

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 30 September 1999

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)** took the chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 29 September. Page 75.)

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the Governor Sir Eric Neal and Lady Neal who play a vital role in our community. I have been fortunate to attend a number of functions at which they have been present, and they make an outstanding contribution on behalf of the state. We know the caper in respect of the Governor's speech. The speech that the Governor reads on behalf of the government is a prepared speech. Like a number of other members, I was disappointed with its content and the lack of detail in respect of a number of matters. I was somewhat astounded that health was not even mentioned in the Governor's speech.

In respect of the issue of health, I would like to address, in particular, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is a beacon in the western suburbs. It has served the western community since 1952. It is the major focal point from a health point of view in the western suburbs. I have no doubt that the shadow minister for health will go into specific detail regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as she has already done on a number of occasions in this chamber, but I wish to speak about it from a local perspective.

I have been contacted on no one issue more than I have been on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital both in the period predating my election to this parliament and also during the two years in which I have been the local member. I do not think that any one issue in the western suburbs is more sensitive or emotive than the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Concerns have been expressed to me by individual constituents ranging from the aged to expectant mothers to young people who have used or are about to use the services of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This issue touches on people's emotions very heavily.

I note with dismay that we have another leaked document that has come direct from the planning section of the Department of Human Services—and I will touch on that in a moment—but I think we need to go back one step before we look at that leaked document, which is somewhat stunning in its presentation of what is intended to be done to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

We need to go back to look at some of the contributions made by the Minister for Human Services in respect of health and more specifically the Queen Elizabeth Hospital—contributions that were made in this parliament largely as a result of questions that were asked by our shadow Minister for Health. I refer particularly to a contribution which was made by the minister and which was reported in *Hansard* on 23 June 1998 in which he assured this House of the commitment to upgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The minister said:

I have said this previously. The previous plans to establish a private hospital of a substantial size went out to the RFP—a natural process to go through and shows that the government used a rational judgment.

I am not too sure what either the judgment or the detail was. The minister further said:

I met with some of the board members of the hospital and discussed it with them and with the CEO of the hospital. As a result of that a proposal came forward that is now being worked on in detail.

I wonder what that detail was. We wanted to retain the hospital as a full teaching hospital. The design of the new hospital will provide a state-of-the-art facility with flexibility and functional efficiency. Here is the same minister in June 1998, just over 12 months ago in this parliament, spelling out and going into detail about the \$43 million that this government intended to commit to the refurbishment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The minister further said:

Of course there is still some planning to be done in that regard. Yesterday, cabinet agreed, subject to the approval of the Public Works Committee, to the first stage of the redevelopment: the construction of a new intensive care unit at a cost of \$4 million. This is over and above the mental health facility. The proposal for the intensive care unit will go before the Public Works Committee as soon as possible, and work will then quickly commence. So, cabinet has already signed off on the first stage of the redevelopment.

The shadow minister asked:

How many years will it take for the government to carry out the works totalling \$90 million?

The minister replied:

We are uncertain whether the cost will be \$90 million or \$100 million, which I am sure the honourable member would understand. I expect that it will be over a five to six-year period once the program starts.

Here we have the Minister for Human Services, just over 12 months ago, spelling out all of the detail with regard to the refurbishment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital: the allocation for the first stage of refurbishment costing \$43 million with the government going on to spend between \$90 million to \$100 million over a five to six year period. One can imagine how stunned we all were when the shadow minister unearthed this document which came straight from the planning section of the department of the Minister for Human Services. The document outlines quite clearly and clinically the secret agenda with respect to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

There was no consultation with people in the western suburbs about this, which the minister promised earlier this year when we went through this very same exercise in regard to the obstetrics unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Public meetings were held earlier this year, which I attended and which the shadow minister, the member for Price, the Leader and the local mayor attended. Hundreds of people attended public meetings and rallies about these very issues that are now leaked to us in this astounding document that has been suddenly shown for what it is.

A commitment was given by the minister (not that he ever attended any of the public meetings) that there would be no cuts to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital until there had been full public consultation. No decisions would be made until there was full public consultation. They were the minister's exact words.

I have a document, which was unearthed by the shadow minister, which highlights the following with respect to the gutting of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital: surgical procedures will be restricted; advanced surgery requiring intensive care support will go to the RAH or Lyell McEwin hospital; all major trauma cases will be referred to the RAH; obstetrics will be restricted to low risk deliveries; cancer services will be downgraded; the future of the main base for renal medicine, including transplants, is still undecided; dental services

will be closed; the statewide bone transplant service will be relocated; and some academic units will be transferred to the Lyell McEwin hospital.

That is all contained in a secret document that has come straight out of the minister's office. There was no consultation with doctors or with local residents, which was committed by the Minister for Human Services before any potential cuts would take place. That is what he promised when the debate was taking place about the cuts to the obstetrics unit of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is a grubby form of politics and it is just not good enough. There has been no discussion in the local area and no consultation with the local community. This secret document, which is straight out of the minister's office, is a blueprint, an agenda, for the gutting of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

How this government, given the promises it made about health, and specifically in respect of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, both before and after the last state election, can come forward with any decency and honesty about health, specifically in respect of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is far beyond me. This is just an utter disgrace. There has been no consultation or discussion with people in the local community. The wishes of the public have not been taken into account.

The rationale behind gutting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is that people in the western suburbs will go off to the Lyell McEwin hospital, but, as we all know, that needs upgrading, as well. Promises and commitments have been given in regard to the Lyell McEwin hospital about work that needs to be done there. Goodness knows how it is expected that people in the western suburbs will get out to the Lyell McEwin hospital. In reality that will not happen. In the main, unfortunately, that is just not a possibility for the bulk of people in the western suburbs. There is no direct public transport link so, realistically, what is most likely to happen is that they will come to the Royal Adelaide Hospital in the city where there are already problems.

This is an absolute disgrace and one cannot help but ask whether health, and more specifically the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is the public institution I am most concerned about with respect to my local constituency, would have been so shabbily treated by this government if we did not have the ongoing public brawling between the Premier and the Minister for Human Services. If the health minister was not in the position that Dean Brown is in with respect to the ongoing conflict between these two most senior people in government, would health be so shabbily treated? I doubt it very much.

This proposal is an absolute disgrace. The government should come clean about this public document immediately and should rule it out categorically. In this parliament today the minister has the opportunity to say that this document has no basis, no status, and that the measures outlined in it will not occur. The minister has the opportunity in parliament today to categorically rule out the cuts which have been talked about and which are highlighted in that document, which comes straight out of his office. He should remove any doubt whatsoever in the mind of people in the western suburbs about the future of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He has that opportunity and I invite him to do so.

I also take the opportunity today to make some brief comments about education, which is another critical issue that we must address very carefully and closely because right now our public schools are going through a very emotional debate about Partnerships 21. In dialogue that I have had with all

schools in the electorate of Lee at both primary and high school levels, there is genuine concern about the direction in which we are heading with respect to Partnerships 21. To the best of my knowledge the schools which I have the good fortune to represent have chosen not to opt into Partnerships 21 next year. Schools (including both local parent bodies and staff) are very concerned about the direction of education and about this whole concept of Partnerships 21. They are aware of the difficulties with respect to it and wonder about the bona fides of it all.

When the minister talks about voluntarily moving into Partnerships 21, it is very well known within education circles that this really is 'voluntary'. When the minister talks about schools voluntarily moving into this, we are all aware that it is only a matter of time before schools will be forced into Partnerships 21, when resources that have previously been offered by the education department into the core tasks that historically had been provided for schools to function will gradually be taken away. They will finally be dried up. Schools will ultimately be forced into a situation of opting into Partnerships 21, whether next year or in subsequent years. Time will eventually be of essence in regard to how schools handle this difficult period that they are being pushed into as a result of this concept and policy of Partnerships 21 where more and more resources are being taken out of the system, where greater responsibility without additional money or staffing is being thrust upon schools, and schools will be put into a competition against competition arrangement within our education system.

We should be on about cooperation. There should be a cooperative approach among schools rather than their being in direct competition with each other where there may be potential conflict. We should be operating in clusters and within a system whereby there is cooperation, whereby you have in a particular school or certain schools some areas of strength from which other schools can learn from develop resources. Unfortunately, this is not the trend that we are heading towards in public education in South Australia.

I also comment on some other local issues in the western suburbs. Specifically, I refer to the Port Adelaide sewage treatment plant which is currently located on Frederick Road at West Lakes. It has been there for some 40 to 50 years. Currently SA Water has a proposal with respect to the relocation of treatment plants. Six options have been put forward by SA Water with regard to the relocation of the treatment plant at West Lakes. None of those options is sustainable or palatable to the local community. I will not go through each of them individually, but a range of options have parameters, from leaving it where it is currently and changing the way in which it operates to relocating it to Torrens Island. None of the proposals is sustainable in the local community, because what is most needed in respect of that treatment plant is to get it out of the region altogether—to get it away from local housing and to take it out of the Port River so that all those pollutants are not entering the Port River.

The treatment works treats 35 million litres of waste water every day and discharges the nutrient rich waste water directly into the Port River. None of those options that has been put forward by SA Water takes it out of the Port River completely. None of those options can guarantee that the waste water will not come back into the Port River. We need an option from SA Water that takes it right away from the Port River so that we do not pollute the Port River and the marine environment. We also need an option that takes it

right away from residential housing. Relocation of the treatment works to Torrens Island will not solve all those problems: we must get it out of the region. The best solution, and the only long-term, realistic, meaningful alternative for the local community, for residential housing, for the local environment and for the Port River—for marine inhabitants—is to get it out of the region altogether. It should be relocated to Bolivar. That is the best viable solution for the environment and for local residential housing.

The member for Hart and I attended a local residential meeting on Sunday. That meeting was extremely well attended by some hundreds of people, and there was a very strong commitment from the local community that nothing short of the treatment works being taken out of its current location on Frederick Road at West Lakes and being placed at Bolivar would be acceptable or would be suitable to the local community. That is the best solution for the local region, and that is the solution that SA Water must work on. It must work with the local community and work through a solution that will solve the problems. It should not work on a bandaid measure that will simply take the problem from one area and relocate it to other residential housing areas.

The treatment works must be taken out of its current environment at West Lakes, where it is causing enormous problems to local residents. It is causing significant problems to those people in regard to their every day living, and it must be removed from there. However, the simple solution is not to relocate it to Torrens Island—to relocate those problems to other housing areas. The solution is to get it out of the region altogether. The best solution is to get it to Bolivar, and this will overcome the problems that are being experienced by local residents in West Lakes and the surrounding suburbs, such as Royal Park. The problems that are currently being experienced by those people need to be overcome and the issue needs to be addressed meaningfully and a long-term solution found.

I would also like to touch upon a couple of areas within my shadow ministerial portfolio. I wish to express my disappointment about not having received any answers from the Minister for Government Enterprises in regard to a whole range of questions that I asked most specifically about the TAB. As you would well know, sir, the racing industry is currently doing it very hard here in South Australia. We are in a somewhat volatile climate. We are experiencing a difficult period, and there has been genuine discussion and dialogue about stake money needing to be reduced because of the downturn in moneys being received from the TAB.

On 10 August, I asked a number of questions of the Minister for Government Enterprises in respect of the turnover and the profit of the TAB, including how much money has been spent on advertising and pay TV, and how much the TAB has spent on negative settlement. These are questions to which the racing industry deserves an answer, and the minister has now had some seven weeks to reply to those questions. These are questions which need to be addressed urgently and to which the racing industry has every right to get an answer, and it needs an answer very quickly. If we are to work through these problems, we need to work through them together. The only way to work through these problems within the racing industry is for people who know the detail of some of these answers to sit down with people in the racing industry and work through the problems and the issues. If there are specific problems that need to be addressed, that information should be shared with the racing industry, because currently that is not happening.

Currently, there is no dialogue. The only dialogue that is occurring is with the Racing Industry Development Authority (RIDA), and that is simply not good enough. Labor has foreshadowed—and I do so again today—that it would remove RIDA straight away. That would immediately free up some moneys to the racing industry, money which could go direct to stake money. Currently, this industry is crying out for some answers. This industry is crying out for some leadership and wants to know where the money has gone. I can say where the money has gone: a large part of it has gone straight into RIDA and has been wasted by RIDA.

I do not talk about the money RIDA passes through to SATRA, SAHRA or SAGRA that then goes to the industry for stake money. That is not a black mark against RIDA—and it should not be. There is something like \$12.36 million that does not go to the racing industry, money that should go to the racing industry. The money that RIDA is currently using for a range of different areas, some of which we are not sure of but some of which we know goes to advertising, would be better spent if it went straight to the racing industry. Let the racing industry determine how that money is spent. Right now, that money would be like a gold mine to the racing industry. The racing industry is currently under one of its greatest threats, that is, the reduction of stake money.

So, those questions need to be addressed, answered and put on the public record. Most importantly, that information needs to be shared with the racing industry. Sit down and talk to these people. These people are reasonable. You know that, sir. I am talking about trainers, owners, jockeys, punters, the stakeholders of the racing industry—not the bureaucrats or the people that this government does not want to talk about. I am talking about those people who should be involved in the key decisions of the racing industry. Share that information with them; work with them; work through a solution. Instead, what do we get? In the Governor's speech we get a one-liner about proprietary racing. This opposition will look very closely at any bill introduced by this minister with respect to proprietary racing. Of course, we are talking about Teletrack. We will examine that very closely and will do what the government should do: we will consult with the racing industry. We will talk to the trainers, the owners, the jockeys, the punters and the bookmakers. We will consult with those in the racing industry, because they are the people who need to be consulted. They are the people who at the end of the day will make this racing industry work—not inactivity, not lack of leadership and not smart alec, half-baked decisions 24 hours before a vital vote on a bill in respect of proprietary racing where decisions are cooked up on the run without any real thought about it. We will examine that bill very closely and consult with the racing industry.

We also await, and are surprised that we have not heard this week in the Governor's speech, an announcement about the minister's plan to corporatise the racing industry. We look forward to that as well. We want to see a plan from this government. We want the government's agenda. The government is in government to govern. We still await anything from this government on the racing industry. The only things the government has given us in the last two years were Teletrack—and that was a few weeks ago—and RIDA.

We want to see some leadership. We want to see the government's plan and what it is going to bring before this parliament. We will then consult with the racing industry and see what it thinks about anything that the government brings before this parliament. I would like the Minister for Racing to tell me when I received an invitation (to which the minister

referred) to a meeting that took place down at Port Adelaide, at the Centre for Manufacturing, in respect of the corporatisation of racing, when he called together the greyhound and harness racing people.

I have been told by a number of people that at that meeting, when he was asked, 'Why weren't the opposition invited? Where are the opposition to talk about this corporatisation model?' he said, 'The opposition have been invited.' I want this minister to come into this parliament and tell me when either I or the Leader of the Opposition was invited to that meeting. And I want proof of that. Until he provides proof of that, all I can suggest is that either he made a mistake or something even worse occurred in his thought processes at that meeting. Neither I nor the Leader of the Opposition was invited to that meeting, and we are the appropriate people to have been invited.

I have been told by many people that the minister made that statement, so I will be most interested to hear from the minister as to when and what that invitation was, because I certainly did not receive one. So, we eagerly look forward to some detail from this government in respect of racing.

I would like to finish by acknowledging the Masters Games, a great event for South Australia. I was delighted to participate last Sunday in the five kilometre run, which was very well organised, and also delighted on the same day to participate in the medal presentation for the triathlon at West Lakes. It is obviously an enormous event. The Leader of the Opposition and I attended the opening ceremony on Sunday, and I wish everyone the very best for the rest of the week.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): At the outset I would like to indicate appreciation for the work of Sir Eric and Lady Neal, and I do so not only in the more formal sense but as a South Australian also indicating the affection in which both Sir Eric and Lady Neal are held in our community. They are very approachable: gone are the stiff and starchy days when people scraped and bowed. One can and should show respect, but Sir Eric and Lady Neal are very approachable and mix in with the community at a whole range of functions, and it is great to see them relating to people of all ages in all sections of our community.

In terms of the Address in Reply, I thought I would share some observations that arose from my recent trip to the United Kingdom, and relate them back to South Australia. At the outset I should point out, so that there is no misunderstanding, that in terms of my time away there were only four days for which I claimed an allowance: 26 days were totally privately funded, as was my wife's air fare. I will start on a light note in terms of privatisation.

I noted in the UK that there has been a trend towards privatising toilets, which seems a rather strange turn of phrase. It was brought home to me most harshly at Harrods, a store with which I am sure most people are familiar. The cost of using that facility is £1, which translates into \$2.50, which is a lot of money for a pee, if you will pardon the expression.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: No, you can have only one. It is a trend that is catching on and in many ways it is unfortunate. I am sure that Harrods makes a lot of money out of the tourists, although on the positive side it ensures that the facilities are clean and well kept. But it highlights the point that the pound is very strong as a currency at the moment in relation to our dollar, so nearly everything for which we pay

a modest amount you can multiply 2½ times to find out what you will pay in the United Kingdom.

I particularly went out of my way to find out perceptions of South Australia and Australia. This is not part of a cringe mentality; I am not one of those who bow because I am an Australian; I am a proud Australian and I do not bow to anyone. But it is important for us to look at how tourism is presented in terms of opportunities in South Australia so that we can address any misinformation and, likewise, other images of Australia and South Australia which may be damaging and inaccurate.

In terms of tourism, looking at some of the guides over there, Adelaide was referred to as 'sleepy'. I guess it depends on your perspective whether that is a negative or positive thing: if you want a restful holiday, perhaps it is a positive. Whilst one of the major guides said that Adelaide was 'sleepy', another said that Glenelg had 'seen better days'. I think Glenelg is a delightful area and I disagree with that assessment. I am sure you do, too, Mr Speaker. I am not in any way criticising the present Minister for Tourism or her predecessors, but I will bring these matters to the attention of the minister so that we can correct anything which is false or misleading.

I talked to many people in the UK, many of whom had the feeling that if they came to Australia they would be set upon by snakes, spiders, crocodiles and the like—and I can see why they get that impression. The media, particularly film, present that stereotype view of Australia. It is not surprising that many of them fear that if they come to Australia they will be attacked by a venomous creature. Indeed, I was horrified on the plane to view a new film *Paperback Hero* which was funded by the Australian Film Commission and which is the stereotypical nonsense produced about Australia, that is, the dusty Outback. It made us look like hicks. People say that it is only entertainment but it is also part of the image that we present to the wider world.

One suggestion put to me by someone overseas was that we ought to look at having an area where people can observe kangaroos and emus in large numbers, along the lines of a nature game park in South Africa. I am not sure whether the member for Stuart would be offering his property for such a purpose, but they said that they would like to come to Australia and drive or be among thousands of kangaroos or emus to get a sense of what you can feel—obviously with different animals—in South Africa. I thought it was an interesting point of view.

The Qantas booklet, which is not available in Australia of course, is designed to attract English tourists to Australia. I notice in the list of events covering the next 16 months that not one event in South Australia is listed. The list includes the Melbourne Cup (which I am sure, Mr Speaker, you regard as a fairly important activity); the England v. Australia Ashes Test Cricket Series; the Australian Open Tennis in Melbourne; and the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in Sydney—which is written up twice. I do not know if it is a double-barrel thing. The point is that no South Australian activity whatsoever is listed. The Qantas booklet for Australia, New Zealand and Fiji is available to all travel agents in the United Kingdom. I will point that out to the minister as well, to see whether we can change that.

The *Daily Telegraph* had a 27 page feature on tourism in Australia, but South Australia got no mention of any kind. There was a big article on whale watching and it was suggested that people should go to the Great Barrier Reef to watch whales. I found that surprising in terms of what we can

offer in South Australia. We cannot promote ourselves everywhere on every issue, but we could address some of those issues. Something which has great potential, given the expansion in the South Australian Museum, is traditional Aboriginal culture. I am not in any way criticising what is being done, but if we want to capture the tourist market in relation to traditional Aboriginal culture we need to spend probably \$30 million to \$50 million not only on a centre for artefacts but also on Aboriginal dance and culture combined—very much like the Maori centre which exists in Rotorua in New Zealand.

One publication in the UK which horrified me was the 1 September edition of *Southern Cross*, because the front cover shows a photograph of people in a concentration camp. It is captioned 'Australia's Nazi shame', and that took my eye. Looking through it, another headline reads 'Australia's Nazi past' and we see pictures of Buchenwald, Dachau and other concentration camps, with slaughtered people lying on the ground. Another headline reads 'Adelaide man faces genocide charge.' When you read it, it is not quite as drastic as the cover, but people walking down the streets of England must wonder what we have been up to. When you read it, you find that there has been no significant evidence of Nazi activity in Australia. It is basically a beat up, but it makes us look as though we are a nation of Nazis who were involved in the atrocities of the holocaust. I was particularly concerned about that.

I was also concerned to see the documentary produced by John Pilger on Aborigines in Australia which was screened on BBC TV. It was very biased and featured people like Professor Harry Reynolds who have a particular slant. We all know that there were terrible injustices done against the Aborigines, but these things have to be put in a proper context and not in a program which is just blatantly distorted and exaggerated.

With respect to wine—and I know that this is a topic close to the heart of many members—in London I visited the recently opened Vinopolis, City of Wine. The entry fee was the equivalent of \$A23. I notice that our wine centre will charge \$10 entrance, but I suspect that ours will have many of these features. Vinopolis is spread over two acres on the bank of the Thames. The brochure reads:

Explore the wine odyssey, an interactive tour of the world's wine cultures through 20 dramatically themed rooms. . . Zip around Italy on a Vespa, board a jet to tour Australia's vineyards—

that was positive—

. . . the Grand Tasting Hall to taste five wines from over 200 of the world's wines—

and you can eat at their restaurants and shop in their shop and so on. I was a bit cheeky and asked whether any of our people had been over to have a look. The woman on duty said that she assumed they had but they had not identified themselves. Whether she was being a bit naughty, I do not know. I hope our wine centre does draw people here. I know it has grown considerably in size and cost from that which was originally proposed, and I know that there are contentious aspects including the office part of it, but it is certainly important that we promote our wonderful wines.

On that point, whilst travelling around the UK, I was disturbed to find that not many of the mini bottles of wine were available at the dinner table. There were plenty of Californian and European wines available in small bottles, which is a popular way that tourists and others can consume wine at the dinner table, given the cost of wine in the UK. I

know they are available on aircraft, and certainly they were available on the one on which we travelled, but perhaps our wine industry could look more closely at the availability of 187ml bottles of wine for the British hotel and restaurant market.

Australian chardonnay is very popular in the UK and, whilst we have a good reputation, we should not sit on our laurels, because countries like Chile, the United States, South Africa and New Zealand are pushing very hard. I was surprised to find in some of the wine shops that New Zealand wine is as well represented as Australian wine. While we are good here, we should not kid ourselves that we have the game sewn up, because we do not.

The millennium is being celebrated in a big way in the UK, and much more so than here. I am not sure whether that is a good or a bad thing. Many people have lost sight of the fact that the millennium is a Christian celebration. That is what it is meant to be, even though there is some debate about when Christ was born. We know that there is a mathematical problem with what we are doing next year, because the end of this year is not the start of the new millennium.

Putting that aside, the British government has spent £440 million on building a millennium superdome which is interactive and which is due to open shortly. It has virtual reality rides, circus type activities, gardens and all sorts of things. They are claiming—and I have seen the facility—that it is one of the three physical facilities on earth which are visible from space. I found that a bit hard to believe but that is what they claim.

Another activity involves churches celebrating the millennium with a nationwide bell ringing, and we could certainly consider this if it has not already been picked up. I have mixed feelings about bell ringing because at the time my first son was born a bell ringers' conference was being held at St Peter's Cathedral, and I do not know whether it prolonged labour or assisted it, but it just about drove me bonkers because it went on for virtually the whole weekend.

However, from the Christian churches' perspective, it is a wonderful way of celebrating the millennium (or almost the millennium). It was sobering to hear, though, the Chief Rabbi in the United Kingdom say that the millennium means nothing to Jewish people. It is not a celebration for them, nor is it a celebration for the Muslim community because their celebration, in terms of the anniversary of their prophet, is a long way off. For traditional Aboriginal people the concept of the millennium is meaningless. For those who have embraced Christianity and western culture it would have some meaning, but Aborigines had about six different concepts of time and linear time was not prominent amongst them.

Another issue which is almost at the point of hysteria in the United Kingdom is the debate over genetically modified food. One cannot be in the country for five minutes without being aware of that raging debate. Prince Charles has come out calling these foods 'Frankenstein foods', which is fairly helpful for the farming community. To give members an idea, one example is a front page headline in the *Daily Scottish Mail* (this is a good way of minimising the employment of journalists if you take up the front page with a big headline) which stated, 'GM food expert: we need tougher tests'. Dr Chesson, a supporter of genetically modified foods, is saying that we need to have more adequate testing because we are developing new strains of canola, or oilseed rape (as they call it), with the residuals fed to stock, and he is not sure what the consequence will be.

As from Monday of last week, all restaurants and take-away food outlets in the United Kingdom must tell customers whether there is any genetically modified ingredients in any of their products. That is a pretty tall ask. If one goes into Marks and Spencers, or any of the stores, there is a big sign stating: 'We do not sell genetically modified food.' If anyone believes that, they believe in fairies. The public perception and concern in the United Kingdom about genetically modified food, which I think is exaggerated, nevertheless is reflected in the companies' putting up those sorts of signs.

To reinforce that, a statement appeared in the *Times* of 3 September stating that Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), which buys one-third of the American corn, wheat and soya crop that is processed into food, has indicated that from now on farmers must separate genetically modified food from non-genetically modified food. That is also a tall ask, because things such as canola seed products are used in margarines and all sorts of sauces. The Liberal Democrats in the United Kingdom—and I do not know how liberal or democratic they are—held a party conference last week and supported a five year ban on the growing of genetically modified crops. It is a huge issue from which we are not divorced because, if we cannot sell crops, food and animal products overseas, we have a big problem.

