

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 19 October 1999

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

PORTS CORPORATION

A petition signed by 1 479 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the government not to sell the operations of the Ports Corporation on Kangaroo Island was presented by the Hon. D.C. Brown.

Petition received.

NOTICE PAPER AND DAILY PROGRAM

The SPEAKER: I advise members that, as part of the development of the MAPICS project, from tomorrow the Notice Paper and the Daily Program will be emailed to their electorate offices. In the case of the Notice Paper that will be by 9 a.m. following the previous day's sitting and at 1 p.m. for the Daily Program.

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)—

Advisory Board of Agriculture—Report, 1998-99
Regulations under the following Acts—
Agricultural Chemicals—Prescribed Standards
Fisheries—
Lobster Pots Age Restriction
Prawn Licence
Fisheries (Gulf St. Vincent Prawn Fishery
Rationalization)—Principal

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

Regulations under the following Acts—
Harbors and Navigation—
Goolwa Area
Guichen Bay
Nurses—Principal
TransAdelaide Corporation—Charter, July 1999

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

Construction Industry Training Board—Report, 1998-99
Department of Treasury and Finance—Report, 1998-99
ElectraNet SA—Report, 1999
ETSA Capital Pty Ltd—Report, 1998-99
ETSA Corporation—Report, 1999
ETSA Power—Report, 1998-99
ETSA Utilities Pty Ltd—Report, 1999
Flinders Power Pty Ltd—Report, 1999
Gaming Supervisory Authority—Report, 1998-99
Motor Accident Commission—Report, 1998-99
Office of the Liquor and Gaming Commission—Report, 1998-99
Optima Energy—Report, 1998-99
Parliamentary Superannuation Board—Report, 1998-99
Police Superannuation Board—Report, 1998-99
SA Generation Corporation—Report, 1999
South Australian Asset Management Corporation—
Report, 1998-99
South Australian Government Captive Insurance
Corporation—Report, 1998-99
South Australian Government Financing Authority—
Report, 1998-99
South Australian Superannuation Board—Report, 1998-99

State Supply Board—Report, 1998-99
Superannuation Funds Management Corporation of SA
(Funds SA)—Report, 1998-99
Synergen—Report, 1998-99
Terra Gas Trader Pty Ltd—Report, 1998-99
Electricity Act—Regulations—Industry Regulator

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

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee—Report, 1998-99
Land Board—Report, 1998-99
Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board—
Report, 1999
Reserve Planning and Management Advisory Committee—
Report, 1998-99
South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council—
Report, 1998-99
State Heritage Authority—Report, 1998-99
Wildlife Advisory Committee—Report, 1998-99

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

Courts Administration Authority—Report, 1998-99
Director of Public Prosecutions—Report, 1998-99
Justice Portfolio (Incorporating the Department of Justice
and the Attorney-General's Department)—Report,
1998-99
Legal Services Commission of South Australia—Report,
1998-99
Office of Film and Literature Classification—Guidelines
for the Classification of Publications
Police Act & Police (Complaints & Disciplinary
Proceedings) Act—Agreement—Conduct constituting
minor misconduct
Public Trustee—Report, 1998-99
South Australian Classification Council—Report, 1998-99
State Electoral Office—Report, 1998-99
Regulations under the following Acts—
Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing)—Forms
Liquor Licensing—Dry Areas—Port Augusta—Short
Term
Real Property—
Fees—Land Division
Fees—Variation
Supreme Court Act 1935—Rules of Court—Federal State
Jurisdiction

By the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. I.F. Evans)—

South Australian Harness Racing Authority—Rules of
Racing—Harness Racing—Rules.

STATE ECONOMY

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Today I want to talk about the government's commitment in taking South Australia to the world—making sure that the world knows where South Australia is and what it has to offer. In a fast-changing global economy never before has this been so important. Our small population of less than 1.5 million people means that we do not have the economies of scale for our industries and businesses to survive and prosper on the strength of local market alone. Those days are long gone. South Australia needs to be more export driven and foreign investment friendly than just about any other state in Australia. This is our future. It is recognised by this government and is being recognised—thankfully—by an increasing number of South Australians and their companies. South Australian companies now trade with some 180 countries—the highest number of any state in Australia.

Exports mean job security and job expansion. Foreign investment, be it through investment in existing South Australian goods and services or new business initiatives, means more jobs for South Australians. This in turn means more money being spent in our hotels, clubs, restaurants and retail stores. In fact, the whole state benefits.

Taking South Australia to the world is not a glib statement. It is a statement of substance. It is a genuine commitment from this government to ensure that South Australia and South Australians have the opportunity to make the most out of being part of the global village—making sure that international tourists are well versed in the delights of the state from Kangaroo Island to our wine regions through to the beauty of the outback and the Flinders Ranges. The outstanding success of Tasting Australia and its subsequent promotion, marketing and profiling of South Australia of its fine wines and foods, restaurants and tourist destinations will enhance that substantially.

It is a commitment that our businesses and industries, from the emerging aquaculture industries (we are now the foremost state in production of farm based aquaculture) to manufacturing and information technology, all have doors to opportunities opened for them. It is a commitment to showcase what we do best.

I assure the House that this government is no shrinking violet when it comes to selling what is best about South Australia—selling our competitive advantage. There is our stable and able work force, record of low industrial disputes and competitive wage structure. There is our low cost affordable lifestyle from housing to living costs. Then there are our food and wines, arts and entertainment—the list goes on.

The government is committed to taking South Australia to the world and the world to South Australia. As a case in point, last week I travelled to Asia to open up our offices for Education Adelaide in Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as conducting a series of industry and trade discussions. Education Adelaide is an initiative of the South Australian government, Adelaide City Council and our three universities to promote the state as a high quality and highly affordable education destination. And the initiative is working.

We are actively targeting Hong Kong and Singapore as markets with the greatest potential for significant growth in overseas students. Since 1995 there has been a 49 per cent increase in the number of students from Hong Kong alone—these are full fee paying students—making the city the biggest supplier of overseas students to South Australia. More young Singaporeans go on to higher education than any other Asian country. And Singapore, with its fibre optic network, is ideally placed to take advantage of on-line education over the internet—an area where, I am proud to say, South Australia is the national leader.

This involves taking Adelaide education to the world. An opportunity has been identified and the government has acted. And why are an increasing number of students from Hong Kong and Singapore choosing to study in Adelaide? Well, it is because of our competitive advantage. The average cost of living for an overseas student in Sydney is \$15 000 a year. In Adelaide that cost is almost halved to \$8 000. That is high quality, world recognised education at an affordable cost in a safe environment and with an enviable lifestyle. About \$230 million a year is contributed to the economy of South Australia by these full fee paying students from overseas. That is not only assisting and offsetting the operational cost of our universities, which will assist South Australian

students in terms of their costs, but also the more students the greater opportunity there is for curriculum choice, advancement and expansion, the beneficiaries being South Australian students—not to mention the spending power in a range of small to medium businesses in the state.

Last week I also travelled to Korea to sign a sister city agreement with the provincial government of Chung Chong Nam Do, the sixth largest province in the country. This agreement was two years in the making. It provides South Australia and South Australian companies with a solid base to build on annual exports of \$100 million in refined lead, fuel, oil and wool but, more importantly, it places South Australia in the box seat to take advantage of two key emerging sectors: food and beverages, and information technology. That is the government's food for the future plan. As a result of the emerging opportunities, the government is also examining the prospects for a trade office to be established in Korea. Again, this is about recognising opportunity and seizing that opportunity. Similarly, a unique tourism opportunity has also been identified, seized upon and implemented in Japan. To that extent, I pay credit to Mr Robert Gumley, our senior representative in Tokyo, whose perseverance and persistence with the Japanese authorities enabled this project to go ahead.

South Australia has become the first foreign state or country to be granted permission to run a tourism campaign in 24 000 post offices across Japan through a deal struck last week between our government office in Tokyo and the Japanese ministry of post and telecommunications. The campaign promoting South Australia as a tourist destination for the more mature Japanese, who have had enough of the east coast experience (that is, beyond the rock, the reef and the bridge) has a potential audience of 45 million Japanese. South Australia has the exclusive rights for this campaign for the first two years, with an option for the third year. The campaign at a cost of \$500 000 shared between the government and the Australian Tourist Commission, aims to lift the number of Japanese tourists from 20 000 to 50 000 a year for an annual injection of up to \$500 million into the state—again, an opportunity identified; the government has acted.

Last week in Hong Kong, Cathay Pacific revealed it had chosen Adelaide over the United Kingdom for the long term training of its pilots. Pilot training for major airlines is a niche market; that is what South Australia does well: being innovative and being able to specialise. British Aerospace Flight Training Australia based at Parafield, formerly the Australian Aviation College, will now be the sole provider of training for Cathay Pacific pilots. Currently Cathay Pacific sends about 12 pilots a year to Adelaide for training. Next year it plans to send 40 pilots, with a further 60 the following year. The decision reflects an enormous faith in the quality of the training and expertise supplied by British Aerospace and its specialised Adelaide work force.

These initiatives are but a few examples of the benefits of taking South Australia to the world. The benefits are real; the job creation is tangible. South Australians can rest assured that the government will continue to take South Australia to the world. Whilst on this trip during the course of last week, discussions were also held on investment in South Australia, and in particular the major transport infrastructure of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link was discussed with interested parties who were part of the preferred consortium, underscoring the importance of that transport corridor to South Australia, its economy and our future.

JET SKIS

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I table a ministerial statement made by the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning in another place on jet ski regulation review.

QUESTION TIME**BHP STEEL**

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the crucial importance of retaining the 2 000 steel industry jobs at BHP's Long Products Division in Whyalla, does the Premier favour a trade sale or a sale by public float of BHP Steel, and can he confirm to the House that parliament would need to approve significant changes to the 1958 indenture agreement between the government and BHP to allow a new owner to operate the plant?

The 1958 indenture (which I believe refers to a former indenture in 1937) gave BHP exclusive rights to certain mineral deposits, electricity, water and other resources in return for building and operating the steelworks. Through legislative changes to the indenture, the opposition is keen to work with the government to secure the best outcome for Whyalla and for the skilled and loyal BHP workers.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition and the fact that the member for Whyalla took up this issue with a similar thrust in my discussions with her, after BHP had indicated to me the course of action that it has now put in place.

As has been publicly announced, BHP intends to sell its Long Products Division at Whyalla. In discussions with Mr Paul Anderson and other executives from BHP, they have indicated that the possible sale of the Long Products Division could be implemented by two methods: first, a trade sale or, secondly, a public float to shareholders of BHP to establish an independent company business unit. My understanding is that BHP is looking at those options and will make a determination as to the course that it would prefer.

It is correct to say that several indentures are in place at Whyalla and also that the ore body has an indenture applying to it. Any trade sale or any public float with the establishment of a new company would, as I am currently advised, in a preliminary sense, require changes to the indenture. It will be the intention of the government to ensure that the interests of Whyalla and, in particular, those of the work force, are protected in any decisions that BHP would wish to make as it relates to the sale.

As the government's support will be required for indenture amendment, I can assure the leader, the member for Whyalla and the House that consideration of the work force and the ongoing investment in Whyalla will be paramount in our consideration. I am unsure of the time line, but I would anticipate that, over the next six to nine months, the preferred course from BHP will be identified. I go on to say that, as it relates to BHP and its executives, I would like publicly to commend them for the way in which they have gone about the process in terms of forewarning, advice and explanation of the steps that they wished to take.

As I said at the time, I think that the decision by BHP in the major rationalisation of its operations in Australia will

present perhaps a circuit-breaker for Whyalla in this context. Over recent years, we have seen a diminished work force and limited capital investment—that is, capital investment that has been absolutely essential has been put in place. With a new purchaser, one would hope that, as a stand alone steel operation in either a new publicly floated company (as I understand is one option), or a trade sale, one would see substantial new investment and, therefore, the endeavour to get new market opportunities for BHP. That must augur well, of course, for Whyalla.

I am also advised by BHP that the management and the work force are to be commended for the efficiency of the operation at Whyalla: it is one of the more efficient operations in Australia. The reason Whyalla continued to function and Newcastle did not was in fact because of that point. In my ministerial statement a moment ago I mentioned the work force, the commitment of the work force and the attitude of the work force generally in South Australia being a competitive advantage. In that instance, in Whyalla the work ethic, the attitude of the work force and the output of the work force was a factor in retaining the operations at Whyalla vis-a-vis the closure of the operations on the eastern seaboard of Australia. It proves the benefits of competitive work force performance. Given that—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Well, I pay credit to all who were involved in that. If there is the recognition in the broader community of the need for that and the effect on the South Australian economy, we will continue to get further private sector investment which will bring job certainty for South Australians. But as it relates to Whyalla I think credit is due to the performance of the facility. Major new capital investment will be required in the not too distant future, and any purchaser would obviously have to take that into account. Clearly, the blast furnace has been extended beyond what is normally, as I understand it, an operational lifetime, but with prudent management of the blast furnace they have been successful in that.

I can assure the leader, the House and the member for Whyalla that our endeavours will be to ensure continuity, further investment, protection of the work force and a facility which contributes substantially to the economy of South Australia. To further enhance the prospects of the Whyalla operation, if we are able in the not too distant future, in the next month or so, to reach a successful conclusion on the Adelaide-Darwin rail link, it offers a prospect of significant benefit to Whyalla and to the South Australian economy where substantial components of the purchasers of the goods and services will be sourced out of South Australia, and I understand that is part of the bid proposal of the preferred consortium. In that instance, there would be a further boost to Whyalla and to that particular investment and facility.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Will the Premier outline to the House the recent government initiatives to promote community consultation in the decision-making processes of government?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Well—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Spence!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am delighted that there have been some interjections from those opposite, because I will be more than happy in the fullness of this answer to respond

to some of these questions opposite. We have prided ourselves over a few years on being accessible and listening. Perhaps the member for Hart, who laughs loudest, might actually acknowledge that in relation to a major project proposed for his area at Pelican Point we did take into account the community. The member for Hart laughs, but he is more than prepared to take on board decisions of the government when it has responded. For some time—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No. What about the ‘lunch-a-lots?’ I do not know whether members have heard, but the members for Hart and Elder are into the lunch circuit again: they are taking the media out on these lunch binges. Members will remember the barbeques earlier, and the only person who was not asked to the barbeques was the Leader of the Opposition. Lo and behold, the lunches are on the agenda. It is the member for Hart and the member for Elder, but, once again, the leader is not on the list—and neither is the member for Kaurna!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order. Before calling the honourable member I point out that if members wish to take a point of order they should rise from their seat before doing so and call a point of order. If a member just stands there, it does not indicate much to the chair. I assume that the member for Reynell has a point of order.

