Gillman is just as bad a site as, if not worse than, Pelican Point—but I will make that a topic for a separate contribution.

The sewage treatment works program for my electorate is an absolutely appalling decision. I hope that the member for Bragg as a former minister will understand the point I am about to make. A correct decision of this government was made to work towards closing the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works at West Lakes. Why? There are two reasons; first, it stinks for the people who live close to it and, secondly, it discharges its effluent into the upper reaches of the Port River.

Do you know what some Einstein in SA Water Corporation has done? The solution is to close it and spend \$90 million to build a new plant at the other end of the Port River. It will still be close to homes and it will still smell, but it will discharge the water at the top of the Port River—in the busiest waterway in the state right next to the Royal SA Yacht Squadron, right next to the Cruising Yacht Club, right next to the North Haven beaches and right next to where the QE2 docks every couple of years. This was the policy solution.

This is nonsense. As we head towards the twenty-first century, as the government is prepared to allocate \$90 million plus of taxpayers' money, the solution is to shift the problem from one end of the river to the other. I say to SA Water: get smart, get serious. If you are going to spend that amount of taxpayers' money, do it wisely and find a better solution. If it takes a little longer, if we have to wait for more money to accrue in the capital works budget, I would rather wait a year or two to get it right. As we head towards the twenty-first century, if the most lateral thinking that SA Water can come up with is to close a plant at one end of a river and relocate it to the other, I despair about the quality of public policy in this state. It is totally unacceptable.

As the local member for Hart, I will not sit back and allow sewage discharge from an outflow pipe to occur within 30 or 40 metres of where people live and have recreation, and a high profile waterway where people sail and fish. If it were not so real, I would almost think it was a joke, that somebody was having a lend of us. But, at the end of the day, SA Water

really has to get a grip on reality. As long as I am the member for Hart, I will not sit back and watch public policy wreck my community. It is bad enough that we have a power station that we do not want and a ship breaking industry that we do not want—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr FOLEY: —and now we have—

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: It might be time for you—

Time expired.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Hartley. In doing so, I add that I am a great admirer of our Governor, particularly in the way he shows a great interest in this state of ours. Having come from industry, he is well aware of the needs of our state. Certainly as he moves around my electorate, I get the impression that he has not only a great understanding of business and of the needs of the state but also a deep empathy for the people of South Australia.

It was with considerable interest that I listened to the Governor's comments when he opened this session of the forty-ninth Parliament, and the language used and the statements made in his opening remarks certainly aroused my interest. He used phrases like 'social balance', and he suggested that 'all South Australians, wherever they live', are to 'share the burdens as well as the benefits'. I sincerely hope that these statements accurately reflect the philosophies of this government and that it was not mere sophistry aimed at appeasing the masses.

The reason I make these comments is that I am also hoping that the government is not falling into the trap of seducing itself into believing that the results of the recent Victorian election can be put down to the so-called Kennett factor. This would be an exercise in self-delusion, particularly if applied to the results in regional areas. One need only study the result of the October 1997 election here in South Australia. If that was not convincing enough, one should look at what happened in June 1998 in Queensland. Now we have the debacle of the Liberal government in Victoria. I think everybody should realise now that the regional voters have at last lost patience. They have done what previously would have been considered unthinkable. They have turned their backs on Liberal governments. In Victoria they have not only walked away from the Liberals but they have stepped right across the political divide and returned Labor members in regional electorates.

My comments tonight will be delivered from the perspective of my own interpretation of where country electors see themselves and why they have deserted, and will continue to desert, conservative governments, unless a significant change is made in the approach from those governments to the way they see and treat the regions and those who live there.

His Excellency the Governor spoke of the State's growth and he gave some examples in mining, agriculture, forestry and the fishing industries—all based in our regions. We heard that the State's food industry has grown from \$5.8 billion to \$7 billion in the past two years, principally out of our regions. We heard also that the economy in the Riverland has grown at 30 per cent per annum for the past four years—more growth in the regions. Indeed, it appears that all the good news as far as economic growth in South Australia is happening in the regions, yet people living in the regions

have reflected through the ballot box that they have been ignored or at least let down by their government.

Largely, the people whom I represent are not calling for hand-outs, massive infrastructure projects or for special treatment. They are merely asking for recognition of their being and their contribution to all aspects of life in this state, both social and economic. They wish to receive a reasonable level of service. They expect that they might enjoy services from the state government so that their lifestyle can be comparable with that of their city cousins. Their biggest beef is that they wish to be treated as worthwhile contributors and to be able to get on with their lives without being overburdened with bureaucratic overkill and, if they need to interact with government, they desire to be treated with compassion.

Country people desire to be able to have some say in the management of their communities, affairs and industries. Indeed, they are sick and tired of committees, boards and experts whom governments and ministers use to hide behind. The practitioners on the ground in a whole range of industries believe that their knowledge is not only equal to but is often superior to that of the so-called experts who have gained their knowledge through intensive study but have little or no practical skill.

I wish now to move to some specific portfolio areas and to point out some of the issues involved and the way in which I believe that the handling of those issues has led to the disenchantment to which I have been referring. I will preface my remarks by pointing out that these remarks and the issues which I will address will be no means exhaustive or in order of their relative importance. They are topical and illustrative of the point which I am trying to make.

First, I address the area of local government. Certainly we did it differently in South Australia from the way in which Jeff did it over the border, but we have had amalgamations and, despite the minister's saying that they were all voluntary, the biggest driver for amalgamations in South Australia was the honest and genuine belief by councils and councillors that, if they did not do it voluntarily, they would be forced.

I have always suggested that they did it under duress, and I have seen no evidence to change that thought. This level of government has forced amalgamation onto local government. I am not saying whether it was a good or bad thing or whether amalgamation per se is good or bad, but it was this level of government that forced local government to amalgamate, and there is some resentment in the community because of that.

State governments continue to shift responsibilities to local government without the equivalent funding to enable it to live up to those responsibilities. In this respect I refer to an article in the *Advertiser* of 20 September in which the minister is reported to have said:

Councils need to pick up in the area of social justice. It is part of growing up as a level of government.

It was interesting that the Governor in his speech talked about the role of functional reform between the various levels of government. He specifically referred to moves in the ensuing months to work out functional reform agenda between local government and state government. Here we have the Minister for Local Government telling local government that they should be picking up in the area of social justice.

What are his thoughts on functional reform? We have the commonwealth government, which is largely responsible for social justice and social welfare; we have the state government, to a large extent, in that same functional area; and now we have the minister trying to encourage local government

to go into that functional area, as well. Indeed, local government is going into that functional area. That is something which I abhor. It is just a case of duplication, and there are councils around the state that are employing specialist staff in the area of social welfare. That should be the province entirely of the state government, and that is one area where functional reform should start.

One of the reasons why I abhor local government going into those areas is the tax base on which local government largely relies. Of course, that tax base is a capital tax base. It is nothing more than a wealth tax, and it can be justified only if the tax is actually used to provide services for that wealth. When it is used to provide personal services, the tax base used to provide those services should reflect the ability of those people to either pay the tax or, in the case of wholesale sales tax or goods and services tax, their ability to pay the tax is reflected by their ability to consume. So the tax can be seen to be fair. Certainly, in my opinion, capital based taxes are not and never will be seen to be a fair way of carrying out social policy.

In recent times much has been said about our health system, not only in South Australia but nationwide. I often find myself defending the health system, because I believe, as many do, including our Prime Minister, that we have probably the best health system in the world. If you do happen to fall ill or get run down in the street, the best place to do it would probably be right here in South Australia, because the ability of our health system to cope would be better than that of anybody else. The level of service, care and sophistication of our hospitals and our staff working in them would be as good as is available anywhere.

I will point out for the benefit of other members a few things that happen in rural and regional South Australia, in particular in my electorate. I have no fewer than seven hospitals in my electorate, and historically all those hospitals used to provide obstetric services. That is a pretty hot topic around the state at present, particularly in the city. We heard the previous speaker talk about the QEH just down Port Road. If there is any talk about reducing obstetric services in any of the metropolitan hospitals, there is an immediate outcry. Obstetric services are still provided in three of the hospitals in my electorate, at Meningie, Millicent and Naracoorte.

The hospital at Kingston no longer provides those services, and it is a 30 minute drive from Kingston to the nearest hospital that does provide them at Naracoorte. The hospital at Penola no longer provides obstetric services, and it is a 30 minute drive from Penola to go to either the Naracoorte, Mount Gambier or Millicent hospitals. The Keith hospital—which is a private hospital—no longer provides obstetric services, and it is a 60 minute drive to the nearest hospital that provides those services, at Naracoorte. Bordertown is 50 minutes from Naracoorte, the nearest hospital to provide obstetric services, and Bordertown no longer provides obstetric services, either.

When people in the city think they have been hard done by because they have to travel a few kilometres or for 20 minutes for some sort of medical service, I would like them just to pause for a moment and think about what their country cousins are suffering. We in the country are not expecting to have obstetric services in every hospital, and the communities to which I have referred are largely accepting of the situation that they find in their local towns. One of the situations they find pretty hard to take is that it is very difficult to attract and retain doctors in those country areas.

We are being told continually that the only way that we will attract doctors into country areas is if the communities can offer them a package. Sometimes it is the local government or the hospital board, but they are being told that they have to provide a package which might consist of owning the bricks and mortar of the medical clinic, a house which they can offer to the doctor at a very low rent or no rent, or even providing a motor car. Why should country people have to provide those sorts of services to a doctor so that they can get basic medical services in country towns? It is an area which causes great angst to rural people and one which I hope the minister and his federal counterparts can address.

Mr Hill: They won't.

Mr WILLIAMS: I'm hoping they will. I do not particularly blame this minister or this government, but there are some very serious structural problems within our health system. Most of them can be laid at the feet of the federal government and concern things such as gap payments and the problems we have between public and private cover. The Keith hospital is a private hospital, and the Keith area maintains a much higher level of private health cover than do many other communities throughout South Australia, purely because they have a private hospital. So, the members of that community have to maintain their private cover. In other words, to some extent the people of the Keith community are subsidising the health of everyone else in South Australia.