The United States does not seem to be too concerned about genetically modified food, and nor does Canada. However, I can tell the House that the United Kingdom and Europe are. We need to get a handle on it very quickly. From a cynical viewpoint, you would either say that Australia should be totally organic—and I know this is a fairly rubbery term—and promote that for all it is worth or else go flat out down the genetically modified path. Many farmers, researchers and scientists would say that we have been modifying genetically for years through the breeding of plants and animals, anyhow. However, the critics say that it is on a new dimension, on a new level and scale, and that we ought to be cautious. So we can rest assured that that issue will come more and more to the fore here.

Whilst I was in England the *Times* ran a major story with the heading, 'Ocean wildlife losing struggle for survival.' Who should get a mention but dear old South Australia. The article states:

A herpes virus infected pilchards in over 3 100 miles of waters around South Australia in 1995. 'Evidence suggests that the virus was introduced with frozen pilchards imported to feed to sea-caged southern blue fin tuna in South Australia,' say the scientists.

We are not immune from the rest of world. As I said, whilst we do not bow or kowtow, nevertheless we need to be mindful of and be prepared to respond to those sorts of issues.

Another issue that really took my interest because of South Australia's involvement is an article in the *Financial Times*, which is hardly a radical sort of paper. The heading is, 'Digital revolution may sound death knell for call centres' and, as members know, we have several of them in South Australia. It states that the conventional traditional call centre—one on one telephone type activity—is inadequate for the future and that call centres of the future must be web enabled, which is a bit of jargon. That means that they must offer a full package of phone, fax, email and internet access, as well as interactive digital television. It is saying that people who do not change will be left redundant. Unless the people who work in the call centres are retrained and so on, they will become unemployable. So, there is a warning. I have mentioned that to the Premier. He is interested in that article

which, as I said, was not in a radical paper: it is quite a considered article.

The same paper highlights the resurgence of interest in science parks. It points out that, in recent times, there have been two new science parks at Cambridge, as well as others at Grimsby, Cranfield, Nottingham, East Lothian and Sittingbourne (which is near Kent), as well as new London parks at Enfield, Tottenham and Croydon, with another one proposed for Dartford. The point is that science parks went off the boil a bit in the early 1990s and, as members would know, we have one at Bedford Park. Sadly, I think that has been compromised a little, but I am not picking on Lone Star. However, we have built a lot of things on that science park site, and the Oliphant building is now being used for a range of purposes. We need to be mindful of not taking away our options in relation to the possible use of that science park and, indeed, creating others in conjunction with universities and the private sector.

As members would know, there has been a lot of talk about the parklands, and we tell ourselves that we are the biggest and the best in that area and in other areas. Once again, we need to be a bit careful and avoid what I call the Texas syndrome—that we are the biggest and the best. We should not be afraid to state where we are good or excellent but, in terms of parklands, members should one day visit Dublin, which has Phoenix Park, consisting of 1 800 acres of land right in the city centre; in fact, it still has deer roaming wild in it. However, Dublin has not allowed the sorts of activities in that park that we have allowed in our parklands. When we talk about our parklands, sadly, in more ways than one, our parklands are often used for parking, particularly for the show, and that is an issue I have taken up with the Lord Mayor, because it is a quite inappropriate use of the parklands. We have built on a lot of the parklands, and we should look closely at that. I would be very keen to see the new legislation which aims to protect our parklands. Phoenix Park is a beautiful park in Dublin and in total is probably about the same size as our parklands.

Members may have heard of Tesco, which is one of the largest grocery chains in the United Kingdom. I met with some of their people and they have a policy of recruiting and training people of any age, and I thought that was an excellent idea. The consideration to find out more about Tesco came some time back from the Premier and one of his staff, so I inquired of them. I think it is an excellent program that people of any age can be brought into something like that and trained up to a management position over time. Too often in our society we tend to disregard people who are getting on in years, but Tesco has a totally open recruitment policy in relation to age. It should be commended for that, and I believe we could learn from it.

Finally, I will mention an issue which might seem a little strange and I must confess I had never heard of this creature before. It is the pot bellied black Vietnamese pig. That is not a nice way of describing an animal, and I am sure the pig would be quite offended, but that is its name. What is unique about this pig is that it gets skin cancers, but it has a mechanism to get rid of the cancers. I have spoken to the health minister here. Research is being done in the United Kingdom where they have some of these pigs, and my colleague the member for Hartley would appreciate that scientists in Italy are also doing work on this pig. It frequently gets skin cancers (which might seem strange, given that it is a black pig), but it has a mechanism for treating them itself. If we could find out what that is—without necessarily taking the

same form as that animal—it could be very important in dealing with the skin cancer issue in Australia. Quite a bit of work is being done on that in the United Kingdom and Italy. I am getting more technical and general information on that subject to pass on to the Hon. Dean Brown, the minister for health, to see whether we can benefit from that research in any way.

So, travel can be worth while, particularly if you relate it back to your own state. To reiterate what I indicated previously, we should not presume that we know everything or that we are the biggest and best on everything when we are not, but we have much to be proud of here. This is a great country. Travelling on the Belair line train after the London tube is quite a welcome relief. We are the amongst the most fortunate people on earth; we should recognise that and not be complacent. Issues such as East Timor bring home to us that we live in a volatile world where change is inevitable and frequent.

In conclusion, I look forward to another session in this parliament, working for the people of Fisher whom I am proud to represent and who give me the great honour of being their representative. I undertake to give them 100 per cent effort in trying to represent them effectively in this place.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I commence my remarks by commenting on the contribution we have just heard from the member for Fisher, who has just demonstrated that the public does indeed get good value from their representatives, using inquiring minds to identify the problems that we all face and looking for some of the solutions that other communities have come across. While I know that we can do that on the internet, my experience is that there is nothing like being there and being able to ask questions about it and observe the things you did not know were different. I was recently in Western Australia, and one of the observations I made there was that people do not tailgate. They keep a beautiful distance behind you when they are driving, and I must say I found that very relaxing.

I also visited Tasmania with the Public Works Committee, and one observation that I made in relation to driving habits there was the absolutely assiduous nature with which people stop to allow pedestrians to cross the road. They only have to be in the vicinity of a pedestrian crossing and drivers stop. Even when you do a terrible thing such as jaywalking, drivers slow down or stop for you.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms THOMPSON: My colleague mentions that they did not know we were politicians. What I observed was encouraging to me because it demonstrates that educational measures can be taken to improve driving safety and practice. I would especially like to see an education campaign against tailgating, which I find a particular problem as I regularly drive the distance to and from Reynella. It is an intimidating practice, and I know that I am not the only person whom it makes feel uncomfortable.

The main thrust of my remarks today concerns where I would like to see the government going as opposed to where it is going. The first matter I would like to address is the need for increased care in the community. Reference to this matter was distressingly lacking in the Governor's speech. In his speech, the Governor said that his government's legislative program:

... can be seen to embrace the ideology of its commitment to a fairer society in South Australia.

He continues:

In the third year of my government's second term, its legislative program seeks to build on the foundations of the past six years. . . and to refine existing legislation so that the changing social needs of the community are addressed.

But what do we find in terms of these changing social needs of the community? A detailed search of the Governor's speech reveals very little indeed. WorkCover is mentioned, and in that respect the Governor states:

... it is my government's intention to propose changes to the workers rehabilitation and compensation legislation.

I welcome that. I encounter many people who have had horrifying experiences under the current workers' compensation arrangements. However, the remarks that follow give me no cause for comfort. The Governor states:

This will include changes which provide for national consistency of worker coverage—

fine—

where workers are temporarily working interstate—

fine—

and a range of amendments that will focus on promoting worker safety within a commercial approach.

This disturbs and distresses me, because in my experience it is the commercial approach taken to workers' compensation that has caused so much distress in our community. I meet many people who under a decent rehabilitation program could become productive workers, but what takes place is a mishmash of medical treatment, being shunted from pillar to post, failure to realise the impact of an injury on a person's whole life, and then some sort of a payout which is supposed to set someone up for life but which, if they are lucky, enables them to pay off a few debts they have acquired during their time on workers' compensation and to start thinking about a new life, which generally does not eventuate.

We then find that the federal government is wondering where all the invalid pensioners have come from. I can answer that question: they come from people who have been injured and invalidated through workers' compensation, retrenched or redeployed. Most of these people are capable of undertaking some other work in the community (paid as well as unpaid work), but there are no training programs because the commonwealth government has abolished them.

The commercial approach to workers comp has said that getting them off the books is the easiest way to go, and now we are threatened with a commercial approach to workers' safety. Heaven only knows what that means but, according to the word about town, it means removing a lot of the regulations and enabling businesses to make their own decisions about what is and is not safe. This might be fine for large, responsible employers. I had the pleasure of visiting Mitsubishi at Tonsley Park last week and I look forward to visiting the Lonsdale plant very soon. The commitment to workers' safety at Mitsubishi was very evident.

It had been about 20 years since I had visited Tonsley Park and I could see amazing differences in basic areas such as housekeeping. I know that Mitsubishi places great emphasis on the importance of housekeeping, which contrasts with one organisation the Public Works Committee visited in Tasmania. It is doing wonderful things but I am afraid its housekeeping is even worse than mine! What will this mean for small business when they must make decisions about safety priorities rather than having regulations to which they can refer to guide them in how to provide a safe workplace for their workers and for themselves?

A project in the south is working through the Noarlunga Healthy Cities Program and is helping small businesses to improve their safety practices. In particular, the program works with our local vocational education program, Partnership 2000, to ensure that young students are attending a safe workplace. The ability to have clear documents that guide people in looking at workers' safety, from everything I hear, has been very much welcomed by the small businesses involved. They are really getting into the project and sending themselves and their workers off to training programs at all hours of the day and night, as well as working in a safety conscious manner with the students on placement.

I do not get any feeling that this is part of the workers' compensation amendments proposed by this government. If it is, I will be very happy to stand up here and say so. But back to this legislative program that will address changing social needs. What else do we find in the Governor's speech? We find amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act. That is fine. People who need the care of the Guardianship Board deserve first-class care and, if we find ways to improve that, I will welcome them. We find amendments to the State Disaster Act to reflect recent changes to emergency service management arrangements. That does not sound like it is doing much to address social needs. There are amendments to the Cremation Act, which may result in cheaper burials and which is something that families would welcome, but it seemed to me to be motivated more by a commitment to competition than a commitment to people in times of distress.

This is scarcely a legislative program to address changing social needs, let alone a lack of fairness and equity in our community. I was pleased to note that additional funding has been made available to our volunteer organisations, but I did not actually know what funding they were talking about because I have not seen buckets of money coming to the many community organisations operating in my community of Reynell.

Indeed, without those volunteers and those community organisations my community would be very much impoverished. There are many volunteers in my electorate who find it increasingly difficult to do their job because of the incredible competition for scarce funds. They work for hours on the development of projects which they know will meet specific needs in the community. They submit applications, for example, to aid community benefit only to hear that the number of applications exceeds by about four times the amount of money available. This scarcely helps the development of our community and the development of fairness, equity and a complete life for many who do not have many opportunities in their lives today.

I take this opportunity to pay credit to some of the many volunteers who sustain the people of Reynell and the community spirit there. I mention specifically Frank Ronan from the Onkaparinga Over 50s Centres; Bev Goodwin and Robert Woolcock from the Reynella Neighbourhood Centre; Eric Bennett and Tina Adams from the Hackham West Community Centre; Bob Mansfield from the Christie Downs Community House; Helen Stone from the Morphett Vale South Primary School and all others who, like Helen, give their time as chair of a school council or members of a school council; and the volunteers who work in our schools without whom many of our schools could not survive. In some schools a huge number of parents work as volunteers in order to provide something like the sort of education they want for

their children but which is not being provided by the current state education system.

I also note the contribution of Amanda Wood from the Southern Success Business Centre, who works tirelessly to support the needs of small business in our community. I also mention Rod Prime from the Lonsdale Business Association. Ron Blake and Melinda Brewster work constantly on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch in the interests of community safety, and I thank them and all other members of Neighbourhood Watch. These are just a few of the people who really contribute to our community. Prominent among them are people who are unemployed or supposedly disabled. The people with disabilities are able to put in almost full-time jobs in the community centres, but they still have to live in poverty. I would like to see them working in full-time jobs and being able to live with a degree of safety, security and peace of mind, instead of for ever having to watch every cent.

The Governor's speech refers to investment decisions such as Tasting Australia, the Tour Down Under and the Le Mans. That is a strange description of investment decisions. I very much enjoyed the Tour Down Under and welcome the fact that in the next event there will be a finish in the City of Onkaparinga, and I expect to enjoy Tasting Australia. However, is that really the best that we can do for investment decisions? Where are the investment decisions that will support secure jobs that allow people to get a mortgage or a loan for a car, whitegoods or furniture? The casual work that is available, particularly through labour hire firms, does not enable people to get a mortgage, to get any sort of loan, and it leaves them in a constant state of worry and stress. That is not good for their health or that of their family and the community.

Where in the Governor's speech was mention made of grassroots support to help small businesses identify extra job opportunities and then to select, induct, train and support recruits so that they can become productive workers? The small business people I encounter often tell me that one of the major barriers to taking on extra workers is the difficulty they experience going through the human resources process. Large firms employ specialists to do that. Small business operators have to fulfil the main function of their firm, do all the book work and be HR specialists as well. We can give them practical support by taking on some of the role of the HR specialist.

What I heard in the Governor's speech and what I have seen in the last two years of this government and the four years before that is a whole lot of wrong priorities. I recognise that I need to look at the Governor's speech in the context of the budget but, putting those together, I still find a lack of priority for education and a failure to address simple issues such as the high absenteeism that occurs in some of the schools in my electorate. It is not supposed to happen. The law says that children are supposed to attend school, yet sometimes I visit a school where as many as one-third of the children are away. This is not a simple issue to deal with. It requires a direct commitment of personnel to work with those children and their families, to work out how they can get to school, what is the value of education placed by those families, and how they see education as being critical and important to their children's chances in life. These people need intensive support and assistance.

I see pleas from the principals in the newsletters going home talking to parents about the need to build good work habits by getting their children to school on time every day, recognising the odd days of domestic crisis, which I think we

all have. Why is it necessary for those principals to make those pleas in the newsletter? A plea in a newsletter does not really go a long way. Those families need support and assistance.

What about the priorities to health? It is scarcely necessary really to mention the distress in the community caused by the lack of health facilities and the cuts in that area. However, like many of my colleagues I will give just a couple of examples to illustrate what happens to people when bed numbers are cut. One constituent, a 35 year old truck driver, is experiencing a recurrence of a knee injury that he incurred in a sporting incident some 15 years ago. The knee injury is such that he can no longer drive. That means that as a truck driver he cannot work. Flinders Medical Centre can give him the first opportunity to see an orthopaedic surgeon in March next year. This person came to me in July. We are hoping that the Noarlunga Centre might be able to give him an appointment slightly earlier. But that is an appointment to see an orthopaedic surgeon: it is not an appointment for treatment. So, in the meantime, we have this ridiculous situation of an otherwise capable and willing worker not being able to work simply because he cannot get a medical appointment.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Ms THOMPSON: This matter has been raised with the minister. You should not have to go to your member of parliament in order to get this sort of treatment. We then have Shayla Smedley, who is just five years old. She is expecting to start school in the next term. She has been attending kindy for some time, but she only gets to attend about half the days of kindy as she has tonsillitis. A lot of kids have tonsillitis. However, Shayla's tonsillitis is particularly persistent. She is constantly on antibiotics, which she and her parents find do not work. All she needs is a tonsillectomy—apparently a cheap operation, which she could have under the private system for \$900. Her parents do not have \$900. Gail was injured at work, so she is off work now, having been paid out and, although Darren earns a good regular income, they have a mortgage based on two incomes which they are having trouble paying on one wage. They do not have \$900 for a tonsillectomy for Shayla, and why should they? In the meantime, Shayla is missing out on learning in some of the most crucial stages of her development.

John Bytheway needs new teeth. His rotting teeth keep breaking off bits at a time. He has gone from being a friendly outgoing person to being quite reclusive, according to his wife. He puts his hand up to his mouth all the time and does not like going out the way he used to because of the odour that comes from his mouth and the unpleasant site. I have written to the minister about dental services for John Bytheway, too, and am still hoping to receive a reply that says that this person's basic needs can be attended to.

What about support for people with disabilities and their carers? Jocelyn Gibson has long cared for her disabled daughter and has also fostered a number of children with disabilities. Jocelyn has been living on the carers' pension for a long time. Her daughter is now sufficiently independent that she does not need full-time care but does need specified periods of care. If Jocelyn were able to receive support with that care, she could undertake a training program and, hopefully, obtain work to get her off the poverty line. However, despite many pleas and despite letters to the minister, that care is simply not available.

With respect to community safety, I also have had an experience, as has the member for Wright, of a constituent who had to sit in her home watching her car being broken into

in the driveway while no-one came. I could not find much attention given to these issues in the budget, as I said, and I cannot find it in the Governor's speech either. Constituents are very ready to point out what they see as wrong priorities. They complain to me about police not arriving and I mention problems with police numbers, but recently I received the reply, 'What do you mean about problems with police numbers?' Why are there two police cars at a speed trap? Why do they not send the police to where they are most needed?

People wonder why they cannot get secure, low cost housing when they read about the government building elaborate offices for the wine industry. They wonder why they have to change for football in a leaky, rusty shed when they see that \$28 million is being spent on a stadium, effectively, for seven soccer matches. They wonder why hospital beds are closing, including six at Noarlunga and about 30 at Flinders, when they see \$247 million being spent on a government radio network that will not meet the needs of our police officers or fire fighters when they are most vulnerable in isolated situations. They see young people hanging around the streets and sometimes getting up to different forms of mischief because they do not see any role for themselves in our community.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms THOMPSON: There is one good news story in my electorate, and that is the establishment of the vocational education college at the Christies Beach High School. Hopefully, this will address at least some of the needs of young people who do not find current education opportunities relevant to them, despite the considerable efforts of the many excellent teachers in the area. In relation to the vocational college, I would like to particularly congratulate Di Garwood (the Principal of Christies Beach High School), Kath Heptinstall (who is charged with the development of this project), Doug Moyle (the Principal of Morphett Vale High School, who has been a driving force in vocational education in the south), Andrew Russell (who is the executive officer of the excellent Partnerships 2000) and Paul Wilton (who has been coordinating the Careers in Manufacturing project based at Morphett Vale High School). These people work constantly, under very difficult circumstances, with tight budgets and inadequate resources and do outstanding jobs.

Another issue of concern to me is the lack of accountability in government. The Victorian election has focused attention on the lack of accountability perceived by the Victorian people, but this government has no reason to be comfortable in that area. My experience on the Public Works Committee has presented me with frequent examples of officials being less than frank. Their role seems to be loyalty to their minister rather than accountability to the parliament. It was, in fact, refreshing yesterday to be told by one official that a particular course of action was a political decision. That leaves us clearly with a direction about where to ask for answers.

This I could contrast with other witnesses who obfuscate, resort to claims of commercial in confidence or simply answer a different question from that asked or promise papers that are never delivered in an attempt to act more like a political staffer than a professional public servant under the Westminster system.

Ms Rankine: They're all under threat; that's why.

Ms THOMPSON: Yes. Certainly, the fear that I encounter when speaking briefly with some of my former colleagues

is quite palpable. They cannot speak out; they cannot tell what is really going on; and they cannot provide impartial advice to ministers, because some ministers have tantrums when they get something that is not according to their wishes. I do not have to look far. I have decided that what we have been experiencing is simply not good enough in terms of accountability to the parliament. In this session I will be more forthcoming in indicating where I think evidence is too heavily qualified to give me real confidence of its veracity.

Then there is poor management practice. We really only have to focus on the Hindmarsh stadium to find total examples of poor management practice. An open-ended commitment to make up loan payments to the bank when the soccer federation does not deliver is simply a dangerous way of doing business. The contract recently obtained by a member in another place indicates that there is no requirement for the soccer federation to prove that it cannot pay the debt to the bank. All that happens is that it does not pay the debt to the bank and the taxpayer steps in. Contrast this with what is happening in Western Australia with the redevelopment of the Subiaco stadium.

Lately, I was fortunate to be able to talk to Jeff Ovens, Chief Executive of the West Australian Football Commission. They have a management plan required by the Development Act. They know to what other uses the stadium can be put. They have invested in public transport options. To overcome some of the parking problems, they have prize draws to reward people who travel by public transport. They have a clear policing strategy. They have developed transfer hubs at Murdoch University, among other places, to enable people to get to the stadium. They know exactly how much they need to earn in rent if they let out the facility for a pop concert, for instance.

Questions about this in relation to the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium were greeted with complete obfuscation. There is a tight financing arrangement contrasting to that which I have mentioned where the government has a fixed commitment to paying the principal and the football commission has to provide the variable interest. There is also the issue of securing the title of the soccer stadium so that it is not sold off, but I will not have the opportunity to go into that at this stage.

I conclude by saying that this government does not seem to know the difference between what is nice to have as opposed to what we need to have. It is nice to have a wine centre that once was a museum and now is an icon. It is nice to have a convention centre that has also been described as an icon, but do we actually need them? There is value in both a wine centre and a convention centre that meet the needs of current exhibitors, but do they have to be icons, compared with the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House? I do not think so. I conclude by thanking the people of Reynell.

Time expired.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): At the outset I congratulate the Governor on the manner in which he delivered the address. I also take this opportunity to commend both the Governor, Sir Eric Neal, and Lady Neal on the way in which they carry out their duties and responsibilities. We certainly have in both the Governor and his wife people who are recognised as excellent ambassadors for South Australia. I marvel at the time spent by both of them moving through various parts of the state. They must both have incredible itineraries, and that is recognised and well received by the people of South Australia.

A number of points found in the Governor's speech have been referred to by other speakers, such as the fact that over the past year South Australia has had the second highest level of growth of all the states and territories in Australia. I was pleased to learn that our mining, agriculture, forestry and fishery industries have each grown at a rate of 20 per cent over the same 1997-98 period.

As far as jobs are concerned—and we recognise that we place the highest of priorities on providing more jobs for people in this state—I was pleased to see that we have had 14 consecutive months of increasing trend employment levels in South Australia. Exports have increased by 6.5 per cent, which is very good news when we recognise that nationally they have fallen. The net migration loss has been at its lowest for five years, whilst our population growth rate has been at its highest in the same period. I was interested to see that the value of production of the state's food industry has grown from \$5.8 billion to \$7 billion in the past two years. And so one could go on.

Some very good news for the people of South Australia was contained in the Governor's speech. There is a lot of good news out in the electorate, although there is also continuing concern about some issues. Regrettably, in some instances there is misinformation, which does not help the average person in this state to understand exactly what is happening in areas such as education and health.

Referring to figures that have been used by other members in this debate, we need to recognise that the Liberal state government has increased health spending from \$421 million in 1993-94 to \$587 million in this latest budget. Acknowledging the interjection of my colleague the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance earlier, I only wish that some members from the other side had been here back in 1993 when the Liberal government took office, and recognised the huge difficulties that we were having providing anywhere near adequate budgets for so many of the services provided by the state.

Coming back to health, the Australian Bureau of Statistics puts the increase to which I have just referred at 37.2 per cent in nominal terms and 24.2 per cent in real terms. Of course, this has been done despite the constraints of the state debt. That does not mean that everything in the garden is rosy as far as health in this state is concerned, and I am very much aware that there are people who are not receiving the services they require. Members from both sides of the House have given examples of particular cases. I regret that that is the position. There are very few areas in which we could not do things better with the funding that is made available. And that is not a political issue: that relates to this government as it has related to governments of the other persuasion in more recent times.

I have to say that I still have some concerns with the emergency services levy. I commend the minister (who just happens to be in the chamber at the present time) for the changes that have been made and the relief that has been provided and announced over the past week or so. As far as my electorate is concerned, I am aware that a significant number of people will be assisted as a result of those changes. I commend and thank the minister for instigating and implementing those changes.

But, having said that, I still feel for people in small business, particularly those who operate a number of vehicles, and private bus operators, for example, who will continue to pay the levy on vehicles. Many people in small business who are affected cannot afford to be disadvantaged in any way

whatsoever, and I hope that issue is recognised by government in the very near future. I also have to say that, because of the recognition that I give to volunteers, particularly in my electorate, I am very mindful of the superb service that is provided on a voluntary basis by organisations such as the Country Fire Service, particularly in very vulnerable seats and areas I represent in my electorate of Heysen.

I am concerned about the impact that the emergency services levy may have on volunteers. A number of business operators have approached me and made it quite clear that while they have been prepared to provide time for officers who have worked for them to attend fires, sometimes day after day, they are now having to reconsider that situation. A fellow came to see me the other day and for some 25 years he has been providing water free of charge to one of the CFS units in the Hills. He has been hit fairly hard by the levy and has just made it quite clear that, while he does not want to disadvantage the CFS in any way, he is reconsidering that particular support in the future. Knowing the people of South Australia as I do, and knowing very well the people of the Adelaide Hills, I am sure that other people's safety and the future of an organisation such as the CFS will be given the highest priority, but I do have some concerns and it is appropriate that I continue to raise them in this place.

As far as education is concerned, the minister for education is aware that a number of schools in my electorate are seeking major upgrades, for example, schools such as Mylor which has about 100 students, and Stirling East Primary School which is a much larger school and which requires a considerable amount of upgrading. Meadows requires major upgrading and applications have been made through both major and minor works for redevelopment of that school. I have taken up with the minister my support and the support of the local communities in having this work carried out as a matter of urgency.

A number of issues that were of major importance throughout the Hills area have been rectified. One of them is water quality, and I am absolutely delighted with the progress that has been made and the quality of water now provided to the people throughout my electorate. I know that there are parts of the Adelaide Hills that still need to see an upgrading of that service but, overall, there has been significant recognition on the part of the people in my electorate in regard to improved water quality.

The other matter relates to the South Eastern Freeway and particularly the road between Crafers and Cross Road. I am sure that all members are aware of the massive work that has been carried out up there in recent times. We are all looking forward to the opening of the new section of the freeway, hopefully no later than February next year. It was to have been December but I understand that they have run into a few problems and that the opening has now been delayed until February, and we look forward to that. Having travelled that road for most of my 57 years, I certainly look forward to no more roll overs of semitrailers, etc. When people say that it will be fantastic to have a stretch of road that eliminates all accidents, I would like to think that that will be the case, but I doubt that it will. Even with a six lane highway, I am sure there will be idiots who will still travel above the recognised speed limit, and I really do question on many occasions the lack of responsibility of some motorists. Regrettably, the standards of some of our drivers are not very high.