Ms THOMPSON: Yes, sir. My point of order concerns the relevance of barbeques to community consultation.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order, but I would bring the Premier back to the substance of the reply.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Members greeted this question with great mirth and a number of interjections, and it would be inappropriate to ignore them, although perhaps that is not quite in line with Standing Orders, which I will attempt to observe.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Talking about smiling, I notice the member for Ross Smith busy at work. I feel a bit sorry for Ralph: he exposes all the party’s problems; risks it all in the courts and wins; builds a bit of a war chest for the next election; does all the hard work, and then finds out that only he and the member for Price are going to be challenged after all this. The member for Elder was coaxed back into Elder—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: You might have sought justice in the courts, Ralph, but you shouldn’t have expected it afterwards, particularly from some of your colleagues over there. I notice that the member for Price and the member for Ross Smith, who is looking up now, have been busy writing during this. To return to the substance of the question, country cabinet meetings are important in that they allow the cabinet to meet with representatives of local communities. Over a couple of years we have taken the cabinet to country areas of South Australia, and in that way cabinet is better placed to become familiar with and understand issues of importance to particular communities. It also allows local people to put forward their views to cabinet ministers. Recently we had country cabinet meetings in Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Clare, Waikerie and the Barossa Valley; next month we will be in Millicent and shortly after that in Mount Gambier. The success of these country cabinet meetings—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Yes, I am sure that Mount Barker will be on the list. If members just wait, I will give them the full list. Given the success of these meetings, we have taken to expanding that initiative, and when we were in the Barossa Valley for the meeting in about August, if my memory serves me correctly, we announced that we will have 12 community cabinet meetings next year. They will include rural areas such as Mount Gambier, Victor Harbor, Kangaroo Island, Peterborough, Whyalla, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, Port Pirie and Renmark, as well as metropolitan areas such as Golden Grove, Marion, Gawler and Noarlunga.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: We have made policy decisions relative to Pelican Point such that I would have thought—

Mr Foley: Only three.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Be thankful! The member for Hart noted a moment ago that we are so predictable. If we are so predictable, why was he so concerned at the policy decision that might have emerged on Pelican Point? There is a bit of a contradiction there. It is like wanting the golf course around the national power station at Pelican Point as a buffer. You tell the locals one thing and try to negotiate on the side: ‘Give us a golf course around the power station and I might be able to neutralise some of the local effects.’ So, the interjections will cloud the response to the member for Hart, I acknowledge. Not only has Cabinet gone out, but also over recent months we have introduced the chief executives—the senior management council—going out as well. That has been a valuable addition to the process that we have had in place now for some time.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Well, in relation to the Leader’s side comment, I simply say to him: we have been waiting for the year of policy of the Labor Party—one policy, just one. We did get one but, lo and behold, it was a recycled policy. It was not even a new one: it was a 1996 policy of the Leader who said that whenever they get into government—whichever century or decade that might be—they would have four country Cabinet meetings. Big deal! We have in fact gone well beyond that.

We have consistently said that if we are effectively to rebuild and rejuvenate the economy of this state—and I must say (and even the Leader would have to acknowledge) that the economic indicators show a state starting to rebuild; and Econtech’s August 19 report stated that we will have two to three years of good positive growth ahead of us in the economy—there is economic development within both the country and the city. We now have country towns and regional areas that are growing and expanding.

For instance, Loxton has been built out. We have had to put in place further subdivisions and extend the water mains system for expansion in Loxton. Clare (where Cabinet met earlier this year) has effectively been built out as a regional town. They want further expansion and will need about 600 additional employees in the next two years to meet the demand in the viticulture industry in that region.

Members should also note what the aquaculture industry is doing for country and regional areas on Eyre Peninsula, where we now outperform every other state in Australia in growth in aquaculture and produce ex-farm gate. That is what we have been attempting to do. The whole of South Australia’s rejuvenation and the policy directions and settings that have been put in place are in fact delivering.

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the potential effect on jobs in the car industry of the current buyers' strike on the purchase of new cars as consumers wait for the introduction of the GST, and last Friday's strong statement on the issue by the head of Holden's, has the commonwealth government now indicated any preparedness to introduce transitional tax treatment for cars to bring down the wholesale sales tax rate to the level of the prospective GST so that the decline in car sales can be reversed and jobs secured?

There has been a continuous five month decline in car sales and there is a stock of 100 000 unsold cars nationwide. Last Friday Holden executives were reported as saying that they would consider halting production in the lead-up to the GST if demand continues to fall as consumers defer purchases to take advantage of the lower tax on cars. Holden's Chairman and Managing Director Peter Hanenberger stated that unless this issue is addressed 'something ugly is going to happen next year.'

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): On this question, the Leader might well be aware that I have formed an Auto 21 group which comprises the major manufacturers and key automotive component supply firms. We have met, and as a result a number of issues have been raised with me. I have taken up those issues, and let me recount two or three of them: the importation of used tyres from overseas impacting against the production by Bridgestone; the importation of mag wheels into Australia in competition against mag wheel production within South Australia; and the importation of used motor vehicles which are unfairly competing on the market in South Australia.

Not only have I taken those issues up with the Prime Minister, Senator Minchin as Minister for Industry and the Minister for Industry and Trade but at the recent trade ministers' meeting in Darwin South Australia put on the agenda the need to ensure that the importation of these secondhand goods—tyres and used cars—and, in some instances, as it relates to mag wheels, new product from overseas pass the safety tests and requirements applying to Australian produced product under Australian rules, and they do not. I was in the Senate when the Button plan looked at a relaxation for the importation of used motor vehicles, but with the expectation that the number of used motor vehicles coming into Australia would be insignificant. I think since that time it has doubled or trebled in number, and therefore that is impacting against new motor vehicle sales in Australia. The matter has been taken up on those three fronts.

In relation to new motor vehicle sales and what we are seeing in the marketplace at the moment, that is another issue that I have discussed with the Prime Minister, Senator Minchin and other federal cabinet ministers, in that the transitional provisions need to be addressed at a federal level. There are several ways in which the transitional provisions can be addressed. First, in the wholesale sales tax treatment through to 1 July; or, secondly, from 1 July next year onwards the 100 per cent, then 50 per cent component as it relates to leased vehicles in the two years post the introduction of the GST and the abolition of wholesale sales tax. There are two components to that.

It is a matter of presenting argument to the federal government—and I have. At this stage I do not wish to indicate the response from the federal government other than to say that we are continuing to work on it. There are two

components, pre and post 1 July and GST, and how the transitional provisions, both in advance and after, might better reflect continuing momentum of sales of motor vehicles. At the end of the day, these decisions are a matter for a federal government. We need to take into account the fact that the Australian government's commitment in East Timor is a very substantial financial commitment in this financial year which has not been budgeted for by the commonwealth government. I have heard suggestions of the order of \$1 billion worth of expenditure in the current financial year, which, clearly, was not in the forward plans and estimates. Therefore that restricts opportunities for a federal government.

Be that as it may, the arguments are there. We have presented the case for South Australia and presented the case for the motor vehicle industry but, at the end of the day, these decisions are a matter for the commonwealth.

JOBS COMMISSION

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Industry and Trade advise the House whether he supports the idea of a jobs commission as recently announced by the Leader of the Opposition?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I had to smile when I heard of the latest policy development by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the development of a jobs commission. As members are aware, it was widely reported in the press that in his address to the Fabian Society on 6 October the Leader of the Opposition stated that one of his first actions as Premier would be to scrap the current department of industry, trade and technology and other competing economic development agencies, establish a single jobs commission and make it directly answerable to the Premier. No doubt that would be attractive to some people when they first hear of that policy. However, the interesting thing is that the department he is planning to replace does not exist.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: You have been here two years; if you do not know the name of the department it is hardly our fault. It is interesting that the name of the department he will replace does not exist. The first policy publicly announced after the last election is to replace something that does not exist, and that says a lot about the policy development of the opposition. One would assume that a jobs commission would take on the role that is currently undertaken by the minister for employment and his officers, and one would have to ask why anyone would want to give that job to the Leader of the Opposition. When he was the minister for employment under a previous government, between December 1989 and September 1992, the number of unemployed South Australians increased by 34 600. The number of people who were employed fell by about 8 000 people. The unemployment rate rose from about 6.8 per cent to 11.4 per cent, and the teenage unemployment rate rose to about 40 per cent. For every day that the Leader of the Opposition was the minister for employment, 34 South Australians joined the dole queue.

So, it is interesting that the first thing he would do as Premier is bring all these employment agencies under him so that he could repeat the dose for South Australia. What will he replace? This is the interesting question. Let us look at what the Department of Industry and Trade and other departments have delivered for South Australia. South Australia has enjoyed about 15 consecutive months of trend

growth employment. More people are employed in South Australia now than ever before—some 666 000. About 17 400 more South Australians are in work today than at the same time last year. The unemployment rate has fallen from about 11.5 per cent when we came to government to about 8.2 per cent. Employment in South Australia has grown in 11 out of 17 industry divisions to the year ending in August. For example, merchandise exports have increased by 6.5 per cent for the year 1998-99. Manufacturing exports totalled \$3.6 billion and are up 5.6 per cent from the previous year. Exports of road vehicles, parts and accessories are up some 36 per cent; wine has increased by about 23 per cent; and fish and seafood are up by about 7 per cent.

So, the general policy thrust of the ALP is that, once you get the economy up and running, the first thing you do with something that attracts a bit of good news is get rid of it and replace it with nothing more than yet another committee that might report to the Premier. I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the House that he got the department wrong; I believe he has his policy wrong.

HINDMARSH STADIUM

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I direct my question to the minister for Olympic soccer. Why was consultant Mr Sam Ciccarello retained by the government in 1997 at a cost of \$378 000 to 'bring the Olympics to South Australia' when SOCOG correspondence shows that Adelaide's Hindmarsh stadium was already listed as an Olympic soccer venue more than two years earlier? A document recently released by the ACT government under freedom of information legislation shows that on 30 January 1995 SOCOG wrote to the then Chief Minister of the ACT in relation to Olympic soccer venues. The letter states that the Sydney candidature file, which forms part of the host city contract with the IOC, already provided for the Hindmarsh stadium to be used for Olympic soccer. The Auditor-General's Report contains detailed criticism of the government's handling of the Olympic soccer consultancy, with the auditor questioning whether the state received value for money.

The SPEAKER: The Chair presumes that the honourable member is directing the question to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing.

Mr WRIGHT: No, Sir; I am directing it to the minister for Olympic soccer.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member knows full well that no minister has been sworn in under that title. To whom does the honourable member want to address his question?

Mr WRIGHT: On a point of order, Sir: when we last met in the parliament the minister said that she was the minister for Olympic soccer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is clearly starting to flout the authority of the Chair. He knows full well that the Chair is requesting the name of the minister to whom the honourable member is addressing his question. If he does not give me the name I will pass on to another question. I will give him one more opportunity; to whom is he addressing his question?

Mr WRIGHT: The Minister for Tourism.

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): The member for Lee is well aware that the consultancy about which he is talking was more than simply the obtaining of the event for this state. The consultancy covers activities from

security to a whole range of things, and he well knows that. I think he is just being—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Stuart.

REGIONAL AND RURAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Will the Premier advise the House what consideration is given to the needs of regional and rural South Australia in policy determinations by this Liberal Government?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Last year, at the request of the Provincial Cities Mayors Association, the government responded by putting in place a regional task force. We indicated to the provincial city mayors that that regional task force would be treated seriously. The recommendations would in fact be put in place, and that is what has happened. The task force reported earlier this year. Post the task force report, the Office of Regional Development has been established. The purpose for the Office of Regional Development is to ensure that there is coordination across government for regional development initiatives. Access to that would be from local councils, regional economic development boards, companies or individuals with major projects where they are seeking a coordinated whole of government response.

The Office of Regional Development will be part of the Deputy Premier's office, as has previously been announced. The Deputy Premier will also be Minister for Regional Development, focusing on the needs of country and regional areas of the state.

In addition, one of the great restrictions on economic development in country and regional areas, as has been highlighted over recent years, has been the lack of infrastructure for new development, whether it be three phase power, extension of the power grid, extension of water mains or roads to service new developments. We have put in place a \$4.5 million regional infrastructure development fund: \$4.5 million has been committed, and in the forward estimates over the next two years we have also included \$4.5 million.

The purpose of that regional infrastructure development fund is to assist with the provision of power, water and roads to offset any establishment costs for economic activities in country and regional areas of the state. They are positive responses, and the allocation of funding to underpin what we have seen as important for some considerable time—and not just the past three weeks—

Mr Conlon: Four weeks.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Elder says 'the past four weeks'. I am pointing this out because the task force was put in place last year. The task force reported earlier this year and we acted on it. In the budget that was brought down in May this year we allocated funding for it, so I put the lie to this nonsense put forward by the member for Elder that this is an activity of four weeks: it is not. It is an initiative that has been put in place over the course of the past 18 months or so.