I move on to education and the problems we face in the education portfolio in the country. This is another topical issue which the opposition loves to bring up on a regular basis. The fact is that South Australia spends more dollars per student than is spent by any other state, apart from Tasmania.

Ms White interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: We spend more dollars per student than any other state, apart from Tasmania. There is something wrong with the system. The AEU keeps putting up its hand, wanting to tell everyone how the system should be managed. I suggest that, if the AEU took a serious look at what it has done to education in South Australia and worked with the government instead of against it, and if it worked for the education of students in South Australia instead of for the election of a Labor government, the dollars would go a lot further and we would indeed have a much better education system.

I refer to the problem of education in the country. The major problem is attracting teachers to country schools, apart from those people who wish to enjoy the lifestyle. By and large we attract only new teachers with little experience, who are going to their first or second placing out of teachers college. We have great difficulty in attracting and retaining experienced teachers, and one must ask why. Many experienced teachers in South Australia would love to work in the country, but there is a substantial cost to their working in the country. The cost involves matters as simple as using their motor car and running up many kilometres in travelling backwards and forwards to meetings and conferences, for which they receive very little compensation.

Teachers with 10 years experience or more generally have families, and they find they move out into small country communities into what they see as substandard housing, which does not suit their family situation. This very common complaint, brought to me by senior teaching staff with that sort of teaching experience, is one of the reasons why many of them wish to leave country postings and get back to the city. The government could look at another way to encourage country teachers. For years we have heard of country

incentive packages; we keep paying lip service to it, but we do very little about it. One incentive for teaching staff could be to give them an accelerated rate of accumulating long service leave for country service.

I now turn to the agricultural portfolio area. Agriculture is one of those industries which governments throughout Australia largely wrote off, particularly with the collapse of the wool industry. When I was a schoolboy we were still talking about Australia riding on the sheep's back, but it has taken very little time for the South Australian community to forget where this country's wealth came from. In times of need it took very little time for both city communities and governments to forget the contribution that agriculture has made to this country.

Departments of agriculture traditionally have provided research and extension to farming communities. Today, that is done largely by private companies. Research is done and the product of that, the intellectual property, is owned by private companies, and the extension is done by employees of private companies. I do not have a problem with that. In fact, I think it has probably been of benefit to agriculture. Agriculture has leapt ahead because private companies have put much more effort and money into research and extension than governments could afford. In the meantime, this is just another area where government has been able to reduce its level of service to country communities.

There is one small agriculture industry which has quite a few members in my electorate. I draw the attention of the House to a specific example of something that has happened. I refer to the apiary industry which is very important to South Australia, particularly now that we are moving more and more into horticultural and broadacre crops, many of which rely heavily on honey bees for pollination. The apiary industry in South Australia currently has been devastated by an insidious disease called American foul brood.

In August 1996, the apiary industry approached the minister with a request to increase the effort of apiary inspectors to try to overcome this disease. It is worth noting that this is not the first time in the history of the apiary industry in South Australia that this disease has got into our bee populations and devastated the industry. With assiduous inspection and hard work by both inspectors and people working in the apiary industry, previously they have managed to get on top of American foul brood.

The minister, having been approached by the industry in 1996, informed it that he had set up a steering committee. The steering committee grew into a task force, and the task force went on to produce a report. The members of the industry approached me with a petition which said to the minister that the industry did not agree with the recommendations in the task force report and still wanted the minister to put more inspectors into the field as they had requested three years previously.

Under pressure from the industry, in March this year the minister agreed to put another inspector into the field. His department advertised for a senior apiary inspector. I was approached by some members of the apiary industry who said they did not want a senior apiary inspector; they wanted someone who could go into the field and inspect beehives, someone who has on the ground, hands on knowledge of bees, not someone who sits in an office.

The advertisement said that the department was seeking a senior apiary inspector to 'design a risk management strategy to assist apiarists to control American foul brood'. When I approached the Minister and said the industry was

alarmed at his putting on a senior apiary inspector, he wrote back to me and said, in part:

The introduction of American foul brood risk management strategies is of a relatively lower priority.

That contradicts precisely what the advertisement for the position said.

It is these sorts of things which are driving traditional conservative voters away from conservative governments—these little issues such as regional development. We have had a regional task force go all over South Australia—at what cost I do not know—but the upshot is that we now have another couple of committees. Regional South Australia does not want committees; it wants someone with a bit of practical business knowledge, which I have suggested our Governor has, to give them the help that they are asking for. They do not want committees to mull over and put off issues and to extend decision making processes for months.

It would be remiss of me in this debate not to mention water. I want to address several issues regarding water: first, a select committee of this House handed down a series of recommendations at the end of the last session. The minister informed this House that the government largely intended to adopt those recommendations and everyone—certainly in my electorate and, I believe, in the neighbouring electorate of Gordon—breathed a sigh of relief and said, ‘Now we can get on with life and we will move forward from here.’

It is with much regret and great dismay that I inform the House that we have gone backwards since that date. We now have the department saying that it will cost millions of dollars to implement the recommendations. We have catchment water management boards saying that it has made even more work for them and that they might take even longer to come up with allocation policies. The problem is that, if the government makes a definitive statement that it has accepted the recommendations of that report, most of the work will have been done. There is no excuse not to move directly on.

One recommendation was that we reassess the permissible annual volumes for each of the management areas. Some people in the South-East say that this will cost \$5 million or \$6 million and that we cannot allocate water or allow any transfers of licences until that work is done, and it might take years.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: That is nonsense.

Mr WILLIAMS: The member for Stuart says, ‘That is nonsense’, and I totally agree with him. It is nonsense, because another recommendation stated that licences should be set as a percentage of the permissible annual volume and not as a raw kilolitre figure. If we adopted that recommendation, every licence would change if we happened to review up or down the permissible annual volume. In my opinion there is no need to go through that work at all. If those recommendations were adopted, we could get on with it tomorrow. As I say, it is with regret that I inform the House that the situation has become bogged down.

I attended a meeting on Monday evening in Tintinara, which is an area in the Upper South-East for which the water resource in some nine hundreds is not proclaimed. The people in that area are suffering under a moratorium on water use. The minister declared a moratorium for 12 months as at 13 January this year. That moratorium gives the minister very wide powers, which are not subject to review. The minister can make decisions that are not the subject of any arbitration or review. I want to bring to the attention of the House some of the things that have been happening.

In April, landowners in that area who did apply for authorisations under the moratorium were told that they would be given authorisations if they could prove that they had made a financial commitment to using water in this forthcoming irrigation season. Landowners submitted substantial paperwork to prove their bona fides, which was assessed by a review panel. I cannot discover the names of the people on the review panel; I cannot discover the criteria under which it worked, but I do know from evidence that has come into my possession that the review seems to be very subjective. In fact, the review panel has not made any decisions; it has not given authorisation to any landholder under that particular circumstance other than seven landholders in one hundred who wish to take water from the confined aquifer.

A series of landholders in the Tintinara and Coonalpyn area and down the road towards Keith have centre pivots sitting in their paddocks. They have prepared paddocks to sow lucerne but they have not been given authority to start pumping water. We now have the Landcare officers for the area writing letters, pleading with the minister and the department to take some action so that these people can start up their pivots and stop the sand drift.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: Quite a few of them have just turned them on, but a lot of my electors are good, honest, upstanding citizens. At least one case has been brought to my attention where the land-holder was given authority to turn on his pivot but, because the authority came so late in the season and lucerne needs to be planted in June or July, he explained that if he planted lucerne it would not germinate and, if it did, it would not come to fruition. The land-holder sought permission to plant a different crop. The department forbade that land-holder from growing a different crop in the interim, advising him that he had to grow lucerne or lose his authority to pump water. The farmer planted lucerne, the paddock is now blowing, and no lucerne is growing in it. Officers of that department have not only mucked up their administration of water policy but they are now making out that they are advisers on agronomics as well.

I could talk about quite a few other topics, and craypot licences come to mind. The announcement about Pathways South Australia interests me greatly, and I want to get more detail on that. A lot of my electorate already has good access at fairly high speed to internet services, so I want to get some more details on that program. In my speech on the budget earlier in the year I congratulated the government on its capital works program, but I warn the government that people in rural areas are sick and tired of icon buildings.

Time expired.

Mr HILL (Kaurana): I am pleased to follow the member for Mackillop because I would like to address a number of the themes that he raised in his speech. I am pleased to support the motion and make comment about the speech made by the Governor yesterday. I do not want to reflect on the Governor when I say this, but it was surely one of the most boring speeches that has ever been delivered in that chamber. It was totally lacking in vision. It might have been read well by the Governor but what he had to read was an insult to him and to the rest of us.

The speech was a mixture of things, including boosterism in that it contained a lot of phrases promoting what the government sees as its great merit. It had plagiarism, because the Liberal Party now has a Liberal listening campaign, which

it has clearly pinched from the Labor Party. It contained an element of reaction, including reaction to the Victorian election result, and there were lots of elements in the Governor's speech about listening and caring, especially to the people in regional and rural South Australia, and that was one of the themes picked up by the member for Mackillop. The speech also contained a fair amount of eclecticism, particularly in the minimal items on the legislative program—bits and pieces pulled together to make it look like the government knows what it is doing.

The overall theme, if there was one, was the recommitment to privatisation, which really undermined the other notions about listening and learning from the Victorian election. If the government has learnt anything from the Victorian election, it would be that people are sick and tired of privatisation. If government members had been listening to people they would know that, and the evidence is that they have not been listening. One of the interesting issues raised in the Governor's speech can be found in the third paragraph, where he said:

Within this policy balance, it is imperative that quality of life receives the same level of priority as economic growth and debt reduction.