I will speak briefly on another major issue because, as far as I am concerned, the thing that is most dear to my heart is the advancement of the Adelaide Hills generally. I am not

referring to just my electorate, and I do not need to go into all of the advantages as far as the average tourist is concerned. The Adelaide Hills area is the centre of it all, and we are suggesting very strongly to people who travel to the Barossa that, instead of travelling up the Main North Road, they go to the Barossa via the Adelaide Hills. If they want to go to the McLaren Vale region, instead of using South Road we are suggesting that they travel via the Hills. We are very close to the Riverland and the lakes district, and one of the significant advantages of the Adelaide Hills is the close proximity to the City of Adelaide.

The region has superb Adelaide Hills wines, eateries, crafts and producers of fine food. On top of all that, I would suggest that we have some of the friendliest people in the state to care for those people who wish to travel through the Adelaide Hills. We also have fabulous national parks in my own electorate, including Scott Creek Park, Mark Oliphant Park, Morialta Conservation Park and Cleland Reserve, but I will come back to Cleland a little later. Within Cleland is the Mount Lofty summit, and most members would be aware that I have had a particular interest in the development on the summit. I am delighted with the visitation numbers and the progress that has been made in that area, but there are some needs that I would like to put before the House. I believe that the new facility needs to be extended. That would not be a difficult process.

I would like the section that is now set aside for the sale of knick-knacks and other goods to be moved into a new area and for that area to be set aside for much more general tourism information and, more specifically, information relating to the tourism assets of the Adelaide Hills, including information about Adelaide Hills wines and the tasting thereof. I recognise the excellent work carried out by the workers within that facility, I strongly suggest, however, that the Tourism Commission take a much greater interest in that facility. I would go as far as to say that the Minister for Tourism should be responsible for that facility. I have given an enormous amount of thought to that, and I know I was the Minister for Environment when the facility was built. However, because it is one of the first places that people visit when they come to South Australia, it is important that it be recognised as a major tourist and information provider.

While no-one is more supportive of national parks and wildlife than I, I believe that Cleland provides excellent facilities and information about these related activities, and these functions should be directed through Cleland rather than through the Summit. Both facilities, Mount Lofty Summit and Cleland, must be very closely linked and I certainly want to see that happen.

I also believe that, in recognising the fantastic facility that we have in Cleland, the significant number of people who visit that attraction and its conservation values, it could be used much more to showcase South Australia's wildlife. For example, it would be fantastic to be able to bring together the great work done by the government through the Department of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs, particularly through the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the fantastic work being done by the private sector. For example, would it not be great to have Cleland representing the National Parks and Wildlife Service and organisations such as Earth Sanctuaries from the private sector, therefore bringing them together as a showcase? Warrawong, for example, is fantastic, and it is only one of the private sector facilities at the present time in this State which acts as a showcase for our fauna, flora and conservation generally. It

would be great to bring those together as a showcase for people to visit and then go onto other parks, to Warrawong or to any of the other sanctuaries around the place not only in the Adelaide Hills but in other parts of the state. It could be achieved, and it is something we should work for. It would be great for the Hills but, more importantly, it would be superb for the state of South Australia. I hope that we would see that happen in the not too distant future.

I would like to say considerably more about that and other matters but, because I know many others want to participate in this debate, I will restrict my comments. In closing, I again commend the Governor for the manner in which he delivered the address, and I commend both Sir Eric and Lady Neal on the superb way in which they are carrying out their responsibilities within South Australia.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I listened to the speech delivered on Tuesday, on behalf of the government, by our Governor Sir Eric Neal. Like most people, I could have been led to believe that this state was blooming and all was prosperous and rosy. However, given the current rate of unemployment in South Australia, this is not so. We know that our unemployment figures are a national disgrace and totally unacceptable. During the last state election, the Olsen government campaigned on a platform of generating jobs. We remember its \$1.2 billion capital works program which created news headlines. Subsequent state government budgets supposedly have also committed many millions of dollars for jobs, but the results are far from spectacular. What we have seen is a haemorrhaging of jobs, factories and other work sites closing down, and families leaving South Australia for job opportunities elsewhere. The government seems prone to making reactionary statements on sessional short term unemployment trends; for instance, the employment minister said in August this year that youth unemployment was at an eight year low, proving, he said, that the Olsen government had got its economic policies right.

The Premier went further by stating in the *Advertiser* on 13 August that what we are seeing is the revival of the economy. Far from an economic revival, the recent unemployment figures show that South Australia is the national unemployment capital of Australia. Unemployment increased from 8 per cent to 8.7 per cent and youth unemployment has leapt from 24.3 per cent to 31 per cent, resulting in a fall of job vacancies and an overall unemployment increase. So, every month we hear of a company closing down, with more jobs lost to our work force.

People want to know what the long term employment policy of the government is. What will it do to assist our youth and older workers get back into the workplace? Families in South Australia want to know what has happened to the state government's billions and continuing subsequent billions that have been promised for jobs by the government. They want to know why it is that we still have record unemployment after so much money was promised and spent with so little to show for it in terms of jobs growth. Families are simply sick of hearing about these sessional short-term temporary jobs. They want to see jobs growth through industry growth. They want to see jobs, both existing and created, that have stability and security, and they want to see the government leading the way and not continuing job losses through government supported, in fact created, redundancies and the culling of public sector industries such as in health, education, policing, housing and so on.

South Australians have yet to see any comprehensive industry policy emanating from the Premier. Many constituents in my electorate of Torrens have commented to me that the current government operates on a knee-jerk response, without any real industry policies. That means that many thousands of people in this state are suffering severe stress because of the uncertainty of their job security and the ongoing retrenchments in both the private and the public sectors. It prevents families from being able to plan ahead.

I would like to draw to the attention of the parliament a group of injured government workers at the SA Water rehabilitation centre at Hope Valley, which is also in my electorate, to illustrate the inconsistent approach of the state government towards job security and its responsibilities to injured workers. At the outset I give credit to the government upon the development of this initiative. It is a government resource that is assisting injured workers develop new skills in horticulture and reforestation. The centre employs up to seven people at present, and they are all earning a wage. The one thing these workers have in common is that they are all suffering from work related injuries sustained whilst in the paid service of the state government or are redeployees. Many have serious physical disabilities ranging from severe mobility problems from stroke or back injury, or emotional problems from job related nervous breakdowns. Yet these workers are working as a team and producing thousands of trees, which are planted out in the environment. They also make various bird and animal boxes with great skill. I was pleased to go to Rundle Mall a month or so ago and see that these boxes they had created were used in a display there. Of most importance is that these injured workers clearly show that, even while injured, one can lead a productive work and home life.

The resource is able to function economically and efficiently by donations of various items from other organisations. The trees and seeds are donated by Trees for Life or collected by various organisations such as the Cleland nature reserve, and Pete and Pat gardening centre donates various organic materials to assist the SA worker rehabilitation centre to be able to function economically. For instance, the centre has provided hundreds of thousands of trees, which have been planted in and around the Torrens River catchment areas, SA Water reservoirs, in schools, community gardens, the zoo, upper Torrens land care, Cleland reserve and many more organisations too numerous to mention. The trees retail at \$1, but it would have cost the government between \$2 and \$4 per sapling if purchased in the private sector. That this is a saving of many thousands of dollars to the government, other agencies and the community in general goes without saying.

Here we have injured workers who want to play a meaningful role in society, have dedicated themselves to developing an environmentally and economically sustainable industry, which will help to stop erosion and assist in the beautification of our state. Sadly, these workers at the centre have been under the threat of redundancy for some time. The workers and their families live on an emotional roller coaster from day to day, never really knowing whether there will be a job to go to next week. Like many other injured workers, rehabilitation providers send them to interviews for which they have neither the skills nor the physical capacity to undertake. It appears that most accept that their injuries are so severe that they are virtually unemployable in the private sector and cannot understand why the government will not allow them to continue to develop the program, which the government actually first started. This industry gives these

workers confidence and a belief in themselves. They know they can make a major contribution to society and earn a wage to support their families. Being able to continue to work and be productive has boosted their confidence, their morale and indeed their vocational skills. Now, the government wants to cast them aside and undo the good work that has been done.

Their families see and experience their continued stress due to their current uncertainties. Far from improving their health, the government's actions are actually having an adverse effect on the health of these workers. The devastating impact is on not only them but also their families, and it is nothing more than a cruel act. The government is ignoring its responsibilities to its injured workers. The government should be setting an example to the private sector by continuing to develop the humanitarian project at the SA Water rehabilitation centre. As the Premier is so fond of saying, this is a win-win situation all round, but the problem is that the government cannot see it. The workers have received many letters of support for their industry and their commitment. I will illustrate the high regard that the government departments and community organisations have for these workers at the rehabilitation centre by quoting from some of the letters that were forwarded to these workers. A letter from SA Water at Berri states:

On behalf of the Lake Victoria-Rufus River greening group, I would like to thank the Hope Valley horticulture group for their invaluable help, hints and the donation of the hundreds of trees our group has now planted. We are hoping that the horticulture group will still be in operation next year as we are planning an autumn planting once again. Your group's help has been greatly appreciated.

A letter from ID&A Catchment and Environmental Consultants states:

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks on behalf of ID&A (South Australia) Pty Ltd for the work undertaken by SA Water redeployees in growing tube stock and erecting habitat boxes for the Torrens Rural Riparian Works program and the Our Patch program. During the 1996-97 revegetation works component of the Rural Riparian Works program, Wayne Brown, of the Mount Lofty Ranges catchment program and I saw an opportunity for the Torrens catchment water management board to undertake a joint program with SA Water redeployees to grow tube stock and build habitat boxes for the board's revegetation works.

In the first year it was agreed that the redeployees would grow 25 000 plants for the board free of charge if the board supplied the materials (planting tubes, soil and seed). Pine boxes for fauna habitat have also been produced and we are very pleased with the quality and workmanship. This has been a good opportunity to acquire plants and boxes since the program's inception in 1996-97. It has provided useful work for the redeployees (who have all expressed a keen willingness to participate) and strengthened cooperation between the board and SA Water. Again, I express my appreciation and look forward to working with the SA Water redeployees in the future.

Trees for Life states in its letter:

I am writing to express our appreciation of your work in caring for the Trees for Life tube stock produced for the Patawalonga and Torrens catchment water management boards. Without your assistance, I am sure the planting program would not have been as successful. We are looking forward to working with you and your team in trialing propagation of *Hymenanthera dentata* (tree violet). We hope that by your team testing a number of alternative propagation techniques and timing we will be able to be more certain of how best to handle this species. The end result should be that we will become able to add this important plant to the list of species available to landholders wishing to revegetate their properties.

These are ringing endorsements from departments and the community. Sadly, SA Water omitted to make any mention of the great work that the rehabilitation centre does, even though on page 15 of its 1999 annual report the illustration

largely features all the trees in the reforestation program which have been grown and supplied by the workers at the rehabilitation centre.

Both private and community organisations see the value in the work that these people do. The government should also recognise their worth and continue with confidence the job it started when it first established the rehabilitation centre. The government has within its power the ability to give these workers back their self-respect and optimism for the future by keeping the centre open and hopefully expanding it through the centre's increased trade.

The raft of government taxes, fees and charges is taking a terrible toll within our community. This is particularly the case for thousands of people who are on pensions or low incomes. These people are struggling to make ends meet because of continual rises in government charges, which include the emergency services levy as well as petrol, basic food items and other essential services such as power, water and gas.

With reference to the emergency services levy, Keith, a constituent of mine, came to my office seeking assistance. He told me that his family cannot make ends meet as their pension simply does not keep pace with increases in taxes and charges. He posed the question: why does not the government grant pensioners the right to a concession on the emergency services levy? He believes this would help them to cope financially with this additional burden. This constituent and his wife receive \$732 in total per fortnight. After meeting all their living expenses they have very little left over to meet the new levy.

That, of course, is impacted upon by the increases in car registration stamp duty, and so on. The new reduction to the levy announced by the Premier on Monday still means that Keith and his wife, instead of paying \$110, must pay \$80, based on the value of their home of \$90 000. Keith considers the emergency services levy reduction announced by the Premier not as a pat on the back but as a slap in the face because he says that he simply does not have the money to pay this levy, full stop. There are no financial reserves for a pensioner family such as Keith's. He says that his well is dry, and therefore I think that his question is perfectly reasonable.

The other problem which is constantly raised but which was not mentioned in the Governor's speech is that of health. Our public hospital resources are being continuously eroded. That is just another terrible indictment of the government and further shows that it is really treating South Australians like second-class citizens. Again, we have spiralling hospital queues and financial cuts to services. The Premier, however, can seemingly find an extra \$5 million for a car race but, unaccountably, cannot afford to give his health minister much needed dollars for our declining health system. We believe that he has his priorities back to front, and I am sure that members opposite feel the same way.

The old adage that absolute power breeds absolute arrogance and contempt I think is a cap that well fits and suits our current state political climate. This was certainly the folly of the Jeff Kennett style of government. It does not work and the electorate will not wear it, as Kennett discovered. As the member for Gordon noted when he spoke yesterday, the Governor has encouraged all elected members to be mindful of the significant responsibilities they have to continue to work both towards the common good of their communities and the state as a whole. This is a very timely message and one with which I am in total agreement.

In South Australia there is certainly an air of tension and stress within the community. When I was first elected to this parliament I said:

My party has a great opportunity to build back through representing the needs and hopes of ordinary South Australians.

I further said:

... I think now is the time that we got back to basics. It is time we got back in touch with what people want to see in South Australia for the future... to focus on the kind of community we want to build for a better future, for a better tomorrow.

Of course, when I said that in 1994, I was referring to a government of my own party—a government which I believed, such as this government, had lost its way and which was seen as somewhat aloof and out of touch with its people. I said then:

The kind of aggressive politics of the past, the divisions in the community and, indeed, the acrimony that I understand can sometimes invade this House must be replaced by a greater sensitivity to and appreciation of the diversity of our community. We must seek how to develop accord in the community we seek to serve rather than creating division and alarm.

Arrogance, contempt and the misuse of power by government or opposition will be rightly judged harshly, which means that we cannot take for granted that a mandate to govern will be so clear cut. We on this side of the House will have to work hard to win the confidence of the people and to convince them that we are a party capable of being an alternative government.

Those words meant a lot to me and I had faith at that time in change. Consideration, recognition of skills and commitment to people is more important than winning just for the sake of winning. What is the point of control when you lose the plot? I am committed and always will be to the philosophies of the Labor Party. These philosophies are about social justice, equity, fairness and a genuine understanding of the needs within our communities.

To control the levers of power means nothing if control is all that counts. Time is running out and not just for this government. We must put the interests of South Australians first and concentrate on policies which reflect a human face and which care for people first. We need to move away from our economic rationalist past and to govern for families' needs. If we are good but knowing economic managers of our economy, we can create a fair and just environment for people to live, work and play in, but if control and power is our motive we will only seek political control at the expense of democratic process and social justice.

I also take this opportunity to indulge in something more personal but it, too, is about justice. My husband Bob and his fellow officials who are committed to fair and just practices in the workplace were recently re-elected in their union ballot. Bob has now given 12 years of dedicated service to the then ETU and now to the CEPU because he believes in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. It has not been easy and not just on the industrial front because forces sought to take control of that union simply for the sake of it and nothing else. If I can be forgiven for gloating, I advise the House that his support in the ballot just a month ago was 84.3 per cent, and that came about because he is committed to doing the best for his members. Power is not the driving force for him. He says that he is just doing his job. Perhaps that is why he has engendered such respect in his field.

In closing, let me say how helpless and shocked I have felt at the unfolding slaughter in East Timor of the civilians and the clergy, and the wanton destruction of property. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to their families and their loved ones. I pray that no further loss of life occurs in East Timor,

although I suspect that will not be the case, but my prayers and thoughts are with those Australians over there, including a friend of mine, and people from other countries who are supporting those people in these difficult times.

The political and military stability that we have seen in Australia cushions us from the barbarities of war that rages in other countries from time to time. It is wrong to ignore the plight of people who have an inalienable right to national self-determination and independence when that is threatened by aggressors. It is a principle for which many thousands in our armed forces gave up their lives in the past two world wars. To our troops, civilians and logistical staff in East Timor, I send you God's speed for a safe return. We look forward to having you back home with your families and loved ones. We in Australia believe that you are doing a necessary and essential job and very much understand and appreciate that you are risking your lives to uphold the basic principles of international democracy and self-determination.

Let me also say how pleased I am to be here representing the people of Torrens this session. I find my role and place in that community both rewarding and challenging, and I will continue to strive to achieve a fair go for all my constituents.

Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey): I support the motion moved by the member for Hartley and, in doing so, I would like to point out that two years ago I made my first contribution with my maiden speech. As a newly elected member and a person relatively green in the ways of politics, I was in awe of the power of this place. I could not quite believe that it was little old me standing up in this very spot, having my words recorded into the history of this place. I was full of hope, ideology and a burning ambition to make a difference. Here I was amongst the decision makers of this state, jointly holding the balance of power with two complete strangers and utterly terrified of what the future held and how I would cope. I knew that I had an incredibly steep learning curve ahead of me.

Sadly, what I have learnt is a sad indictment on the way in which business is conducted in this place. I have learnt to distrust, to watch my back and always to look for the hidden agenda. What is most unfortunate though is that my feeling of complete disillusionment with the current political climate is echoed loudly and clearly in the community. A good indicator of this disillusionment is the latest news poll in which 42 per cent of respondents did not want to commit to support either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition. How sad! I came into this place in the belief that the devastating results of the 1997 election, which saw the Liberal Party go from an overwhelming majority to a minority government in just one term, would be a lesson to all politicians not to take the electorate for granted. But what followed? It was a complete and utter denial of any blame for the appalling result, a knee-jerk reaction to do a policy backflip and sell our electricity assets to find headroom in the budget—the Premier's words not mine. This headroom I believe was to go on a spending spree on nonsense projects to attempt to buy back the confidence of the electorate before the next election.

To my mind the answer is simple, so simple I guess that those in the leadership group making decisions behind closed doors on the advice of a few in the inner sanctum have completely overlooked it. The people of South Australia want sensible government, although out in voter land those two words are not often used together. They want a government that is prepared to get the basics right, to manage our finances responsibly, to listen to the priorities of the people, to ensure

that fairness and equity underpin government decisions and to be open, up front and honest with the people. But what have we got? We have a government that leaps from crisis to crisis. We have an opposition that dedicates its effort to muckraking and, unfortunately, a government that provides it with plenty of muck.

They have on the one hand a government that they do not trust and on the other hand an opposition that inspires no confidence that they are any better. Why is there so much cynicism out there? I believe we need look no further than the latest debacle, the emergency services levy. Last year we started with the sound idea to broaden the base from which funds were raised to finance our emergency services. Not everyone contributed under the old system and all agreed that this was not fair and equitable. The then minister sold the idea well. No-one who was contributing under the old scheme would be likely to be worse off. Our volunteers would be better equipped. Levies raised would be hypothecated for the express purpose of funding emergency services.

It all sounded great, so how did it go so wrong? This government got greedy. It saw this fund as an opportunity to shift significant expenditure responsibilities from general revenue to another revenue stream under the guise of looking after our poor volunteers. I assure everyone in this place that what has resulted is nothing but a sleight of hand. There is nothing honest, fair or equitable in what has resulted since the abusive implementation of what should have been a very sound and positive initiative from this government. The emergency services levy has been another slap in the face for me, as I honestly believed what the government was telling me when I voted for this last year. I have been deceived and the South Australian public has been deceived. It is nothing but a new tax and nothing but a poll tax in disguise. It is nothing but a new avenue for this and future governments to make an unlimited grab for cash.

Insult was then added to insult when the Premier announced last Monday that he had listened to the people and as a result he would be providing a windfall of \$20 million to ease the burden of this levy. This levy, of course, is one that we have not actually been charged yet. Out of the goodness of his heart he had seen fit to bring forward future benefits from the lease of our electricity assets. What nonsense! He was going to pull \$20 million out of a bucket that had not been filled yet. How stupid does he think people really are?

After the ridiculousness of this statement was made obvious in the media, the Treasurer came out this morning and admitted that, of course, it is not possible to bring forward future benefits. We have now been advised that the money is actually available because of how well the government is doing with advance payments towards the unfunded superannuation liability—a change of tack only after its first attempt to pull the wool over the public eye was blown out of the water. Unfortunately, the second attempt does not stand up under close scrutiny either, but that is another story.

It is no wonder that the Premier and his leadership team have no credibility out there in the community. They are simply not telling the story like it really is. They are not being open and up front with the public. They think that they can just change the story if the public does not buy it the first time around. The Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services have hotly disputed statements that I have made to the media about the inequities of the \$20 million levy reduction, particularly for the rural sector. I would like to point out to this House that my comments were made as a

result of the government's own documentation released last Monday. I will quote from point four of the explanatory notes provided with the media release, as follows:

No remission was given to the 40 000 primary production properties in regional area 2, which makes up most of the arable land in South Australia.

And all my electorate outside the towns. That was before the cabinet submission, I am told, but it went out with the media release announcing the \$20 million. It might have been an error, but my statements were made based on the documentation provided by the government. Instead of coming out and saying that that documentation was incorrect, they chose to criticise those people who were making remarks on what was government provided information.

Mr McEwen interjecting:

Mrs MAYWALD: The member for Gordon rightly says that we should not believe what is put out by the government until we get the second or the third version. And we should question before it comes out whether or not it has been to cabinet. When my local media questioned the minister on his response, he gave them that answer: he told them that the page to which I was referring was released before it went to cabinet and, therefore, it was not correct. Dear oh dear!

I could go on and on about the comedy of errors that has occurred over just this one issue. To further make the point, I could go on and on about the way in which we are not told the whole truth about many issues. The most obvious would be how badly the idea that we needed to flog off our electricity assets was sold. This debate went on for 18 months and the arguments were full of contradictions, clarifying statements and misleading statements. The best one is the perception given to the public that the sale or lease of Optima-ETSA would result in \$2 million a day in interest savings. I wait with interest to see how the government intends to change this perception, when the harsh reality is quite different.

I note that, since the lease legislation has been passed by this parliament, the government's terminology has significantly changed. All of a sudden, we are hearing about non-commercial sector debt reduction, not just debt reduction. Now we are hearing about the small flexibilities in the budget that will result from the leases of our power assets. No wonder we are cynical, and no wonder no-one knows whom to trust.

Last year in my contribution to the Address in Reply to the Governor's speech I outlined some of the concerns that were being brought to my attention about this government's lack of action in regional areas. I was extremely flattered that the Premier actually read my speech and took the time to write to me about my concerns. I received a three page letter in return that told me how wrong I was, because the government was actually doing a great job. Why, then, does the public not agree with him? It is because he is not listening. This government is piddling around the edges with tokenism instead of taking heed of what the general public sees as priorities. A regional task force was established that galledivanted around the countryside gathering data to put into yet another report—the same age-old concerns that have been plaguing the bush for decades, and what has resulted? We have more committees. This government's answer to everything is to set up another advisory committee so it does not have to take responsibility for the decisions. We are committed out; we are economically rationalised out. South Australians were almost Liberaled out at the last election and, if the Olsen government does not start to heed the very clear

message that is being sent from the community, the Premier will be out at the next election, or sooner.

I am very saddened that once again I am standing here criticising the performance of the Olsen government. Unlike the Victorian Independents, I made my position very clear before I was elected that I would support conservative government. I am saddened, as are many traditional conservative voters, that we seem to have disappeared into a political void in this state. I am saddened that, after two years, this government continues to treat the general public with disdain. My message today is very clear: there is only two years left for members of this government to prove to South Australians that they are worthy custodians of conservative government.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

[Sitting suspended from 12.55 to 2.00 p.m.]

NATIVE VEGETATION

A petition signed by 21 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the government to review native vegetation protection laws to reduce the rate of vegetation clearance was presented by Mr Hill.

Petition received.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the Auditor-General's Report for the year ended 30 June 1999.

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

That the report be published.

Motion carried.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Livestock Advisory Groups—Report, 1998-99

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

Budget Outcomes—Report, 1998-99

Roxby Downs and Stuart Indenture—Amending Deed.

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: I rise to clarify matters raised in the House yesterday by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in relation to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Industry and Trade. As the Premier indicated in his ministerial statement on Tuesday, it has now been proved with the line of questioning from both the leader and the deputy opposition leader that this attack amounts to a concerted campaign against Mr Cambridge, designed to damage both Mr Cambridge's reputation and this government's ability to attract investment from overseas. In fact, today we read in the *Advertiser* that the investors in the tax building in King William Street are now considering pulling out as a direct result of the ALP's destabilising campaign to

derail investment in this state. Once again, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has not relied on fact to support her claims.

Let me go through them point by point. Yesterday during grievance debate the deputy leader, by way of statement of fact, told the House that 'taxpayers certainly paid for his airfares'. What the deputy leader is saying unequivocally is that taxpayers funded Mr Cambridge's overseas travel to Singapore this month so that he could attend a board meeting of a company in which he has declared his interest. Mr Cambridge advises this is wrong. Documentation provided to me by Mr Cambridge shows that both the airfares and accommodation for this month's trip was paid for by New Toyo—not the South Australian taxpayer.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has leave to make a statement.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

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

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Hart.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Furthermore, Mr Cambridge was on approved annual leave. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is not the only one who has it wrong. The member for Lee wrongly claimed in a question that Mr Cambridge was on government business in Singapore where he attended a board meeting of New Toyo. He was on approved annual leave. Once again this documentation, which I will now table, shows quite clearly that both the member for Lee and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were wrong. The deputy leader also raises allegations regarding last year's travel to Singapore by Mr Cambridge. Once again, she is wrong.