HINDMARSH STADIUM

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism. Will the Minister confirm that after \$30 million worth of state taxpayer investment the title to the Hindmarsh stadium still remains with the City of Charles Sturt and will she say why this issue has not been resolved

more than a year after it was raised as a major concern by the Public Works Committee? In its report on the stage 2 upgrade of the soccer stadium in June 1998, the committee's majority report states that the committee strongly recommended against proceeding with construction until this issue was resolved.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): The answer to the member for Lee's question is that the titles that were in the city's name still are; those titles that were in the government's name still are. We are negotiating with the City of Charles Sturt (and have been for over a year) in regard to the value and on what terms and conditions the stadium may be transferred to government. Our officers are still talking to the council; that process is ongoing. It is not as though the government is taking no action. The fact is that we have been talking. There is some disagreement about the value and the terms and conditions. We will try to—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The member for Ross Smith said that they have us over a barrel. I do not know whether that is quite true. We do not have to buy it. The building actually exists so that people can play soccer there. We do not have to buy it if we do not want to. It is simply a decision of government as to whether we do so.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I do not know how many people in the Labor Party have \$20 million or \$30 million to buy the stadium from the City of Charles Sturt. I do not know how many private buyers there would be out there. When you think it through—whether we buy it or not—it is an interesting question for government, because who would buy it if the government did not? So, who has got whom over the barrel we are not quite sure, as far as the negotiation is concerned.

To answer the member for Lee's question, the government certainly has taken steps to consider buying the stadium. The City of Charles Sturt and the government are negotiating. Members will have to await the outcome of the negotiations.

INFORMATION ECONOMY

Mr VENNING (Schubert): My question is directed to the Minister—

Members interjecting:

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

Mr VENNING: Can the Minister for Information Economy advise the House of any new information economy initiatives that allow the government to communicate with every South Australian, particularly those South Australians living in rural areas?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Information Economy): I thank the member for Schubert—

Mr Foley interjecting:

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

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Hart.

Mr Foley: Sorry, sir.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the member for Schubert for his question. It is a particularly important question about the opportunities for rural South Australians to communicate with their government, with exactly the same access opportunities as people in the metropolitan area. Over the last month we have announced a number of key initiatives that will, indeed, open up substantial benefits to those South

Australians now living in rural areas who, it is a fact of life, have a number of advantages over those living in the metropolitan area but who also have a number of disadvantages, perhaps summarised by Geoffrey Blainey's phrase 'the tyranny of distance'. It is recognition of that fundamental disparity between metropolitan and rural citizens that caused us to look to use the advantages of the information economy to overcome those disadvantages for rural citizens. The opportunity for information technology to enable, if you like, the saying '24 by seven'—in other words, 24 hours a day, seven days a week access to government services and to the government in general—is one that the rural people will grasp, I know, with both hands.

From the middle of next year, all South Australians—and, in particular, schools and businesses in rural and regional centres and communities outside Adelaide—will enjoy the fastest and the cheapest internet access in Australia. Pathway SA will provide higher quality and cheaper access to the internet for rural schools, in particular, than in any other Australian state. What that means, obviously, is that the school children will benefit. It means that the opportunities for access to information from around the world at city quality, at city prices and at city speed is right there for regional schools. It also means that the call connection cost for people at many regional centres will drop from what was previously an STD cost to a local call cost. As the Premier mentioned, we have been going around into the rural areas for our cabinet meetings, and every single person to whom I have spoken about the information economy has indicated that, for them, access to the internet has been too slow and too expensive. That is now fixed.

There is another opportunity, because we realise that it is not enough just to put the services out there: we have to make sure that the people know how to use them and how to access the advantages provided by the new technology. So, we have brought in the Networks for You initiative to teach people how to capitalise on all these benefits. When you combine Pathway SA with the Networks for You program you actually have a very powerful mechanism for people in regional and rural South Australia to be participants in the world economy at the press of an enter button.

The other really important initiative which has been released—and, of course, the regional and rural South Australians who now have this better access to the internet will be some of the people most keen to use it, as well as of course people in the metropolitan area—is Talking Point. We believe that this is an international first. I am sure that the internet literate would be able to guess the URL, but, if not, it is www.talkingpoint.sa.gov.au. So, there is access to that and to the particularly important issues that we are putting on the net. The first one that we put up was the controversial one on ship breaking. The very fact that the input from that enabled and helped the cabinet to make its decision in relation to ship breaking—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: It did. The member for Hart, who I believe is the shadow minister for information economy—or at least during the estimates he asked me some questions in that area—laughs at the fact that community input through a world first would not be able to make the government change its mind, but the honourable member is wrong. It is exactly the opportunity which the people of South Australia will now have because of the use of modern technology. It is another way of the government consulting with the community.

There is another very important initiative in relation to the information economy, and that relates to WorkCover. One of the things for which governments around the world, particularly around Australia, have been criticised is that on occasions we are regarded as being too turgid, too slow, not efficient enough and so on. WorkCover, a statutory government authority, has decided that within 18 months it will transform itself into an electronic business. That will be good for the stakeholders, better for the employees and better for the employers. We have a member, if you like, of the slow, turgid, inefficient government actually doing it. It is saying to the major companies in South Australia, 'Chase us; don't criticise us. We are actually seeing the twenty-first century. We are confident of our place in it, and we will be a catalyst for other businesses in South Australia to follow us.' I congratulate WorkCover on that move.

The Labor Party's commitment to the rural South Australian arena has always been questionable. Its commitment to the information economy is even more so, because the shadow minister laughed earlier. I was flabbergasted to read in the paper this morning that in the potential new government in Victoria the minister for information economy or multimedia has been demoted. There will not even be a cabinet minister for information technology in Victoria. That presents the most fantastic opportunity for South Australia. Frankly, I hope that the Labor Party follows our example.

HINDMARSH STADIUM

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): Does the Premier have full confidence in the South Australian Soccer Federation to continue to manage the \$30 million Hindmarsh stadium in the wake of the demise of the Adelaide Sharks, the resignation of the federation's soccer ambassador, Joan Hall, the Ciccarello consultancy debacle and the re-negotiation of the payment arrangement for the Adelaide Force Soccer Club by the Premier following their threat to leave for Norwood Oval? Will the Premier provide the details of the new deal and assure the House that it will result in no additional exposure of taxpayer's funds? Will the Premier now release publicly the government commissioned economic analysis of the stadium upgrade? The opposition is aware—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Bragg!

Mr WRIGHT: —that there is growing disquiet and financial problems among the SA Soccer Federation's member clubs. Representatives of the clubs are concerned that the upgraded Hindmarsh soccer stadium—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is now starting to comment. I just caution him.

Mr WRIGHT: A government-commissioned economic analysis of the upgrade indicates clearly similar concerns.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Spence!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: This is interesting in terms of the attitude of the opposition to the development of sporting stadiums and sports in general in South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Well, it is interesting that previous governments could spend money on velodromes, aquatic centres, hockey stadiums and those sorts of venues and that is not an issue to the opposition, even though they are partly debt funded or partly or wholly paid out of taxpayers' funds. Apparently, that is not an issue: that is all

right, because the opposition did it. So, this government comes in—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, it is interesting policy discussion, because this government comes in and spends \$28 million or \$30 million on a soccer stadium and apparently that is a tragedy, according to the opposition. How is it not simply another piece of social infrastructure that has been provided by the government? Why is it different from the velodrome? Why is it different—

Members interjecting:

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

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: And I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: How is it not another piece of social infrastructure for South Australians to use? I will compare the difference between the opposition's winning government and this government's doing so. The opposition, on winning government, invested in some really good things: plywood cars, hurricane insurance in Florida and \$6 million to \$8 million on South African goats, but why do opposition members not go to the soccer community and explain to them how they lost tens of millions of dollars at Wembley? Opposition members are not prepared to admit that, while we have invested right here in South Australia (so that South Australians can go and play soccer in their backyard in Hindmarsh stadium), their government lost money in Florida, on New York property deals, on London property deals and on South African goat farms.

We are the government that has invested in South Australia. We have put the Hindmarsh stadium building up there. All members of the opposition do is kick it in the guts! They kick EDS, they kick Motorola and they kick Hindmarsh stadium. I do not know one thing that members of the opposition stand for. It is a piece of social infrastructure that will be there for a long time for South Australians to use. Granted, there is only one team playing, but so what? They have other games; that does not matter. The member for Hart laughs: if he were close to soccer at all he would know that next year 16 licences come up for grabs and there is a chance that there will be another team in Adelaide. And we will work with that team to rebuild the sport.

One thing that soccer will not get from us is a government that will walk away from them. We will work with them to build the sport. But when members of the opposition go to them and talk about consultancies and about releasing reports, I would ask the member for Lee to release these. I ask the member for Lee to release his report, if a report exists. Did members opposite as a government get advice to invest in plywood cars or did they just invest off the top of their head? Did they get advice to invest in South African goat farms? What made them go out and spend \$9 million (or whatever the figure was) on South African goat farms?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat. I warn the member for Peake. Any more interjections and he will be named.

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the minister could address his remarks to the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. It is bordering on a frivolous point of order considering the circumstances.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In relation to the cost and management of the stadium, I wrote to the Soccer Federation last week requesting information of their own consultant's report and as at last night we had not received it.

YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE

Mr MEIER (Goyder): My question is directed to the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance. What activities is the government undertaking to ensure that the community is fully informed about potential year 2000 date problems so they can take appropriate action to be prepared? It was put to me during a visit to my electorate Monday week ago by the minister—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr MEIER: No, it was put to me. Don't you listen? Listen for once. It was put to me during a visit to the electorate of Goyder by the Minister for—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MEIER: —Year 2000 Compliance that this government was the best informed government—

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: It was put to me: I am simply repeating.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr MEIER: You do not like what the people are saying about this government.

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith! The House will come to order. It is quite in order and it has been a custom of this place for members to put a question with the explanation 'It has been put to me'. The time the Chair will take some interest in it is when members start to string several facts together which 'have been put to me' and which then become debate. The Chair will then intervene. At this stage, the member is not out of order, and I ask the House to restrain itself and allow the member to proceed.

Mr MEIER: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It was said that this government was providing the best information to the people of this state compared with any other state, and as a result the community feels very relaxed about entering the year 2000.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Minister for Year 2000 Compliance): I will leave the discussions of 'magnificence' to the member for Ross Smith and his own party. I am sure they all think that he is magnificent at the moment. I thank the member for Goyder for his question. Regrettably it has been one of the few positive questions during question time. They all seem to be coming from this side today and, even when a positive question is asked, I am sure that visitors to this House are disappointed that positive questions, particularly of this nature, are shouted down in such a raucous way by the Opposition. That might reflect Opposition members' response to an offer I put to them recently, but I will come back to that offer and their take up on that shortly.

The government recognises that no matter how well prepared we are in ensuring that we have our own year 2000 date problems rectified and no matter how well prepared businesses are in ensuring that their year 2000 date problems are rectified, the reality is that if the community is confused, indeed if it panics, that confusion and panic could be a more significant concern than the actual event itself. As a government we are in a position, as I have assured the House before, to be able to demonstrate to South Australians and to reassure South Australians that the government is prepared, that

essential services are prepared, that utilities are prepared and that major business is prepared.

In focusing in the remainder of the year on those areas which could cause confusion and panic, it has been important for the government to determine an appropriate strategy to communicate with the community at large. In preparing and embarking upon that communication strategy, we have focused essentially on two areas of community, first, consumers and, secondly, householders. In focusing on consumers obviously the government has drawn on professional staff within the Office of Business and Consumer Affairs. The staff in that office are already providing extensive information to the community on the purchase of new and secondhand goods, on precautions they need to take, and on things about which they need to be aware in relation to year 2000 compliance and year 2000 date problem issues in purchasing equipment.

Those staff are easily accessible through the government's free information hotline—a number that has been well advertised and well detailed to this place—1800 11 2000. That hotline will continue, and those staff will continue their work into the new year so they will be on hand to address any concerns or problems that the public have after 1 January with any minor malfunction of equipment. They will provide the public with advice on what action they can take to ensure that their rights are preserved and that their problems are attended to.

Since 1997 the Australian Retailers Association has been well aware of the need to ensure that goods that are sold are fit for purpose and in adhering to the definition of 'fit for purpose' they recognise that the products they sell, regardless of the nature of the product, must be workable beyond 1 January 2000 so consumers can purchase new products in the confident knowledge the product will continue to work or, if there is a problem, the retailer will honour the purchase and ensure that it is made good.

In relation to the householder campaign, a number of avenues have been embarked upon by the government to date including advertising brochures and particularly through presenting events. Indeed, in the electorate of Goyder and many other rural electorates good use has been made of opportunities presented by country field days and trade events so that South Australians living in regional areas have access to information. That information has been promulgated readily at those locations and also at major event locations within the city of Adelaide such as the Royal Adelaide Show which gave a whole of state opportunity because it is so well attended by rural South Australians. Also, at the very successful Wired Up Expo held last Friday and over the weekend information was disseminated.

In a bid to ensure that all South Australians have access to easy to understand and easy to use informative material the government has produced a 'Ready for 2000' brochure. This is where I come back to the offer made to the Opposition. All members of parliament of the lower house, regardless of political party membership, were offered the opportunity of the government's providing a printed brochure to distribute in their electorate. The brochure is important. The offer was made in writing to all members of parliament. While it has been taken up by Liberal members of parliament, I am disappointed that only two members of the Labor Party have taken up that offer.

Mr Hill interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The member for Kaurua, as one of the two, is asking that he be named—and I am

happy to congratulate the member for Kaurna for taking up that opportunity. The other member, of course, is well aware of the importance of looking after a rural region—and the member for Giles also has taken up that opportunity. Many others now want to say, 'Me too.' I am happy for them to take up this opportunity.

The Hon. M.H. Armitage interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: They want to follow the new leader, the member for Adelaide has assured me. I am not sure who that will be this week, but if members of the Labor Party want to distribute this information to their constituents, the opportunity is still there—and I welcome their advising me of that today.