I find this somewhat fascinating because earlier in the week I read an extract from a report conducted by Moody's into the South Australian economy. One of the paragraphs in that report referred to debt reduction, and it had this to say:

Additional debt reduction will be hard to achieve, however, because significant savings from restructuring have already been realised and because of increasing labour costs and new initiatives, especially infrastructure programs—

like the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium—

The government intends to use recurrent revenues to fund general infrastructure projects but, since the projects are so large, additional debt financing will be needed.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the chamber. Members will resume their seats.

Mr HILL: I know this is fairly dry, a bit intellectual for them, but I will try to liven it up. I was talking about debt reduction and quoting from Moody's. Moody's said that the government intends to use recurrent revenues to fund general infrastructure projects but that, as the projects are so large, additional debt financing will be needed. I find that quite fascinating. The government says in His Excellency's speech that its commitment to debt reduction is the same as its commitment to economic growth and quality of life. If that means that we will have more debt, presumably we will have a lower quality of life and less economic growth because, unless the government decides to go into greater debt, the only way it can service these infrastructure needs is to reduce the expenditure and quality of life items. So much for the sincerity of what is contained in the Governor's speech!

I will speak at some length about the issue that is the most important issue in South Australia at the moment, namely, the issue of health and health services. It is clear from the amount of coverage that this issue has received in the press and in the media generally, in this Parliament and certainly in all the electoral offices of members on this side of the House that most people in South Australia believe that health is the No. 1 issue. Unfortunately, in the Governor's speech there was not one reference to health or hospitals—the most important issue facing the people in South Australia. You have to ask why that is so. There is a crisis in health. We have the minister for health at loggerheads with his own government and cabinet

about the amount of money that cabinet is prepared to put into health. We have the minister for health fighting with the federal minister for health. We have fights between Brown and Olsen, the state and the federal governments, but no reference in the Governor's speech to health.

At the same time we have a commonwealth government that proudly boasts a \$7 billion surplus. It is absolutely obscene that we have a \$7 billion surplus in this nation and we have pensioners who cannot get hip replacements and have to wait at least a year before they can be seen by a doctor to work out whether they will get a hip replacement. We have pensioners who cannot get dentures. We also have old people, sick people, poor people and young parents with young children who cannot get health attention in our public hospitals. It is absolutely obscene that the commonwealth government has \$7 billion and will not put any extra into health.

I will give a couple of examples of the kind of problems that have been brought to my electorate office over recent times. I visited a gentleman a couple of weeks ago in his home in Port Noarlunga South. This pensioner, who contacted me about a hip replacement issue, was recently advised by his doctor that he needed a hip replacement. He is in pain—every night he wakes up in the middle of the night and has to pace the floor to reduce the pain. He is on drugs to help ease the pain, and it is causing him much distress. He went to the doctor, who told him to go to Flinders hospital to get an appointment with a specialist. He went there in August and the earliest date he could get for an appointment with a specialist was 1 August 2000—12 months hence!

He has absolutely no idea, once he gets to see the doctor in 12 months, how long he will have to wait for the subsequent operation, and there is no way he can find out. I have written on his behalf to the minister to see what he can do. What makes the situation worse in my constituent's case is that this gentleman has had three heart operations. At the time of the last heart operation he was told that he had a 20 to 30 per cent chance of not surviving the operation. If his heart gets worse he will not be able to have an operation. He knows that there are no further operations for him. It is therefore incredibly important for him to keep his heart working properly, so he needs to keep fit. He has been a member of the surf lifesaving club since the late 1940s and he likes to swim and walk but, because of this rotten hip, which he believes he damaged in the pursuit of his activities in surf lifesaving some years before, and without a hip replacement, he will not be able to get the exercise. I said, 'I do not know if I can do much for you because I have been told of people who have been in so much agony and in such a strong need of hip replacement that they have been crawling around the floors of their house and still have not been able to get on the list. However, I will see what I can do.' That is just one example.

Today I was phoned by another constituent whose husband has cancer of his bladder. He was taken to Noarlunga hospital yesterday to have an operation to have his bladder removed. This man is 68 years of age. He was in the hospital and they had taken him off food and drink and he had done all the things you do before you have an operation. They had shaved him where they needed to shave him. The doctors were there ready for the operation. The anaesthetist was there, about to give him the anaesthetic, and the doctor said, 'Wait, we cannot perform this operation today because we do not have the equipment to monitor your breathing when you come out of that operation.' So, this man was put back into

his clothes, put into a taxi and sent home with his wife, who rang me absolutely outraged and distressed. Can members imagine the anxiety that this man and his wife have been through: first, to face the fact that you have cancer, then to face the fact that you have to have an operation for it and lose your bladder, then to go through the stress of getting to the hospital, having the shaving done, knowing that you may not come out of the operation—because you can never be 100 per cent certain—and then getting right to the end and being told that they cannot perform the operation? He has been told that he has to now wait two weeks and he will have the operation at Daw Park.

I think that this is absolutely disgraceful. I have no idea why it happened in this case. I do not blame the hospital, but it is clearly another example of the lack of funding and support to help ordinary people receive the sort of help they need when they need it. I have already raised this matter with the Minister, Hon. Dean Brown, and I have told him that I would be raising it here. I hope that he is able to sort out that problem too. One wonders how many of these cases we do not hear about as members of parliament because the people just give up. There must be thousands of these cases.

There are a number of cases one hears about that involve people who are looking for help with their teeth. One woman rang me, and it was an absolutely pitiful case. She needed dentures. She had obtained them through the public dental system and they fitted. Then something happened, her jaw moved and she had to have them redone, and it was done again through that system. Then her jaw moved a third time and the dentures did not fit. So, she had a choice of either not using the dentures—therefore, she could not eat; she had to have liquids—or putting them in. She did start putting them in and gluing them, and then she got ulcers all through her mouth. Once again she could not eat, so she had to get rid of the dentures. The people in the dental system said that they could no longer help her and she had to go into the private system. She could not afford it. It was a matter of either waiting for the government system—and I am not sure now how long it was, but it was an enormous amount of time—or paying for something that she just could not afford. It is absolutely pitiful and disgraceful, and I ask the government, if it has a \$7 billion surplus, how it can allow people to suffer in this way?

We know that this is the case: there is evidence about this. The *Public Sector Review*, in its most recent publication, quoting from the 1999 State of the States report published by the University of New South Wales (so it is not a PSA review; it is done by an objective group), stated that South Australia spends \$471 per person per year on hospital services compared with the average for other states of \$531 per year. So, we know that there is less money going into the health care system in this State. It does not matter what the Premier and the Minister for Health say, who they blame or how they justify what they are doing: we know that they are spending less. This government is not caring; it is not listening to the people of South Australia, because it is ignoring their basic, fundamental rights to a decent health care system. The report on the front page of the *Public Sector Review* states:

The dramatic shortfall in funding has left South Australia's public hospitals with an \$85 million black hole, a figure that almost directly corresponds with the \$87 million extra paid by government to cover the blow-out in its controversial deal with communications giant, Motorola.

This year's report has given South Australia's health service the second lowest mark of any state, with only Victoria scoring lower.

Is that not interesting: only Victoria. We know what happened in Victoria. I will briefly quote from one of my favourite newspapers, the *Border Watch*, which, in its editorial on 3 August, referred to the health system. The editorial stated:

... are we playing a dangerous game of politics with people's health, Mr Olsen? If so, we hope the people remember at the next election and your present incomprehensible attitude comes back to bite your government hard on polling day.

So say all of us on this side of the House to the editorial of the *Border Watch*.

Briefly, I turn now to another issue which I know is one of considerable concern, particularly in the south, that is, the issue of services being provided to aged persons. Seniors' week is approaching, and I know from what I have been told by my constituents that there are very long delays in services for aged persons in the south. The Southern Domiciliary Care Service is stretched. Community care packages are booked up well in advance. Community Options does not have the resources to deal with people. In some cases, there are over 50 people on lists waiting for these services.

There is also I understand a lack of respite available in the area. This is at a time when the number of aged persons in the state generally is increasing, particularly in my area. I shall mention a couple of suburbs. From the last census (1991-96) the Aldinga Beach area, for example, now has 180 extra persons over the age of 65; Maslin Beach is up seven, Willunga (outside of my electorate but still in the same area) is up 107; and McLaren Vale and McLaren Flat are up 163. So, the ageing population is increasing, and there is an absolute shortage of services. I do understand that there is a proposal for Seaford Rise that will provide some sort of aged accommodation in that area, which I think is a good thing.

One area where I will commend at least one of the government ministers in this brief contribution is the area of transport. I refer to the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Diana Laidlaw. I do not commend her for everything she has done but I do commend her for being gutsy enough to visit my electorate and meet with some of my constituents who have been campaigning for a long period about the development of Commercial Road. I have raised this issue a number of times in this House and in the local media in my electorate. For the first time the government has provided for Commercial Road in the budget, something about which I am pleased. I am also pleased that the minister took the time to visit the electorate, to front the local constituents who had been raising this with me and to work out a set of priorities for the development of Commercial Road.

For the record, I will briefly outline those priorities: (1) to upgrade the Maslin Beach Road intersection; (2) to upgrade the existing signalised Griffiths Road intersection at Moana; (3) to upgrade the intersection with Dalkeith Road and Nashwauk Crescent (also at Moana), a site where there have been a number of fatal accidents; (4) to review the existing signalised junction at Seaford Road; (5) to upgrade the junction with Weatherald Terrace at Port Noarlunga; (6) the first stage of the upgrade of the section of Commercial Road between Seaford Road and Dalkeith Road; (7) to upgrade the road between Penzance Street and Seaford Road, including the Jared Road intersection; (8) to upgrade the road between Maslin Beach and Dalkeith Road; and (9) to upgrade the road between Weatherald Terrace and Penzance Street.