Mr Cambridge was in Singapore on 16 September last year—not to attend a board meeting but on government business. The company's legal counsel, Mr Liong Ka Yew, has confirmed to the government that there was no board meeting at the time Mr Cambridge was in Singapore, on 16 September last year. He was there on government business dealing with investment issues for South Australia. But the inaccuracies do not stop there. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to a series of press releases put out by the Premier. In fact she quoted from them, in particular that of 17 January. I am advised that the Premier's office never put out any releases on this issue as she refers to them. In fact, the deputy leader relied on a newspaper report to substantiate her accusations. She is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: She has deliberately attributed quotes from a newspaper article in the *Sunday Mail* of 17 January as being an official government statement, which clearly it is not. Given the above, I call on the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to produce the evidence: produce the evidence that taxpayers paid for the air fare; produce the press release of 17 January. If the deputy leader cannot produce the evidence by the close of parliament today, I call on her to fully retract her statements and apologise to the House and to Mr Cambridge. If she cannot produce the evidence, the deputy leader should resign.

QUESTION TIME

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. Given the Premier's statement last Tuesday that no decisions had been made on the future of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and a minute from the Director of Cardiology at the hospital that describes the government's plan to downgrade the QEH as unduly damaging, that it pays no consideration to cost effectiveness and represents a dereliction of duty, will the minister now release full details of the government's proposals and conduct an open and transparent process of public consultation on the future of hospital services in the western suburbs?

The opposition has been given a copy of a minute written by Professor Horowitz, the Director of Cardiology at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which describes plans to downgrade services at the hospital as a dereliction of duty. Dealing with just one aspect of the government's plans, Professor Horowitz said:

It is ridiculous for haematology and oncology to be supplied by general medical registrars. As cancer is a major cause of death in the western suburbs, it is very bad to contemplate reducing services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): First, I go back to the document referred to in this House on Tuesday by the Leader of the Opposition. I happen to have a copy of that document, which was put out to the media by the leader's own office, and the front page says: 'Options paper for discussion with clinicians'. That highlights two points: first, clearly no decisions have been made because here is an options paper put out for discussion; and, secondly, it specifically invites feedback from the clinicians involved. That is consultation.

So, on the first point that the honourable member has raised, in relation to releasing the details of decisions made, clearly no decisions have been made and that is why you have an options paper. Secondly, the whole purpose of the options paper was to get feedback from the clinicians, and that is exactly the process the government is going through.

CALL CENTRES

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Could the Premier outline to the House any recent results of the government's focus on attracting call centre operations to South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): The member is obviously referring to an announcement that I had the privilege and pleasure to make a short time ago, announcing that Ansett Australia is to develop a purpose-built call centre at Science Park in Adelaide. This is a significant win for this state as it will deliver 300 new jobs on top of retaining 140 jobs and a purpose-built facility for 440 jobs at Science Park. It will be built in two stages. Stage 1 will commence early next year and is planned for completion by October. Stage 2 will commence construction in August next year and is expected to be completed in March 2001. There are good signs of an indication of Ansett's plans for further investment in South Australia. It has reserved land adjacent to the Science Park site to allow further future expansion.

We can achieve these sorts of results for one reason: the government has a plan unlike, I might point out, those opposite, who are, it seems, interested only in stacking branches, inventing members and making up stories as we

had from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—although I might add it is not the first time that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been wrong, wrong, wrong with accusations that she has made in this House under parliamentary privilege.

We will continue to move with policies such as this and aggressively market the state overseas to get new investment in this state. That is why our overseas missions are so important to the future prosperity of the state. We are a small state and we need to attract new private sector capital investment. If that comes from overseas, so be it, but it is the private sector new capital investment that underpins job creation in this state. To us it matters not from where the investment funds come provided that we get them and, as a result, we get jobs created here in South Australia. This is despite the fact that we have had some odds stacked against us—those odds being the opposition, which wants to denigrate any new private sector capital investment in this state, which wants to talk down this state and investing in it, and which is prepared as part of its political strategy really to take issue with small and large companies wanting to invest in this state.

The opposition laughed just a moment ago at Mr Tu's suggestion that he might not proceed with refurbishment of the Australian Taxation Office's former building in King William Street. For the benefit of members opposite, when they left office that derelict building was vacant in King William Street. We now have someone who is prepared to put \$15 million or \$20 million into its refurbishment, but what does this opposition want to do? It wants to denigrate, knock, carp and call into question that investment. Do members opposite want the Australian Taxation Office's former building to stay derelict for another seven years? That is exactly where they want it to be.

Well, we are interested in the construction industry jobs that will be created by the refurbishment, and we are also interested in more overseas students in South Australia, because that office building was designed for overseas students who will attend our three universities. When we came to government we were getting of the order of 4 per cent of overseas students coming to Australia to study. We ought to be getting 8.8 per cent or thereabouts on a national average. We have worked hard on that. I was interested to see in the recent report that we had the largest increase of overseas students (but for Tasmania) of 6.3 per cent. So we are stepping up the number of overseas students who contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to this economy by way of living expenses and purchasing power within our broader community.

The taxation office building was a key component of accommodation for students for our universities. The deputy leader's grubby little tactics have no substance of truth, and the deputy leader does not have the goodwill and substance to apologise for the outrageous, inaccurate and wrong accusations she made in the parliament yesterday against someone who cannot come in here and defend himself. The deputy leader was gutless in making inaccurate and unsubstantiated allegations against a man that have proved to be wrong. It will be interesting to see whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has the good grace today to retract and apologise—we will see the substance of the deputy leader.

The investments that we have attracted, whether it be call centres, the taxation office building refurbishment or others, are important components of the rebuilding of the economy of South Australia. That is why we have had 14 months of

trend line employment growth in South Australia. It is why Econtech in its report released on 19 August this year has indicated that the next two to three years will see constant growth in South Australia. We want to realise those trend estimates to ensure that we are delivering a better viable future for South Australians.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Peake and others can interject and laugh at that, but what we want to do is deliver a future for our kids by using a range of measures. The member for Peake's old colleagues in the taxi industry are having a field day at the moment through the Masters Games, as are the caravan parks, the hotels, motels and restaurants. It is all about underpinning tourism and the hospitality industry and creating jobs. That is what this government has been focused on for the past six years and will continue to focus on. What we will do by having a clear policy focus is refurbish old buildings that have sat derelict for six or seven years in South Australia, and that is in contrast to the opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said that this year was going to be the year of policy. Well, I have not seen one yet, unless it is the policy of destabilisation, which he is pretty good at or a policy—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Or branch stacking.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: They have a very good branch stacking policy, but apart from that they do not have a policy to increase investment in this State. Rather, the opposition has a policy to put investment in this state in danger, and by putting investment at risk it is putting jobs at risk. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, the political strategy—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The political strategy of those opposite is to stall economic recovery, not have job growth because they think that will help them in the ballot box. Continue to carp, oppose and criticise; we will get on with the job and continue to work hard on the trend line and the economic forecast that we are seeing emerging for South Australia because, at the end of the day, what we will do is deliver jobs for our kids.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Will the Minister for Human Services meet with doctors and nurses who have expressed extreme concerns about plans for downsizing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the total absence of clinical input? Does the minister believe that the medical and nursing staff should have been consulted from the outset; and will the government accede to the demands that both nurses and medical staff now be included in the decision making process on the future of the hospital?

The opposition has been given a copy of a letter to the minister from the Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Medical Staff Society dated 8 September 1999, signed by 68 doctors, which says:

We believe the radical downsizing of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has gone too far and the destruction of teaching and research in the north-west is not acceptable.

The opposition also has a copy of a petition from nurses at the hospital requesting that doctors and nurses be included in the planning processes, not excluded as they have been.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): The honourable member made the point—and this

is the whole thrust of her question—that those people wanted to be included in the process. She quoted from a letter sent to me on 8 September and signed by a number of doctors. Here is the discussion paper of 14 September which was specifically put out for clinicians to be involved in those options.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It is; it is an options paper put out by the hospital management to have those concerned look at a number of different options and get responses from the staff. All I can say is that the honourable member asked whether they will be included; here is the stark evidence put out by the Leader of the Opposition last Tuesday that in fact they have been included. There is the discussion paper.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Have you read the paper? It states that it is an options paper for discussions with clinicians, revised on 14 September 1999. So, there is the evidence that those discussions are in fact taking place; and the very fact that some of the doctors have raised issues as a result of the options paper shows that there is consultation and feedback on this issue.

CALL CENTRES

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I direct my question to the Minister for Industry and Trade. In its latest forecast, Econtech has stated that South Australia will have the highest employment growth of any state or territory in 1999-2000. Will the minister inform the House of the current status of the call centre industry in South Australia and indicate that industry's impact on employment growth?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I welcome, as I am sure do all South Australians, Ansett's announcement today of the new call centre operation coming into South Australia. The creation of 300 new jobs and the retention of 140 is certainly very positive news, not only for Ansett but also for the South Australian economy. That underlines one of the strategies the government took on when we came to office in 1993 about diversifying the South Australian economy into other areas. Certainly the call centre and back office industry was one of the areas that the government took up very strongly, because we saw it as an area of strong employment growth. As the Premier quite rightly points out, with a 14 month trend in employment growth, the call centre and back office industry has had a big impact on that employment growth.

We now have about 6 000 South Australians directly employed in the call centre, back office, help desk or shared service centre area. If you add the indirect jobs to that, you find that they are now a significant employer in the South Australian economy. If you consider the volumes of people employed by Mitsubishi or GMH, you will see that, with 6 000 people employed, the call centre is now a significant employer within this state. We will continue to target this area, because we see South Australia as having particular competitive advantages in that regard. We are pleased that the figure is growing at about 20 per cent per annum, which is impressive, and while it is growing at that rate we will certainly continue to support it.

One of South Australia's big advantages in the call centre market is our language skills. I know that the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training has very strong interests in that matter in the secondary school area. Given our multicultural background, the language skills available

in the South Australian community generally give us a big advantage over some other states for locating call centre and back office operations here. That is one of the reasons why firms such as Westpac, Bankers Trust and now Ansett have located their call centres here. Apart from the quality and skills of the work force and the cost of operations, one of the main issues involved is language skills. The call centre strategy is working well. We are certainly pleased with the announcement today, and we look forward to bringing other call centres to the state in the near future.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Why did the Premier tell this House on Tuesday that the government had assessed in May this year that it would again make use of Mr John Cambridge's abilities and appoint him CEO of the Department of Industry and Trade when in June this year the Minister for Industry and Trade unequivocally ruled out Mr Cambridge returning to his department on return from three months long service leave? On 24 June this year the Minister for Industry and Trade was asked in parliament in estimates committees if he expected Mr Cambridge to return to work in his department after his long service leave. The minister replied 'No, Mr Cambridge stays within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.' The government advertised for a new Department of Industry and Trade CEO position on 29 May, with a closing date for applications of 18 June. This meant that applications for the job would have been with the minister for a week by the time he ruled out Mr Cambridge's return to his department.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): The point that the deputy leader raises is wrong. The applications for the job were not with me at that time, and the answer I gave in estimates was accurate at that time.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): My question is directed to—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Are you listening? This might help the honourable member's next career move. Will the Deputy Premier outline the state government's commitment to implementing a biotechnology industry here, and can he respond to some of the extreme elements that are criticising some of the developments that are taking place in that industry?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his enormous interest in this subject. Members are aware that he has put forward a reference to the Social Development Committee on this matter and has helped out enormously with the task force that has looked into this to try to spot the opportunities for South Australia. Recently I had the opportunity to meet with three of the world's leading biotechnology companies to investigate the opportunities that might be here within biotechnology in South Australia, particularly with the biotechnology centre at the Waite. That is important because, without doing that, we will find it extremely difficult to retain our position as the leading plant breeding state in Australia.

It also gave me the opportunity to talk to Rhone Poulenc about the current negotiations with them for the international distribution of diagnostic testing which has been formulated by CSIRO and SARDI and which can see a good return on

the research that has been done over the past couple of years. Certainly, those negotiations are continuing, and there is a good opportunity that we will pick up some good international dollars for the work that has been done.

It also gave us the opportunity to talk to them about the genetically modified food debate as it stands in Europe at the moment. We also had the opportunity to talk to government officials and to some of the supermarket executives, as well as to other food industry executives. There is no doubt that in Europe the debate is in an absolute mess and no-one can now really rein in the debate. It is running away and causing an enormous level of anxiety as to where the future of agriculture lies in Europe. They face having to unwind the debate as more and more products that will have obvious consumer benefits become available. That anxiety as to how to unwind the debate is shared by most people who understand technology and biotechnology.

The debate has been hijacked or run by Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. From talking to people, I know that that has been greatly assisted by the fact that the level of confidence of consumers in the authorities and in science is at an all-time low in Europe because of BSC and other food scares which have sapped the confidence that consumers have both in the authorities and in science itself.

Interestingly, five inquiries have been held in the UK, including one from the House of Commons and one from the House of Lords, that have basically ticked the science and given pretty much the all clear on the food safety issues, which has been a surprising result for some people. It just shows that science and where the debate is headed are somewhat at odds. Industry and government are quick to admit that they got the public education about biotechnology and genetic modification horribly wrong as they went along.

From talking to people, it seems that Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth and other anti GM groups have been able to focus the debate on the more contentious 5 per cent of the whole biotechnology spectrum. Unfortunately, what has happened is that industry and government then reacted to that 5 per cent. So, really, it has focused the debate on that real contentious end and has not caused wide debate to be held.

At the last ARMCANZ meeting, we requested that the federal government look at a strategy whereby the Australian public is educated broadly about biotechnology, to make sure that the level of education here brings in absolutely everything, that it is transparent, and that it educates the public about the whole issue of biotechnology and genetically modified foods and ensures that members of the public understand totally what the benefits are and what risks may be right down the other end so that they can make informed decisions. It is very important that people know not only what they eat through labelling, and whatever, but also that people understand what genetic modification is all about. Without that, there is no doubt that this state, and Australia, will miss some enormous opportunities. Those opportunities are broader than agriculture: there are certainly opportunities there in biomedical, environmental and industrial applications which, as I have said, can be of enormous benefit.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the federal government's ensuring that there is a consistent and transparent attempt at educating the Australian community about biotechnology and GM foods, because if it does not do it, and soon, there is no doubt that Australia will miss a lot of opportunities and find it extremely hard to compete with North America on the world markets.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier table in this House the provision in the employment contract held by Mr John Cambridge under the Premier's department that allowed him, while on three months' paid long service leave between May and July this year, to earn up to \$150 000 for consultancy work with an offshore company with which Mr Cambridge has been a paid director for the past three years? Mr Cambridge's annual salary as a chief executive officer with this government is well in excess of \$200 000. He is also the paid director of an offshore company that owns a subsidiary company here in South Australia.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I refer the deputy leader to the ministerial statement that canvassed this matter on Tuesday.

EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Can the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training, following his recent trip to the United Kingdom, outline any information he may have seen or heard of regarding technology initiatives now being considered by the State government?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): Last weekend I returned from a 10 day trip to Ireland, Scotland and England, and I would have to say that I was impressed with the information and communications technology agenda that is being undertaken by the governments in those places. We have seen now in England a decade of strategic devolution to UK schools, and we are seeing some groundbreaking responses with respect to a range of challenges before government and educators across technology in those schools in the area of technology delivery, curriculum options, enterprise education and successfully promoting community and parent partnerships.

While I was there I concentrated on low socioeconomic schools, because I wanted to see just exactly what programs were occurring in those places. One that springs to mind very quickly is Bavistock, which is just outside Birmingham. It is the fifth lowest socioeconomic area in Europe—not just the United Kingdom. It is a very poor area, and there is a high level of single family children in the school. When we drove up to the school, we saw in the housing estate alongside the school a burnt out Mini Minor in front of one of the buildings, which just reinforced that situation. However, I would have to commend the principal, because he had an outstanding program at that school. The students presented themselves magnificently. The principal has told the students, 'Here is your opportunity in life. Here is the one opportunity that you have to get out of the situation that you are in and make something of yourself,' and used the term 'a million pound golden key'.

He said to the students, 'If you work hard while you are at this school, I will guarantee you £1 million.' That meant that, if they worked hard and achieved the results that they required from school, they would be able to get employment and through their working life earn £1 million. Each one of those students carried around with them a golden key in their pocket, as did the Principal, just as a reminder that even though they came from a low socioeconomic area this institution and education would be the way out for them to be able to improve their station in life and get employment.

It was a brilliant program, because it raised the esteem of the students. Members of the opposition are smirking at this somewhat, but it raised the level of esteem of the students from one of particularly low self esteem and a level of low education. As I said, the success that that school achieved was quite outstanding. Their first students have just been accepted at Cambridge University. The school had been operating for 16 to 17 years and it had never seen anybody from that area go to university. They have a young female weight lifter who has been accepted in the team for the Olympic Games; again, this lifted the esteem of the scheme. So, it was a fantastic program.

I asked that principal, 'What about the devolution? What do you think of that given that the program has been running for 10 years?' He said, 'I would never want to return to the old system. The ability for me and my staff to make the decisions which suit this school and our particular circumstances here is second to nothing in terms of the old bureaucratic system.' So, it reinforced the fact that in those low socioeconomic areas—and that story was repeated in other areas I visited—they appreciated that devolution and the ability of the principal and the—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Well, St Thomas's school west of Dublin in the Tallagh area. Again, this is a housing estate established by the Irish government. There is no public transport, community hall or church. It has 12-storey apartment houses and a very high single parent population. That school includes the parents in the running of the school. The parents actually have a room within the school where they can run development programs, where they are consulted and have an input in the curriculum of the school and where they actually have a living role within the school. Many people in that school are returning to complete A-level qualifications that they never had the opportunity to do when at school previously. So, it is an excellent program.

Of course, the advantage I saw that these schools have is the tremendous amount of funding that the European Union is providing for schools. Ireland, England and Scotland now have a 4 per cent unemployment rate. In Ireland some £27 million is going into education to promote programs, so it is quite an advantage for them. However, we also saw the information technology implemented in terms of computers in schools, and in this area South Australia is well ahead of English, Irish and Scottish schools. We have a better computers to student ratio than they have, but they have implemented information technology as a subject from reception to 16 years old. Students there are actually learning the programming of computers and are adapting that information technology right across the curriculum. In this area I have asked our CEO, Mr Spring—because we are currently undertaking a review of the curriculum in South Australia—to see how we could incorporate information technology as a subject in our schools and ensure that that is spread right across the curriculum.

Professional development for teachers would also be needed in this area to ensure that our teachers are well placed to teach this subject. Over there we also saw linkages with industry: industry is linking up with schools in giving specialist career advice as to what it requires of students. I have been pushing for a very much closer link between industry and our schools to ensure that what we are producing with our students is what industry wants. Those are just a few of the ideas we saw in the United Kingdom. I must say that

I picked up there some good ideas which indicate a bright future for education in South Australia.

GOVERNMENT ACCOMMODATION, SINGAPORE

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): My question is directed to the Premier. Does the South Australian government own or lease any residential accommodation in Singapore other than that which may be used by the SA government commercial representative and, if so, who has made use of this accommodation, when did it happen, and with whose authorisation?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Certainly not to my knowledge.

WATER METERS

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises provide information to the House on the progress of SA Water's meter replacement program?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): I thank the honourable member for his question, which deals with a particularly important subject, that is, the \$20 million project under which South Australia will replace 440 000 meters in a staged program across the state. Over time, water meters become unreliable and in some cases can completely jam, and that is, of course, inconvenient both to SA Water and its customers. The new meters will be more reliable and, as I have told the House before, will more accurately record water consumption.

The new water meters will ensure an equitable system of usage and billing for water usage and consumption for all customers. Obviously, that is a bonus, because not one member in the House would deny that water in South Australia is a particularly precious resource. All the meters now being installed are the new meters, and before installation each and every meter is tested in the factory to ensure that it is accurate.

What a pity the member for Kaurana is leaving the chamber! All the meters are required to operate within the specified Australian standard for water meters. During the evolution of this contract, I often pondered how the government could demonstrate the accuracy of the new meters in comparison with the old ones. I had no idea that the member for Kaurana was pondering the same question, and I was delighted when he took under his wing the matter of how we would demonstrate how much more accurate the new meters were than the old, and he helped me to do it.

The member for Kaurana (Mr Hill) recently had occasion to find out just how reliable and accurate those new meters are. Mr Hill and his constituent with whom he was working did not actually have any testing equipment, but he was obviously a boy scout, because he adopted the motto 'Be prepared.' Necessity being the mother of invention, Mr Hill and his constituent got a milk carton and carefully poured the water into the testing device. SA Water tests later in the day confirmed two things: first, that the meters were reliable and, secondly, that milk cartons should not be used for water meter testing.

Apparently, the member for Kaurana might next want to try ice-cream containers, who knows? Indeed, if this is the level of accuracy that the Opposition members are prepared to accept, it is no wonder the State Bank became such a disaster. One wonders what measures of testing accuracy they were using whilst our state's future was going down the drain. Their unorthodox way of testing the accuracy of a range of

matters may well be the reason why SA Water under their stewardship was actually losing \$47 million a year and under ours has seen about a \$200 million turnaround.

Clearly, this government does have policies in direct contrast with the opposition. As I have said to the House before, I would point to the success which we have had with guiding the water industry in South Australia to a position of being innovative and competitive on a world stage, as well as being customer focused. I wonder where, indeed, we would now be if we had relied on the humble milk carton. Unfortunately, the member for Kaurana is not here and I wonder if he knew the question to be asked. He is not here, but it is factual that he is becoming known around the traps as Mr 1 Per Cent because he is like one of the new varieties of milk, that is, instead of being only 1 per cent fat he is only 1 per cent fact.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Auditor-General's Report tabled today states that 'the present arrangements for the probity review of the electricity leasing process are, in my opinion, inadequate' and that he also expresses concerns about the terms of the appointment of the probity auditor, what are the probity concerns raised by the Auditor-General with the government, and will the government ask the Auditor-General and his senior officers to be personally present in the secure area when the bids are opened to ensure there is no repeat of the lapses of probity that occurred during the water contract?

On the day on which the water contracts bid came due, two of the three bids were opened, copied and distributed more than four hours before the receipt of the ultimately successful bid. The ultimately successful bidder was in telephone contact with South Australian water officials after the other bids had been improperly opened. The security video machine filming proceedings ran out of tape; the probity auditor went home at 6 p.m.; the South Australian water official with responsibility for the bidding went out to dinner; and there were a series of other irregularities.

What were the Auditor-General's concerns about the electricity probity process and will the Premier ensure (and ask him to be there) that the Auditor-General is present when these bids come in?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader will resume his seat. There is no need to re-ask the question at the end of the explanation.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Or make a second reading speech after he has asked the question for the second time, Mr Speaker. I will tell you where a probity auditor ought to be: at ALP headquarters on South Terrace. That is where there ought to be a probity auditor. The ALP even had the temerity to sign up deceased people. The member for Lee looks nonplussed. It was the member for Lee who said that this branch stacking was 'just a clerical error'. That is what the member for Lee said. I understand it was the member for Lee who tapped the member for Ross Smith on the shoulder and said, 'Well, Ralph time to go.' But they made a mistake: Ralph will not go anywhere; Ralph is staying put. The member for Ross Smith has had some outstanding legal success—

Mr CONLON: I rise on a point of order.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader will come to order. I warn the Leader of the Opposition. He is perilously close to being named on the second day.

Mr CONLON: We have tolerated the Premier's excesses on this all week but what has this to do with the question he was asked? He is not only entering into debate: he is debating a matter about which he was not asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order other than to remind the Premier of a ruling I made earlier in the week.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I can understand the Labor Party's sensitivity on the question of probity. As for the member for Elder, he can change his tune, too. It was not so long ago that the member for Elder was referring to the Lord Mayor as 'Her Royal Highness'. When it was brought to his attention that the Labor Party was doing a little courting in that area, she suddenly became a person plainly admired by the left. The member for Elder has shown a little duplicity. We have become used to the forked tongue approach. I understand that the member for Elder has ruled out moving across town to Ross Smith because a shift right across town to that seat is seen as a little too aggravating for the honourable member. This perseverance of the member for Ross Smith, his temerity—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the Premier to come back to the substance of the question he was asked earlier.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am more than happy to respond to the substance of the question. The matter of probity was raised, as I understand it, between the Auditor-General and the Treasurer, and the Treasurer has taken the appropriate steps.

INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCE

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Will the Minister for Human Services outline the benefits to South Australians of the new \$8 million research facility for the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science? I was unfortunate enough recently to listen to members of the opposition severely criticise this particular initiative of the government, and I ask the minister to outline to the House the real benefits of this project.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I appreciate the question, because the development of a new building for the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science is a very important step in promoting medical research in South Australia. The present building from which the IMVS operates was constructed in 1938. It is a very old building; it is too small and much of its research is carried out from a range of other very old and small buildings scattered around the Royal Adelaide Hospital site. Under the proposal, a brand new \$8 million building will be constructed on the Royal Adelaide Hospital site. This will provide state-of-the-art medical research facilities and, very importantly, they will be able to undertake some of the world's leading cancer research.

The Hanson Centre, which is a part of the IMVS, is now regarded as one of the most important gene—as well as one of the most important cancer—research institutions in the world. Between the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the IMVS and the Hanson Centre they will now be able to have state-of-the-art protein laboratories which will be designed to analyse and characterise proteins. They will also have a confocal microscope facility in the building to examine vascular supply to

tumours and other tissues which are crucial in terms of cancer research. They will have a state-of-the-art cell genetics laboratory which will allow them to analyse and manipulate genes, and they will also now be able to undertake hepatitis research which requires a very specialised laboratory.

The work being undertaken on cancer research at the IMVS, the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Hanson Centre, as I indicated, last year attracted international attention when it drew about 200 scientists from around the world to a major conference they held. The government has committed \$5 million to the building of this new facility, and a further \$2.7 million will come from the research funds of the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Very importantly, however, it will provide a state-of-the-art facility and once again help to keep South Australia at the forefront of medical research. This state is fortunate in that we attract more per head of population from national health and medical research funds than does any other state in Australia. It is a tribute to the quality of medical research that is carried out, particularly by people such as Professor Grant Sutherland, who is a member of the staff of the IMVS and the Women's and Children's Hospital, and others including Dr Mathew Vadas, who is the leader of the research team at the IMVS.