The information to the community advises of the excellent readiness of groups such as electricity organisations, SA Water with United Water, gas suppliers and distributors, the telecommunications industry, the fuel industry, the food industry, the banking and finance industry, emergency services, health and aged care, and travel, and the readiness of our colleagues in the federal parliament in important areas such as pension, family and unemployment benefits, and indeed other state government services.

The brochure also provides a very easy to use room by room guide to the average house so that South Australians can work through the brochure and solve their problems. It is, indeed, a useful guide. At the same time my regional liaison staff continue to visit rural South Australia to ensure that rural South Australians have the opportunity of receiving information they require. To ensure that Labor electorates are properly covered, and indeed the whole state, my department will be surveying those areas to ensure there is a community awareness. If that awareness is not as it should be, we will then take further action to ensure those communities are appropriately advised.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr LEWIS (Mallee): I bring up the one hundred and fifth report of the Public Works Committee on the Adelaide Convention Centre extension and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the report be published.

Motion carried.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I draw the attention of the House to a development taking place in Sheidow Park in the area known as Woodend. There is quite a bit of history to it. The Hickinbotham group of companies have been developers in

the area over the last decade at least and on Lemon Road they have built a shopping centre next to the Woodend Primary School and kindergarten. For some time that shopping centre has only been partially leased, and so Hickinbothams have approached Peter Hurley, the well-known hotel operator and prominent figure in the Hotels Association, to develop a pub on that site to replace the existing shops. For many years, the local residents have been keen to see the shopping centre better utilised and they have been disappointed that shopping facilities consistently have not been made available at that site. However, I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the local residents are absolutely appalled at the prospect of a pub now being situated there with a car park, which, for all practical purposes, would be shared with the local primary school.

The level of resident feeling and activity has astounded me. Under the liquor licensing laws a few local residents were advised of the development about a week and a half ago and, in the space of about three days, they organised a public meeting, which was attended by over 300 people, in the hall of the Woodend Primary School. Those residents feel so strongly about this matter that they have also taken action in terms of demonstrating against the Hickinbotham group at the site of their display home in the Woodend estate. I have said to those residents that I will be doing everything possible to assist them in their goal to have the proposal withdrawn or knocked back in some way, and I have taken a number of steps to help them. Of course, I welcome the assistance of other people in the area, not only the council but also other members of parliament such as the Hon. Nick Xenophon and the Hon. Wayne Matthew who also, I am told, has an interest in the area.

I move to another topic relating to the Hon. Wayne Matthew, the member for Bright. It is a story about a very positive move by the Marion Council. In 1998, the Marion council undertook to develop a social area strategy to cover the south ward of Marion council, primarily the suburbs of Trott Park, Sheidow Park and Hallett Cove. In the course of preparing that report various submissions were invited and one was received from the Hon. Wayne Matthew. He wrote an extensive submission which he sent to the council with copies to various council officers. I suppose that the honourable member was quite proud of his submission.

Many locals hotly disputed things that he said in the submission, for example, his comment that Hallett Cove had an excellent public transport service and his praise of health services in the area. However, what brought a lot of fun into it was that, when the social area strategy was published, with the Hon. Mr Matthew's submission attached to it, he became furious and insisted that the Marion council apologise for this submission which he had put into a very public process. Perhaps he was not so proud of the ideas that he had put to the Marion council after all. The council took him seriously, as it properly should have, and published a huge apology to the residents. Many thought it was a joke, but what is not a joke is his suggestion that the residents of those suburbs are adequately catered for in terms of transport and health services.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Minister for Year 2000 Compliance): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this grievance debate. While it is not common that ministers so use this time in the parliament, on this occasion it is important that a number of matters of public concern are placed on the record. I have the privilege of representing the Hallett

Cove area and also Sheidow and Trott Park areas and the part of Trott Park that falls within the Woodend subdivision, likewise with Sheidow Park. I am particularly disappointed that the Hickinbotham group of companies, in concert with, in fairness, a well respected hotelier, Mr Peter Hurley, have seen fit through an application lodged via Mr Hurley to seek a liquor licence to open a tavern in the existing Woodend shopping centre.

There is a lot of history to the development of that centre and indeed to the development of the school next door to that centre. It needs to be remembered that the school is a school that Susan Lenehan (the former education minister) refused to build. The school is the school that the Labor Party of the day said would never be needed. In endeavouring to ensure that the residents of that area received the school to which they were entitled and the school that as a Liberal Party then in opposition we knew they would find would be used well and would be filled, an agreement was reached and carried through in government and that school was then privately built and is now being well utilised.

It is for that reason, particularly with the good spirit in which that school was built, indeed by the Hickinbotham group of companies—they have since on sold the school, I understand, to another investor, but they received a lot of public acclaim for being prepared to participate in such a visionary and indeed now successful project—that I personally have put to Mr Michael Hickinbotham of that company that I am disappointed that the company's good work is now being undone through what I regard as a short-sighted decision to endeavour to have licensed premises, including poker machines, operating, if their application were to succeed, some three days a week to 2 a.m. and the balance of the week to 12 midnight—certainly not a satisfactory situation in the midst of a built-up residential area next door to a primary school and also a pre-school.

In endeavouring to ensure that issues are properly worked through when such proposals are put forward, I have always believed that members of parliament ought to show appropriate leadership and ought to work with all parties involved to ensure that the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the community majority viewpoint, which is in my view—no tavern. To that end, I have spoken extensively on more than one occasion with both Mr Hurley and Mr Hickinbotham and will meet again with a representative from the Hickinbotham group of companies in a bid to discuss sensible alternatives. I have also spoken with a large number of the concerned residents who have very good reason for being opposed to this venture.

I have also spoken with people from a registered residents' group that has been set up (it would appear) to support the proposal. The residents' group is being incorporated as the Woodend Area Residents' Association, a slightly different name from that of the existing association of Woodend Residents' Association. The discussions I have had with the Hickinbotham group and Mr Hurley have centred around how those associations were set up.

The person witnessing the documents for the incorporation of that association was none other than someone from a legal company that regularly represents the Hickinbotham group of companies. The cheque was lodged by another legal firm that normally represents Mr Peter Hurley in many of his ventures. I have asked what I believe to be appropriate questions about that, and from the Hickinbotham group of companies I have received an admission that indeed they did assist in the establishment of that group, and they are of the

view that it was for the establishment of a tavern. I stand opposed to that venture and am pleased to do so.

In relation to the Marion council southern areas strategy, as the member for Mitchell is aware, it was my request of council to undertake that strategy. It is commonsense and common courtesy that, when a draft is provided, the comments in relation to that are not public but are used to change the draft.

Ms KEY (Hanson): My grievance is with regard to the meat industry. I have received a number of calls from constituents and also the meat employees union, a number of members of which have lost their jobs over the past couple of years. We have seen job losses at AGPRO and I believe that huge job losses at Chapmans are coming up. There have also been a number of industrial problems within the meat industry that make the MUA dispute look as if it was the grandfather for what is happening in South Australia. We have Patricks II under our very nose.

I have reported to this House a number of times about some of the reactionary changes that have been put in place for workers in the meat industry. The latest example comes from T&R abattoir in Murray Bridge, and this agreement is from September 1999, so it is very recent. In the Australian workplace agreement, or AWA, as it is known, the meat industry award does not apply; the agreement can change at any time; and employees are required to report on other workers for so-called policy breaches. Employees are not to take sick leave without the company's permission and must submit to random drug and alcohol testing. Employees cannot work for other employers without the company's permission, even if they are casual or have occasional work. The employees have no classification or career path; they must pay for any knives, steels, pouches or stones; all employees have a probationary period of up to six months; and employees must train to a trade level but will not be paid at that level. Training is out of hours and unpaid.

The 38 hour week standard is abolished and replaced by a 40 hour week with no rostered days off. Hours of work may be changed at any time to include weekend work, 10 hour shifts, shift work or early morning (4 a.m.) work, at the discretion of the company. Hours of work may be averaged and no penalty rates will apply, except for night work, at 12 per cent. Employees are required to work one compulsory hour overtime per day, and to work on Saturdays or Sundays as compulsory overtime. Overtime is not paid but banked and paid out at the discretion of the company. Employees are not entitled to any breaks during the ordinary eight hours; and employees, including permanents, may be stood down without pay at any time without notice. This includes part way through a day.

All allowances, including work in cold temperatures, are abolished. Employees will be paid as juniors until they are 21 years of age. There will be no choice of superannuation funds; the company will make the choice. Annual leave loading is abolished; annual leave is abolished; sick leave is reduced to five days per annum from eight and 10 in some instances; family care leave is abolished; and long service leave is abolished. Medical certificates are required for every day of absence from work. If overtime is earned at a higher rate than the normal rate, employees will not receive credit for the higher rate, and the butchers' picnic holiday is also being deleted. Work on public holidays is compulsory, and will be paid at the ordinary rate with a 50 per cent loading

credited to the shutdown bank, which is paid when stock is in short supply.

A service bonus applies after seven years, but the agreement is for only three years. Employees can be sacked for not working unpaid overtime. Employees can be suspended without pay at the discretion of the company. Redundancy payments are reduced to the maximum entitlement of two weeks pay, however long the worker may have worked for that company. Redundancy will not be paid if alternative employment is found. Wages will now be paid fortnightly and employees can work overtime at ordinary rates. This is the latest Australian workplace agreement in Murray Bridge for T&R abattoir in September 1999. It is an absolute disgrace, and it indicates the agenda that both Mr Reith and Dr Armitage are looking at with their industrial relations legislation. This is the way we are going, and I think it is totally outrageous. The whole House should protest against this attack on union rights, workers' rights and human rights in this instance.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Industry and Trade): I wish to make some comments about the member for Napier's Address in Reply debate contribution. In that speech the Deputy Leader stated:

I would also like to dwell upon the issue of accountability.

The member for Napier then proceeded to discuss the need for transparency and accountability in government. I have some sympathy with those remarks about transparency and accountability, but the question arises whether those comments should apply equally to members of the opposition or independent members of the parliament. When those members rise in the parliament and make statements about people who do not have the opportunity to reply in this forum, is there an onus on those members making the claim to get it right and then, if they do not get it right, to come in and correct the statement to the House? That is the fundamental principle I am taking about today.

As I said in my ministerial statement on Thursday 30 September, the member for Napier had made two charges in connection with Mr John Cambridge that I believe are false. One was an express statement that taxpayers paid for Mr Cambridge's air fares to Singapore to attend company meetings while on approved annual leave. Secondly, there was an implied statement that Mr Cambridge had attended a company meeting in Singapore in the previous year while on government business. The member for Napier also had reported the claim that statements she had read into the House were from a Premier's media release, when I am advised that in fact they were from the *Sunday Mail*.

With respect to the first two charges, the evidence has already been tabled, and it proves that the allegations made by the member for Napier were baseless and wrong. On Thursday 30 September, I called upon the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to fully retract her statements and apologise to the House and Mr Cambridge by the close of parliament that day. In doing so, I left open the rest of that sitting day for the member for Napier to come in and make an apology, and two weeks for her to make a statement to the media that what she had told the parliament was wrong. My understanding is that the member for Napier has failed to front on both points.

This raises a question about what protection exists for the Public Service. It is one thing for public servants to be questioned and claims made about them but, when evidence is given to the House or made public that clearly proves the

statement wrong, and when the allegation has been made in the House, surely there is a duty on that member to come in and apologise to the public servant or the person concerned, and simply say they got the information wrong. I have done it myself in relation to comments I have made in previous debates; I have come in and corrected them later. It does not take such a big human effort to come in and apologise to the House or the person concerned and simply say that the information you gave to the House and the comments you made were wrong, and that you apologise for that.

I also make the point that it is an interesting question for the opposition's leadership. Why is it that when our then deputy leader misled the House he lost his position and ministry, yet another deputy leader, who has given information to the House that is clearly wrong, remains without comment or action from the opposition? Where is the balance regarding accountability? Why is it so different that the members of the government have to be accountable for every word they say, yet the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can come in and make a statement that is clearly not right? The comment she made to the House was simply wrong. I have tabled the evidence to show that it was wrong. I am asking her to have another opportunity to come in, clarify the record and apologise. I encourage her to take that opportunity.

Mr FOLEY: Is the member suggesting that the member has misled the House or not? I ask you to rule on that, Sir.

The SPEAKER: The chair does not interpret that the minister is implying that at this stage. I understand where the member is coming from, but I do not believe it is a point of order that I can uphold at this time.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): I will speak to the House today about an important local initiative launched at the Modbury West Primary School last week. I refer to a matter of interest to you, Sir, namely, first-aid and the ability of people to be able to render first-aid when necessary. The program launched is the Junior First-Aiders course to be run in conjunction with the St John Ambulance, which will be supplying the training, and the Lions Club of South Australia. This initiative will be statewide and will see thousands of year six and seven children trained. I am told that it is aiming for 50 000 students over two years, which is an enormous effort.

The project is based on a pilot run by the Lions Club of Glenside. It was started by Noel O'Brien and I understand his work in getting this project documented as something that would be very much worthwhile has been absolutely fantastic. St John has a major commitment to the training of first-aid for people in the community and I understand its goal is to have at least one person in every home able to administer first-aid. No doubt the greatest number of people who will be administering first-aid will be adults, but this initiative will make sure that young people have access to first-aid training. The students will be trained in practical bandaging exercises that will enable them to handle bleeding, concussion, accidents and shock, bites and stings, burns, minor wounds and fractures.