The time frame for this could be anything between seven and 10 years, which is not acceptable; but at least the people in my electorate know what are the priorities and that the

matter is in the budget, something with which I am pleased. I do commend the minister for visiting my electorate. She thought that a bit of heat would be applied to her, but I assured her that my constituents were very friendly and would look after her, which is in fact what they did.

Briefly, I refer to a couple of issues in the environment area. Yesterday, the Minister for Environment announced to the House that she would embark on a process of allowing mining in Yumbarra Conservation Park on the West Coast. Of course, there was no reference in the Governor's speech to this brand new initiative to allow mining in national parks, something which I thought would have been of sufficient significance to be included in the Governor's speech but which was slipped in just after question time. This is a political move. There is evidence from the Department of Primary Industries that this is the case. This is the advice that was given to the Minister for Primary Industries. This is a political try-on.

It is possible to resolve this issue in a way which allows a win-win situation, as social workers like to say, but that requires proper consultation and proper involvement of the local community, the local Aboriginal group and the conservation movement. The prime reason we have conservation parks and national parks is to protect and preserve the unique parts of our land mass. This is an important park. It may not have glamorous mountains, rivers and streams and cuddly animals that ministers can go in front of a television camera with, but it is part of our Mallee; it is part of the most traditional part of South Australia. It is in pristine condition; it has had very little exposure to human beings; and it is fragile, as the member for Torrens says. To put mining in there will totally interfere with that. There is no way it can be excused.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

Mr HILL: And she is ignoring the recommendation of the committee that met in the last parliament. More will be said about this. I just want to put on the record that I think what the government is doing is a big mistake. In some of its seats in the metropolitan area where there is an interest in environmental issues, the government will suffer. I am talking about the seats in the Adelaide Hills and in the eastern suburbs. Members who hold those seats will be campaigned against on this issue. They will suffer on this. If members vote for it, they will receive pain, and I will not let this issue die in this House.

The other issue I would briefly like to refer to is the announcement in the press that the EPA has worked on an on the spot fine proposal for pollution of waterways. I was surprised to see in the paper that I was quoted as being supportive of this proposal but that the minister who has responsibility for this said that she would wait and see. I thought: what an outrageous kind of comment from a minister. What a gutless minister. What a lack of leadership by this minister. We all know that this is an important area: we need to stop pollution of our waterways. I would say that \$300 is far too much to fine someone who is washing their car in the street, but I do not think that is really what is intended. We have to stop people polluting our water system. It is equivalent to the kind of litter fines that are already in place. Where was the minister on this? Where was her leadership—absolutely nowhere at all.

The third issue I would refer to under the general heading of the environment is that of the Friends of the Parks. In August I was very pleased to attend the Friends of the Parks meeting down at Pinnaroo, and I congratulate those associat-

ed with organising that. My wife and I had a thoroughly enjoyable time and met again with many of the very good people who put in hours and hours of voluntary work supporting our parks system. We enjoyed the hospitality and enjoyed visiting Ngarkat park, where we had a look at the damage caused by the fire that occurred earlier this year.

One of the interesting things about the meeting, of course, was the hostility shown to the minister herself. In her speech she said, 'I want you to be friends of the parks, not foes of the parks.' I think what she really meant was, 'I want you to be my friend, not my foe.' The reason she said that was a couple of the motions. For members who do now know them, the Friends of the Parks are very gentle people, and for them to be critical is quite extraordinary. One of their motions was that they did not want the minister to have her photograph, her name and message on any more of their brochures, because it was causing an enormous waste of resources. They were advised that perhaps they should not talk about this issue but, nonetheless, they persisted and voted overwhelmingly against the minister having her face and name on their brochures.

One of the officers suggested that it was government policy for all ministers to do that. But it is certainly true that the Friends of the Parks did not agree that it should happen. I do congratulate the Friends of the Parks from Pinnaroo: they did a great job. It is the third conference of the Friends of the Parks that I have been to, and I hope to go to many more. I will briefly go through some statistics that have been prepared by the *PSA Review*, again in relation to parks. They indicate that the State Government has allocated a budget of around \$59 million for national parks in the next financial year, representing a funding cut of more than 5 per cent from the previous year.

In terms of new works, the government has cut the budget allocation by half while, at the same time, increasing fines and regulatory fees. Grants for important programs such as the Native Vegetation Fund, the Coastal Protection Fund and the Pastoral Management Fund have been slashed, the Wildlife Conservation Fund has been halved and the State Heritage Fund has been cut by 45 per cent. All the good work that the previous Minister for the Environment did has been totally undone by this current incompetent incumbent. They also say that, on top of this, the government has admitted that it is reducing supplies and services, expenditure grants and subsidies and operating revenue.

I now refer to an issue which is of some moment in my electorate, that is, the rates paid by the Mobil Oil Refinery to Onkaparinga City Council. The Mobil company in an attempt to reduce its bottom line has put to the government that it should reduce the rates paid to the council from \$1 million to \$250 000. The amount it pays is set out in the indenture act which was established originally in the late 1950s and 1960s and amended in the 1970s. I am not opposed to support for Mobil at all. I think it is an important South Australian company and that we do need to keep it here. It is important to the whole state. If the government decides that it needs extra support, the government should take the resources from industry assistance funds but not from the pockets of the ratepayers of the southern suburbs.

The local council has said that if it is forced to find \$750 000 approximately 20 jobs will be lost locally or there will be an increase in rates of some 2 per cent. The rates have already gone up: it does not want to do that again. I am very pleased that the member for Reynell and I have been up front about this and said that we are opposed to the council's being

forced to do this. Also, I am pleased that Bob Such, the member for Fisher, has written to Iain Evans, the Minister for Industry and Trade, as follows:

I write to express my total opposition to any move to require the ratepayers of the City of Onkaparinga . . . to subsidise any of the council rates payable by Mobil Australia. Such a move would be an unjust imposition on local ratepayers and would also undermine the autonomous role of the local council.

I agree with him and I am now waiting for other Liberal members from the area—the members for Mawson and Finnis, the member for Bright, whose electorate will take in part of the Onkaparinga area, and the member for Heysen, who has a strong interest in this matter as well.

On top of this issue, the Onkaparinga council is already suffering as a result of government changes to the formula used to set the allocation of grants to local councils. For example, Onkaparinga City Council, which currently has a population of 146 367 (up from 145 000 last year), had a grant reduction of 2.54 per cent in the most recent round. So, one of the biggest councils serving a less affluent area has already had a reduction in grants and many of the other councils in rural areas have had huge grant increases—small councils no doubt.

There are many concerns about increases in prices. Council rates is just one of them. As have many members, I am sure, I have been contacted by many electors who have all sorts of concerns about rates. The current price increase in LPG and ordinary petrol is disturbing many people. I think it is something that people do not really understand: they want to see leadership and action by the government in this area. Small businesses are concerned about the GST and I know that people in my area, especially in the most southern part of my electorate, are now paying increased rates on their motor vehicles because of the change in boundaries which apply to motor vehicles. For example, one gentleman rang me recently to tell me that the cost of registering his tractor has increased from \$60 to \$200. That is a tractor he uses on the odd weekend to take his boat down to the beach.

A lot of this has to do with the delivery of services. In the speech made by the Governor, the government tried to say that it is learning, listening, caring and sharing, but it really has not addressed the fundamental issue of what is wrong. It is not delivering the services that people want. The recent Victorian election has demonstrated that. It does not matter how clever, how smart, how well cashed up and how well resourced the Premier and the government are and how much the media is in its pocket because, if the government does not deliver services, and if it is out of touch with what ordinary people think, it will lose votes. I place on the record my congratulations to Steve Bracks, the Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, and to John Lenders, the former state secretary who is now a member of the parliament there, for their great campaign, and hopefully they will do even better in a few weeks when the Franklin East by-election is held.

The government here is panicking as a result of the Victorian election. As I have said, it has already stolen from us our 'Labor listens' campaign. It is now having 'Liberal listens' and is talking about announcements for regional and rural areas. It is talking about the ESL cuts, but it is too little, too late. The trouble is the government is not committed to basic public services.

In the few minutes remaining, I will indulge my fascination for the *Border Watch* to read some fascinating quotes from the local members. I will read extensively from the comments of the member for Gordon, who analyses in his

own inimitable way the Victorian election results. He said—and I think this is just classic:

The Liberals just will not listen. What does it cost to listen? It was incredible that, while SA Liberals were not listening and messing things up, opposition leader Mike Rann was meeting with the director general of the World Trade Organisation on behalf of land producers.

Then he went on to say:

If you drew a straight line between Adelaide and Melbourne, you would not get a Liberal electorate between Adelaide and Melbourne.

Isn't that wonderful! He continues:

You are not going to call Peter Lewis a Liberal, are you? He works against them. At least we [referring to himself, Williams and Maywald] try to work with them, but Peter Lewis, he actually works against them. The Liberals have made their own bed and they continue to mess it up. In South Australia, look at the lobster thing. They have just gone from bad to worse. The \$250 million government radio network contract has gone from bad to worse. The emergency services levy, bad to worse—

and so it goes on. Then he says:

It just gets sillier by the minute. But we are not allowed to criticise them. Don't criticise them, for goodness sake. Don't criticise them.

Then we have the member for MacKillop and, talking about the election of himself, Maywald and McEwen, he says:

Each of us were relatively unknown and were standing in very safe Liberal seats. After being elected, I would have thought the Government would have come to us and said, 'How did you do that?' I would have thought they would have come to us and asked where they went wrong. They have not bothered and they still haven't realised why people have voted against them.

How true. The next day, 23 September, Karlene Maywald is quoted in the *Border Watch* as follows:

Rural Victorians, by voting as they did in last Saturday's election, have sent a clear message to the government that they were not happy with the treatment handed out in the bush.