I highlight the work carried out by the director and the board of the institute as well. We are fortunate in having such outstanding researchers here in South Australia. This government has made a significant contribution to making sure that over the next 20 to 30 years we have appropriate, modern facilities to ensure that that research, particularly into cancer, is able to continue.

MULTICULTURAL YOUTH OFFICERS

Ms KEY (Hanson): I direct my question to the Premier. In both a media release and at the multicultural youth speak-out forum held in March this year, the Premier announced government funding for ethnic youth development officers in local councils. Have any of these officers been appointed? If so, at what councils; if not, why not?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I am happy to refer that to the responsible minister.

MASTERS GAMES

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Will the Minister for Tourism inform the House of both the success and the potential benefits of the seventh Masters Games?

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Patrick, the AWU told you to go home and behave yourself.

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): It gives me great delight to talk about the seventh Masters Games, because sitting in this chamber we actually have two medallists. Just in case members of the government and members opposite do not know, the Premier won a bronze medal yesterday and the member for Bragg won a silver medal, and I think they both ought to be congratulated.

Members interjecting:

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

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order as well—and the Minister for Government Enterprises.

The Hon. J. HALL: I know that members of the House are really interested to hear how successful the seventh

Masters Games has been so far and will clearly continue to be over the next few days. When you are walking around the city, the enormous numbers of participants in the games are very obvious as they wear their magnificent merchandise and continue to spend a lot of money in our state.

The initial expectations of the success of the games have been surpassed for some time now. It was expected that there would be about 10 000 participants. I am very pleased to report to the House that even the final expectations have been surpassed, because the participants are now around 11 700, and that is well in excess of what we had hoped for. It is the best turnout since the fifth Masters Games, which were held in Melbourne, and it is a great tribute to Adelaide that we have surpassed one of the previously held Victorian records.

Some 48 different sports are involved in the games. As I mentioned earlier, we have a couple of medallists here, and so far I have not seen members of the opposition participating, but if any of them win medals I will be delighted to offer the appropriate congratulations.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J. HALL: I've got a dud knee; you know that. It is important to report to the House on the very high level of interstate and overseas competitors, because they are very important to our economy. Just for the member's benefit, I resigned from the position of ambassador with great regret because I have now been given the responsibility of looking after the tournament and, for those who mischievously say the most atrocious things, I decided that I would remove from the opposition the capacity to background journalists and people involved in soccer as to my conflict of interest. I did it with great regret and still actively support the game and will continue to support all levels of soccer. The member for Hart deserves a kick in the pants for some of the things he said yesterday, because they are so entirely wrong.

Some of the other activities that I think the house would like to know about from the Masters Games is that there are 650 overseas participants from 28 different countries and it is very gratifying to know that they are certainly enjoying very much what Adelaide has to offer. If any members over the past few days have tried to book a table in most restaurants in town they would have found that participants, their families and friends, in the Masters Games are certainly spending up big. The total number of people from interstate and overseas is estimated to be more than 5 500 and the estimated economic benefit of this event is somewhere in excess of \$28 million. Certainly I look forward to bringing some of these details to the House in the next few weeks.

Adelaide is the first city that has been awarded the games twice, the first time being in 1989. That is a great compliment to South Australia and Adelaide in particular for having the capacity to impress the organisers so much that they have given us a second go at hosting the games. It is important not just to measure the success of the games in terms of economics and numbers, because there is a great deal of frivolity and fun out there. The games started on Sunday night and more than 8 000 marchers participated in the opening ceremony. We ought to place on record our gratitude to the Chairman of the Masters Games Board (Mr Barry Fitzpatrick) and members of his board for the enormous effort that he has put into this, along with more than 600 volunteers, led by the Chief Executive (Rob Kirkpatrick). It is important to acknowledge the role the volunteers have played in the staging of this event because they have done an absolutely phenomenal job.

I am sure the house would like to know that so far around 4 000 medals have been awarded and by the completion of the games it is estimated that 12 700 medals will have been presented to those people involved. So far 36 Masters Games records have been broken and I am sure that members of the house will be interested in my running through a couple of them. Forty-two year old Sandra Kramer from Elizabeth won the 1 500 and 5 000 metre walk. She also set an Australian and world record. Eighty-five year old Louise Close from Gawler River did extraordinarily well in the over 85 years category, setting a world record in the 100 metre sprint. Ninety-one year old Katie Du Plessis from Semaphore Park set an Australian record in the 5 000 metres for the over 90 age group. I would have thought that some of you lot over there might give some credit to these amazing athletes. God knows what any of you lot will be doing at 91 years, other than signing up members for the Labor Party, I suppose. You might not be into branch stacking by then.

I think it is appropriate for members of this House to applaud the fantastic efforts of South Australians who have contributed in making these games so successful. As I said earlier, there has been an enormous input from volunteers, and the hours of volunteer work so far are estimated to be more than 20 000. I would like to put on the record that the Masters Games now have earned the tag of 'the happy games'. I think it is fair to say that they have been absolutely sensational, and I look forward to some further reports in the next few weeks.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. In light of the criticisms expressed in the Auditor-General's Report tabled this afternoon concerning this government's practices in the employment of chief executive officers, what changes, if any, are under consideration by the government to address the Auditor-General's concerns? The Auditor-General states that there is a lack of performance benchmarks in contracts between the government and senior executive officers. He refers to 'an absence of contractual provisions relating to performance' and expresses concerns about the potential for 'political determinations' to influence whether a chief executive should be dismissed. The Auditor-General states:

Without political neutrality the chief executive becomes a mere lackey of the executive government. A review of the current contracts of chief executives in South Australia suggests that the independence of the individuals concerned may be compromised.

That has come from the Auditor-General. The Premier seems to laugh at the Auditor-General's recommendations.

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): We seem to have this habit of the Leader of the Opposition really breaching or pushing to the limit the standing orders of this parliament. He asks the question and gets into an explanation, reading the explanation off his cheat sheet, and he then goes into a debate. It has become a habit of the Leader of the Opposition to—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader has asked his question. He can remain silent and let the Premier respond.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Leader of the Opposition very smartly says, with respect to a report that was tabled 20 minutes ago—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I noticed that the leader was absent for a good part of question time and, no doubt, his staff have been searching for some pointers. So, whilst he was out for that 20 minutes or so, the rest of us were here in question time doing what we ought to be doing: responding to specific questions for the illumination of parliament. But not the Leader of the Opposition: he spends more time out of his seat in this chamber during question time than in his seat.

A report has been put forward by the Auditor-General that is about a foot high. I will give consideration to the Auditor-General's Report, just as we do every year. I have responded as it relates to the issue that the leader raised earlier in question time. The Treasurer has already addressed that issue, taking action as recommended and responding in a positive way.

I wonder, however, what the Auditor-General might have said about the performance of the Bannon government as regards its employment of chief executives. There was a chap called Bruce Guerin. He had a reasonable contract. He was head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet when the State Bank saga was around, and there were some difficulties with respect to what to do with Mr Guerin. So, the administration of the Labor Party put in place a contract of enormous cost—I think it was something like \$1 million—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Bruce could be categorised as the million dollar chief executive. That was all the work of members opposite. I wonder what this Auditor-General might have said about their performance contracts with their chief executives. But, thank goodness, we are well past their time in government, well past their time of putting in place these contracts, and we will be well past their having an ability to return to put them in place again in the near future.

STATE BUDGET

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

ROXBY DOWNS

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I also table a ministerial statement made by the Treasurer on the amending deed to the Roxby Downs Indenture.

CRIMINAL LAW (UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS) ACT

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I table a ministerial statement made by the Attorney-General (Hon. K.T. Griffin) in another place on the Criminal Law (Undercover Operations) Act 1995.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON WATER ALLOCATIONS IN THE SOUTH-EAST

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

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am very pleased to be able to present a progress report on the Select Committee on Water

Allocations in the South-East. Since the select committee tabled its report on South-East water allocations in the South-East on 3 August 1999, the government has put in place processes for responding to its recommendations. This has included assembling a team of people from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs, Primary Industries and Resources SA, and the South-East Catchment Water Management Board.

This implementation team has been focusing its efforts on the main thrust of the report, that is, the initial allocation of rights to access and use of water which has not already been allocated. This water will be allocated on a pro rata basis, that is, in proportion to the areas of land owned. It must be allocated as quickly as possible, because the unallocated water is effectively quarantined from any further allocation until we put the new pro rata system in place.

Members will recall that in early August parliament amended the Water Resources Act to effectively freeze further allocations of water rights in the South-East until such time as the government could implement the key recommendations of the select committee. Meanwhile, the South-East Catchment Water Management Board is working very hard to develop long-term plans for the management of water in the region. Let there be no confusion between the long-term role of the catchment board and the immediate task of government. The board is concerned with sustainable water resources management over the long term. This involves developing and refining rules for trade, provision of water for the environment, pricing, metering, assessing the impacts from a variety of land uses, confined aquifer use policy, and numerous other activities. Further, it will need to provide advice on the application of a changed levy system consistent with the recommendations of the select committee.

The government has the immediate task of developing a scheme to initially allocate the unallocated water on a pro rata basis. I am grateful for the assistance of the CEO of the catchment board, Mr Hugo Hopton, who is a member of the implementation team, and for the advice of the catchment board itself.

We cannot allow the allocation of the unallocated water rights to be delayed a moment longer than is necessary, but the implementation of the pro rata policy will be an immense and complex task. Let me provide the House with some of the examples of the magnitude of the challenge.

To determine the volumes of unallocated water in each of the water management water areas, we need to know two things: first, the permissible annual volume (PAV), which is the amount that can be safely used; and, secondly, how much of this has already been allocated to existing licences. This is a complicated and time-consuming process. The select committee quite rightly recommended that we take into account the water use impact relating to deep rooted perennials when we assess the PAV. This is important, because it has been shown scientifically that the recharge of groundwater beneath the canopy of trees is minimal, if not zero. So, we must measure the area of tree plantations before we calculate the PAV. To do this we need to measure the treed areas from aerial photos and then make some assessment of the future expansion of the forestry industry. That starts the process.

We then need to assess what volume of water has already been allocated for each management area. This information is not readily available, because water allocations in the South-East have been made on the irrigation equivalent basis. This is an allocation to irrigate a specific area of a particular crop on a particular type of soil in a particular climatic zone.

To convert irrigation equivalents into volumetric allocations requires a range of conversion factors to be developed and agreed. Our experience to date in other parts of South Australia has shown this conversion task to be a very difficult one, so we expect that it will take some time.

The allocation task itself is massive. Presently, there are 8 000 water licences in South Australia, of which 2 500 licence holders are in the South-East. The pro rata arrangement will provide an opportunity for well in excess of 10 000 and possibly as high as 15 000 land-holders to access water. There is the prospect of doubling the number of licences in the state. Communications, initial offers, acceptances, adjustments to initial offers and the issuing of licences as they apply to each acceptance is all part of this process. The resources required physically to process and issue licences will be immense. Costings at this point have not been assessed.

These are just some of the complexities of the initial allocation task. Further resolution will depend on the collection of a wide range of data, and new or extended databases will need to be developed as a consequence. We are progressing through this work as quickly as we can, and I will keep the House advised of progress. However, as the House will recognise, this is not a straightforward process. In the meantime, the catchment board will continue its excellent work on the bigger picture. The only matter it does not have to concern itself with is the initial allocation of the unallocated water.

There is a great deal of responsible direction contained in the report of the select committee, which I will be referring to the board for its policy direction. In particular, I will be asking the board to consider the concept of adaptive management and whether such a concept could be included in water management policies now or in the future. Adaptive management is an approach which recognises that our water allocation policies are really just ongoing experiments with natural systems about which we are continually learning more and more. It will be a sensitive, ongoing, transparent process of managing water in a dynamic and sustainable way.

The current policies in the South-East are inclined to be too rigid and are based on the simple assumption of uniform and constant replenishment of the groundwater across large areas of the countryside. Obviously, things are more complex than that. We need to collect a lot more information on the groundwater processes, and this needs to come from a more sophisticated monitoring program. The concept of adaptive management recognises that we will have to regularly review our water allocation plans in the light of new information and changing circumstances.

So, in closing I pay special regard to the South-East Catchment Water Management Board. Throughout these difficult times the board has gone about its business professionally and with the primary objective of long-term sustainability of the water resources of the South-East. Jim Osborne and his team are to be congratulated for their efforts, and they have my best wishes for the tasks and the complexities that lay ahead of all of us.

GOVERNMENT ACCOMMODATION, SINGAPORE

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: During question time the member for Lee posed a question in relation to additional

accommodation or facilities of government offices overseas. I guess that the import of the question was to attempt to cast aspersions, to create a perception, to establish a set of circumstances where beyond the trade offices other accommodation is provided for the benefit of officers.

Mr Wright interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No, it wasn't. It has been the wont of this opposition to get up and pose a question, create a set of circumstances and try to set a perception, as I have indicated previously, that is nothing like reality. I have sought advice on the member for Lee's question. I am advised that the Department of Industry and Trade has a trade office in Singapore where we have a trade representative, Tay Joo Soon. Apart from that, there is no other DIT activity in Singapore. That is the advice that I have given. I would ask the member for Lee in future simply not to take the truncated questions coming out of the leader's office. If the honourable member wants a career in this place, he ought not peddle mischief, misinformation—

Mr Wright interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: On two days this week the member for Lee has attempted to peddle misinformation for deliberate political purposes against an individual who cannot in this House defend himself.

Mr Wright interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I just hope that this week the media sees the opposition for what it is: lack of accuracy, lack of integrity and lack of any focus on the future for this state.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): All of us are aware of the ongoing saga of announcements, re-announcements, backflips and backdowns in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that have occurred over the last five years, but I must say that what is happening now really takes the cake. In an options paper put together by a handful of people, called the Project Steering Group and the Project Control Group, a blueprint for a massive downgrade of services has been presented to clinicians at the hospital for discussion.

This options paper—and I am happy to provide a copy to any member who would like to look at it—is incredibly wide ranging in its scope. It looks at restrictions in surgical procedures and in advanced surgery requiring intensive care support, and says that all major trauma cases will now be referred to the Royal Adelaide Hospital. It reaffirms that obstetrics, the area about which the community has been so concerned, will be restricted to low risk deliveries only. It says that cancer services will be downgraded; that the future of the main base for renal medicine, including transplants, is still undecided and probably will not be at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; that dental services will be closed; that the statewide bone transplant service will be relocated; and that academic units will be transferred away from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

That is not all: that is only a portion of the list of changes that are outlined in specific detail on the so-called discussion paper. Today in question time I referred to requests by doctors and nurses at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for some input into the process of decision making about the future of the hospital. I also referred to serious concerns that had been expressed by Professor John Horowitz in relation to the plan that has been put forward. In his comments he called some of the things absolutely ridiculous and was extremely critical of the solutions that have been put forward. I noted that the minister fobbed off my question and flippantly replied, again, that no decisions had been made and that this paper was simply an options paper for discussion.

The problem with its being an options paper, of course, is that it had only one option for people to consider. I ask the minister, in particular: what about the members of the community? They still do not get a look in; it is only the clinicians who will have the opportunity to have an opinion on the one option. As far as the minister is concerned, the community members do not even exist: they are not even mentioned. People in the western suburbs were outraged at the plans for their maternity services. That is just a drop in the ocean when we look at the extent of what the government really has in mind.

The minister thinks that he can get away with this, that this is okay and that this is the way to run and plan vital services. Consultation is not about being presented with a fait accompli, one option at the end of a process. Consultation is about the minister and his department outlining a policy framework, presenting the information, posing relevant questions and seeking input from all those who have an interest before coming up with an options paper. That is what consultation and discussion is about.

Perhaps he could take a leaf out of the book of the Minister for Education in terms of the processes that have been gone through in relation to Partnerships 21 and, in particular, in terms of the review of the Education Act. The minister, the Premier and this government have shown an arrogant disregard for staff and, above all, for the community of the western suburbs. They deserve everything they are going to get.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): October is the birth month of Sir Hans Heysen, acclaimed South Australian artist, recognised not only throughout this country but also internationally. Sir Hans was born in Germany and lived and worked around Hahndorf until his death at the age of 91 back in 1968. He was known particularly for his oil paintings and drawings of gum trees and scenes around Hahndorf and the Flinders Ranges, so it is quite fitting that next week, once again, we will see a week-long festival of soirees, exhibitions, tours and music to celebrate the life of Sir Hans Heysen.

A number of activities are taking place at his home and studio. The Cedars has been carefully maintained as it was in his day, with many of his paintings on the walls and part-finished works in the studio, and they will be open to the public. The festival is an initiative of the Mount Barker council, the Hahndorf Academy, the Artists Voice, local traders, The Cedars, the South Australian Tourism Commission and local schools. It is a major highlight of the festivals of the Adelaide Hills. One of the highlights of the week is the Heysen art prize, with winners being announced next Saturday, and I am delighted that I will have the opportunity to present one of those prizes. A total of \$8 000 will be made

available in prizes, and I am told that there are at least twice as many entries this year as there were last year.

As I said earlier, The Cedars will be open for special events and guided tours, and an exhibition of Nora Heysen's work will also be opened next Saturday and will run for four weeks. I invite all members to visit the Hills for what will be a very significant event, the Heysen Festival for 1999.

Last weekend, my wife and I were delighted to be able to join many thousands who attended the Birdwood Classic, a marvellous event involving some 1 184 period cars, motor cycles, trucks and buses that started at West Beach and wound their way through the picturesque Hills to the National Motor Museum at Birdwood. This is a biennial event that attracts a range of vehicles made between 1945 and 1969. It is a great event for South Australia and for the Hills in particular. The standard this year was very high because of the quality of restoration which, of course, is improving all the time.

People dressed in clothing to match the period of the car, and were most impressive. They are to be commended for the effort they put into the preparation of their clothing. The director of operations, John Chittleborough, was particularly pleased with the tens of thousands who watched what he called the 'baby boomer' vehicles roll into Birdwood. I was most impressed with the number of people who were prepared to come out and thoroughly enjoy a wonderful afternoon in the Hills at Birdwood.

I am also delighted that Hills produce will be spotlighted for the tasting tour, when young chefs from the Adelaide Hills will be given the opportunity to showcase local food. Hills food and wine will be in the international spotlight next month for Tasting Australia, and I know that we are all looking forward to that event. A tour involving 22 international food and wine experts will visit four Hills venues next Wednesday, when about 27 local food producers and 23 Hills wineries will be involved in providing samples of their wares.

It is organised by the Hills Regional Development Board and the Hills Wine Region, and I am sure that everyone is looking forward to the day as one of the features of the week-long Tasting Australia. Hills produce is also being showcased by a number of young chefs. We look forward to its being a great success.

Ms RANKINE (Wright): Governments of all persuasions have a responsibility to the taxpayers of this state to spend their money carefully to ensure that they get the best value for money. Sadly, however, it appears that this government, more than most, needs constant reminders about the responsible use of public funds. We are constantly seeing inappropriate and wasteful use of taxpayers' funds and as this list grows so does the number of new taxes being introduced to fund that waste, despite the government's trying constantly to find new names for its hits on the people of this state.

As a member of Labor's waste watch committee I want to draw the attention of this House to what appears to be another example of financial wastage and inappropriate use of government funds. On Saturday 18 September an advertisement appeared on page 7 of the *Advertiser*, entitled 'Delivering the future' and claiming that the Minister for Government Enterprises has 'a reputation for a breadth of vision and delivery of effective programs'. Well, I do not know about a breadth of vision but this advertisement took my breath away. It claims that the minister is responsible for the following:

- Establishing South Australia as a major participant in the information economy
- Creating safe and productive workplaces with cooperative and efficient relationships between employers and employees
- Developing a world-class export oriented water industry and other government enterprises
- Project managing major initiatives such as the West Beach boat launching facility, water reuse projects, Holdfast Shores and Mawson Lakes.

I am sure these claims raised more than a few eyebrows. I wonder if those working and being treated in our public health system hold this minister in such high esteem. If my memory serves me correctly, it was this very minister who was responsible for the disastrous Modbury Hospital privatisation contract. Was it not this minister who also had his sights set on privatising the QEH?

As for developing a world-class export oriented water industry, what we have seen locally is higher prices for water, the Bolivar pong, our reservoirs being contaminated and the letting of the water meter contract through a foreign firm to a company in Mount Barker—and we only have to talk to the local residents to assess the success of that initiative. If I am not mistaken, the Premier is the one who has been claiming that this world-class oriented water industry was of his making—but then he was in Atlanta when this advertisement appeared in the *Advertiser*.

I am familiar with the Mawson Lakes development and, like Golden Grove, it is a great credit to its developers. I am not sure how the minister sees himself fitting into this and I am not sure how the Delfin Property Group feels about the minister trying to take the credit. I think the minister is drawing a very long bow and really testing credibility in claiming that he is creating safe and productive workplaces. This is an issue with which I will deal in some detail at a later date. Needless to say, you do not have to speak to too many people out there, both in the workplace and in the electorate, to learn that this is just a nonsense.

The bottom line is that this is a job advertisement for two personal staff for the minister. The people of this state deserve to know at what cost this has come; how much this government is paying a private firm (Morgan & Banks) to undertake this role. What we do know is that the advertisement alone, based on the normal charges and loading which applies to Saturday's paper, cost well in excess of \$3 000. As far as I am aware, the general practice is for ministers and MPs to advertise for staff in the employment section of newspapers. But this advertisement did not just advertise for staff: it was a promotional exercise for the minister and a gross misuse of taxpayers' funds.

I find this particularly offensive when I have had to fight for 12 months to secure a suitable wheelchair for a man who is an amputee, who has a heart condition and who had been reduced to pushing himself backwards to get around in a heavy archaic chair. He was not even my constituent but it seems that he got little joy from his own MP, the member for Newland—it was just too hard for her.

Be that as it may, anyone who has an interest in applying for either of these positions can access information (according to the advertisement) on www.monster.com.au. I understand that job seekers can also find 'monster' simply by typing in the word 'Armitage' on the quick search facility. Were Morgan & Banks perhaps trying to send us a message?

Time expired.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I would like to bring to the attention of the House the unfortunate interjections by the

member for Hartley yesterday during my Address in Reply contribution.

Mr Koutsantonis: The member for Hartley?

Mr SCALZI: The member for Hart, sorry. I did not think it was appropriate to go into detail in my speech yesterday because the speech had a special place. The member for Hart took a point of order, as follows:

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.

This year is the Year of the Older Person. We are witnessing the success of the Masters Games. I think it is appropriate in such a year and during the Address in Reply debate for a member to reflect on members' age and experience. That is all I was doing yesterday when the member for Hart rudely interrupted, as did also, of course, the member for Peake.

Mr Koutsantonis: If you can't take it, get out.

Mr SCALZI: I can take all you dish out. I appreciate the value of the young, but let us not undervalue age and experience. We will be the poorer for it if we do. As I said yesterday, we should value youth—and we do—and I congratulate the members for Peake and Playford on being elected at ages 25 and 27—and may they contribute to this parliamentary system. I acknowledge the input—and the increase in the number—of women in this place, and I think it is a very good thing that it has taken place. I acknowledge and applaud the increase in this place of participation by people from diverse backgrounds; migrants including the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: With several citizenships.

Mr SCALZI: He interjects 'with several citizenships'. I disagree with him on that but, nevertheless, I acknowledge his contribution. In a democracy we must have broad representation and I think that in the Year of the Older Person it is only appropriate that we should have representation of that particular group. Would the member for Hart tell his own constituents who are in that age group that my speech yesterday was absolute drivel? Will he go out and tell them that?

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: I ask the member for Hart to apologise to those constituents. For too long we have not valued age and experience. As I said yesterday, there are two members over the age of 60 in this place, one from the Labor Party and one from the Liberal Party, both of whom have a lot to contribute. Many members of parliament overseas are still in their 70s. Many commence their political careers in their 50s. The member for Norwood would agree with me; she knows about the situation in Europe, but she is silent. Let us be consistent. If we value age and experience, let us have representation in this place because I think it is important that we have members elected to this place on merit. I suggest that a lot of people in the older age group have merit to be elected to this place. That is what my contribution was about yesterday, and I was extremely disappointed that, in the Year of the Older Person and during the success of the Masters Games, the member for Hart thought it was drivel to put on the record that we should reflect on this matter. I am not interested in quotas: quotas is not what this is about. It is about encouraging people to participate in the political system.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: We will be poorer if we do not acknowledge the contribution of experience and age in our society. Time expired.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): Sunday is a very important day in the history of South Australia: Norwood and Port Adelaide are playing in the SANFL grand final again. The Norwood Football Club, which was founded in 1878, is a great club and it has won 27 premierships and been runner-up in 20 grand finals. We had a very great victory in 1997, when we played our traditional rivals Port Adelaide again and when Norwood won 19 goals 12 points to Port Adelaide's seven goals 11 points. It was really fantastic victory—

An honourable member: Can I have that score again?

Ms CICCARELLO: It was Norwood 19.12 to Port Adelaide's 7.11. The Norwood Football Club is hoping that that will be repeated this year. There has always been great rivalry between the two clubs, although for many years, and particularly in the 1980s when the competition was in crisis, many meetings were held between the two clubs to see how the competition could be strengthened. However, the relationship between the two clubs soured somewhat when the Port Adelaide Football Club instigated some movements to enter into the AFL, and that is now history.

Although not part of the national competition, Norwood has continued to excel in providing many players for the AFL competition—some play for the Crows, Port Power and many other AFL clubs. Port Power has one of the great Norwood players, Matthew Primus, playing for it. Wally Miller, a Norwood stalwart, who recognised the importance of a strong local competition, said that, in future, Norwood would be a conduit, not a career, for the most talented and ambitious. It would produce the best and provide for a player to graduate to the AFL. In *Men of Norwood: Red and Blue Blooded* written by a great one-eyed Norwood supporter, Mike Coward, Wally Miller said:

They say something is always lost in the wake of progress. But you can't lose everything, and it becomes a mission to rebuild in the circumstances that prevail.

Norwood certainly has been trying to rebuild in the very difficult circumstances of the SANFL, and it has shown itself to be an extremely good club.