In keeping with the principles of the pilot program the Lions Clubs across the state will be raising funds to be used by St John to train the students in a specially designed two hour first-aid course. Also included will be a specially produced curriculum work book and attendance certificates. I very much enjoyed being at the launch of this program. It was picked up by one of my local schools, the Modbury West Primary School, through some very good work by the Deputy

Principal there, Mr Peter Faull. He had seen details of the pilot program written up in a magazine and took the initiative and contacted those involved with the Lions Club and made it happen. Our own local Lions—in particular I saw Merv Keenihan there that day—and a group of dignitaries were involved with the launch held in the school gym. The enthusiasm of the students made me realise how important the program will be. I noticed before I left that they had the minister bandaged around his head. Obviously he had had some jaw problem while we were present, and others were having their arms and legs bandaged. The skills the students will gain will not only be fun for them but will be life long skills. One of the things St John is hoping is that it will lead to a great number of these students moving on and doing a full first-aid course. There is absolutely no doubt that first-aid at the scene of an accident is a lifesaving measure. I hope none of us ever happen to be involved in a situation where we need first-aid, but I know that it is something I need to learn and I hope to do so as a follow on from being involved in the community work I am engaged in.

The other interesting fact that I would bring to the attention of members is the cost per student. It is calculated at \$15 per head, so Lions Club will have to raise that \$15 per head and if its aim is 25 000 students a lot of fundraising will be done by Lions in the next 12 months. The cost will cover instruction fees, the cost of the work books, the certificate and the administrative costs. It is proposed to have a maximum class size of 24 students. This demand having been created, it is now the aim of St John to work with the program across schools in the state and once the Lions sponsorship concludes it will continue to be supplied, we hope, on a user pays basis. We need the cooperation of the Education Department to ensure this goes on at all schools.

I was pleased to see another initiative happening at Modbury West. It is one of the schools involved in all sorts of good things in our area as it is very entrepreneurial and the parents' club has worked hard to raise money for air-conditioning; there are improvements around the grounds and school buildings. The school is a joy to be associated with. I commend the course to the House and hope all members support it.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Today I wish to make a contribution with regard to gambling, in particular pokies. In the past week or so we have had two launches—one on 14 October at the Old Lion Hotel by the AHA and the Licensed Clubs Association with regard to the revised code. I congratulate the AHA and the licensed clubs for their initiative. We must bear in mind that the AHA and the licensed clubs are responsible in the sense that they provide some assistance to problem gamblers. We all know that there are problem gamblers there. All the other codes do not take action in relation to problem gamblers, and they should do so. The next launch I attended was on 16 October at the Historian Hotel and was related to pubs without pokies. That is a great initiative. I know that the AHA supports all its members—those that do have pokies and those that do not. But I do not think enough people know that some hotels choose not to have gaming rooms and pokies and they should be complimented on that because at least they provide an alternative and I can see that that alternative is important for us to promote as members of Parliament.

It saddens me that in the eastern metropolitan area there is only one hotel that operates without pokies, namely, the Maylands Hotel at Maylands. I know the Maylands Hotel well and know the Clappis family well, including Enzo, his

sons Fred and Andrew, his daughters Suzi and Vivi and their respective spouses. They have had the hotel since 1987. Not only do they not have pokies but they do not have the TAB either. When I asked them why, they said that they wanted to provide a family atmosphere and anybody who has been to the Maylands Hotel knows that that is the case. I know the family well. I used to go to school with Fred Clappis and in fact sold newspapers with him, so I have had a long association with the Clappis family. It is sad that there is only one hotel in the eastern suburbs that does not have a gaming room.

As I have said on many occasions, if I had been here at the time of the introduction of the poker machines I would have opposed them. However, today we have them and we must be responsible about any further encroachment of any form of gambling. I agree with the Premier that enough is enough. I agree with the capping and agree that we should not expand. Nevertheless, to suggest as some people do that the pokies are the source of all evil is looking at it in a way that does not fully represent the situation as it is.

I believe that gambling in general is a problem, as I said when the Social Development Committee reported. I believe that all codes of gambling should become more responsible, including the Lotteries Commission, and I believe that we have to carefully monitor gambling in general. Governments have become too dependent on gambling, and we must analyse the situation properly. I believe that the code involving the hotels association and licensed gaming rooms, including the installation of clocks, a 24 hour gaming help line and referrals for counselling, is a good initiative, as is the concept of pubs without pokies.

Time expired.

YUMBARRA CONSERVATION PARK

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I move:

That this House requests His Excellency the Governor to make a proclamation under section 43(2) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 that declares that rights of entry, prospecting, exploration and mining under the Mining Act 1971 may be acquired and exercised in respect of that proportion of the Yumbarra Conservation Park being section 457, north out of Hundreds, county of Way (Fowler) and that a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting its concurrence thereto.

I table the draft proclamation document. This is an opportunity for us to demonstrate how the community and the environment can benefit from best practice environmental management that sets and demands high standards of care and protection for the natural environment and unlocks new possibilities for the creation of much needed jobs in this important area of our state.

The reclamation of the central part of Yumbarra Conservation Park will not mean that the conservation park status is removed. The only change to that part of Yumbarra Conservation Park will be that mineral exploration and mining will be allowed. The overall objectives of managing the park for conservation will continue, as they have for the other sections of Yumbarra Conservation Park where mineral exploration and mining access already exist. Any exploration or mining that occurs in Yumbarra Conservation Park as a result of reclamation will be intensively managed to

minimise any impact on the ecological values of the park and surrounding region. Many of the species that occur in the area of the mineral anomaly within the central part of the Yumbarra Conservation Park also occur in other parts of the park and surrounding reserves. A biological survey of the Yumbarra Conservation Park was carried out in 1995 and found that:

The Yumbarra Conservation Park biological survey has revealed that the core area of the park covers a very significant north-south and east-west biogeographical transition but that the area of geological interest is unlikely to contain any species or ecological communities not also found to the east or west of the proposed mineral exploration licence areas.

Owens et al, 1995, A Biological Survey of Yumbarra Conservation Park, DENR page 61.

Yumbarra Conservation Park is part of a large region of continuous mallee, much of it known as the Yellabinna region, which provides important links through similar habitats from the top of Eyre Peninsula through to Western Australia. Reclamation and allowance of mineral exploration will have negligible impact on the value of the area as part of a larger region of reserves that together provide a significant area for species protection and evolution.

Part of the Yumbarra Conservation Park (now the central portion) was proclaimed in 1968 to conserve what was described by the then Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 1995 as 'a significant representative area of the western Eyre Peninsula mallee ecosystems outside of the dog fence'. The then National Parks Act 1966 prohibited exploration or mining in parks and reserves and, as a result, that original area was proclaimed without provision for exploration under the Mining Act.

The National Parks Act 1966 was repealed and replaced by the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972, with provisions for proclamation by the Governor of rights to explore or mine in a national park or a conservation park. However, it was not until 1985 that a shift in government policy under a Labor government allowed for the first joint proclamation of a park. This was followed in 1986 by the Labor government's decision that all new reserves were to be jointly proclaimed unless there were overriding conservation considerations.

In 1990, two contiguous areas east and west respectively of the original Yumbarra Conservation Park were proclaimed, bringing the total area of the park to approximately 327 589 hectares. These additions were proclaimed subject to the 1972 amendments, allowing exploration and mining subject to conditions designed to protect the park environment. In 1993, on publication of magnetic images showing the magnetic anomaly, a company application was lodged for an exploration licence over land that included approximately 26 000 hectares of the central portion of the park.

In April 1996, the House of Assembly established a select committee to inquire into a proposal for reclamation of that area of Yumbarra Conservation Park, within which exploration licence application 142/93 is largely contained, to enable access for exploration and any future mining to be contingent upon a full EIS as a component of the decision-making process. The select committee submitted its report in March 1997, which included a recommendation in favour of reclamation. The motion for reclamation does not conform entirely with the recommendations of the select committee. The motion aims to re-proclaim the entire area of the central part of the park without a sunset date and to allow exploration and mining by any qualified person under the provisions of the Mining Act 1971.

The explorers in the central part of Yumbarra will need to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988, as the explorers in the surrounding areas have done, by undertaking Aboriginal heritage clearance procedures, including surveys.

Environmental impacts, such as disturbance to flora and fauna, will be kept to the minimum possible. The area contains several significant animal and plant species. The identification of these and the avoidance or minimisation of any adverse impacts on them will need to be determined by the explorer in consultation with the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs. Environmental obligations, terms and conditions and performance criteria imposed on the explorer will be detailed in the proclamation and exploration licence. Mining of any economic resource discovered in the park will undergo an environmental impact assessment process. There will be a full environmental impact statement, as required for major projects under the Development Act 1993.

Control over exploration, mining and associated activities will be exercised through the provisions in the terms of the proclamation; the terms and conditions attached to an exploration licence under the Mining Act 1971 and agreed between the Minister for Environment and Heritage and the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development; the terms and conditions attached to each approval by the Director of Mines for specific activities; and the terms and conditions of a mining lease subject to the outcome of a future environmental impact statement.

Monitoring, management and reporting of the condition of flora, fauna and ecosystems of the area explored will be carried out by qualified personnel employed by the explorer and approved by the Minister for Environment and Heritage under the supervision of professional DEHAA staff. A number of measures are proposed to ensure that exploration and mining impacts are minimised and to provide additional ongoing management support for the parks and reserves system. The preparation of a draft management plan under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 for Yumbarra and other reserves in the Yumbarra-Yellabinna region will include such actions as:

- A further biological survey of the exploration area in a company funded program prior to exploration and mining;
- Environmental audits by PIRSA and DEHAA of management performance and condition of the land in the affected area against specified performance criteria and environmental objectives specified in the exploration licence; and
- The identification and protection of various ecological associations.

The allocation of additional resources to DEHAA in the form of a dedicated scientific officer to manage environmental impacts in reserves in the west of the state will ensure high standards of environmental responsibility and provide an important liaison role with both the explorers and PIRSA.

The development of codes of practice and rehabilitation techniques for mining activities in the mallee-covered dune ecosystems in arid areas will be included as a part of any exploration program. There will be further development of the biological data base for the state's western mallee region through baseline and ongoing monitoring undertaken by the exploration proponents.

As part of the re-proclamation of Yumbarra Conservation Park, Wahgunyah Conservation Reserve, which is currently a reserve under the Crown Lands Act 1929, will be made a single proclamation conservation park. This will be an

estimated 48 600 hectares unavailable to mining interests. It will also be a significant upgrade in status and will provide increased management control over this area of coastal mallee and heath land, which is already a significant area for the local community. From this position it will be proposed that the reserve be proclaimed as a wilderness protection area under the Wilderness Protection Act 1992. Because this government is a government which listens to the people, we will undertake full public consultation prior to any wilderness proclamation proceedings.

In addition, a further section of the Nullarbor National Park will become singly proclaimed to further protect this sensitive arid environment. This will remove approximately 89 000 hectares from the potential impacts of mining. The re-proclamation of the central portion of Yumbarra will result in a gain to the overall area of land in the state's reserve system from which mineral exploration and mining will be excluded. The additional areas will amount to some approximately 137 600 hectares, while the part of Yumbarra Conservation Park being reproclaimed to allow mineral exploration and mining access is approximately 105 000 hectares.

The outcome of reproclamation and exploration will achieve a balance between environmental, economic and social considerations to ensure that all gain from this proposal to reproclaim the central part of Yumbarra Conservation Park. The investigation of an extraordinary magnetic geological feature which may foreshadow a major mineral deposit with important economic outcomes for the region and the state cannot be ignored by any responsible government. The reproclamation of the central portion of Yumbarra will provide an opportunity for the people of Ceduna and surrounding districts for regional economic development and further progress state economic development following the success of the South Australian exploration initiative.

Reproclamation will also provide the key to unlocking a host of improved environmental outcomes. There will be an overall increase in the area of reserves in the state without access to mineral exploration or mining as a result of this action. In addition, we will establish a comprehensive management plan for Yumbarra Conservation Park and other reserves of the Yellabinna region and see the further development of the biological data base for our state's western mallee area.

Through the further responsible development of the mineral industry and through collaboration in the development of new exploration models, we will ensure the application of best practice environmental management in Yumbarra. All these measures demonstrate this government's commitment to both protection of the environment and the creation of jobs that will be welcomed by the regional and local communities in this important area of the state. I will certainly welcome an open and frank debate on this motion and seek the support of all members of this House on this most important motion.

Mr HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

WHALING ACT REPEAL BILL

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to repeal the Whaling Act 1937. Read a first time.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

History

After two unsuccessful attempts to regulate whaling by the League of Nations in 1924 and 1927, 21 countries, including Australia, signed the Convention for the Regulation of Whaling in 1931. This was ratified in 1935 and the South Australian *Whaling Act 1937* was drafted to apply the provisions of that Convention. However, the Convention was quickly considered to be ineffective and was abandoned in 1937 in favour of the International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling, which gave greater protection to some species and set minimum size limits for a range of other species.

In the international spirit of cooperation that followed the Second World War, the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was ratified and entered into force in 1946, with Australia an original signatory. The Convention established the International Whaling Commission to formulate and be responsible for the application of regulatory measures for safeguarding whale stocks while allowing the orderly development of the whaling industry. Since 1986 the International Whaling Commission has placed a moratorium on whaling under the Schedule to the Convention, although some nations have continued to whale under the Convention.

Since 1979, it has been Australian government policy to oppose whaling both domestically and internationally through the International Whaling Commission. Indeed, the National Task Force on Whaling, which reported in May 1997, was charged with the responsibility of advising the Federal Minister for the Environment on the most practical ways to achieve Australia's stated policy of bringing about a permanent ban on commercial whaling worldwide. Australia's policy on whaling and whale protection in both Australian and international waters has a legislative basis in the *Whale Protection Act 1980*.

General Considerations

The Whaling Act (no. 2361 of 1937) was assented to on 1 December 1937 but was never proclaimed and therefore never committed to any Minister. It is assumed that it was not proclaimed because the 1931 Convention, to which the Act was intended to apply, was abandoned in 1937 in favour of the International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling.