Then she says:

Mr Olsen professes to include regional South Australia in the decision-making process, but what has he really done? The Premier, by holding cabinet meetings in regional South Australia, believes he is involving country people. But is he really? The locals see a convoy of white chauffeur-driven vehicles pull into town and a group of dark-suited ministers accompanied by staff and mobile phones.

Time expired.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): I move:

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

Motion carried.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate. I am not sure how many address-in-reply speeches I have made in the time I have been in this chamber.

Mr Wright: The first one.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Obviously the honourable member cannot read. I recall that I have made a significant number of contributions. I have not bothered to read them in later years. First, I congratulate his Excellency the Governor for the manner in which he delivered the speech at the opening of this session of Parliament, and I commend him and his good wife for the excellent work they do on behalf of the people of South Australia. In my electorate, a number of difficulties have been experienced by my constituents, and there is—

Mr Hill: Have you been listening to them, Graham?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think I have listened to them, because I have been sent here on 10 successive occasions.

Mr Hill: They will wake up eventually.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: They are in good hands. I just want to address a few of those problems and make some suggestions where I think things could be improved on their behalf. I was pleased to learn that the Government has decided to proceed with exploration and development of the national park at Yumbarra. For many years I represented that part of South Australia and, having been to the location, I fail to understand why anyone would complain about it or would want to stand in the way of what will be a very good development.

Those people who are throwing up their hands in horror and thinking that the sun will not come up if we develop this proposal have really taken a very mean, narrow-minded, nasty and selfish attitude towards life, because that part of South Australia needs development and opportunities, and it is no good exploring it if there are no minerals there. It is purely a quirk of fate that when that conservation park was declared the provisions of the Mining Act did not apply. All those bleeding hearts who jump up and down need to get out in the real world and ask the people in that part of the state or other areas of South Australia where they are suffering great difficulties what they think about it.

I will give members an example of what can happen. We all recall the nonsense which took place when Roxby Downs was developed. What great opportunities that has created for the people of South Australia. On a smaller scale, I have in my electorate both the Honeymoon and Beverley uranium projects. A number of people now have jobs at Beverley, and the benefits that flow to the rest of that community will be quite significant. The company will be flying an aeroplane to the area two or three times a week, and the locals will be able to use it. There will be a power plant, which the local community will be able to tap into and there will be other facilities. Why would anyone, except if they were mean and miserable, want to stop that sort of activity? It will create royalties and opportunities for the people of South Australia. There is a tremendous need for opportunities to provide jobs in infrastructure.

In my electorate, the pastoral industry in particular is suffering greatly due to a number of circumstances. Low wool prices, droughts and grasshoppers are forcing these people into very difficult situations. I say to the House and to the people of South Australia that they need carefully to consider the great contribution that the wool and pastoral industries have made to South Australia and they need very carefully to analyse the situation and take some positive measures to assist these people.

The first thing that needs to happen is a change of attitude among many sections of the bureaucracy. These people are sick and tired of being hindered and harassed by insensitive, perhaps well meaning, but misguided bureaucracy. The way in which some of these people have been carrying on is, in my view, completely outrageous. In this respect I will relate a little story. In the past few weeks I have been travelling widely, as is my wont, around my electorate, and I was in Marree. I stopped at the local cafe to have a cup of tea and a quiet discussion with the locals, who said to me, 'What is happening? We have had a character up here taking photographs of houses. It was a public servant—one of those enlightened bureaucrats.' They were given a letter stating that, if they want to make any changes to their homes or sheds, they must fill out a form.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Hang on a minute; do not get yourself excited. These people are not used to this sort of bureaucratic nonsense. They will have to pay a fee of up to \$400, and they were told, 'We will back every three months to check up on you and, if you have done any alterations, you are liable to a fine of \$30 000.' My advice was, 'Tell them to go jump in the bloody lake,' because obviously you have a group of people—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before I take the point of order, I suggest to the member for Peake that, if he is going to continue to interject as he did this afternoon, he go to his seat immediately.

Mr FOLEY: Sir, I ask your ruling on the use of the word 'bloody'. I think the precedent set in the Queensland parliament only a few weeks ago was that that was indeed unparliamentary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The chair does not believe that the word 'bloody' is unparliamentary. It has been used on numerous occasions, but I would suggest to the father of the House that he might refrain from using the word.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: They have rather peculiar standing orders in the Queensland parliament. The member for Hart would have been marched out of the Queensland parliament every day without a vote. If I were he, I would not refer too much to the Queensland parliament, because he would have had the finger pointed at him. The people who live in these small isolated communities have a hard enough job without having some ill-informed technocrat coming out and making life difficult for them. I am amazed that people who have so much time with so few constructive things to do go around and harass these people who have really received very little from the government in the past and who do not ask for a great deal but who really like to be left to their own devices. I share their concern about these sorts of people who drive around in new four wheel drives—which most of these people cannot afford—and so on, with an unhelpful attitude. However, on this occasion we were fortunate, because this esteemed character was handing out bits of paper with his name on it. I was pleased to get hold of one of those pieces of paper. I have sent the information to the minister, along with some curt notes about what my next course of action will be if the minister does not take some positive steps. Obviously, we may have to read this document into the *Hansard*, and I will give an explanation about what I think of these characters. However, Mr Deputy Speaker—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The unfortunate thing is that often, unless members of parliament get involved in these sorts of matters, they just grow like topsy, and the stupidity—and that is all it is—continues, because these people become totally engrossed in their regulations, by-laws and various other procedures, with no regard to the poor individual who is just trying to go about his life with his family and who did not have the same opportunities most of us have. There seems to be an intense ability to want to make life difficult for people. Sir Humphrey Appleby and others have distinguished themselves in this way for many years. Unfortunately during my time I have had a lot of fun arguing with public servants, but these days my patience with them is wearing a little thin.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No, I was much more tolerant when I first came in here! Then I had the opportunity to have some discussions with some of the tourist operators in my area. I am pleased to say that the tourist industry has developed and is providing great opportunities for people. Thousands of people are travelling in the Far North of South Australia; in fact, some 25 000 have gone down the Birdsville track in the past two months. At the end of June, when I was at Cameron Corner, nearly 10 000 people came through there, but those people out there providing the services are still doing a wonderful job. We need to encourage and promote them, and provide the infrastructure and create more opportunities so more people can benefit, because many people love travelling through there. I hope they appreciate that a little commonsense is required and that they should not go driving on tracks which are marked 'no entry', because that is often for very good reason. We have had a very unfortunate happening through that part of South Australia where people were not properly educated. The development at Wilpena has been very successful and has attracted a lot of people.

In the very near future, we have another notable event coming up with the re-enactment of the mail run by Tom Kruse. I do not know whether any members of the House remember seeing the film that depicted his life story. Perhaps those of us who are a little older remember seeing that film in our early days. I have been given the privilege to participate in that celebration and welcome him to Port Augusta in a few days time, and I am looking forward to it.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No; he will be driving his old blitz truck. I never intend to get on another horse as long as I live, I can tell you. I have had my experience with horses. I come from a family that was involved with race horses. People such as Tom Kruse have made a great contribution to the outback of South Australia, and I am delighted that the great service he has given to the people is being honoured and recognised. It is often easy as the years pass by to forget and not recognise people in their own lifetime. So, I am looking forward to that and to seeing the film again, which I saw when I was going to primary school. I am not all that old, but it was a year or two ago!

People should understand that the people in the pastoral areas are suffering, perhaps as much as they have ever suffered. They are having difficulty educating their children, and the downturn in the price of wool is really hurting these people. Governments just have to recognise that South Australia and Australia operate outside the capital cities. If they do not, those people will not forget.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: They would be most unwise to put their trust in the Labor Party, because the environmentalists and greenies will destroy them completely.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I do not know whether the honourable member heard the member for Hart and the shadow spokesman for the environment speak in this House when this government amended the pastoral act to give some relief to people who are having difficulty paying their pastoral rents. Those members made ill-informed, harsh and irresponsible comments and criticism of this government, regarding people who would be on negative incomes.

Ms Rankine: Socialism is alive and well in the bush.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I may have misjudged them (I would not want to do that at all), but on every occasion when the member for Hart and the shadow spokesman for the

environment get up to speak in this House it appears that they take the side of the radical conservation movement. Whether it is in relation to getting a small mining development going or taking steps to protect people against the ravages of bushfires and those sorts of things, where do they stand? When the government amended the stamp duties act to provide for inter-generation transfers, the member for Hart criticised that. At the next election I will make sure that every one of those people is aware of those speeches. We will make sure that every one of them is aware of what the member for Hart and the shadow minister said.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, we will make sure. Usually, in these matters he is supported by the Hon. Mr Elliott, a man who knows everything about everything but who probably knows nothing about most things—Mr Know-all. He appeals to about 7 or 8 per cent of the population. That is where the Democrats set their sights, because all they need to get elected is that 7 or 8 per cent. So, they will inflict any hardship on rural people that they possibly can.

Regarding education in the Outback, the decision that the government made to improve internet connections in rural South Australia will be welcomed. I visited schools last week which had new computers, but they could not get access to the internet and, in those where they could, the connections were so bad they could not operate the computers properly. This would be of great assistance for those children so that they can have the same ability as a student at Norwood or Henley Beach.

I would like to see every school child in South Australia with a laptop in front of them, because that will be an accepted part of the daily life of the next generation. So, I think we should aim towards that. I am not sure at what age—they start very young now. I do not want them to be like me as I find it quite difficult. Two of my assistants, fairly patient people, were trying to instruct me in how to operate a computer. I am making some progress, but young people do not seem to have any problems with computers.

I believe that we need to pitch our public policy resources towards ensuring this, because I hold the view that many of the things on which we spend resources may be nice and of some benefit but they are not essential. I believe it should be the role of the state government, whose purpose it is to provide services to the community, to concentrate on the core issues of health, education, communication and roads to ensure that we do not get in the way of people who want to create income and export dollars. It is nice to build sporting complexes, but I do not believe they should be our top priority. I do not care who knows that, because at the end of the day a huge number of my constituents cannot afford to go to these places. They cannot afford to pay their bills.