We have had some wonderful players in the past, and I think I have highlighted previously the great Garry McIntosh who won a couple of Magarey medals. However, we have also had some other wonderful players whom I have had the great opportunity of meeting. Some of my heroes from the past are—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask both the members for Hart and Hartley to take a seat.

Ms CICCARELLO: —the great Bill Wedding, Ron Kneebone, Sam Gallagher and Tom Warhurst. I also had the great privilege of meeting a former Norwood coach, Alan Killigrew. When I was a small child I used to go to church just to see Alan Killigrew. He was a very religious man and he went to church every morning. It was a great joy for me to see him.

The motto of the Norwood Football Club is 'fortis in procella' which means strength in adversity. We have had a lot of adversity, but I would like to think that we can certainly overcome our adversity in the SANFL. In 1984, Norwood created history: it came from fifth to win the premiership, and that year it was playing against Port Adelaide, and it was a very sweet victory. This year again we have come from fifth position and we hope to make history again. We have done it before; we will do it again. I would like to encourage and give all my best wishes to the Norwood Football Club, the Norwood players and the coach. We look forward to a great premiership and great celebrations on the Parade on Sunday.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this grievance debate.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, I am glad the honourable member said 'Everyone is a winner,' because it appears that there are a few losers in the branch stacking saga that is going on. Yesterday, I raised a number of issues in relation to this debate, and I would be interested to know what role the member for Hanson has played in all this. I understand that the member for Hanson is quite skilled in collecting bogus ALP memberships. In fact, she has given it such a high priority that I understand one of her assistants was seconded to go to Cooper Pedy. We saw on television a character who did not want to be photographed. I have had a bit of experience of people taking photographs when you are not expecting it, and this particular gentleman appeared not to want to be recorded.

I understand that he was the architect of this little escapade. I wonder if this is part of his work detail provided by the member for Hanson, because I do not know whether this took place while the member for Hanson was furthering her knowledge overseas on industrial matters or whether it occurred when she was learning how the Americans branch stack. I understand that they are very skilled at this sort of thing. We have all heard the old saying 'Vote early and often.' I do not know whether that goes on in the Labor Party. However, we certainly know that the member for Hanson (and perhaps that is why she is not present in the chamber: she does not want to sit too close to the opposition whip) is one member who is trying to shift the long serving, well respected member for Price, who, we understand, is well regarded in his electorate.

I understand that there is some indignation in that part of South Australia at this little scheme that has been orchestrated by the centre bench suddenly to push out the honourable member. I do not know what he has done wrong, whether he did not vote for the right ticket or whether he has offended someone. We are interested to hear from the member for Hanson whether it is a part of the job description of the people whom she employs that they be skilled in signing up blind people. I thought that a party that professes to have a great affinity with the less fortunate and the people who have not had the same opportunities as the rest of us would not be involved in this process.

Today we had questions about probity. I want to know what probity checks the Labor Party has in relation to its membership, whether the member for Hanson is the probity officer or just who it is.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I understand that we will have some interesting times relating to the honourable member who is interjecting when a certain court case is concluded. However, that is another saga to which we are looking forward. During the last election campaign a few postcards were sent out. Let me say to the member for Hanson that she will know all about postcards, branch stacking and signing up members in cemeteries before we are finished. What I want to know relates to the activities in which the executive is involved and who is providing the advice on the course of action that it should be taking. We have been waiting with bated breath.

During the past few years I have been responsible for giving the member for Ross Smith a certain amount of publicity, which, I think, helped his standing in the community, but—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Not the publicity to the extent that the state executive of the Labor Party—
Time expired.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

(Continued from page 92.)

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): His Excellency's speech opening this session of parliament prepared by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is supposed to be about setting the government's priorities for the year ahead. Significantly, there was not one single mention about health and hospitals. That omission spoke volumes for this government—a government which has its priorities wrong. There is no more pressing issue confronting this state than the condition of our public hospitals. It should be the mark of our decent and first world society that we can provide a hospital bed to our sick when they need one, regardless of the size of their wallet, yet in recent weeks we have seen an unprecedented strain on our public hospitals. Yes, it was winter; yes, it was the cold and flu season, and that all put pressure on our public hospitals, but the biggest problem was that this year our public hospitals have had their budgets cut by a further \$36 million: \$30 million from metropolitan hospitals and \$6 million from country hospitals.

In fact, during its first four years in office the South Australian Liberal government cut a total of \$230 million in real terms from the health budget. The result is that our public hospitals are now in crisis. I want to remind members about some of the promises that the Olsen government has made to South Australians about our hospitals. Let us go back to the 1993 state election. The Minister for Human Services told South Australians in his then capacity as Leader of the Opposition:

There will be a hospital bed when you need one.

That was one of the most categorical statements of that election campaign. But, just two years later in November 1995, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital announced that it would close 50 beds because of a budget shortfall of \$13.5 million. I know that people now having surgery cancelled because of bed shortages will remember that broken promise.

In the 1997 budget, just before the 1997 state election, the Premier announced:

\$45 million boost for health, which means hospitals can provide more services.

That is what he said. The Premier said that hospitals would be quarantined from budget cuts but, in May 1999, just two years later, the Olsen government announced that hospital funding would be cut by \$36 million. I know that people who have had their outpatient services cut will remember that broken promise. So, before the 1993 and 1997 elections, bold promises were made, to be broken shortly afterwards.

During the ETSA debate the government said that the sale of ETSA would fix all our hospitals and provide all the funds we need for health, but on 22 July 1999 the human services minister said that cabinet had refused his request for addition-

al funding. I know that all South Australians will remember that broken promise. I must say today, however, that I should express some sympathy for the human services minister. He fights the good fight. He fights for more money for health inside cabinet and the Liberal Party room, but then the Premier and his cabinet foes deny him the money. Then, out he goes, trying to defend the broken promises in cabinet solidarity. He agreed to appear with me and health and community representatives on the *Today Tonight* health forum, while the Premier bolted for cover. And, like a loyal cabinet member, he takes the hits for the Premier, much to his chagrin, but to the Premier's not so secret delight.

I am sure the human services minister does not expect South Australians to forget those many health promises when people are waiting up to 24 hours in corridors for a bed at the Flinders Medical Centre; when beds are being closed at the Queen Elizabeth, Lyell McEwen and Noarlunga hospitals and elective surgery is being cancelled; when an elderly woman is turned away from the repatriation hospital because it is full; when women are being told that obstetrics services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be downgraded and that plans are now being discussed to effectively gut that great hospital in the western suburbs.

Even before hospitals started cutting services after the 1999 budget, South Australian hospitals faced a crisis. On 21 July 1999, Dean Brown declared that 'public hospital beds in South Australia are basically full' and that elective surgery would be cancelled. We heard of the elderly lady who was turned away from the repatriation hospital because it was full and told to go home and call 000 if her condition deteriorated. We heard of patients waiting up to 24 hours in the accident and emergency department for a bed at the Flinders Medical Centre. The state Vice President of the AMA said that public hospitals were surviving only on the goodwill of staff working countless hours of overtime.

The CEO of the Flinders emergency department revealed that, in July, 164 patients had waited more than 12 hours for a bed, some in corridors. The Australian Nurses Federation said that nurses were 'horrified by the mismanagement of our public hospital system'. Meanwhile, the Olsen government blamed the Howard government and the Howard government blamed the Olsen government; the Premier blamed Medicare; federal health minister Woolridge said the crisis was all South Australia's fault; and, while they blamed each other, this year's cuts were coming through the tunnel. Public hospitals were closing beds, outpatient services were being cut, waiting lists for elective surgery were getting longer and people scheduled for surgery had their operations cancelled. One lady prepared herself on two occasions for a gall bladder operation, only to be sent home because there were no beds.

The government's own budget papers revealed that, compared with last year, the government had budgeted for 14 000 fewer inpatients in our metropolitan hospitals this year; 280 patients to be turned away from metropolitan hospital outpatient departments every day; 93 fewer patients to be dealt with by outreach services from metropolitan hospitals every day; 79 people to be turned away from emergency care from metropolitan hospitals every day; and 14 fewer patients to be dealt with in country hospital outpatient services every day. But John Olsen and Dean Brown would not take responsibility for how these cuts would be made. They passed the buck to public hospitals and forced them into crisis mode. At Flinders Medical Centre people were waiting for a bed for up to 24 hours at emergency, and one man died before being seen by a doctor. Then, 18 beds

closed, operating theatres closed for the school holidays, renal dialysis was capped and expenditure on drugs was cut.

At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 25 beds were closed and 50 000 patients were cut, including post-operative patients and asthma sufferers. On Tuesday we revealed in this parliament draft plans leaked to us that show that the government is planning to devastate the QEH, cutting a range of services, sending them elsewhere and closing others. At the Lyell McEwin hospital 23 beds were closed; at Daws Road repatriation hospital, a 79 year old woman was turned away because the hospital was full, and now 11 beds are closed, length of stay is reduced and outpatient services are cut. Country services have been cut at Mount Gambier, where I visited recently, and Port Lincoln and the Riverland. Meanwhile, the Olsen government blamed everyone else: the federal government, our ageing population, medicare and doctors performing too many operations. The human services minister, Dean Brown, even went so far as to insult the generous South Australian businesses and thousands of people who donate their cash and time to our metropolitan hospitals by saying they should do more.

But the federal minister says the real reason for the crisis is cuts in spending in real terms by the state government. Michael Wooldridge released figures showing 'that for every dollar the state government spent on public hospitals in 1991-92 it now spends only 78.6 cents in real terms'. The continuing bitter leadership tensions between health minister Dean Brown and Premier John Olsen have played a major role in our public hospitals being short changed this year. Every South Australian who will be turned away from our public hospitals this year (and there will be thousands) will be the victim of the Brown-Olsen squabble. The Premier's supporters wanted the health portfolio to be Dean Brown's political graveyard.

Where is the ETSA magic pudding for our public hospitals that we heard so much about? We have been assured that there is an ETSA magic pudding, especially for health, and on Monday we found that \$20 million had suddenly been found from the ETSA lease to reduce the emergency services tax on homes. Instead of being an unpopular \$141 million tax it will now be an unpopular \$121 million tax—90 lashes instead of 100. So far we have not found an extra few million for our hospitals or schools, but we can find a 20 per cent increase in the annual benefit to the budget from the ETSA privatisation based on the government's own figures.

The ETSA lease was claimed in budget documents to be worth \$100 million a year. Suddenly it is at least \$120 million a year, and it is being spent already. The Olsen government does not have the money yet, but it is spending it already, and when the plan to privatise ETSA, another broken promise, was announced, we were assured that our hospitals would be the winners. Our hospitals are waiting, and most certainly patients are waiting. Labor believes that ETSA should not be privatised and that keeping ETSA in public hands is in the best long-term economic and social interests of the state. We are not alone in that view.

Since October 1997 in every state election in this country voters have sent out a strong anti-privatisation message with a strong Labor vote. Labor in South Australia achieved a 9.4 per cent swing in October 1997 as we campaigned against the water privatisation and the ETSA sale we knew was coming. Perhaps if the Premier had admitted then what he had planned to do with ETSA it would have been a greater swing. In Queensland and Tasmania, Labor Parties strongly opposing electricity privatisation were swept to office. In New South

Wales Labor said 'No' to electricity privatisation; the Liberals said 'Yes'; and the voters said 'No' to the Liberals—and we saw an increased majority for Bob Carr's government.

Of course we saw Jeff Kennett, the Liberal's pin-up boy for privatisation, taking a beating at the polls and Steve Bracks and his team achieving an outstanding, brilliant result. The Premier, of course, has lauded Jeff Kennett's example on electricity privatisation and other sell-offs. We have heard from the Liberals here time and again about the benefits Victorians are supposedly reaping from privatisation under the Kennett plan. Is he still the standard bearer for privatisation or has the last Victorian state election changed all that? Victoria's Labor opposition received a 5 per cent swing in the most recent election, which means that it won a 7.8 per cent swing over the past two state elections—a magnificent result.

Privatisation is not popular with Australians—as the member for Bragg would say, full stop! In Victoria the secrecy that surrounds so many of these deals was a real issue for voters. Recently I was in the United States where I spoke to one of the bidders for ETSA. I spoke to Ms Joan Freilich, Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President of Consolidated Edison. The message I gave Consolidated Edison was the message I have given and will give to all bidders for our power utilities. Labor will watch this entire leasing process closely, expecting the very highest levels of accountability and probity, and will be seeking a meeting with the Auditor-General to discuss safeguards for a clean and open process.

I was stunned to hear on Tuesday that the Premier has apparently been informed that my discussion with Con Edison was in some way menacing; 'menacing' was the word the Premier used. Probity and accountability—menacing! If we look at the way the government handled previous privatisations, perhaps the threat of probity is menacing to this government, but not to any legitimate bidder with a legitimate professional approach to probity and performance.

The last thing South Australia can afford is another privatisation bungle in the way the Premier bungled the water deal. Let us remember the water deal where we saw bids arriving four hours late and being opened and distributed to unauthorised people, the security video tape running out, the probity auditor leaving before the final and, as it turned out, successful bid arrived, and a string of other anomalies that were, at best, examples of gross incompetence. I informed the committee of the National Crime Authority about some aspects of that bid process. South Australians cannot afford to have happen to their power what happened to their water. They cannot afford a 25 per cent increase in the domestic price of power and they do not want massive job losses. They do not want brownouts and blackouts, the electricity industry's equivalent of the Bolivar pong.

When I told the United States bidder that what the opposition would expect was the highest international standards of probity, the person I spoke with had no problems with that. They thought that an insistence on probity would benefit their bid. It is interesting that the Premier believed that what I said was menacing, but perhaps the Premier did not know what was coming in today's Auditor-General's Report, because what I said has been mirrored by the Auditor-General who said today:

In discussions with the Treasurer, other departmental officers and the appointed probity auditor, I have indicated that there are several matters associated with the terms of the appointment of the probity

auditor that in my opinion should be reviewed to enhance his capacity to discharge his probity audit responsibility. There are other matters of concern that I have also communicated to the Treasurer and his officers. In short the present arrangements for the probity review of the electricity asset leasing process are in my opinion inadequate. I will be presenting a separate report on these matters to the parliament in the early stages of the coming parliamentary session.

Perhaps the Premier will find the Auditor-General's concerns menacing! This Premier must soon realise that there is nothing menacing about a clean, open and accountable bid process.

While in the United States I also met with representatives of the key American company involved in the bid to build and run the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, the operator Genesee and Wyoming. I met with the chairman and chief executive and other senior executives of Genesee and Wyoming. The House would know of Labor's strong support for the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. I have campaigned for years, long and hard, for the rail link which I believe, given developments in East Timor, is showing itself to be more and more important for strategic and defence reasons, as well as for economic reasons. For South Australia the benefits should be of vital new trade links, sparking exports and employment as well as jobs in the construction phase. I reassured Genesee and Wyoming about the bipartisan support the project enjoyed at both the state and federal level and they welcomed it.

Indeed, I pointed out that federal Labor had committed up to \$300 million, compared to the \$100 million pledged by the Howard government. I also raised with the US company the issue of local sourcing for the project. Too often these projects see local companies and products overlooked for products from overseas. I stated that Labor wanted to see the job gains in the country maximised. We want to see Whyalla steel and South Australian cement used in this project.

I also addressed the issue of a start date and funding requirements. Already we have missed several of the start dates promised by the Premier and John Howard just before the 1997 election, when both political leaders said that there was no need for extra money from the federal government to get a start on the project. Of course, meanwhile, the Howard government has publicly stated its support for the rival Melbourne to Darwin line.

I must say that, overall, I was pleased with the talks with Genesee and Wyoming. Company representatives were positive about the Alice Springs to Darwin project and talked about upwards of three freight trains a week on the line. They also spoke about a passenger tourism component to link in with their other Australian passenger train operations. Genesee and Wyoming certainly appreciated the indications of bipartisan support and was supportive of my commitment to continue to lobby John Howard to match Kim Beazley's promise of up to \$300 million from Federal coffers.

So, imagine my surprise when I learnt that an agitated Premier had telephoned a prominent Adelaide businessman from overseas, claiming that I was talking down the project and potentially damaging it by seeking to talk to a certain company in the United States. The Premier's office then apparently contacted a local journalist, who telephoned the businessman to get his reactions. Of course, none of this was true. I had not even heard of the company that was cited, let alone tried to speak with its representatives.

But if the Premier was concerned about what I did not say in meetings that I did not have, he must have been beside himself over the comments of the Northern Territory Chief

Minister, Denis Burke (who is not a patch on his predecessor). Last Thursday, Mr Burke went on Darwin radio and said that more money was needed and that he and Premier Olsen would confront John Howard in a couple of weeks over that issue. He then said:

If we don't get to the figure that we're after—we're walking away from the project. That's how close it is with this consortium.

They are the words of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. He is ready to walk away from the project. Mr Burke claimed that he had been '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.'

We cannot afford to lose this project at the last stage. We cannot afford division like this. Why is Mr Burke flagging this before more money has been secured from Canberra? Why should South Australia offer any more money, especially before John Howard has at least matched Kim Beazley's offer? I can only think that the Premier tore strips off Denis Burke over what he did say, given his frantic concerns over what I did not say at a meeting that did not happen. The fact is that the Alice to Darwin link would be a real boost to our economy—and let us not forget that it was promised by the commonwealth government in 1911 as part of the deal for this state's losing its Northern Territory to the commonwealth. Canberra owes us.

This project is in the interest economically of South Australia and the Northern Territory, but it is clearly in the national interest to have a north-south rail link. The economy of South Australia needs a boost, because any realistic assessment of the state of the economy raises concerns. The need for confidence and growth in our State's economy was very much the reason for my overseas trip, particularly the future of our car and tyre industries, as well as our lamb and wine exports.

In Japan I met with Bridgestone and Mitsubishi executives, and in Detroit I met with General Motors' representatives. Bridgestone employs about 1 300 South Australians at its two plants here at Salisbury, in my electorate, and at Edwardstown. We want to ensure that Bridgestone and the country's other tyre manufacturers can survive and grow into the future. Unfortunately, the industry is under pressure from at least two sources of unfair competition: the dumping of used foreign made tyres on our market and tariffs that give a concession to Korea and Taiwan, amongst others. As many as 800 000 used foreign tyres are dumped onto the Australian market each year from Japan, the US and Germany. At this stage, that is just 7 per cent of the market, but it has a real capacity to grow rapidly. Used foreign car tyres captured one-third of the New Zealand tyre market in just three years earlier this decade.

There are genuine safety and reliability concerns about these used tyres. Of course, there are also concerns about Australian jobs. The tyre makers would like to see national legislation to ensure that used tyres imported to Australia are properly tested for safety and permanently marked as part worn tyres. They want the importers of these tyres to submit their shipments for complete inspection, certification and fumigation upon arrival. At the moment, importers of these used foreign tyres accept no responsibility to cull out unsafe, unroadworthy or damaged tyres. If people think that this is special pleading by Australian manufacturers, they should consider what happens elsewhere. Canada banned these imports in 1992, while the UK introduced tough controls in

1994, with safety requirements and all such tyres having to bear the mark 'part worn'. In the USA all used tyre imports must satisfy transport regulations, including a grade stamping, and they must be marked with the country of origin.

Meanwhile, imported new tyres face a tariff in Australia of 15 per cent. However, certain countries that are competitors to our local industries and to local jobs receive a so-called developing nations concession of just 10 per cent. We are supposed to help the Third World, but the countries receiving these concessions include South Korea, Taiwan and China. Counting Korea and Taiwan as developing nations in the car or auto accessory area is simply staggering as well as stupid. This special status needs to be reassessed.

Let us talk about automotive manufacturers. Mitsubishi employs about 4 500 South Australians at the Tonsley and Lonsdale plants. Recently, the company announced 300 voluntary redundancies in a move to make its South Australian operations more competitive. Mitsubishi is a vital part of South Australia's job future, and it is important for South Australia to present a united front in support of the company. Mitsubishi Australia's management and unions are currently working to present the best possible case to Tokyo in order to secure a commitment to build the next generation Magna Verada. They have to prove that the South Australian operations are internationally competitive against Mitsubishi Motors' other plants world wide in order to win the right to build the 2002 car.

In Tokyo I met with executives, including Mr Yoshisuke Kondo, Managing Director and Corporate General Manager of International Car Operations, Mr Atsushi Saruhashi, Deputy Corporate General Manager of International Car Operations, both of whom are board members, and Mr Yukio Iwai, General Manager, Australia Thailand Operations. I told these senior Mitsubishi executives that both the state opposition and the state government were strongly supportive of the company. They spoke very highly of the Mitsubishi Australia work force and their positive relations with the car unions. They welcomed moves by both the Premier and me to lobby Canberra to seek changes to the pre-GST tax arrangements on new cars.

The company says that the current arrangements were a problem because they were leading purchasers to defer buying cars until the GST came into effect. Registrations of new cars fell by 8 per cent over the past month and by nearly 14 per cent over the year to July. Special tax arrangements have already been put in place for electrical goods, which are overwhelmingly foreign made. Why not some concessions for Australian made cars? I also told the Mitsubishi executives in Tokyo that the federal and state ALP would continue to lobby for a review of tariff cuts before the final steps were taken in 2005.

We need to give Mitsubishi and other car manufacturers some greater certainty in future planning. At the moment, the Howard government is committed only to holding a review after the final step is taken. That does not make sense. It is like jumping out of a plane and asking for the parachute when you are halfway down. We can only assess where the industry is going if we know where we are right now and where our Asian trading partners and competitors are in terms of their tariff and non-tariff barriers. This is an issue that I took up with General Motors executives when I met them in Detroit. Unfortunately, I did not meet with Mr Louis Hughes on this trip, as I had understood this appointment had been confirmed.

I did however meet with other executives, including the General Motors Chief Economist. He indicated that General Motors was delighted with the success of its Holden subsidiary in South Australia. General Motors in Detroit seemed particularly pleased with Holden's export success in the Middle East. The company believes that there could be a substantial market for Australian-made Holdens in South-East Asia but again says that high tariff barriers in countries such as Thailand and Indonesia are making Australian auto exports virtually impossible. I expressed strong support from the state opposition for further expansion in South Australia through a new V6 engine plant. I was told that no decision has yet been made on the location of the \$1 billion V6 engine plant in Australia. That says to me that it is still up for grabs. Victoria wants it and we want it. General Motors wants to invest in aluminium engines to be built in Australia for both the Commodore in this country and for export and for the Cadillac in the United States.

It would be a tremendous symbol and example if through bipartisan lobbying we could secure that car engine plant for South Australia. It would mean more jobs both directly and indirectly in our car industry, and that could only be good news. What would be even better news for our car industry, our lamb exporters and our wine industry is if we started to see some genuine tariff reform and fair trade around the world. I was fortunate to secure a meeting with the Rt Hon. Mike Moore, the former New Zealand Prime Minister, Trade Minister and Foreign Minister who is now Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. I raised with him the problems that our car industry and our lamb exporters face given the US import tariff, and also concerns for our wine industry, its spectacular growth still being frustrated illegitimately by tariff and dumping measures.

I asked the World Trade Organisation to investigate Asian nations that are rorting world trade rules by applying tariff and other barriers to prevent Australia from exporting cars to their markets. I told Mr Moore that the World Trade Organisation preaches to Australia to lower its tariffs but seems to have taken little action to ensure that our competitors do likewise. In the past 10 years car imports to Australia have risen from a 20 per cent share of the Australian automotive market to well over 50 per cent. Australia's automotive trade deficit has also doubled during the same period to \$8 billion.

During the same period, Nissan ceased to manufacture in Australia and became a local importer. At the same time that Australia is reducing its car tariffs, some of our key competitors have ignored world trade rules by applying a range of tariff, non-tariff barriers and taxes to make it virtually impossible for our cars to be sold in their markets. Malaysia, headed by Dr Mahathir, a country which sells cars to Australia, is one of the worst offenders, with import duties of up to 300 per cent, together with local preferences, mandated local content levels and other protective measures. Malaysia corrupts world trade rules; there is absolutely no doubt about it.

Pakistan has import duties of up to 265 per cent; Indonesia, 125 per cent; and Thailand, 80 per cent, along with various local content rates and taxes. Korea, a big exporter of cars to Australia, applies a range of taxes and other measures to prevent reciprocal trade in automobiles. But they take maximum advantage of Australia's lower tariffs. Meanwhile, Australia continues to drop tariffs, with further cuts planned in the year 2000 and again in 2005.

But it is not just our manufacturers that face these hurdles. I raised with Mr Moore at the WTO the issue of the United

States' extraordinary and recent impost on lamb imports. As the former Prime Minister and Trade Minister of a small, largely primary producing nation, Mr Moore was keenly aware of the lamb tariffs issue. I was armed with a detailed briefing from the South Australian Farmers Federation about the lamb issue and other agricultural trade issues. I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from the South Australian Farmers Federation. I told Mr Moore that the US decision to impose a tariff on Australian lamb exports was an act of gross hypocrisy from a nation that lectures the rest of the world on the evils of protection and the benefits of free trade.

The US action is a body blow to Australian lamb exporters and, whilst at the moment the local industry has not been hit, it certainly has the potential to do great damage in the future and to frustrate export growth. After all, our state supplies more than a quarter of national lamb exports to the US. While the US hardly produces any lamb of its own, it has slapped a prohibitive tariff on Australian and New Zealand exports. On top of the 40 per cent tariff for above quota imports, that is, those imports above the 1998 level, Australian lamb producers face an increased tariff for imports within the 1998 quota. In addition, there is a \$US100 million industry assistance package for the American lamb industry. That is protectionism on an impressive albeit unfair scale.

Australia and New Zealand account for 95 per cent of imports to the United States. Of course, South Australia has the most to lose from this openly offensive protectionist measure by the United States. Jobs in South Australian meatworks are on the line. In recent years we have already seen meatworks close and jobs shed at Noarlunga, Gepps Cross and Murray Bridge. Labor has been pushing for a meat industry summit in this state to bring together all those involved in the industry to try to thrash out a positive plan for the future. Once again, it would be bipartisan. So far, while jobs have been lost, the Olsen government has ignored all these calls.