Protection for marine mammals in South Australian waters is now principally covered by the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. This Bill has been drafted to repeal the *Whaling Act 1937* and the passage of this Bill will formally close an era of South Australia's history, that of whaling. It was a remarkable time, creating some of the enduring images of early South Australia. However, new images have replaced the old; the tourist's camera has replaced the whaler's harpoon.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Repeal

This clause repeals the *Whaling Act 1937*.

Mr HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986. Read a first time.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* received Royal Assent in 1985. It was the first modern animal welfare legislation in Australia; in most jurisdictions, the animal protection laws had not been reviewed for half a century. The persons involved in the development, drafting and Parliamentary passage of that legislation are to be commended. The Act, in essence, is sound and has been the

benchmark in the development of similar legislation in other states and territories.

Clause 5 of the Competition Principles Agreement requires that all legislation impacting on competition must be reviewed by the end of 1999 and that recommendations must be considered and implemented by the end of the Year 2000. Under the automatic expiry program, the regulations were also required to be reviewed by the end of 1999. To facilitate these processes, the decision was made to undertake an extensive general review of the Act, Regulations and the adopted Codes of Practice at the one time.

The Review Panel reaffirmed that the legislation is contemporary, necessary, adequate and appropriate. However, in the 15 years since the Act was drafted, it has become apparent that sundry administrative matters and other minor matters require attention. Some of these were noted by the Review Panel, others were identified in the preparation of drafting instructions and in the course of drafting. This Bill addresses these relatively minor matters while retaining the basic policies and spirit of the legislation.

When the Act was first drafted it was envisaged that the position of Chief Inspector would be filled by a public servant who would act as a liaison between government and the RSPCA. However, the Act does not specify any role or responsibilities relating to the position and it has not been used for the past decade. On this basis, the position is seen as unnecessary and will be revoked by this Bill.

The development of codes of practice and their recommendation to the Minister has become an important function of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and the Act is amended to reflect this developing role in the committee's duties.

Various other minor amendments are proposed. It is made clear that breach of a code that has been adopted by the regulations does not constitute ill-treatment of animals, but is a regulatory offence attracting the lesser penalty.

The forms required for various purposes are no longer to be prescribed by the regulations but will be approved by the Minister, thus allowing a greater degree of flexibility in accommodating ongoing change.

The minimum membership of animal ethics committees is increased from four to five, in compliance with the national code (see the definition in clause 3). The committees are also to be bound by this code in performing their functions.

Inspectors are to be appointed by the Minister instead of the Governor, thus bringing the Act into line with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*; some persons are appointed under both Acts. An offence is to be created of failing to surrender an identity certificate when a person ceases to be an inspector.

The powers of inspectors are to be upgraded to enable animals to be seized as evidence of an offence. At the moment, if an inspector suspects on reasonable grounds that an offence against this Act has been committed, the inspector may seize and remove from the premises or vehicle any object that may afford evidence of the offence. On occasion, where there is no evidence of cruelty, inspectors may need to confiscate an animal as evidence. This is particularly relevant when a person is the subject of a court order preventing them from owning an animal of a certain class. Inspectors do not have the specific authority under the Act to use video and audio tapes but both are commonly used as evidence. The Bill specifically allows for such evidence to be gathered. Currently, if the RSPCA holds an animal because it has been ill-treated, there is no provision for costs to be recouped. In some cases, animals may be held for extended periods and the RSPCA must provide agistment. This Bill would permit the Society or the Crown (in circumstances where an ill-treated animal is held by police or stock inspectors) to recover reasonable costs.

The Act provides inspectors with the authority to give notice to owners of animals in situations where the animal should not be worked (e.g. horses). These notices may include directions as to feed, water or any other treatment. Currently, the provision only relates to working animals. In all other cases the inspector only has the authority to seize the animal. In many cases, this is not in the interests of the owner or the animal and it would be preferable for the inspector to be able to give suitable directions (e.g. a thin dog must be fed three times daily for the next month). This amendment extends the provision beyond working animals.

At times, an animal is seized under the provisions of this Act on the grounds of suffering unnecessary pain. Theoretically, at some time in the future the owner of the animal may be able to claim it back and not reimburse the RSPCA for veterinary or boarding costs. In many cases, an owner who has deserted the animal, e.g. a farmer who walks off his property, never returns. There is no provision for

the RSPCA to sell or otherwise dispose of the animals in this situation. The Bill provides that the RSPCA may dispose of the animal if, after reasonable enquiries, the Society is unable to locate the owner or, if the owner is found, if that person does not collect the animal within three working days of being given written notice advising of the animal's whereabouts.

The existing Act empowers a magistrate to order that a convicted person surrender the animal in question and to forbid the person from having custody of another animal or animals of a certain class. It is not clear whether the magistrate can order the surrender of other animals, or merely the ones relating to the charges laid. The Bill seeks to clarify the intent of the provision.

Consistent with the government commitment to update legislation as it is amended, sundry statute law revision amendments are set out in the schedule to the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Explanation of Clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

This clause provides for commencement of the Act by proclamation.

Clause 3: Amendment of s. 3—Interpretation

This clause amends various definitions. The definition of 'Chief Inspector' is deleted as the position is obsolete and is to be removed from the Act. The Code of Practice referred to in Part 4 of the Act (Teaching and Research) is defined.

Clause 4: Amendment of s. 12—Functions of the Committee

This clause adds a function of developing codes of practice to the list of functions carried out by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

Clause 5: Amendment of s. 13—Ill treatment of animals

This clause amends section 13, which sets out the behaviour that constitutes ill treatment of animals. The amendment inserts a paragraph relating to killing animals by too slow a method, a matter that is currently covered by the regulations. New paragraph (i) combines the matters currently referred to in paragraphs (i) to (l).

Clause 6: Amendment of s. 17—Application for a licence

Clause 7: Amendment of s. 18—Grant of licences

These clauses remove references to prescribed forms and allow for the forms to be approved by the Minister.

Clause 8: Amendment of s. 19—Conditions of licences

This clause creates an offence of failing to comply with a condition of a licence permitting the use of animals in teaching and research.

Clause 9: Amendment of s. 23—Animal ethics committees

This clause increases the minimum size of animal ethics committees from four to five.

Clause 10: Amendment of s. 24—Procedure

This clause requires an animal ethics committee to comply with the Code (as defined above) in conducting its business.

Clause 11: Amendment of s. 25—Functions of animal ethics committees

This clause requires an animal ethics committee to furnish the Minister with annual reports in accordance with the regulations. The functions of such a committee are broadened to include functions prescribed by the Code. A committee must also comply with the Code in carrying out its functions, in particular, the function of approving the use of specific animals in research by licensees. An offence is created of a licensee failing to comply with a condition attached to an approval.

Clause 12: Amendment of s. 28—Inspectors

This clause deletes the office of Chief Inspector and also provides for inspectors to be appointed by the Minister instead of the Governor. A provision is inserted requiring inspectors to hand in their identity cards on ceasing to be an inspector. Inspectors who are police officers must, if not in uniform when exercising powers under the Act, present their warrant cards when requested to do so.

Clause 13: Amendment of s. 29—Powers of inspectors

This clause broadens some of the powers exercisable by inspectors. The power to seize evidence is extended to animals. The power to take photographs is extended to films and video or audio recordings. If an animal is seized on the ground of suffering, the costs of seizing, treating or caring for the animal may be recovered from the animal's owner.

The power to give directions to the owner of an animal is extended to include orders to provide the animal (whether a working animal or not) with rest and shelter and to exercise the animal as stipulated in the notice.

Clause 14: Insertion of s. 30A

This clause inserts a new section which sets out the powers of inspectors to kill, sell or otherwise dispose of animals that have been

forfeited to the Society by court order or that have been seized under the Act and are to be returned to the owner, but the owner cannot be found or fails to collect the animal when requested to do so. Proceeds from selling such an animal go to the Society, unless a court orders otherwise.

Clause 15: Amendment of s. 34—Permits to hold rodeos

This clause allows the Minister to approve the forms for rodeo permits. An offence is created of failing to comply with a condition attached to a rodeo permit.

Clause 16: Amendment of s. 36—Power of court to deprive convicted person of animal

This clause clarifies and amplifies the orders that a court may make against the owner of an animal where the owner is convicted of an offence in respect of the animal. In particular, it is made clear that not only the animal the subject of the offence may be forfeited to the Society but also other specified animals owned by the defendant.

Clause 17: Insertion of s. 42A

This clause inserts the usual evidentiary provision in respect of codes that are incorporated or referred to in the Act or the regulations.

Clause 18: Further amendments of principal Act

Schedule

This clause and the Schedule make various amendments to the Act of a statute law revision nature.

Mr HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 30 September. Page 119.)

Ms KEY (Hanson): First, in reply to His Excellency the Governor's speech at the opening of the third session of parliament, I thank the constituents of Hanson for their continuing support, particularly those who have now found their way into my office and who have expressed their appreciation with regard to the different inquiries and issues that they have raised with my personal assistant, Ms Lindy McAdam. While I am on the subject of the electoral office, I place on record my appreciation to Ms McAdam for doing such a fabulous job of dealing with the number of issues that arise and also for assisting me in my work.

We in the seat of Hanson have had a number of very successful campaigns over the past two years. I am continually impressed by the dedication of constituents to make sure that different issues with which they are concerned are resolved in the community's favour. In particular, I refer to the Western Suburbs Environment Association, which has been campaigning for a long time on environmental issues to do with residents living next to industry, and, secondly, to the Adelaide Workmen's Homes Group. A number of constituents in Richmond live in Adelaide workmen's homes in the Richmond Estate and they have established the Richmond Estate Network of Tenants Incorporated (RENT), which is taking up the battle to preserve the special residential environment in that area of Richmond. They are just two examples of the wonderful work that is done in the electorate.

I also take the opportunity to compliment the various residents' associations, the Thebarton Historical Society and last, but not least, the ongoing work of the neighbourhood watch groups in the electorate of Hanson.

I refer to one of my portfolio responsibilities for the Labor Party, namely, industrial relations. I shall report on a study tour that I undertook in April and May this year to examine various aspects of workplace safety, workers' compensation and rehabilitation arrangements in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The study tour was undertaken with a view to identifying programs which could be adopted for the benefit of South Australian workers and employers. When

we get into government in two years, I hope that this study tour will help form the industrial relations platform with regard to workers' compensation, safety and rehabilitation and, hopefully, some better and more up-to-date legislation.

The organisations visited during the tour included: the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board; the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations; the British Columbia Workers' Compensation Board; the CSST in Quebec; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters-Local 531, in Chicago; the New York Workers' Compensation Board; the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board; the Oregon Workers' Compensation Division; the United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive; the Trade Union Congress (UK); the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration; and the Wisconsin Workers' Compensation Division.

In large part this tour, my first since being elected in October 1997, was in response to the continuing decline in the enforcement of the state's occupational health and safety laws by two Liberal governments. I have been very concerned with the operation of the WorkCover scheme in regard to questionable rehabilitation practices, if any, and the inequitable treatment of many workers with long-term injuries. These issues form the basis of a considerable proportion of complaints that I receive from constituents in my electorate of Hanson, and even more from constituents of other electorates, including those of Liberal Party members. The feedback I have received from many of my parliamentary colleagues also suggests that these types of complaints are widespread amongst the community, and I have on different occasions had discussions with my colleagues on the other side of the House about issues that they also are plagued with, in relation to workers' compensation.

In addition to contributing to the resolution of these concerns, I am confident that a number of ideas and programs I have become familiar with as a result of this study tour will, following Labor's return to government, contribute to a more balanced administration of South Australia's occupational health and safety laws and the development of a more accountable, effective and compassionate WorkCover scheme. At this time I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the CEOs of all the organisations that I visited, for the staff's time (in some cases staff were made available to me for a number of hours so that all the questions I had about the actual operation of the different workers' compensation schemes were answered), their professionalism, their courtesy and their hospitality.

Before turning to a couple of examples that I think would be helpful to South Australia, I would like to give a brief outline of the major differences in approach adopted in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom towards compensation, workplace safety and vocational rehabilitation. Because of the time, I can provide only a broad overview of the main issues of interest, and I welcome members of this House to read my full report, if they would like to do so. I would be very happy to answer any questions they may have about the comments and observations that I made.

Along with Australia, Canada and the United States are the only countries in the world where workers' compensation arrangements are determined at the state or provincial level. By contrast, workers' compensation arrangements in the United Kingdom have been largely integrated with the country's social security system. In terms of ownership, the workers' compensation arrangements in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom exhibit considerable vari-

ation. In the United States, ownership is primarily in the hands of private insurance companies. There are publicly owned schemes in six states, and approximately 20 other states where publicly owned schemes compete with private insurers. Private insurers have exclusive coverage in the remaining states and territories. In most US jurisdictions there is also the opportunity for large firms to self insure.

All the workers' compensation schemes in Canada are publicly owned and typically administered by tripartite boards of management. The scope for self insurance in the Canadian schemes is very limited. In the United Kingdom, as noted above, the workers' compensation system is largely a subset of the publicly owned social security system. Payments for work related injury also differ markedly between the three countries. In the United Kingdom, workers usually receive a flat rate of compensation for 28 weeks and then become eligible for a permanent disability pension. The amount of the pension is dependent on the level of impairment associated with the injury.

Currently, an injured worker is entitled to a pension of £1.18 per week for each percentage of impairment, subject to a threshold level of 14 per cent being met. In addition, workers have full access to common law remedies, where there has been negligence by employers. This is by no means a system that I favour, but there are some good points to be made about making sure that workers are not left on the scrap heap with no support whatever. In this case, the social security system makes sure that workers are not left destitute when they have had the misfortune of being ill or injured at work. In the United States, workers usually receive 66.7 per cent of pre-injury weekly wages, subject to an upper limit that is specified as a percentage of average weekly earnings. Typically, this limit is 100 per cent of a state's average weekly earnings, although in many states it is lower than this while in a few it is higher. As I said, there are many variations to the theme, certainly in the United States.