Ms Rankine: If you think your priorities are wrong, how do you think the people are feeling? They know that the priorities of this government are wrong, too.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I say to the honourable member that some of those priorities have been wrong for a long time. Many priorities in this state have been changed, but there are many that still need to be changed. My constituents will benefit greatly by that decision and other parts of South Australia whether it is in schools or in people's homes. It is a step in the right direction. Even at the most isolated station homestead, where a child attends the School of the Air or a parent has to teach them, that student could access the internet—and I think that would be of benefit. I believe that mothers, who in most cases teach their children through

correspondence, ought to be given some assistance by the government.

It is not costing the taxpayers very much. If children must go to school, there is a cost to the taxpayer. It may not have been necessary when wool was \$1 000 a bale but when it is probably averaging less than \$400 a bale people just do not have the money, and it is placing a great strain on those people who are trying so hard to give their children what we all believe is their right—a good education. They cannot afford to pay anyone to help them and they are under great strain and personal difficulty. I believe that the need to help these people has long since passed. I believe that the government subsidy to isolated parents needs to be increased. I had not intended, Mr Whip, to speak for any length of time and I assured you that I would not.

Mr Meier: You have only seven minutes to go; you can wind up now.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I support the Address in Reply. I look forward to a number of the measures that the government intends to take. I am very concerned in relation to the difficulties facing people in my electorate. I intend to use this chamber to pursue those issues vigorously and I am not concerned whom I annoy or upset in that process. I commend the member for Waite for his contribution. I thought it was excellent. He brought to the attention of the House a number of issues which people should think through very carefully.

Having watched nearly every night on television what has taken place in East Timor, I think it is an absolute outrage that, when we are supposed to live in an enlightened society, people have been treated in such a deplorable way. I do not believe that the Portuguese have any reason to put up their hands. It is all very well for them to be high and mighty at the present time but their stewardship over some 300 years has left a great deal to be desired. They had no intention, in my view, of bringing those people towards democracy or leaving an infrastructure so that they could make it in their own right.

We certainly will have to pay a high price. I believe it is our responsibility to help these people. I believe that the taxpayers of Australia will be called upon to make a very significant contribution for a long time. And we are living in a fool's paradise if we do not increase our defence readiness, provide more resources and have more people in our armed services. The need for the Darwin to Alice Springs railway ought to be obvious to anyone as a result of what has taken place in East Timor

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, they will.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am sure they will, because it will be one of the great train journeys of the world. If we could get half those semitrailers off the road, it would certainly make it much more pleasant and it would increase the capacity of this country to shift huge quantities of freight quickly and efficiently. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Ms RANKINE (Wright): It is an honour to follow the member for Stuart. He is certainly an elder statesman of this chamber and we younger members can learn a lot from him.

Members interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: I am not saying what that is.

Members interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: We can. Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I have absolutely no argument—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would save the honourable member time if she referred to the chair as the Deputy Speaker rather than the Acting Deputy Speaker.

Ms RANKINE: I am sorry, sir. I have absolutely no argument with the proposition that we must have some balance between the economic and social needs of this state. I have no argument with the goal of moving to the next century with a far fairer society. The problem is that the rhetoric of this government is rarely matched by its actions. I thought I would reflect a little on the experience in my electorate and the northern suburbs generally of this government's idea of meeting the social needs and providing a fairer society.

Last night the *Today Tonight* current affairs program ran an item about a young father who had barricaded himself and his 18 month old son in a vacant Housing Trust home in a desperate attempt to get housing. This man had apparently been sleeping in his car for the past two months and had been forced to surrender custody of his son to his mother because they had nowhere to live. As the stand-off with the police and the trust came to an end, this man was advised of the processes in applying for priority housing with the trust. Never mind that he had been on the waiting list for some time.

My only knowledge of that man's particular circumstances was as presented on the television program, but I do have specific knowledge about the current situation in relation to public housing in the northern suburbs. In my view, not only is our public housing in crisis but our emergency housing for people in grave and dire circumstances can only be categorised as in major crisis. We have reached the stage where we are prioritising our priority situations.

Last Friday I took up an invitation from Magistrate Fredericks to visit the domestic violence court at Elizabeth. That is a wonderful initiative, and those involved in it—the judiciary, the police and social workers—are doing a wonderful job and deserve our sincere appreciation. Domestic violence is one of our most serious social problems, and any program aimed at reducing its incidence and effects is deserving of the strongest support. All those involved accept that this is a long-term proposition. There simply are not any short cuts and we must be prepared to pay the price now for benefits into the future.

During my visit I saw people from a range of backgrounds and circumstances present themselves at the court. This is a unique court which has a very special level of informality. It also projected a strong determination to provide protection for those involved. One young man who came into court was quite willing to admit his crime. He appeared genuinely remorseful and had of his own volition attempted to get counselling. Sadly, the earliest he could access any professional help was December. In desperation, he sought help from his local minister of religion. While I am sure that they can offer a level of assistance, this young man needed and wanted more. My reason for raising this case is to highlight the need for a total approach when dealing with domestic violence. That issue cannot be addressed if appropriate and professional counselling is not available. The whole point of the domestic violence court is to try to reduce this crime, to provide some solutions for people and to provide safety for victims.

Appropriate housing is also an issue of great need for many women and children who find themselves in these circumstances. I do not think it is unreasonable for them to expect that they will receive assistance from our public

housing authority, that they can and will be safely housed. However, let me convey the circumstances being faced by one of my constituents, who is a victim of severe domestic violence. This woman is the mother of two teenage children. She separated from her husband earlier this year. She is currently living in private rental accommodation, paying \$120 a week out of her sole parent pension. This woman was beaten severely in front of her children and the children witnessed their father threaten to kill their mother with a knife to her neck. He has also told the children that he will grab them, put them in a car and gas them. They are terrified and have refused to go to school. The school has contacted their mother to find out why they have been absent so long.

The Northern Metropolitan Community Health Service provided a support letter for this woman. It said that she was having ongoing contact with the police and that she was fearful of further violent attacks from her former partner. A large part of this fear arises from the fact that her former partner is aware of where they are living and has an intimate knowledge of the house and how to access it as he has lived there. She feels that this terror can end only if she and the children move to a location unknown to her former partner. Despite support letters, despite police reports and despite obtaining a restraining order, this woman has been refused priority housing by the South Australian Housing Trust.

Having made personal contact with the trust, I was told that in order to provide her with priority status they needed evidence of permanent damage to the children. What a disgraceful set of circumstances we have when a family needs to prove permanent damage to children because they are victims of domestic violence in their household. Where is the justice and fairness in that? What do they think happens to children when they see someone hold a knife to the throat of their mother? I was advised that there are currently 90 people on the priority list for housing in Salisbury and that if she were put on that list now it would take six months before she was housed. If this is not a crisis, I do not know what is.

The trust was happy to help with a bond and rent for private rental, but this can take up to 30 or 40 attempts before a property is secured. Private rental accommodation is at a premium. These people are in traumatic situations and are being expected to house hunt over 30 to 40 properties. This situation is not only unacceptable but is also cruel.

Last week a woman who cannot read came into my office. She is on a sole parent pension and has four children aged seven, six, three and two. She has no car and she has no telephone. She has been living with her mother-in-law for the past three months—in a caravan parked out the back. Her husband dropped her off there and took off. She does not know where he is. The situation with her mother-in-law deteriorated to the extent that she refused to allow her and the children to have access to the house, food or bathroom facilities.

This woman visited the Housing Trust, was provided again with assistance with bond and rent, but she has no transport and has been dropping the children off at school early in the morning so that she can look for a house with the two young ones—the three year old and the two year old—in tow, using public transport and relying on the bus drivers to read the information she gets from the real estate agents.

This woman was not put on the emergency housing list or offered any other help. I asked for emergency housing and my office asked for emergency housing, and we were told that there was none. The Salvation Army had no housing available, either. In the end, the northern family accommoda-

tion service provided two nights in a caravan park for this woman and her four children. The Salvation Army is now providing her with a home. But what about the inappropriateness—the disgraceful situation—of sending an illiterate woman with four children off to find a house in the private market with no car and no telephone? This was a situation that would clearly escalate into an emergency situation, as it clearly did. There is absolutely no excuse for this but, if there is any defence at all, I understand that the situation with the Modbury office is twice as bad as that being experienced in Salisbury.

At a recent meeting of the anti-poverty network in Modbury, the Women's Housing Association advised that it takes referrals from about 67 agencies. It has 161 homes and a huge waiting list. Its waiting time is about eight months and the demand is increasing beyond control. Greg Black, the CEO of the Housing Trust, was quoted on the *Today Tonight* program last night as saying that up to 1 000 Housing Trust homes are for sale at any one time. I accept that the trust should sell its homes; I do not have a problem with that. I accept the renewal programs—and there are a number of those under way. But the homes that the trust sells and the homes that it knocks down must be replaced. We will leap from crisis to crisis when we have developments of 2 000 Housing Trust homes being demolished and being replaced by only 500. Where is the fairness in these situations: where is the equity? Is this what the government means by sharing the burden—families being left in dangerous situations or being left totally homeless as our agencies raise their arms in helpless frustration?

In the Governor's speech he made the statement that we need to reflect upon the history of our state. However, I think we will all be reflecting on some different histories. I know that these people with whom I have been dealing will be: they will be remembering the treatment that they have received under this government. No matter how much the government twists and turns, its emergency services hike has hit home. If members of the government think for one minute that dropping the bridge toll will save this government, they have another think coming. Constant wastage, constant disregard, constant running down of our essential services, our hospitals, our roads, our police: this is the history that the people of South Australia remember now and it is what they will remember as this government heads into its fourth year in office. There is no doubt that panic has set in in the benches opposite. And it was not just the Wiggles yelling, 'Wake up, Jeff': the people of Victoria have also had enough. This is the history that has the knees opposite knocking.