Australian wine producers also face tariff problems that, once again, I was able to raise with the WTO Director-General. Again, I was grateful for a well-argued briefing from the Wine Makers Federation to assist me. I asked if the WTO could take a close look at real trade restrictions that are frustrating a industry that has exports of more than \$1 billion. The South Australian wine industry directly employs 3 000 people and accounts for just over 50 per cent of national wine output and a much greater share of wine exports. The WTO will soon be making important decisions that could have a major impact on Australia's wine industry. Those talks begin in November this year. I told Mr Moore that the case for substantial reform of trade barriers affecting the wine industry was now overwhelming.

Australian wine producers are keen to have access to the growing Chinese market but are frustrated by excessive tariffs even though China in a range of other products, including clothing, has taken massive advantage of lower tariffs in Australia. The People's Republic of China is about to join the World Trade Organisation. A cut to a range of their tariffs, including those affecting wine, must be a precondition of entry. But it is not only China and other Asian nations that have erected excessive tariff barriers to our wine exports. I have asked Mr Moore to ensure that the WTO's millennium round of trade talks also focuses on producers' subsidies to the wine industry in European Union nations.

Other issues are the use of non-tariff measures and wine dumping which are making it more difficult for Australian wine to be competitive in international markets. We cannot afford a policy of one-way free trade, or Australia will suffer. Australia has done the right thing by making the harsh cuts that we are now paying for dearly. It is time that the rest of the world and the rest of our region came to the table. Let us have real fair trade. Let us have fair free trade.

There is one other issue that arose during my trip overseas that I feel needs to be addressed, and that is the announcement of the Petit Le Mans race for Adelaide. Despite the fact that this was the worst kept secret ever—indeed, it was no secret given the government's continual statements, pre-announcements, reannouncements and foreshadowed announcements—the fact that I welcomed the race after it had been announced on television in Adelaide seems to have caused great consternation in the Premier's office. I cannot imagine what the reaction would have been if I had actually attacked the race.

On Friday 17 September I issued a press release here in Adelaide welcoming the race. I also pointed out, of course, that any government that has money for a race such as this has money to address our hospital crisis. The race must not come before people's right to a hospital bed when they are sick. The race itself could be a great attraction for South Australia and it certainly was not a race that people in Atlanta were hiding. From Detroit and Chicago I telephoned the Atlanta race organisers and officers, including David Forner and John Lerner. I explained who I was and the position I held, and they were most generous with their information.

They said that a race would take place on 31 December next year and gave me details of the news conference that would actually give out all the details of the race calendar. I was even invited to come and join them at the Atlanta race where the announcement would be made—something that I am sure the Premier would have welcomed in the same way that he welcomed my presence in Japan with Mitsubishi back in 1997. Apparently, though, my welcoming this race was suddenly supposed to have thrown everything into jeopardy. Not according to the Atlanta organisers and officers that I spoke to.

It must have been a very brief jeopardy that existed only in Adelaide, because I have a copy of the Petit Le Mans race calendar dated Friday 17 September, for immediate release, that announced a race in Adelaide on 31 December in the year 2000. What do you say about a government which, if it is not attacking the opposition for being too negative, attacks it for being too positive and then tells fibs about announcement dates? I have the press release dated Friday the 17th, issued in the United States and put on the internet, which shows that this was not about jeopardising negotiations but a bit of news management. I know, of course, that taxpayers' money was used to fund Channel 9 to go over and capture the Premier in all his glory, but I am sure that is something that *Media Watch* will deal with at a later date.

But then what do you say about a government that can always find money for consultants, that can always find money for government advertising, can find money for a \$100 million blowout of its radio network but cannot even mention our hospitals in its forward plan for the year? It is a government that has its priorities wrong. It is a government that has not been listening to the people. It is very interesting that 'listening' has become a new buzz word for the government, but only this week, following a bad internal poll which shows (and I want to quote this directly) that the government

has become disconnected from the people of South Australia—that the government that has blamed Labor and attacked us for Labor Listens—has actually been told by its pollster and party officials that it must mention the words ‘we are listening’ in every single announcement, hence the backflip that it has had over the EST and the tollway.

It is interesting that government members are prepared to say that they are listening, even though we know that that is not true. They have not done it for six years, and now suddenly they are listening on the back of a bad internal poll of marginal seats and non-marginal seats, which shows a crisis in the Adelaide Hills, where they are susceptible to a Democrat assault, and also a crisis in the regions, which is why we see them trotting off to the regions and showing an interest in people they have taken for granted for so long. Meanwhile, the Labor Party has been diligently conducting our Labor Listens program, more than 100 meetings in all, actually hearing what South Australians have been telling us.

There is a growing awareness among South Australians that we are living in a community, not just an economy. People are increasingly using family analogies. They are saying that no family worthy of its name would neglect its weakest or most vulnerable children in favour of its strongest and brightest. South Australians are talking about a community where there are mutual obligations of shared rights and responsibilities, shared benefits and burdens. They are talking about hospitals, schools, jobs, a safe community, and they are worried about the things they own being sold off. These are the priorities of South Australians, but they are not the priorities of the South Australian Liberal government. I commend the Governor’s speech to the House.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): As we gather for this new session of the forty-ninth parliament on Kauria land, I am reminded of the job in hand. I have been a member of this House for two years now and, as I look towards the second half of my term, I reflect on what has transpired in this place to date and on the task that lies ahead in the context of the slogan on which I ran in the last election, Community Counts. In the Governor’s speech on Tuesday I was grateful for his acknowledgment of past members of the parliament who have passed away in the last year.

In particular, I would like to mention Don Dunstan as a man who has been a significant influence on this state and, indeed, on Australia and the world for, among many things, his contribution to reconciliation and the recognition of indigenous rights and encouragement of the arts. I know that the arts can be a key element to reform and ponder how I can help foster and promote this vital and often overlooked sector. Another notable was Jack Wright, a man who has meant a great deal to a great many people from this side of the House.

During my contributions to debate in this term, I have raised many of the issues that affect the lives of the electors of the seat of Florey, the issues that when all is working well address their hopes and aspirations and make South Australia the best place in which to live and work. It is now that the message of the people that I represent, the residents of the suburbs that make up my local community, must be restated so that it can be heard and acted upon. Their message is simple: they do not ask for more than a fair go, their share in the things that are necessary to have a meaningful, productive and happy life.

What they ask for primarily is the right to work in jobs that offer decent conditions and wages that allow them to provide for families; jobs that provide safe workplaces; and,

if ever the case may arise, a fair system of compensation for injuries sustained while at work. They want to be able to educate their children so that they may make their way in this fast changing world, and want the ability to access a well resourced health system that provides care in a timely fashion when required. They want to see measures put in place to allow them to learn more about their own physical wellbeing and nutrition so that they may practise the art of prevention, which all agree is better than cure, especially in the area of health.

These are the building blocks of a satisfying existence where all are able to participate in community life and contribute to the wellbeing of those around them. Our challenge is to deliver the options, the mix of circumstances that allow their freedom of choice and encourage their ambition to thrive and flourish; to nurture each and every person in this state so that they can contribute to the whole and are not left out of the creation of the wealth that we must generate to move forward. For our people are our true wealth: they are the solution, not part of the problem.

This government’s plan as outlined in the document prepared for the Governor is to remain in the holding pattern that has become such a familiar and unwelcome way of life. It talks of ‘maintaining a just approach regardless of criticism’, so that among others the ‘affluent and those with special needs can feel they are listened to and that their priorities are being or will be addressed’. To do this we need a vision, an indication that the end of the tunnel (should we ever be so lucky as to reach the end) is a good and better place to be. How might we get there?

During the parliamentary recess I and some others from this place had the opportunity, along with many South Australians, to attend a lecture by the renowned Canadian social and political theorist Dr John Ralston Saul. Following on from the inaugural Festival of Ideas, this was another very welcome opportunity to think about and explore new lines of thought and alternative concepts. One of the greatest false economies from which we suffer is the lack of staff time for electorate offices. One full-time position is barely enough to maintain a busy workplace, let alone indulge in the sort of progressive thought and dialogue required to implement change and address the demands faced by our communities.

The lecture was part of the conference sponsored by the Institute of Public Affairs, the Hawke Institute and Imprints Booksellers. It was very well attended and the proceedings were televised on ABC TV’s *Compass* program. Dr Ralston Saul is a well-known critic of economic rationalism and its various hybrids—globalism, transnational corporatism, competition theory, and the list goes on. He is profoundly concerned by the anti democratic bias that he discerns in global corporatism—its ability to dictate terms to communities, to circumvent laws, to stifle debate and to quash dissent. The rise of the new economic ideology has, he believes, had significant repercussions for democracies. In his book, *The Unconscious Civilisation*, he writes:

Those who believe that democracy issued from the womb of the marketplace tend to link freedom of speech to capitalism. George Bush, for example, in his inaugural speech stated that ‘a more just and prosperous life for men on earth’ was accomplished through ‘free markets, free speech and free elections’. The order given to the three freedoms is astonishing from the mouth of a man assuming the chief responsibility for the exercise of the American Constitution. His suggested sequence of freedoms is an historical and contemporary fiction. The world is filled today, as it has often been in the past, with nations that embrace free markets, close censorship and false or no elections.

The new economic ideology, however, thinks differently. Economics—an unscientific profession like many of the social sciences—has primacy in the minds of current public policy makers, almost to the exclusion of all else. How extraordinary it is to compare George Bush's 'freedoms' with the 'four freedoms' enunciated by his great predecessor Franklin Roosevelt—freedom from hunger, freedom from fear, freedom of association and freedom of conscience—the freedoms that form the basis of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949.

Digressing for a moment, I might add that for many Australian workers it is all the more ironic at the moment with the attack on so many things, especially the fundamental right of freedom of association. If I dwell on Ralston Saul's critique of the current model of public sector management, a model in large part based on the politics of the bottom line, the politics which equates efficiency with cutting costs, it is because, despite the criticisms that can be made, his detailed and discerning critique of economic rationalism reminds me—and should remind us all in this place—that there are alternative ways of thinking about the issues with which government and the community must deal.

It is not simply enough to accept the argument that debt reduction, outsourcing, increased competition, watering down industrial laws, user pays, increased shopping hours, introducing what is called 'choice' in education and a myriad other policy proposals—all of which in one way or another reflect the direction of the current economic orthodoxy—are necessary or, indeed, inevitable. As Ralston Saul points out, inevitability is not an argument: it is merely the rhetoric that is used to justify an ideology that would otherwise seem internally self-contradictory.

I want to consider rhetoric and how, indeed, it is manifesting itself in recent political events. One of the interesting facts about the new economic ideology is its ability to clothe itself in persuasive 'community friendly' language while at the same time characterising any alternative as 'old fashioned', 'failed', 'socialist' and much more besides. In his contribution to the July edition of the *Adelaide Review*, federal employment services minister Tony Abbott states:

Generally speaking, there have been two trains of thought on tackling unemployment: the older 'social democratic' approach which holds that unemployment is the result of marketplace failure and the newer, pro market approaches which hold that unemployment is the result of structural rigidities in areas such as wage fixing.

The article, titled 'Beyond the unemployment pieties', is a carefully woven defence of the federal government's work for the dole scheme, a scheme very much in the ethos of the user pays democracy. It clothes itself in the language of mutual obligation, but there is very little real sense of mutuality here. It is a user pays approach to social justice. Mutual obligation can be replaced by mutual rights and responsibilities which recognise human rights and which introduce the concept of universality.

We must make a clear distinction between mutual rights and responsibilities, on the one hand, and mutual obligation on the other. The implications of the doctrine of mutual obligation, so enthusiastically adopted by the Howard government to explain the communitarian basis of its so-called reforms to social security benefits, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme and even Aboriginal welfare are all largely economic.

Mutual obligation is a transactional concept. It sees governmental services in terms of market transactions. When people talk about mutual obligation they really mean that

those receiving the benefits of government services ought to pay for them in kind, as it were. There is no real sense of mutuality here. Indeed, this approach is essentially divisive. It creates a 'them and us' mentality and moves responsibility away from government and the collective solely onto the shoulders of the individual—that it is the unemployed person's fault, not the government's. This is a doctrine which, put simply, disguises the fact that the Howard federal government has all but abdicated its responsibilities to solve the unemployment problem.

We are constantly told to rely upon growth in the economy and reform to workplace laws to further job creation. Accordingly, Tony Abbott says:

Labour market reform (to reward better work with more pay), interest rate cuts (to boost business), tax reform (to create incentives) and the welfare reform (to reduce poverty traps), together with our sustained growth record, have been key elements of a holistic strategy to bring unemployment down. The government is confident that unemployment can now fall further because policies such as mutual obligation and work for the dole are starting to make work more attractive without the downside of unfairly cutting welfare or pricing would-be workers out of jobs.

The sad reality is that so-called market reform, callously included in the title of Reith's second wave legislation, entitled the Workplace Relations (More Jobs, Better Pay) Amendment Bill, has failed to achieve job growth. This is the same argument that was put to argue that youth wages ought to be retained. Lower wages do not equal more jobs. They only mean more people working longer and harder for less. Reliance on the market for jobs growth is putting all your eggs in one basket. Certainly, jobs will be created when the economy is performing well, although without commitment from governments to job creation significant downward changes in unemployment will not be achieved. This is especially the case when money continues to leave Australia because of the failure of the government to make a strong investment in the economy. Dr Ralston Saul makes some instructive comments on this point, as follows:

Jobs are one of the last steps on the production chain. If you want jobs you must first research, develop, plan, risk, invest, build, develop markets and start selling. The result may eventually be jobs. But if you believe that the marketplace is in charge of all those functions—as the received wisdom of today assures us—then you shouldn't be promising jobs because you are abdicating any responsibility for the complex job creating mechanisms.

This is precisely the policy of the Howard government. I am hopeful that the Democrats will reject the Reith legislation, and I certainly encourage all non-government members in the other place to reject the Olsen government's workplace legislation which mirrors the Reith second wave at the state level. It really is as simple as saying, 'No.'

The new economic ideology is fond of claiming choice as one of the key objectives. Choice is seen as a critical element of the free market. The language of choice and consumerism has come to be gradually applied to public sector functions in recent years. In public transport, for instance, we no longer speak of commuters or travellers but, rather, they are customers, and the service has become a business. This kind of language is now also used in the health, education, welfare and community sectors. Increasingly, we are encouraged to view ourselves as consumers of these services in a transactional market sense rather than as the recipients of community services to which we have a right.

Moreover, as consumers we are entitled to seek the same service elsewhere, and the current approach favours setting up competitive systems wherever possible to enable this, even

in situations where competition does not naturally sit. One of the reasons given for introducing competition is to increase efficiency. Yet, as Professor John Quiggin of James Cook University pointed out before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Financial Institutions and Public Administration, efficiency and competition are not co-dependent. There is nothing in basic economic theory to suggest that a competitive firm is necessarily more efficient than a non-competitive firm. Indeed, depending on the nature of the core operations of the firm, it may be inherently inefficient at the macroeconomic level to encourage a waste of resources through competition.

Too frequently, the language of competition and choice is used to justify decreasing government expenditure on essential services. Choice has been the catchcry of the Federal Minister for Education, Dr David Kemp, in introducing the enrolment bench mark adjustment scheme, a scheme which pumps money away from the public education system to private schools and will eventually lead to a significant decrease in educational spending overall. It is the same rhetoric that is being used to argue for the Olsen government's Partnerships 21 scheme. Under the guise of 'choice' the government is attempting to force public schools to adopt a self-management approach that will eventually end up with budget cuts to public school funding.

According to the minister, Partnerships 21 will enable parents to be involved in the direction and management of their child's school. What he does not highlight is the fact that this will end up saving the government money. In any event, parents are not customers and education is not a business. It is in fact an essential precondition of a healthy and prosperous democracy. When we downgrade public investment in education we downgrade our commitment to economic prosperity and to the vibrancy of debate and dissent in our democratic state, both essential ingredients and components to a thriving society. Moreover, the choice that the minister speaks of is largely illusory. The reality of tight budgetary parameters means that there is little effective choice for either parents or schools.

'Choice' and competition go hand in hand for the economic rationalists. They do not necessarily equate to efficiency. When public sector involvement and planning and service delivery is cut back or cut out in deferment to market forces, the reality is that social requirements are not always met. The failure of the federal government's job network is a case in point. At a state level I am particularly concerned about the current round of competitive tendering for Adelaide's public transport system. The experience of competitive tendering in other states, and indeed with the Modbury Hospital contract, indicates that there are significant losses in financial terms and services as a result of outsourcing. We have already seen the development of shadow competition in public transport between rival operators during the course of the current contracts.

This is destructive for the macro efficiency that is required to make the public transport system successful. Rather than integrating the system, competition is slowly fragmenting it. I was alarmed to read in the *Advertiser* earlier this week that the minister is now considering outsourcing the rail network and the Glenelg tram line. The capital costs of maintaining these services is significant. Even in Singapore, where all other forms of public transport are privately operated, the rail system is managed by the government so that it remains responsive to the needs of the people. Competition between rail and bus operators will be one of the inevitable conse-

quences of further privatisation. This has already been documented by Professor Paul Mees of the University of Melbourne in relation to the National Bus privatisation conducted by the Kennett government—and, if the Victorian election is any indication, the public is sick and tired of ideology prevailing over good commonsense.

It has been suggested by some that privatisation and outsourcing have been pursued largely as a method of introducing workplace 'flexibility' through lower wages. Certainly, job insecurity is one of the results of the competitive tendering regime. The fact that current wages at Serco are up to \$80 a week less than at TransAdelaide supports this view. Privatisation complements the industrial relations agenda of the state and federal Liberal governments. Two recent decisions of the federal court involving the Health Services Union and the Finance Sector Union, however, have undercut this strategy. I am hopeful that these decisions—which effectively make wages and conditions non-negotiable issues in outsourcing—will be upheld by the High Court on appeal. We shall wait and see.

One thing is clear though: we do not have to accept that these policies and their outcomes are inevitable. Debate and dissent is essential if true democracy is to thrive. I hope that we may see continued debate about alternative policies in this session of the parliament. It would be good to see if debate in this place could, once again, be based on reasoned reflection rather than the result of the realities of numbers alone. There are legitimate alternatives to the government's approach and the public deserves the opportunity to appraise them without being lambasted. Ideas must be raised and the people raising them must be allowed to do so without fear of derision and ridicule. We need to adopt a holistic approach to our current circumstances and ourselves as we look to the future. We have witnessed more change in the past 50 years than in the entire history of humankind.

Let us consider how we might plan for the future. Spending on health is our largest budget outlay. We need to look at health in a new way, to think of it as more than the genetic and biological aspects of curative health, the system on which we concentrate now. The acute aspects address the needs of 30 per cent of the population's demand on the health system, yet gobble up the 90 per cent of the health budget. We need to include the social, economic and environmental aspects that contribute to well-being and therefore impact on the health of our communities. It is about the capacity of the community to support, foster and sustain its people and itself. These aspects of health can also be applied to every other policy area, especially education and the environment.

However, if you raise any new idea these days, you are expected to know everything about its development and implementation. In happier times, we had the luxury of a well resourced and dynamic public service. This is not to say that those hardy souls who remain after the dark days of slash and burn are not dynamic. Suffice to say that they stand defiant in the face of the storm that has seen so many of them—and a good deal of our bright young people—leave this state. They, like many of us, are too few trying to do too much with too little. They cannot devote their time to making a bigger cake; they are forced to continue to invent ways to cut the cake we have in smaller slices, slices that have defied the odds until now and remained intact—the hanging on strategy.

We need to redress this false economy for we will surely pay the price of neglect. We need to put the money in at the end which is productive, not pick up the pieces after things have fallen apart. In other words, we have to look after the

pennies (or the people) and the pounds (or the economy) will look after themselves and thrive. Let us try some of the trickle up for a change because, for me and a growing number of the community, trickle down has had the thumbs down.

My colleagues have mentioned many areas of concern—the needs of regional South Australia, disadvantage in all its forms and the minority groups that are left out and often left behind. It would do us well to consider that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link: the aged, the infirm, the disabled and their carers and, as society continues to ignore the social problems created as a result of unemployment, the drug dependant and the growing numbers incarcerated in our prisons.

All social ills impact more upon our indigenous people. For instance, Amnesty International recently reported that black deaths in custody have doubled since the royal commission. Why then do state governments not fund outside organisations to provide expertise and evaluated programs to work in prisons; and why is there no provision of syringes in gaols for all inmates, considering that the majority of prisoners are arrested for drug related crime?

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

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

Ms BEDFORD: Do we not have the same duty of care for prisoners as for the rest of the community? To truly progress the path of reconciliation we must see a resolution to the native title debate. We must see a process of genuine negotiation with indigenous South Australians and their representatives. We need to confront the consequences of our collective past in a fair and compassionate way.

In closing, I raise several vitally important issues. First, we must support and promote the small business sector. They are facing the juggernaut of deregulated shopping hours, which is code for greater market share for the giants of the business world to the detriment of what is recognised as the largest employer we have, that is, the small businesses run by people who have truly learnt what it means to be flexible. Secondly, there is our reliance on the goodness of volunteers to perform so many necessary roles rather than additional roles within the community and public sectors. That we need so many people to become involved in this growing army leads me to ponder whether there is some way in which to employ people who can be paid for this work and then, in turn, they can pay tax and consume goods.

Thirdly, we have the growing pressure on South Australia to accept that our easiest or only economic avenue is to accept that we should become the nuclear waste dump of the world. As someone said to me recently, it really does not matter if it takes 15 000 years or 150 000 years for the waste to be neutralised, the damage will have been done. Lastly, there is our reliance on the revenue raised by gambling in all its forms, especially poker machines.

The Productivity Commission has drawn our attention to the level of reliance we now place on the gathering of revenue in this way, an unseen tax on those least able to afford it. In quest of a way of life, in quest of a way to meet needs or break out of a particular lifestyle, a frightening trend is being reinforced. That is that governments seem to be unable to provide the circumstances and opportunities needed to give a meaningful and satisfying way of life. As I said at

the outset, most people only want a fair go; let us give them one. The solution hinges on finding the balance between the short-term fixes and what will see our long-term prosperity.

Ms BREUER (Giles): I am glad of the opportunity to speak today about my electorate, the biggest in the state and the most isolated, diverse and, I believe, beautiful. I was interested and pleased to hear the words 'regional South Australia' mentioned so many times by the Premier and his ministers earlier this week, and I was also pleased to hear the Governor mention it in his speech. Great emphasis was put on assisting the regions and rural South Australians. Does this mean that finally my message has got through that there is a world out there beyond metropolitan Adelaide and a few little pockets of the state which are within Sunday afternoon driving distance for city dwellers? Does this mean that, apart from the occasional cabinet meeting in a regional city, a task force which makes a lot of promises and an infrequent grand gesture in marginal seats, those people out there who are bleeding and desperately struggling to keep their families and communities together, whether hit by new taxes, inflated prices and the hazards of isolation, might perhaps be heard and our issues listened to?

Perhaps this government has heard the people of country Victoria who said, 'Up you, Jeff Kennett; you've done nothing for us.' Has this government got over its toe-cutting approach to us in the bush and realised that we can win or lose an election for it? I look forward to watching what the government does over the next two years, and I hope this means that this government will do something for us. We want jobs, security and a chance to live in our communities and enjoy our lifestyles, and we want a fair go in doing it.

This coming weekend I will be visiting Woomera. Like so many towns in my region, Woomera is at a crossroads in its history. In a few days the American forces will be pulling out of Narrungar. I pay tribute to the people of Woomera, past and present, who have contributed so much to our state. This tiny little place in the middle of the desert in the Far North put South Australia on the map far more than any grand prix, football team or major company in South Australia. World wide in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, people heard of Woomera. A generation of scientists, engineers and service personnel worked in Woomera. Families settled, made their living and raised their children there. The value of their contributions cannot be measured just in economic terms. We owe a great deal to Woomera, and I am saddened that, knowing that Woomera is at a crossroads, the federal government has been so tardy in letting the residents know what their future holds.

I pay particular tribute to Joe Van Homelin, the area administrator, who has worked so hard to ensure his community's future, and to the many others in administrative and community positions and also the town board, who have worked very hard also in trying to get a commitment from the federal government and to work for their future. To me this is an indication of that wonderful spirit in the bush—a determination not to take things lying down or let bureaucrats make decisions that affect our lives without looking at all the implications for our communities. I believe that Woomera has a future, and I will do all I can to ensure this. I was pleased to see a glowing tribute to Woomera by the Andamooka and districts community newspaper on 17 September. In this it talks about the importance of Woomera to their community prior to the establishment of Olympic Dam and then Roxby

Downs. Woomera provided the shopping, health, mail services, court facilities and so on for many years.

I cannot finish talking about Woomera without mentioning a hero in my electorate and a man so important to Woomera, and that is Len Beadell. Earnest Giles, the namesake for my electorate, was a great explorer, and at some future date I will talk about him in this place. His work opened up the outback, but Len Beadell was a modern hero who finished that work. It has been my pleasure recently to read the wonderfully entertaining books by Len. I have read them spurred on by my travels in those remote areas, and I have found in his pages some of the most wonderful human life stories, with that wonderful outback humour which Len was renowned for. I particularly like his ability to laugh at himself and also to take the mickey out of city dwellers without their knowing it, a quality much admired in the bush. His early years were spent in the company of a scout master, who taught Len the love of surveying. He was posted in New Guinea with the army survey corps during the second world war, after which he worked in Arnhem Land.

The Woomera rocket range project in 1947 needed a surveyor at this time, to lay out the site for the town and the firing ranges. Len was the ideal candidate, and that led to his remaining in the army for an extra year to start it off. After discharge, he finished what he had started, and that resulted in him and a little party of men surveying and building 6 000 kilometres of lonely desert roads through the great Victoria, Gibson and Great Sandy deserts of Australia. These roads were located following the path of the centre line of the rocket firing from Woomera north-west across Australia to the Eighty Mile Beach near Port Hedland. In the early 1950s British and Australian governments cooperated in the British nuclear testing program, and again Len was the ideal candidate to lay out the sites, already knowing the desert area of Australia in which the tests were to be conducted. The work he did in those areas was absolutely incredible, when I have driven through those areas in air conditioned four wheeled drives and I think about the conditions he suffered while he was doing all his work in that area.