This payment, which is net of tax and social security contributions, is usually referred to as a temporary total disability (TTD) payment. There is usually a waiting period of three to seven days before a worker is entitled to compensation payments, unless the injury results in a specified number of days being lost, ranging from five to 42 days. Where there is a permanent disability, once the injury has stabilised the worker may be entitled to permanent partial disability (PPD) payments. The amount of the PPD payments is determined by an assessment of the level of impairment. There is a substantial variation between the jurisdictions as to how much is paid and for how long. In some states payments can continue for the duration of a disability, while in others they are limited to a number of weeks or a specified dollar amount.

Where there is a permanent and total disability arising from what is usually a catastrophic injury, the worker is entitled to permanent total disability (PTD) payments, which in most jurisdictions are payable for life or for the duration of the disability. In the event of work related fatality, the worker's family is eligible for death payments. As with other compensation payment categories, the extent of death payments varies markedly between the states. Most jurisdictions also pay for ongoing medical and related costs, although in recent years, with the extension of managed care organisations (something that is being talked about here at the moment) into the workers' compensation arena, this has resulted in greater contestation.

Access to common law by workers for negligence claims against their employers is either prohibited or severely restricted in most states. In Canada, TTD payments are usually based on net pre-injury earnings, as is the case in the United States, although the amounts involved are generally higher and range from 75 to 90 per cent of net pre-injury earnings. In the few jurisdictions where gross pre-injury earnings form the basis of the TTD payments, the level of compensation is usually set at 75 per cent of gross earnings. The upper limits that apply in Canadian schemes are also considerably higher than those in the United States. The determination of PPD payments differs between various provinces and territories.

However, it is worth noting that, unlike in the United States, both these payments are usually adjusted annually and more frequently for the cost of living adjustments in most Canadian jurisdictions. In a number of provinces and territories, PPD payments are determined by an assessment of the level of impairment, then paid to the worker in the form of a pension for life. As in the United States, these impairment ratings are derived directly or indirectly from the American Medical Association guidelines to the evaluation of permanent impairment. In other jurisdictions a loss of earnings approach is used, whereby an estimate is made of what the worker is earning or what he or she is capable of earning relative to their pre-injury earnings.

With the worker being paid the difference (that is, 75 to 90 per cent of the difference between the net earnings involved), there is quite a bit of confusion about what people are actually eligible for. Some jurisdictions, however, provide a dual approach whereby either or both these approaches can be used in the determination of the PPD payments. A number of Canadian schemes also provide supplementary payments in one form or another. Deeming provisions (another aspect which has crept into the South Australian debate) are an integral feature of the loss of earnings approach and enable the compensating authority to reduce an injured worker's payments on the basis of so-called notional earnings that a worker is deemed to be capable of earning irrespective of whether or not he or she is able to obtain that employment.

In the event of permanent and total disability, workers are entitled to PTD payments and as in the United States eligibility for these payments is restricted to workers with the most serious disabilities. Death payments in the event of a work-related fatality are payable to the worker's family and are considerably higher than in the United States. Coverage for medical and related expenses incurred as a result of the injury are also a feature of Canadian schemes.

In relation to dispute resolution there is also considerable variation between the three countries. In Britain there is less scope for disputation since the issue of whether or not the injury is work related is not relevant. The main source of disputation appears to be common law actions for negligence which is traditionally resolved through civil courts. In the US there is a tremendous variation in approaches to dispute resolution. There is a much greater reliance, however, on civil courts than in Australia or Canada. The high cost of litigation in the last decade has prompted moves towards alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. This has also been accompanied by efforts to limit attorney involvement in many states.

In addition, a number of jurisdictions have introduced a scheme-funded workers' advocate to assist workers in their case. Much of the disputation centres on impairment assessments for payments. In many cases there is a wide discrepancy between the assessment of the impairment made by the

worker's treating doctor and the doctor of the insurer—sounds very much like Adelaide!

In Canada there is greater uniformity in the way in which disputes are managed. Often there is an internal reconsideration of issues in dispute which, if unresolved, is the subject of formal determination by the workers' compensation board or an independent appeals tribunal. Only in exceptional cases does a matter in dispute proceed to the provincial civil courts or the federal Supreme Court. Not surprisingly, deeming assessments and impairment ratings give rise to many disputes.

In contrast to Australian schemes, vocational rehabilitation has been part of the workers' compensation scheme in North America for many decades. The importance of vocational rehabilitation in terms of both social and financial benefit does not appear to have been fully realised. While the Canadian approach has many positive features, including the right to return to work and labour market re-entry programs, it also suffers from a number of structural weaknesses which would be familiar to Australian workers' compensation practitioners and analysts.

Other than in Quebec, for example, vocational rehabilitation is not a right but rather is provided at the discretion of the compensating authority. Eligibility for vocational rehabilitation appears to be restricted in most cases to workers with a permanent partial disability status. Since the determination of a worker's permanent partial disability does not occur until the injury has reached maximum medical improvement, this can result in very long delays—often for many months—before vocational rehabilitation is actually commenced. Again, this is something we tend to see in South Australia.

This is contrary to the cardinal rule of effective rehabilitation which is, of course, early intervention. Where injured workers are not able to return to work with their pre-injury employer, the vocational rehabilitation assistance provided often consists of little more than job search training. This approach has attracted much criticism from injured workers groups, the trade union movement and rehabilitation professionals. The attempt to link deeming arrangements with vocational rehabilitation has also given rise to a great deal of criticism and has had the effect of undermining the confidence of those working in the rehabilitation area and those people undergoing rehabilitation.

Not surprisingly, the United States situation appeared to be considerably worse than that in Canada. As in Canada, the worker is not usually eligible for vocational rehabilitation unless he or she has been assessed as having a permanent partial disability. There are also much greater commercial pressures arising from the involvement of private insurance companies, which means that the decision to provide rehabilitation is often more closely linked to the financial needs of the insurer rather than those of the injured worker. This is exacerbated in many states by higher levels of litigation and the greater emphasis placed by insurers on redemptions in order to get workers off their books. Notwithstanding this, as in Canada there are a number of vocational rehabilitation programs that warrant closer consideration.

In contrast to North America, there is no legislative base for the provision of vocational rehabilitation for injured workers in the United Kingdom. This is a matter of great concern to the Trades Union Congress—which is our equivalent of the ACTU—and at the moment they are promoting campaigns for reform in this area. To date there is no sign that the government is tending to move in this direction, so I am hoping there can be more dialogue between

the activists here in the trade union movement and those in the UK to ensure that this change happens.

The variation that characterises workers' compensation and vocational rehabilitation arrangements in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom is also reflected in the manner in which these countries administer their workplace health and safety legislation. In Australia over the past decade there has been an increasing trend towards integration of workers' compensation arrangements and the administration of workplace health and safety laws. This development has been predicated on the view that a more integrated approach towards the prevention of workplace injury, disease and death can produce better results—although whether or not this is the case remains an open question.

In the United Kingdom, where the country's health and safety legislation is administered by the Health and Safety Executive, there has been no integration of workers' compensation arrangements with workplace health and safety. The same is true of the United States where workplace health and safety legislation is administered either directly or through the various states by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration or in conjunction with the states concerned. The situation in Canada, however, is more comparable with Australia where a number of jurisdictions have responsibility for workers' compensation, workplace health and safety legislation and, of course, rehabilitation.

In the remaining 10 minutes, I would like to summarise very briefly the three areas that I think would be particularly important in the proposals that I am putting forward with regard to workers' compensation and health and safety reform. I must say it was quite exciting going to the United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive because for a long time activists in the health and safety area have considered this to be one of the blueprint models in relation to legislation and practice. It was also interesting to find (as I mentioned earlier) that a number of improvements are certainly needed. The number of issues that the union movement shares was quite overwhelming.

The Health and Safety Executive is the enforcement arm of the UK Health and Safety Commission and is answerable through the commission to the Secretary of State for the Environment. As has been the case in other countries, the Health and Safety Executive has been subjected to funding cuts over the course of the late 1980s and much of the 1990s. It has been caught up in the associated deregulatory thrust unleashed by the Thatcher and Major governments, especially during the early 1990s.

As in Australia, there have been many major changes to the structure of the work force in the UK over the past two decades. Approximately 48 per cent of the work force is now employed by small employers, that is, those who have fewer than five workers in their employment, and there is an increasing trend towards the use of contract labour and labour hire arrangements. This has imposed new challenges and demands on the Health and Safety Executive.

In the United Kingdom, 1 500 field inspectors are employed by the Health and Safety Executive for a work force of approximately 27.7 million. There is also approximately one inspector for every 18 000 workers, obviously a very low inspector/worker ratio. This is largely a legacy of the funding cuts associated with the Thatcher years.

On a brighter note, the Blair government has increased funding to the Health and Safety Executive by 20 per cent—and obviously the unions are saying it needs to be increased even further. Despite this significant improvement, it is

apparent that the Health and Safety Executive is still inadequately funded and will require additional budgetary allocations if it is to fully discharge its responsibilities. In addition to field inspectors, the HSE has a number of specialist inspectors with responsibility for specific industries such as mines, offshore oil and the nuclear industry.

A major purpose of the meeting with the HSE was to discuss the various approaches adopted by the organisation towards occupational health and safety inspectors. To a very large extent, the HSE's approach is reactive. Some 85 per cent of inspections are complaint based. This usually involves investigating dangerous occurrences or work related injuries. Health and Safety Executive inspectors issue about 9 000 improvement and prohibition notices a year and conduct approximately 1 800 prosecutions, of which 83 per cent are successful. At this stage there has not been a major emphasis placed on proactive inspections.

The Health and Safety Executive appears to have been hampered in moving in this direction not only because of funding difficulties with which it has had to contend over the past decade or so but also because of the inadequate injury reporting arrangements and the absence of a comprehensive database. It is hoped that the government will be more sympathetic to the needs of occupational health and safety issues and that this situation will change for the better.

I would just like to compare the Health and Safety Executive with some of the findings with regard to the CSST workers' compensation board in Quebec. I have terrible French, Mr Deputy Speaker, so I will not even try to express what the CSST worker's comp. board is in French. The CSST is oversighted by a 15 person board, seven of whom are drawn from business and seven from the trade union movement. The chair is appointed by the government following consultation with business and unions. The CSST is responsible for occupational health and safety administration as well as workers' compensation and rehabilitation.

Having looked at the English version of their legislation, I have to commend the CSST for being able to set out legislation in an easy form that even someone such as I who does not live in Quebec could understand and be up-to-date with very quickly.

The primary pieces of legislation for which it is responsible are: an act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases and an act respecting occupational health and safety. We spent a couple of days with the people from Quebec and were very impressed with some of the initiatives that we managed to inspect. One of the other impressive features of the occupational health and safety legislation in Quebec is the right for pregnant or lactating women workers to be reassigned to duties where the work they undertake could adversely affect their own health or that of the unborn or breast fed children.

The primary aim of this provision is to eliminate health and safety risks arising from pregnancy. However, where this is not done a woman is entitled, subject to certification from her doctor, to a preventive withdrawal. Effectively this means that she is eligible to receive workers' compensation for the duration of the risk. For the first five days of the preventive withdrawal the employer pays her normal weekly earnings, and thereafter she is paid 90 per cent of her net earnings by the CSST. It is worth noting that this right was initially opposed by employers when it was introduced 20 years ago, but it is now widely accepted. I must say that, although I was not entirely happy with pregnant workers being put under the health banner—because a number of pregnant women

workers are capable of continuing with their work—I thought this was an amazing initiative and was particularly impressed that it has been encased in the act for 20 years now. It seems as though South Australia is a long way off from introducing such an initiative.

This is the last point I will make about the Quebec workers' compensation board. The first question that the CEO asked me was whether or not Australia was to have a republic. People in Quebec were, and still are, debating the issues of a republic. They are looking at seceding from Canada. They have had enough of being under what they call 'the British imperialist yoke' and want to go off on their own track. I found it quite interesting that they seemed to be very up to date—probably more up to date than I—about the various issues for and against a republic.

It was quite refreshing to meet people who not only seemed to be administering a fantastic workers' compensation rehabilitation and health and safety scheme but also certainly seemed to be very up to date with debates not only in Australia but certainly the work in South Australia.

The good news is that, on the whole, South Australia has done a very good job. We should be very proud of our scheme in many respects, but there is room for improvement and, unfortunately, in the past few years, I believe as someone who has practised in this area as a workers' compensation advocate that we need to review where we are and make some significant improvements.

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and while I, as a backbencher, am concerned about some of the things that are happening in the community, today I will take a very positive attitude and reflect on some of the great things that are happening and have happened under the government since it was elected in 1993.

We are seeing South Australia, especially in the past two weeks, receiving world recognition as the producers of some of the finest food and wines produced anywhere in the world. The latest visit to South Australia by some 15 camera crews and 150 international food and wine writers for Tasting Australia week has been the single most amazing thing that I have seen happen in this state during my lifetime.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ian Parmenter for arranging Tasting Australia. May we hold him in the highest esteem not only as a chef extraordinaire but also for organising an event that has brought some of the most famous chefs and food scribes to South Australia, as well as giving us an opportunity to showcase the world.

American food writers Vincent Schiavelli and Sophie Grigson on Sunday 3 October travelled with a group along the Coorong to look at the conservation park. They then feasted on South Australian cockles, yabbies and the famous Coorong mullet and other produce manufactured in the area. Their words of praise for the quality of the produce left me and many other South Australians very proud people to live in this state.