Two years ago, a pledge was made to the people of Tea Tree Gully that a new patrol base would be provided; that the police were being moved out of their area but, 'Never mind, we will provide you with a new patrol base as soon as a suitable site can be located.' What has happened? Absolutely nothing. I wrote to the Minister and advised him of a large parcel of land that the Golden Grove High School wants to sell. It is an ideal location for a police patrol base. Over the past few years, the school has suffered vandalism attacks amounting to nearly \$1 million. A patrol base in this location, which has the support of the principal and the school council, would provide a high rate of visibility for police and help create a good rapport between young people and the police. Now all we need is for this government to make a decision. It is hoping that, through its delaying tactics, the people will forget. They will not. The people were assured that this was to be a temporary measure.

I would like to know what work has been done by this government to identify a site—or is it just hoping that this issue will go away? I can assure the government that it will not. Since it moved our local police patrol base out of the area, response times have risen and so have crime rates. Local people are sick and tired of the excuses. They are sick of increased crime, they are sick of slick responses and they are sick of the government's delaying tactics. It is time for this government to either honour its commitment to build the new police patrol base or have the courage to admit that it is doing a backflip and will not be building it at all. As for backflips, this government is going for gold in the area of backflips.

In relation to the high school, I raised an issue with the principal some time ago as a result of a spate of brush fence fires that we were experiencing in our area. I felt that young people within the school needed to have a greater sense of involvement in their local community. So often we lecture our young people about their responsibilities. They are constantly told, for example, 'It is your school and it is your community.' But the truth is that we never give them any real say.

That is the aim of the project that we hope to have up and running in the Golden Grove High School. As far as I am aware, this is the first time a project such as this has been set up within a local high school, and it is great to see it receive such strong support. Students at the high school will be given the opportunity to identify problems within their school or the community generally. They will be required to work through ways of addressing or rectifying these issues and at the same time will gain accreditation for their studies. A political intern has been appointed by the University of Adelaide, and she is working with these students to develop this project from the very outset. It will be owned and operated by these students. I am really pleased that the school has embraced this idea. They recognise that even within the school community only a very small number of students have any real input into the school.

It is important for our young people to feel that they are part of our community. Like all of us, they need to feel that they are valued and cared about. I hope that this is what they will get out of this program. I am hopeful that they will also learn the appropriate processes to achieve their aims, ascertain the avenues available to them for assistance and gain a real sense of belonging to and responsibility for their community. In that area I express my appreciation to the Delfin property developers who made a major donation to the school to help fund the leadership training for students and teachers.

There are not too many of us who at some time during our youth have not done inappropriate things. Some of us got caught: some did not. In the main, it was mostly youthful enthusiasm gone haywire without regard for the consequences. It is my hope that this program will harness and redirect those energies, which so often can get our young people into trouble, in a way which will benefit them and our community as a whole.

In the area of youth I also refer to the Salisbury council and to the approach it has taken, making a real difference out in its community. Some time ago that council appointed a youth officer and conducted a needs analysis of the youth in its area. The council contacted children in the schools, spoke to teachers, approached local youth groups, developed a youth policy and also established a youth advisory council, an official subcommittee of the council comprising representatives from each high school and local youth organisations.

Five sitting councillors also indicated their keenness to be involved.

The policies they have developed recognise the need to consider young people in a whole range of areas. For example, planning was included, and young people were involved and included in all stages of consultation in the Salisbury North Urban Redevelopment Project. In the Pooraka Recreating Links with the Community Project the council identified the need for further development of youth programs and opportunities for young people to participate actively in the life of the community. Other areas included participation, for example, a community development project which allowed young people to be involved in the planning and celebration of Youth Week, the YMCA youth parliaments, Unity in the Community Festival and the development of a Youth Information card.

They also identified the need to assist young people to access areas of funding, including local community grants, youth initiative grants and identifying and applying for funding from other spheres of government in the private sector in order to resource key youth initiatives.

In the area of employment there is a range of strategies: the Youth Employment Strategy, where the council has endorsed a number of innovative programs in partnership with industry, private and public sectors; traineeships; the Employment Development Fund, where council makes a budget allocation each year for the development of new employment initiatives; and work experience and student placements.

In the area of education, in consultation with the Parafield Gardens High School and the Lions Club they developed a youth and community certificate. The certificate is to be awarded to young people who in the post-compulsory years of their schooling have made a contribution to the development of young people and the community in the areas of political, cultural, social and economic development. They have policies and strategies in the areas of arts, recreation, racism, environment and safety and the use of public space, which is a big issue for young people in our society. This is a great initiative and it is working; it is having an impact. I have spoken to young students, ordinary kids from ordinary Salisbury families, who are finding that they have extraordinary abilities.

The Tea Tree Gully council, the other council in my electorate, indicated recently that it intended to undertake an assessment of whether or not it is providing young people in its area with adequate recreational and social activities. Well meaning as it is, if it is serious then it must do much more. Young people want and need to be involved at a far greater level, as Salisbury council has been able to show. As a first step, if it is serious, I believe that the Tea Tree Gully council should employ a youth officer. It must be prepared to seriously back these endeavours and back the young people of its area. These young people need a sense of place and deserve a sense of belonging.

I want also to address an area that is affecting a range of young people, that is, accommodation services for people with Prader-Willi Syndrome. Prader-Willi Syndrome is a birth defect characterised by intellectual impairment, short stature and often developmental delays, incomplete sexual development, and insatiable appetite coupled with a propensity for weight gain. Information that I have read about Prader-Willi Syndrome indicates that many young people have died due to obesity-related complications such as diabetes, heart attacks and kidney failure. Clearly, they have very specific

and special needs, and they have specific and special needs in relation to accommodation.

I raised this issue in relation to one specific case with the Minister for Human Services in 1997. In response, the minister advised that the government is giving careful consideration to the needs of individuals with disabilities such as Prader-Willi Syndrome and their accommodation requirements. As part of the strategy to fund unmet need, the government has been involved in discussions with the commonwealth regarding additional funding through the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement to assist in this area. Has any progress been made in the negotiations with the commonwealth to be able to provide adequate funds to meet the needs in this area?

In conclusion, let me say that the people of the northern suburbs are sick and tired of bearing a disproportionate amount of this government's shared burden. They are sick of suffering the burden of the loss of basic human needs and the loss of basic human dignity. They are sick of the burden of the government's increased taxes, taxes which will force some of them out of their homes. The greatest overall burden they are forced to bear at this present time is the possibility of another two years of this dishonest and deceitful government.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): I support the motion. In so doing I would like to draw to the attention of the House some of the matters that the Governor brought to our attention yesterday in opening this session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament. Yesterday actually started on a high for me, because in the very first sentence our fine Governor talked about the fact that this government was actually going to address some imbalances. He talked about economic and social balance through policy direction and legislation. I thought, 'Good; they listened to the voters in Victoria who told Mr Kennett they wished to live in a society, not an economy'. I thought, 'Good; we might hear about redressing some of the imbalances and we might hear about health, disability services, aged care, law and order, and housing.' They are some of the key imbalances that have been created by the economic rationalists but, surprise, surprise, not once in the speech is there any reference to any of those concerns. Yet, we still find money for the trimmings: we still find money for soccer stadiums, convention centres, wine centres, rose gardens and car races. There is still no balance. That is the issue that must be addressed very quickly by the conservative elements in power in this state or they will not have another opportunity.

Our Governor went on to talk about growth rates. Growth is a means to an end. Wealth generation is for a good purpose: it is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of the state. It is good to see that we have the second highest levels of growth—if it is to be translated into services. Part of that growth, of course, is underpinned by water and the member for MacKillop talked about water tonight. Water is one of those matters with which this government has failed to come to grips. Water underpins growth and wealth generation. There is about 1 000 gegalitres of available water on an annual basis in the southern part of the state. Of that 1 000 gegalitres, a little over 300 gegalitres is allocated and about 150 gegalitres is being used. But 850 gegalitres is running to waste every year. That is wealth running out to sea. We must put in place policies that allow that water to underpin growth and development, and we must not allow any speculation in or hoarding of water. We must move forward. We must free up water to be used to underpin

growth, to create opportunities and to enhance the society in which we wish to live.

Mining was referred to. There are enormous mining assets in this state and we must develop them. I note that in your speech, Mr Acting Speaker, you talked about the defence opportunities that are staring us in the face. We must embrace them as a state. This parliament must get behind those suggestions to ensure that they are properly resourced and researched so that in a bipartisan way we can take a case to the federal parliament. That opportunity must be taken on board and I am sure that this House will support you in that challenge.

The Governor talked about the level of confidence of small business in this state. There is a level of confidence, but there is also an unacceptable level of bureaucratic regulation and red tape. Recently, a family moved from Perth to Mount Gambier and, not being able to find paid employment, the breadwinner in the family chose to use the skills he brought with him as a floor sander. He immediately found that to be a floor sander in South Australia he had to have a builder's licence—a very complicated and expensive process to work through. He was basically told that he cannot be a floor sander because we have a law in this state that provides that he must have a builder's licence first.

Someone else decided to do minor repairs, particularly to garden fences, and a few other minor things around people's homes. Again, he was confronted by bureaucracy that said, 'No builder's licence, no work.' How ridiculous! Yet another small business operator who fits video cameras was told that he had to stop fitting video cameras because he did not have a surveillance licence. He had to go to Adelaide, study at Regency Park and get a broad security licence just to fit surveillance cameras. How ridiculous! We need to get the monkey off the back of small business.

The Governor talked about the information economy. The information economy, a wired world, e-commerce, is based on three things: access, carriage and content. You must have access to the internet at local call costs; you must have carriage, someone to provide the service; and, once you have all that, you must have content. You have to have a reason to be there. We heard today that the government is assisting Telstra in providing extra access at local call cost. Unfortunately, it is subsidising competition, particularly in the South-East, because 98 per cent of the South-East already has access at local call cost. We have our local pops—our local points of presence—and we have local internet service providers providing the carriage, and we are building web sites and we are obviously building the content.