In 1964 ill health and the completion of the road project saw Len packing up his theodolite for life more or less settled in Salisbury, South Australia. Many desert trips still followed, including taking his family out to 'their' roads. He named a section of road after each of his children (Connie, Gary and Jackie) and his wife, Anne. Len was truly a great explorer of our time. Woomera and the rest of Australia owe him a great debt, and I pay tribute to this great man today.

I spoke of Andamooka, and I want to mention it again. In 1995 it was decided to build a pipeline to Andamooka to bring vital water to the town. In May 1996 the water subsidy for the residents was cut off because of the proposed pipeline. At the time of approval for the pipeline it was not foreseen that three native title claims would be lodged over Andamooka and the three surrounding pastoral properties. It was also not foreseen that the drought that they were experiencing in 1995 would continue to the present time. There has been no potable water in the two dams leased from SA Water since 1995. SA Water has been unable to service the windmill and the pumps at Blue Dam yet, for the whole time, the Andamooka progress association has been paying the leases on the dams at \$740 per annum, for no drinkable water and no real maintenance to the facilities.

Andamooka has a population between 750 and 800 people. Many of these work at Roxby Downs and there are many young families. Some opal mining still continues, but the

majority of the community has no connection with the opal mining industry today. All the houses have rainwater tanks, but you need rain to fill those tanks. Why is a country town of 800 people not entitled to drinkable water? Water is carted by road from Roxby Downs, thanks to the generosity of Western Mining. However, it costs \$5.50 per hundred gallons, and you cannot waste that sort of water. To resolve the native title issues it will cost the Andamooka progress association \$5 000 per day. They do not have that sort of money. If this was Africa or South America I could understand this situation, but this is South Australia in 1999, three months before the year 2000. I urge your government to look at this situation and to provide drinkable water in some way for these people, either by subsidy or by assistance in paying for their legal costs in the native title claim.

Yesterday I heard the government talk all day about fairness and equity. Well, I want to hear about fairness and equity for country people. Coober Pedy people pay \$5 per kilolitre for water; the farmers at Penong pay even more, because their water subsidies were cut off. We have a state government that says there will be equity for country people in water, power and other public utilities and that no person will be disadvantaged, but ask us in the country about petrol and food prices, access to medical services, broad curriculums for our latter year school children, jobs, banking services and so on. All we ask for is a fair go, and I ask the Minister to look at the issue of water for Andamooka people and give them that fundamental right of clean, drinkable water.

Today we were told of the very pleasing announcement of the Ansett call centre in South Australia. Whyalla put forward a case for a call centre that the Department of Transport and the Department of Administration and Information Services are intending to establish. We understand that when the centre is fully operational it will employ between 60 and 70 people. We have been told that Whyalla was not chosen as it would add \$200 000 a year to the recurrent cost. Instead, the centre is to be established in Adelaide. The \$200 000 amounts to approximately \$2 800 per employee and is well within the range that other agencies of government contribute to entice employment in regional areas.

However, the Whyalla Economic Development Board has not been shown the methodology used to arrive at these figures, and in this day of information technology it is strange that the cost argument could be used against Whyalla. We are told that this cost is incurred because the customers are in Adelaide—a direct distance of less than 200 kilometres. If this cost factor being used against Whyalla was a significant factor in Australia-wide selection, South Australia would not be in a position to be competitive for some of the big private sector call centres.

In line with this rationale, because most of their customers are in the eastern states, presumably cost would be a significant disadvantage against South Australia. But this is apparently not the case, given that in the *Advertiser* on Saturday 14 August, in the 'Directions' advertising series by the state government, it is claimed that South Australia has more than 150 call centres and the industry sector is growing at the rate of 20 per cent a year. The article names some big operators which were announced today, including Westpac, Bankers Trust, Cable and Wireless, Optus, Boral, Link, and Equifax. The article claims that there are many reasons why these companies are attracted to South Australia, including trained workers, lower office rental costs, lower staff turnover

and good transport links. It is ironic that it is these very same reasons why Whyalla put itself forward for the DOT and the DAIS call centres.

Whyalla's concern is that if the government does not take the lead and invest in Whyalla (or any other regional centre, for that matter), how could the government expect the private centre to invest in us? The 'Directions' article went on to claim that more than 6 000 people were employed and that the government was on track to reach its target of 20 000 jobs by the year 2010. We are concerned to note that it appears that the state government has not set any job targets for this industry in regional areas, given the Premier's comments in the article that:

Adelaide is the call centre capital of Australia, and my government is determined to build on our reputation as a creative, productive and innovative state.

In the article the Premier is further quoted as saying:

This state's success can be attributed to an aggressive investment attraction strategy based on several natural advantages which make Adelaide a logical choice for call centres.

Given the Premier's comments that Adelaide is the government's focus, we can now understand why Whyalla is having a problem in getting any support in government to convince these call centres to set up in Whyalla. I ask where regions stand in the government policy of growing this industry and what the government intends to do with regard to its call centre functions. New South Wales recently took a lead by announcing that a wide range of back office and call centre functions are being transferred from Sydney, including a whole department.

I now wish to talk about some good things in my electorate. I will talk about some of the achievements that have happened in the past few months. First, I will talk about an exciting new project happening at the Whyalla campus of the University of South Australia. I have been delighted that Whyalla has been included as a participating regional centre in the exciting South Australian FV2000 entry to the 2000 national engineering innovation competition.

The Whyalla campus of the University of South Australia is one of five educational institutions working together to design and assist to construct a display car which is expected to be an exhibit at the national innovation showcase exhibition at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The theme of the display car is 'enhanced racing driver safety'. The car is based on the popular Formula Vee entry racing car category, but it will be a concept car and not intended for competition. The advantage as far as students and trainees are concerned is that the technology is simple and easy to work with and they can gain hands on experience by working on the car themselves. Another advantage is that the low construction costs of the FV2000 car means that the greater part of the project funding will go into advanced engineering design hardware and software. The project will not place any financial demand on the participating institutions. All costs are being met through a voluntary umbrella group working under the banner of IDRC (Innovative Design and Research Concepts), operating within FV2000 sponsorship funds.

BHP and Santos are two local Whyalla companies supporting the project. The Whyalla campus has already received free of charge through this project one state-of-the-art Silicon Graphics workstation, installed with global industry standard CATIA engineering design software. Members need to be aware that the licence fees for software of this standard is far above what almost all educational institutions can afford. I have heard that \$25 000 a year for

every installed work station is typical. The result is that staff and students normally do not have access to up to date engineering design software.

The Reengineering Australia Forum, which is supporting the program, is making this CATIA software available as free of charge unlimited licences through an arrangement with IBM and Dassault Systemes to every campus that participates in the national engineering innovation competition, which is up to \$40 million worth of software nationwide.

The potential impact of this arrangement to Whyalla is huge. The Whyalla campus now has permanent access through participation in the project to advanced design hardware and software that it could not otherwise afford. The Whyalla students in the design team are benefiting from the invaluable experience gained in working with Adelaide-based students from our four other campuses on an integrated design project with a real car as an end point.

A fundamental objective of the FV2000 program is to involve regional South Australia, and I am delighted that we are part of this exciting educational project. I am very pleased to have been invited to the formal state launch of the project at the South Australian Centre for Manufacturing on 6 October, and I will certainly do my best to be there.

I will also talk today about the Whyalla Metropolitan Fire Service, which this year won the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service Corporation shield for excellence in fire-fighting proficiency. Firefighters from across the state were put through their paces earlier this year when senior officials conducted their annual inspection of 16 country stations in South Australia. There were four separate visits, inspections of fast hose drills, responses to mock fires, a parade and a rescue scenario. This resulted in Whyalla taking out the prize.

I heartily congratulate all those concerned not only for this but also for the wonderful job they do in protecting the homes and families in our communities. I was most pleased to be invited to their celebration dinner and had a wonderful night with all the people from the Whyalla community.

These people do many hours of work for their community with very little compensation. They put their lives at risk and give up their leisure and family time to work in dangerous situations. I applaud them and their families for this work. Those in Whyalla include: station officer Geoffrey Arbon and Merrilee Arbon; senior firefighter Paul Chapman and Jemma Chapman; senior firefighter George Dunbar and Gail Dunbar; senior firefighter Barry Hammond and Sharen Hammond; firefighter Stephen Schubert and Cristina Schubert; firefighter Ken Litchfield and Jane Izatt; firefighter Patrick Leuba and Annette Leuba; firefighter James Higgins and Pauline Higgins; firefighter William Dunn and Tish Dunn; firefighter Keith Butler and Rosie Butler; firefighter Graeme Smith and Maryanne Smith; firefighter Daniel Clapp and Angela Schmitt; firefighter Russell Cooke and Lisa Chapman; firefighter Alan Brodie and Eynas Brodie; firefighter Julia Bone; firefighter Andrew Higgins and Bronwen Caple; firefighter Christopher Bohlin and Naomi Haldine; firefighter Terry Steele and Sonja Steele; firefighter Paul Leaver and Alison Leaver; and, firefighter Gary Carpenter and Sheryl Carpenter. I mention their partners because it is important, as they are prepared for their partners to go out in the middle of the night on many nights while they stay home to look after children, the house or whatever.

Thanks must also be given to the very understanding employers who allow their workers to leave their workplace in an emergency, and also to the other emergency services for their continued cooperation and support. This is the Whyalla

fire station's second win in recent years: it took out the award in the 1996 competitions. So, I send them all a big thank you and hearty congratulations from me and from my community.

I also have another first to brag about in my community, and one which is very dear to my heart. On Friday night, I had the pleasure to attend the prestigious Training Awards dinner at the Convention Centre. I was absolutely delighted to hear that Spencer Institute of TAFE won the training provider of the year award. Spencer Institute is based very much in my electorate and it includes campuses at Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Cleve, Jamestown, Peterborough, Kimba, Leigh Creek, Woomera, Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs, Wudinna, Kadina, Yorketown and Narungga. It covers a huge area of the state. Metropolitan based institutes do not understand the difficulties faced by Spencer staff, with the huge geographic area that is covered. The wear and tear on lecturers, who are often expected to travel long distances for meetings, training and classes, is incredible. They do a wonderful job. To win this award is a fitting and a wonderful result for them, and I feel very proud that they have achieved this distinction. I must add that I feel doubly proud because I was a lecturer with Spencer Institute in my former life, and I am very aware of the long hours and the hard work put in by the staff.

I was also thrilled to hear that Cherie Smith won the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year award. Cherie originally was in Coober Pedy and embarked on a career in aged care when she saw local elders suffering from staff shortages at the Umoona Aged Care Service. She successfully completed a traineeship in aged care and now works as a trainee Aboriginal education worker at the Port Lincoln High School. Cherie has family in Whyalla, Coober Pedy and Port Lincoln. She is a shining example to young indigenous men and women, and I was very pleased to meet with her and to renew my acquaintance with her mother Doris on Friday night.

Often country workers are treated as second-class citizens when they try to move to Adelaide. Because they have worked in country regions, they are often not recognised as real workers and have difficulty in gaining promotions to the city. This happens in the education field, the health field, the University of South Australia and in the TAFE system. These awards are proof that we can do things as well as, or better, than our city counterparts. To all my former colleagues I say congratulations, particularly to Wendy Burns, who is acting director at present, and the former director, Brian Nussey.

Finally, I want to say a few words on behalf of my beloved Whyalla. In the past, Whyalla has been a major contributor to this state's economy, and still is. Whyalla has been the second largest city in this state since the late 1960s—we still are, although we are just hanging on: Mount Gambier, a thriving community, is fast moving in on us. I do not begrudge Mount Gambier for this, because I am pleased to see any community in country South Australia thrive—and this is one of the few country areas that is thriving.

I was born and grew up in Whyalla, and I have spent most of my life there. I have watched Whyalla cope with the closure of the shipyards in 1978, the rationalisation of the steel industry in the early 1980s, and even more massive cuts in the 1990s. Whyalla coped with all this, and we fought on. But what I see now in Whyalla breaks my heart. The fight seems to have gone out of the city and, whichever way we turn, we are hitting brick walls. Our civic leaders, our economic development board, our industry organisations and our small businesses are doing everything they can to keep

the city alive—to create more employment, to attract industry to the town. But nothing seems to be working. We tried for the power station; we are prepared to look at the ship breaking industry. We have tried to overcome the negative stigma about our city in the media and elsewhere, but no-one seems to listen or to care. I have never seen morale so low in the town. People are leaving in droves—families who have had two, three, four or five generations there. Uncertainty about BHP's future in the city has demoralised everyone. Do we have a future? I do not know.

I urge the government to help us. We have had some very good prospects, such as the call centre that I mentioned, and some engineering firms have been interested. However, nothing ever seems to happen. I do not know why. I hope it is not because I am a Labor Party member in a fairly safe electorate. All I ask is that we receive some more consideration. We have a city with the infrastructure and housing for a population of up to 30 000 people. I ask people to make use of it and give us a go. Regional South Australia deserves a fair go: please give us one.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): It always fascinates me when I hear governors give their projections for the government's agenda for the following year. It reminds me of the arguments some monarchists are putting forward that, if we have a president elected, confirmed or ratified by a two-thirds majority of the commonwealth parliament, that president will simply be a puppet or a rubber stamp for whatever politician of the day is governing the nation or the state. It seems to me that the Governor's speech traditionally has always been written by the government of the day—and that is fine—and we try to keep the Governor's speech as politically neutral as possible to make sure that the government is not compromised in any situation. I applaud the government on not being as political in its speech writing for the Governor this year as it was in the previous year. I felt extremely embarrassed for the Governor last year when I heard the speech that he was forced to make by the government. Often in our past governors and governors-general—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: No, I am not. I am not reflecting on the Governor whatsoever: I am reflecting on you. The example I give is that in Great Britain, when the Labor government routed John Major's conservative party out of I think it was 18 years in office in England, Her Royal Highness the Queen was asked to mention in her speech that Britain just got better. Her Majesty refused to say those words—and rightly so. We should make sure that our head of state is not politicised in any way whatsoever.

What I will say about the government and its agenda for the following year is that it lacks any form of vision. The legislative program that the government has set out for the next 12 months is pathetic. This government is just standing still, like a kangaroo in the spotlight—not quite sure, a bit dazed and confused; not sure whether to move forwards or backwards; relying on internal polling to see whether or not it should reduce or increase the emergency services levy and trying to be very sensitive to the needs of the community. The fact is that this government became very sensitive, indeed, after the Victorian election result. We could just see the paleness in the face of Liberal MPs as they walked into the chamber after seeing their hero, Jeff Kennett, brought to his knees—the so-called 'jeff.gone'; the Premier who had done so much for Victoria apparently leading his government to a third consecutive win. This was the unlosable election against

a 'hapless' Stephen Bracks. But, of course, in the end, Labor fought an election campaign on accountability, honesty and integrity; on making sure that the Auditor-General was listened to and that he was empowered to do his job; on making sure that the independent umpire who looks at government accounting was kept honest; that corruption and arrogance was taken out of the Victorian system and that there was a government in Victoria for all Victorians. That is what we want here in South Australia: a government for all South Australians, not just a select few.

It amazed me that, when the Premier and his conservative government wanted to introduce the emergency services levy, they pulled out the hapless Minister for Police (the member for Mawson) to come out and announce the emergency services levy in front of the cameras and explain how a house in North Adelaide would be much better off under the new system. But when the Premier decided to decrease the emergency services levy because of the backlash in the bush and in the suburbs, where was the member for Mawson? He was nowhere to be seen.

Who appeared on the taxpayer-funded television advertisements? It was John Olsen, talking about how he has been listening to the community, how he has consulted the community, how he cares about how he has hurt the community with his emergency services levy and how he has decided to reduce it. The Premier suddenly found \$20 million. Well, that is just fantastic. I am glad the government found \$20 million. I often find loose change when I sit on my sofa at home. I look behind it and I find a \$2 coin. Obviously those in government were sitting there and thinking, 'Oh, here's a spare \$20 million; we will use this for our hospital; we will use this for our schools.' Meanwhile, hospital beds were being closed. While there was the threat of the closure of wards at the QEH, the Flinders Medical Centre and the Lyell McEwin, this government sat back and did nothing. Not only did it do nothing, but it blamed someone else: the federal government.

This government has never taken responsibility for any of its actions. As soon as the government hits a brick wall with an issue it says, 'It's the Labor Party's fault; if only you had supported the sale of ETSA earlier.' Well, we never supported the sale of ETSA. Those opposite say, 'If it were not for the State Bank situation 10 years ago we would be in a much better position.' This government never wants to take responsibility for its actions. They do not want to govern; they are afraid of governing. They do not want to be ministers of the Crown. They do not want to take responsibility for their actions: they want to blame others.

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I take no responsibility whatsoever for the State Bank; I was 15 years old when it happened. If you want to blame me, that is fine. This government has used the State Bank crisis for political gain. The government has continually knocked South Australia's economic outlook. When that perception of gloom that they cast on the state stuck and they could not get rid of it, it became our fault. This government has never taken responsibility for any of its actions. Today, we had to listen to the Minister for Human Services and his pathetic response concerning the threatened closures at the QEH. This will not give stability to the western suburbs in terms of cancer research, maternity wards, obstetric services, etc. Perhaps this is why the Liberal Party holds almost no seats in the western suburbs. Perhaps it is because the Liberal Party holds only one out of six seats in the western suburbs that the QEH is not at the top of its

priorities. When the Flinders Medical Centre is under threat we see the Minister for Human Services responding and reacting immediately. But when it is the QEH our complaints fall on deaf ears.

South Australians deserve a government that serves all South Australians—not just a select few. It deserves a government that will govern for everyone, because if members opposite do not do that they will pay the same price that Jeff Kennett paid in Victoria. South Australians will not tolerate a government which is arrogant, which does not listen and which thinks it is beyond accountability. In those terms, this government stinks. This government has not listened to South Australians since the day in 1993 when it was elected. If it had been listening to the people there would not be three Independents on the crossbenches. If this government had been listening to the community it would not be a minority government. This government is so arrogant and bereft of vision that after a landslide election win in 1993 it was reduced to minority government within four years. After four years you could not help yourself: fighting amongst yourselves, knocking off Dean Brown—

The Hon. I.F. Evans: Tell us about Ralph.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Ralph's doing a great job. This government is bereft of ideas. I also want to refer to parliamentary procedure. I am still fairly new at understanding exactly how this parliament works, and I do not claim to be an expert on parliamentary procedures. But it seems to me that Address in Reply debates are not particularly useful. After hearing the member for Hartley's contribution about more diversity in the parliament and then remembering how he moved a private member's bill to try to exclude a portion of our community from running for parliament, I could not believe the hypocrisy. However, some Address in Reply contributions are very useful. Members of parliament are able to talk in parliament about local community groups, actions that they require, and local community needs and concerns. But it seems to me that there should be a better system for opposition members and government backbenchers to respond to government programs, projections and visions.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Well, there is no legislation to understand. What legislation is before the House? The government's legislative program for the next year is hopeless. I am sure that the Parliament of Tasmania has more legislation on the books for the upcoming year than does this parliament. Parliament's procedures need to be changed. Question time is not functioning properly. Ministers who are continually fearful of opposition questions run down the clock by talking about so-called good news stories, people winning medals (which is fine) and Le Mans races. I envisage a question time where each individual minister is questioned in a way similar to Estimates Committees. We would have the Premier, Deputy Premier, ministers and junior ministers before a committee of, say, three opposition members and three government members for an hour every day where we could pose questions to each individual minister. Often we can go through two or three days of sitting with an individual minister not being asked a question because there is no time.

Mr Scalzi: Whose fault is that?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is the fault of government ministers who run down the clock.

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: No. My proposal is that there be three government members and three opposition members questioning a minister.

Members interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: From the interjections opposite I look forward to the next general election, because the level of debate will increase dramatically once the member for Hartley is gone. When Quentin Black enters this House the level of debate will rise through the roof. The member for Hartley's contributions in this House are next to pathetic. I believe that question time should be more accurate and that there should be more scrutiny. Ministers should be more accountable to the House. I am sure that this is something our ministers, if we achieve government at the next election, might not appreciate. I believe that backbenchers should have more of an opportunity to scrutinise ministers and premiers than they do currently. We see government backbenchers get to their feet and ask dorothy dixers, questions that ministers have written for them. We all know that is happening. No-one can tell me that the backbenchers of the government ask spontaneous questions concerning their interests. They are told previously in their tactics meetings what questions to ask—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I write all my own questions and speeches. I do not need anybody to write them for me. We need a more accountable government where government members and opposition members have more of an opportunity to question ministers.

On the matter of police numbers, in South Australia they are a disgrace. Since taking office in 1993 this government has actively sought to reduce police numbers. The government has put South Australians and community safety at risk. The government has lowered morale in the police ranks to an all-time low. I went on a trip with the shadow minister for police, Patrick Conlon, the member for Elder, to nearly 40 country police stations. The old sergeant at the police station at Kadina was very loyal to his old boss, the Premier, but, as for the rest, for the first time in my career in politics, including working for other MPs and as a campaign manager for other MPs, police officers, old senior sergeants, people with 25 years' experience are saying to Labor Party MPs, 'This mob is getting it wrong.' Police officers are good at making bad systems work, and they have always done that. Police officers pride themselves on making limited resources work well, but now they just cannot do it anymore.

The first police station we visited was in the Government Whip's electorate, and they were not happy at all. In fact, when the police officer in charge wanted new desks he had to drive to Adelaide at his own expense, steal the desks from police headquarters and take them back. All the painting and renovations done at that police station are done at the expense of the two officers who work there. They are the ones who paint the police station and do the repairs. At this police station the airconditioner has not been working for the past three years. Repeated requests have been made to the local member, who sympathises with the police officers—

Mr Scalzi: He is a good member.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am not criticising the local member; I am criticising the government as a whole. Country police officers and their spouses do an excellent job. Often, while the police officers are out on their rounds, the spouses stay behind in the police station and answer the telephone. They are the ones who are paying the price. And what does this government do? It removes the spouses' levy. This government wants to take away rent relief for country police officers. It is disgraceful. Communities in regional areas want their local police officers working there.

We went to one country police station where the officers are not given the equipment to do random breath testing but are told, 'Every day you must do a certain amount of random breath testing in your area.' However, they are not given the right size of cones, witches hats or signs to put up to pull people over. They are not given the right vests or the equipment they need to do their job. When they book someone for exceeding the legal blood alcohol limit, some clever lawyer in Adelaide gets the person off because the police did not use the right procedure or did not have the right size cones or vests. It is disgraceful.

Country police officers are the poor cousins of police officers in the city. They are using equipment that is outdated. Every time there is a new issue of equipment in Adelaide, country police officers get the hand-me-downs from the city. This is a disgrace. The country is basically represented by conservative members of parliament, apart from the member for Giles (Ms Lynn Breuer). What have government members done for police resourcing in the bush since 1993? Absolutely nothing! It is a disgrace. The government is letting its constituents down. If this was going on in the city, it would be fixed immediately.

But the fact is that the lesson Jeff Kennett learnt very harshly on election night this government will learn, because it has betrayed the bush; it has let them down. You cannot drive to a police station without having police officers criticise the government. This is the first time I have ever seen that—the first time I have ever seen police officers criticise a conservative government. It is amazing. People who have voted Liberal for their entire life as police officers come to us saying, 'Look, we just can't put up with it anymore. We're the poor cousins: we get treated as if we're second class citizens,' and this conservative government, priding itself on law and order and on having a well-equipped police department, treats the police department with utter contempt.

I find it amazing that the government has so many regional representatives in its caucus yet it lets its police officers be treated this way. It is absolutely disgraceful. No wonder this is a minority government. No wonder the three Independents who allow it to govern are from regional areas and seats that the government lost. I have already heard a rumour that there will be a new junior minister, a junior minister from the bush. It may be the member for Flinders: I hear that she is being groomed. She is advertising for speech writers and apparently she is taking certain media classes. The rumour is that our version of Jeff Kennett, Premier John Olsen, is a bit nervous about what is going on in Victoria and a bit nervous about the internal polling and what is happening in the bush.

Maybe we need a special minister for the bush. It may be that the person to do it is the member for Flinders. I wish her luck! But I can say this: there will be a lot of very good Labor candidates running in the bush in the seats of Frome and Stuart, and I am sure there will be very good Independents running in those seats and others as well. There are very good Independent candidates on Yorke Peninsula. If I were a Liberal backbencher, I would be very worried right now—very concerned. If I were a Liberal backbencher in the Hills and had a high proportion of Democrat voters, I would also be very worried.

The community of South Australia has nothing but contempt for this government. People know that the government is not listening: they know that it is just pandering. They know that it is not really interested in the concerns of ordinary South Australians. I give members opposite this

promise: they will be swept from office at the next election. The member for Hartley will be gone, the member for Colton will be gone, the Deputy Premier will lose his seat and the Minister for Education will lose his seat, because this government has betrayed the people who elected it.

Mr Snelling: Davenport will go to the Democrats.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Davenport is a big risk to go to the Democrats. If I were the member for Davenport, I would be extremely concerned. The member for Hartley has already gone; he is already finished. But the ones we have not worked on yet are the ones like Waite and Davenport. They will be desperately needing Labor preferences. Those members will need a strong Labor campaign in those areas. They will need a Labor vote to go through the roof in those areas; otherwise, we will have Democrats in this House for the first time.

My advice to them is this: they should start getting out there and do some doorknocking, listen to the local communities, talk to their neighbours and their constituents and make sure that they serve their needs, not trying to tax them out of existence and not trying to tax ordinary families who are just trying to get by.

I refer to this emergency service tax—and that is what it is: it is not a levy; it is a new tax. No matter how they dress it up, it is still mutton dressed as lamb. It is a tax. And the punters out there know it is a tax. They will do to the government what they did to us in 1993, because when governments stop listening, when governments are arrogant, when governments think that they know better than the people who elect them, they get treated in the way that Jeff Kennett did, the way that Wayne Goss was treated, the way Nick Greiner did and the way that we were treated in 1993. And it is the way John Olsen and his government will be treated in 2001. This government will not survive its own arrogance.

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.48 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 19 October at 2 p.m.