All we have done now is use taxpayers' money to subsidise competition in the marketplace. It has not been well thought through. I certainly have not been consulted in terms of the implications for my electorate, yet my electorate is mentioned in terms of the benefits. As I said earlier today, communication and consultation is not a strong point amongst the conservative forces in this parliament at this time.

We know that Forestry SA will become a public corporation and that it will be given greater flexibility. I support the move, because I think adding wealth in a way does require that degree of flexibility, knowing that the asset is protected in public ownership. But I support it cautiously, because I still see valuable logs being shipped over the Portland wharf, contrary to the policy of the government, and I am told at prices far less than that at which local value adding industries can have access to the same log. I have the photographs to prove it. It continues, and the industry continues to say to me,

'What is going wrong here? What we are told is happening and what we see happening are different things.' In moving to a more flexible structure, I hope we can guarantee to the local industry that it will not be disadvantaged and we will not export jobs at the expense of value adding within our own local area.

The Hindmarsh bridge was an interesting backflip because only last week we were talking about a toll. Last week's toll: on again, off again. But the toll, like the reduction in the emergency services levy, says a lot about the way the present government is leading and managing this state. It is not working back from a vision. It is not thinking through the issues. Therefore it is reacting and then reacting to the reaction to its reacting. So it goes around in circles and we get wish wash, wish wash. Leadership is not about that—it is about working back from a vision, working back from where we want to take this state. If that occurs, we will not get this change in direction all the time and all these confusing messages.

I note that in this session it is proposed to introduce a bill to provide for propriety racing. We have already been told that we did not need such a bill because there are no constraints on propriety racing in this state. The only constraints are all the hurdles put in the way of private enterprise, which wants to compete on a level playing field. It is amazing that a conservative government would want to put up barriers to someone who wants to risk their money to create jobs. Let us hope that the legislation is at least an indication of goodwill and that something will happen. It should have happened anyway, but all these funny little hurdles just keep on appearing.

I note also that we will continue to change and improve the relationship between state and local government. I read it but I do not believe it. I do not believe that this government intends to embrace functional reform. It forced structural reform on councils. I do not believe that it will now say that, once that has been achieved, we will stand back and give competency powers to local government.

I note that functional reform is on about competency powers to local government, saying that they are another sphere of government, that they raise taxes, that they have responsibilities and that they do not require the parenting hand. They do not require the level of interference that has been demonstrated by this government. I hope that in these words we will see some embracing of the concept of genuine functional reform. I note also a reference to the revenue base available to local government, and to dabble in that will be fraught with danger and risk, because this conservative government says one thing and does another.

In the taxing area it is particularly apparent because this government loves taxing wealth. It calls them 'levies'. However, they are not levies but broad based taxes, and it is taxing wealth. Even in the recent changes to the taxing mix within the emergency services levy, the government has shifted a bigger percentage of that revenue base to wealth. Again it will tax the very means of production in this State: small business and farms will now pay a bigger percentage of that overall tax grab because it is a wealth tax. Water, sewerage and the fire levy are wealth taxes.

We must review all this. If we are to review the Valuation of Land Act, we must also review the vehicle that is being used by this government at this time to extract a whole raft of unfair taxes out of the wealth generators, namely, the job creators in the community. I look forward to the legislation and hope that through it we will make some gains.

Was it not interesting that in closing our Governor said that he encouraged all elected members to be mindful of their significant responsibilities and to continue to work both towards the common good of their local communities and the state as a whole. What came first? Local communities. We come here individually to advocate and champion the needs of our local communities, and through that collectively to improve the lot of the state. That is the theory, but what about the practice? The practice is that the minute many people get here they forget about the very community that put them here and they suddenly bow to some preordained position of some power plays within the party that they purport to represent. That is not democracy. So again—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr McEWEN: The member for Hartley might not be doing anything after the next election. Again, the point is that His Excellency the Governor is reaffirming the reason for our being here, that is, to work for the common good of the local communities that we have the privilege to represent and to champion their causes without fear or favour. It is amazing how I am reprimanded by the Liberals for being savage on them in this place, but I do need to remind them that I use this place as a last resort. I will often to spend weeks and months trying to progress an issue quietly with the appropriate minister in written form, through direct contact and through telephone calls, but, when I get total inaction or sometimes I am told one thing and another thing is done, I come in here, at which stage I am obviously fired up, as I was earlier today when I found reason to chastise the Minister for Emergency Services. However, I will not go on with that; I think I said enough about him today.

I will come back to the government radio network for a minute, and not my anger that the minister told me he would do one thing and then did another. Even after the separate minister said that he would send two technical experts to the South-East, when they arrived to meet with 33 people I had assembled at short notice, the answer to every question was, 'We're not the technical experts; we can't answer your questions.' Yet the press release said that the minister was sending two technical experts to the South-East to answer the questions.

The other interesting thing was that when we questioned the ability of Telstra to actually meet the obligations under the contract it then questioned the very contract. Is it the question of whether or not Telstra can provide what is required or whether what has been asked for is what is required? Again, I have had to ask the minister, 'Would you please now give us the specifications you have signed off on, because Telstra may be able to provide the simplex radio network the CFS centrally has asked for, but it may not be the radio network that is actually required.' That is where the hiccup between the UHF and the VHF systems may exist. Interestingly, in that discussion, Peter Fowler, the Executive Director of the government radio network, told the CFS in the South-East that there was nothing wrong with its present radio network.

We must remember the minister has been in here often telling us that the whole thing is fundamentally flawed and will not work, and that is why we are spending a quarter of a billion dollars on it. Well, it is not true, because Peter Fowler told the very people who had set up the radio network in the South-East, after the Ash Wednesday bush fire, 'There's nothing wrong with your network; it's a very good network. Others around the state can learn from what you have done and improve their networks.' Then members need

to reflect on evidence that was given to the Public Works Committee. The CFS told it that for about \$17 million it could lift the standard of the rest of the CFS network around the state to that level which existed in the South-East and which was satisfactory. That is \$17 million versus \$240 million. Of course, I acknowledge that the government radio network does far more than provide radio communications for the CFS. Isn't it interesting to note that, every time the minister wants to sell it, he goes to the CFS, refers to Ash Wednesday and what the Coroner said and, from that point on, he misrepresents the whole situation?

So the government radio network is just one example of being so distanced from what is really happening. Again, the same minister came recently to Mount Gambier to turn the sod on a new MFS station, and we are delighted to have a new MFS station. The only problem is that it is in totally the wrong place; it is not part of the government's vision that there will be combined emergency services centres; and it is not part of what the previous minister came to South-East and said would be provided. I raise the matter in this place because about nine letters I have written to the minister have not been answered. I know that about six letters from councils have remained unanswered, as well as letters from the SES; it goes on and on.

Again, I come in here not as a first resort but out of frustration at the end of the day, when again the minister and his bureaucrats say, 'The local member, council, volunteers and community do not know what is best for them. We do.' They do not want to listen. Wouldn't it have been great to simply turn that sod on an appropriate site and for me to stand next to the minister and say, 'Minister, congratulations on putting your money behind our vision; we're all happy.' But, no, he goes half way, and now he gets another whack around the ears. What is the point of it? Why couldn't he have listened? Why couldn't we have done it right the first time—particularly since he followed a minister who actually came to the South-East and said, 'I agree with you; we must work back from a vision, and our vision is a combined emergency services centre.' Again, it is an example of his not listening.

Let me briefly return to where I started. Let me return to the issues I said that I hoped would be in the speech, because in the opening sentence it talked about an economic and social balance through policy direction and legislation, which meant that I thought that the matter of health would be included. Members should note that I have gone through the whole speech and there has been no mention of health. Earlier today I actually handed the Minister for Human Services a petition signed by nearly 4 500 residents of the community I represent, talking about their local hospital. It was only 4 500, because we have not gathered up all the petitions yet. When you start getting 5 000 or 6 000 signatures in a community of 23 000 it ought to be sending a very strong

signal, not to the minister but to the government, that there are major concerns about health services, and the local hospital, not an economy, is a key part of living in a society. The hospital is only a small component of health services; there are also community and mental health and the health of carers. So many carers in our community are exhausted themselves; they have had to care too much for too long, with no support and no respite. We do not have the supported accommodation, independent living and day options that should have been in place before deinstitutionalisation started. You should never cut one service until you have the alternative in place. But, no: we cut the service to save money and push the responsibility back onto families who can no longer continue to provide that level of support.

We are actually creating more problems. The very carers will soon need care, and what will we do then? But, no, within health, none of that was mentioned. They will tell you that aged care is not the state's responsibility. Aged care has been foisted on local government, because no-one else wants to know about it. As the member for MacKillop said today, local government does not have the revenue base to become the provider of last resort. If you want local government to become the provider of last resort you must also give it the resources to do it.

Law and order did not get a mention. I spoke earlier about police numbers. There is concern in the community about home invasions and the general level of policing. There is alarm in the community about the way speeding fines are used for revenue collecting purposes and for nothing else, but none of that is in here, and there is nothing about housing, the next biggest issue. We know what we have to do within the next 12 months. We know we have to become a more caring and compassionate society.

That is what we are told, and all these issues should see us moving back from economic rationalism—the extreme dry end of politics—which does not exist anywhere else in Australia, I might add: Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria have all had their say about the extreme dry end of economic rationalism and have all started to move back through the ballot box. We need to move back, which means that, on top of all the things the government said it will do in the next 12 months, we need to add to the agenda health, disability services, aged care, law and order, housing and a number of other issues that deal with the individual and not just with the economy. Then perhaps we can again rejoice in the fact that we are living in a society.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.14 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 30 October at 10.30 a.m.