Schiavelli also praised the state government for giving strong support to the food and wine industry. He said that nowhere before had he seen a food and wine producing area that had had such strong support from a level of government. And credit must be paid to the government because it took the wine industry and showed it that there was an export market, an export market that was worth \$120 million in 1993 and \$738 million in 1999. It showed the food industry. Credit must go to Premier John Olsen, who convinced them that

they could become food producers for the whole world, especially for the South-East Asian region, and led them by the hand to export their products into those areas.

Sophie Grigson, who is one of the most prominent food scribes on CNN news, has recorded some five programs that will go not only to the United States but around the world. I do not think that South Australia has ever had previously the opportunity to showcase itself as widely as it has on this program. Those food writers also went to Virginia, and I was absolutely amazed at the growth of that area since my prior visit to it.

The predominantly Vietnamese, Chinese, Italian and Greek market gardeners are producing some of the finest products, which in the space of eight to 10 hours from picking are in the marketplaces of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and China. Credit must also go to those wonderful South Australian men and women from ethnic communities who have committed their lives as primary producers to feeding millions of people throughout South-East Asia with the finest produce grown anywhere in the world. We, the people of South Australia, are also beneficiaries, in having access to that fine produce and some of the best food in the world.

The government has also commenced and encouraged the new industry of farming olive groves, which industry I believe within the next five years will be exporting some of the finest boutique olive oils into other countries. We talk about talking coal to Newcastle; let me tell you that I believe that those boutique wineries will be exporting into countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy, which are the predominant olive growing nations in the world, but we will be able to export into them because the quality of our olive oil will be superior to anything else in the world. Aquaculture last year alone increased by a massive 40 per cent on the previous year. There are abalone, rock lobster, prawns, cockles, blue crabs, tuna, whiting, snapper and oysters, and the list goes on endlessly. That volume increased faster in South Australia than in any other state in Australia. That, with the pristine waters of the west coast producing the best seafood in the world, all contributes to nearly \$6 billion of exports annually: what a change from the draconian days of the battle scarred Bannon government!

Unemployment, which was 12.2 per cent under the present Leader of the Opposition, is currently down to 8.2 per cent. With Econtech, the respected private sector economic forecaster, recently issuing the state and territory performances of South Australia, its key findings were that South Australia will have a higher than Australian average of economic growth over the next two years: 3 per cent in 1999-2000, accelerating to 4 per cent to 2001 to 2002. Econtech states that South Australia's employment growth in 1999-2000 will be 2.8 per cent higher than in any other state in Australia and well in excess of the national average of 2.2 per cent. It forecasts a substantial rebound in business investment in South Australia, with investment in building to rise by 29 per cent in 1999-2000, the highest of any mainland state, compared with the national average of 6.7 per cent. It predicts that the South Australian export sector will continue its positive growth, topping the record of \$5.8 billion in 1998-99.

Finally (the most pleasing), Econtech predicts that South Australia's interstate migration loss, brought about by the previous Labor government, will next year be the same as New South Wales and Victoria. That means that fewer South Australians than in the past 15 years will be crossing the

border: in fact, builders are now moving back into South Australia because of the enormous growth that is currently taking place. Recent news, such as the new Ansett call centre to deliver 440 new jobs, is again thanks to the Premier's efforts, which have attracted about 8 per cent of the national call centres to South Australia. This rate is continuing to grow at a rate outstripping the rest of Australia. Danacorp's announcement to establish close to GMH at Elizabeth is more great news for South Australia's manufacturing industry, and the good news continues.

The mentality of the state must change dramatically, however. For too long we have been afraid of change. The only thing wrong with South Australia is that there is a small, vocal minority who enjoy being negative and who want to keep this state the way it has been for the past 100 years. We should all embrace sensible change. Without change the state will die, leaving our young people without a future.

I would like to reflect some of the positives that are occurring in my electorate. For the past three years young second home buyers have come to realise what a wonderful area Colton is (embracing the areas of West Beach, Henley and Grange), and want to live in the area. It is some 10 to 15 minutes from the city, without any traffic problems; close to Glenelg; and throwing distance from West Lakes shopping centre, Football Park and the great beaches along the western suburbs. The result of this has been that real estate prices have risen dramatically, outstripping every metropolitan residential area and running at second spot to North Adelaide, which has retained its number one position. The people in my electorate can sit back comfortably, knowing that while they have been enjoying the comfort of their own homes the capital appreciation on their properties has been outstanding. This has resulted in new housing estates on areas such as the old West Beach drive-in theatre, the old Grange primary school and many new subdivisions which were previously market gardens at Fulham held by families of market gardeners, mainly of Bulgarian extraction, who were holding those properties and have now decided to release them to their grandchildren for development.

The result of that is that the numbers in the six primary schools and one high school in the area of Colton have grown on an annual basis since 1993. During the past five years I have not had any fears of closures or amalgamations, because student numbers have continued to escalate. In fact, if space permitted, Henley High School could accommodate another 400 students commencing next year, taking it from some 900 to 1 300 students. When the minister for education decides to sign off on it, we will have an international standard gymnastics and recreational hall, not only for students to use but also for the entire community in the area. That has been made available through government grants approved by the minister for education and the Charles Sturt council and will be a world class facility to replace the old, defunct Grange community centre.

I would like to reflect on the confidence of members of the opposition, who seem to think that they are past the line and have already won government at the next election. I can tell them that this government is listening to people and is responding. The figures show that there is confidence back in the state, business is expanding and more South Australians are working today than have ever been in the history of this state. We have only to look across the border to see that arrogance cost Jeff Kennett the leadership. But, already the new Labor regime is promising more nurses, teachers and police. That is great, but it all costs money. The

ratings agency Standard and Poors has warned the new Labor regime that if it does take government it must watch its spending if it wants to retain its financial rating.

One has to look at Kennett and say that, given that he took Victoria's financial situation—in debt to the tune of \$34 billion—to its present financial situation of being \$5 billion in debt, he has done a magnificent job for the state of Victoria. I have always gone on record as saying, and I say this time and time again, that the Labor Party has a proven track record of throwing money away left, right and centre when it gets into government, and it will be no different from the opposition on the other side. In the end, the people will have to pay for it. Yes, you can make yourself a good bloke by giving them everything they want, but in the end they are the ones who will have to dip into their pockets and pay it back. We have seen this. We would have liked to take government in 1993 and have a few biscuits left in the Treasury, but we inherited a debt of close to \$9 billion and were asked to run the state.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr CONDOUS: Yes, and you know my position on that; I have made it quite clear. I believe that Labor governments have to start showing some responsibility in this sector. Already in the past week or so I have had three inquiries from businesses in Victoria that are feeling nervous enough to consider shifting out and coming to South Australia to set up business, and that trend will occur. It is only by responsible government, by spending within your means and not running huge deficit budgets, that the state can continue to grow and have some sort of future.

I commend His Excellency the Governor's stance and the government for the responsibility it has shown in the past two years, and I am sure that by the time we go to an election in two years this state will be travelling the best it has ever travelled since the days of Sir Thomas Playford. I also predict that this government will govern for another four years.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): I, too, later in my contribution will talk about the Victorian elections, but from a somewhat different perspective. I also congratulate His Excellency the Governor and his wife on the outstanding work that they do on behalf of the South Australian community. The Governor's speech (and I realise it is the government's speech that he is required by convention to read out) was a very poor one in that it did not outline any vision or hope for South Australia over the next 12 months. Indeed, one has only to look at our sitting program between now and the end of this financial year and one could hardly say that we are being flogged. The outline of the legislative program for this government is extremely poor in terms of both quantity and quality. But that should not surprise members of the South Australian community with respect to conservative governments, which rarely want to rock the boat or disturb the status quo.

The advantage in the parliament's not sitting in one sense is for the lower house members of parliament to get out and meet with their constituents in their electorates on a daily basis. It helps keep an MP in touch with what concerns people, and one draws strength and succour from communication with one's constituents. I appreciate that it would be much more difficult for a member of the Legislative Council to do the same as those of us here in the House of Assembly.

It is interesting to see the range of issues raised in my office during the recent parliamentary break and during the regular Saturday morning street corner meetings I hold. A

number of people, particularly elderly people, came to see me to voice their concerns with the government's proposals with respect to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the downgrading of that hospital, because constituents living in Kilburn and Blair Athol frequently use the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is pointless saying to those people, 'Go and use the Lyell McEwen Hospital' because, first, it is not only further away than the QEH but, secondly, many elderly residents in particular do not know where the Lyell McEwen Hospital is and if they had to drive there themselves or get somebody else other than an ambulance service to take them there they would have some difficulty finding it.

There is the ongoing problem of education and the quality of it, particularly in providing the necessary resources for our educators to teach our children with class sizes small enough for that education to be efficient and particularly to be able to allocate the necessary resources to those children with reading and learning difficulties to bring them up to speed. With those children we are probably condemning them to a life of unemployment because unless they are literate, unless they are numerate and unless they have an ability to operate a computer, in so far as the next century is concerned for those children the working life will simply pass them by, all because we do not devote sufficient resources to the area of education.

In the area of small retailers, the member for Colton may be interested to know that in a number of shopping centres in my electorate I have spoken to a number of small retailers and not only do they not like the expanded shopping hours and indeed are not working them but they do not believe they could earn any extra money in the additional hours if they took advantage of them and they would only incur additional costs. The large retailers on site within those shopping centres are content because they are in effect taking away business from small retailers who are not availing themselves of the additional shopping hours, and those large retailers are probably just increasing their market share again at the expense of the small retailers.

One of the concerns I will take up with the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs concerns a large shopping centre in my electorate which is on the market and has been for some time. A number of small traders who want to get out, sell their businesses and move on to another life have been on monthly leases for some considerable time. When they get a prospective buyer for their business and go to the shopping centre management with a prospective buyer and say, 'Can these people have a long term lease?' they are told, 'No, you can't; all we can do is offer you a monthly lease.' So these small retailers who are wanting to get rid of their businesses and start a new life are, in effect, chained to their existing businesses unless they simply pack up and walk away, losing all goodwill.

Another area I will deal with on a local basis involves the Prospect city council, in my electorate, which I congratulate on the establishment of a skate park at Whittle Reserve on Churchill Road, Prospect. It was a matter of some controversy in the immediate area. I noticed that the member for Adelaide as the local member for that area was less than enthusiastic about the establishment of the skate park, no doubt due in no small measure to concerns expressed by some of the local residents that it would cause too much noise, vandalism, graffiti and every other term one could use to describe the fears some people hold about young people. Nonetheless the Prospect council went ahead with its project and it has been completed and was recently opened. It is a

good project on Whittle Reserve not only with respect to a skate park but also with its provision for tennis courts, a basketball court, a play area for small children, barbecue outlets and the like, and is being thoroughly enjoyed not only by young people from the Prospect city council area but also by a number of other young people coming from elsewhere to make use of that facility.

It is all very well for members of the older generation to condemn young people for wanting to use a skate park and to say that they are too noisy or that it will lead to this, that or other social discomfort for some of the residents, but we must provide safe areas for young people to enjoy their recreation. We in our time were able to do it when we were young. We grew up in an era when we could wander far and wide from our homes in comparative safety. That is not the case for young people today and I commend the Prospect council for its efforts in that area and for its maintenance of the Irish Harp Reserve of a BMX bike track that a few lads a year ago during a school holiday built for themselves. Largely the council allowed it to stay intact. It had to change some areas for safety reasons, but I commend the local residents in that area who did not object to the council fencing off the area and allowing the young lads and a couple of young girls to continue enjoying the area as a BMX track.

I remember as a young person, quite some years ago, that we were free to do those things in comparative safety. Now we have so many regulations and the like that tend to prevent young people from giving expression to what they want to do to enjoy their recreation. People are more litigious in suing councils if they have areas that are potentially unsafe, and if an accident occurs the council takes the automatic action of forbidding certain activity from taking place for fear of that litigation rather than using some imagination. On this occasion again the Prospect City Council (this is going back some months now) acted on some advice that I was able to give and support that I gave to these young people, and maintained that BMX bike track and made it safer.

The Enfield RSL had an interesting annual dinner last Friday night, during the course of which Lieutenant Colonel Pierre Gregor, who was in charge of Operation Safe Haven at Hampstead Barracks, delivered a speech. Hampstead Barracks is in my electorate and, of course, as we all know, the Kosovars stayed there for a period of three months. Lieutenant Colonel Gregor gave a very informative speech about the role of the armed forces in the operation of that safe haven and all the logistics that are involved before and after the arrival of those Kosovar refugees and the type of considerations that the military has had to put into place. I commend Lieutenant Colonel Gregor and his staff and all the intergovernmental agencies involved, including the Department of Human Services and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. It was a major effort which proved the value of our military forces, not only in war time but also in peace time, to undertake these types of humanitarian services which are of lasting value not only to those people who are immediately affected but also to our community generally.

I also want to mention (again on a local level) three outstanding people who are members of the best and greatest amateur league football club in South Australia (well known to the member for Colton), namely, the Kilburn Football Club. Never was there a greater or fairer club, in all aspects of the game, than the Kilburn Football Club. The member for Colton would know that only too well through the friendly jousts that we have had with the Henley Greeks over the years. Usually they come off second best, both in the fights

and also on the football field. I might add that the Kilburn Football Club never starts a fight on a football field, but we usually do finish it. Three of our members were honoured last Saturday night with life membership of the club. They were Barry White, one of the trainers, Darryl Leske, the interchange steward, and Kym Cotter, a previous chairman and previous sponsorship manager of the club. Each of those gentlemen have given outstanding service on behalf of the club over many years and have given many voluntary hours with respect to the growth of the club to allow it to be what it is today: the best amateur league football club and certainly one of the most successful amateur league clubs in the state. I think we overlook on many occasions, not only with respect to this club but also other sporting organisations, the role and work of volunteers, who do so much to enable those clubs to function—to allow players to take to the field, to provide the money and resources through their untiring efforts to allow the players to participate and for the community generally to take pride in their club and to be able to watch their club in action.

During the parliamentary break we also saw again the closure of another banking service in my electorate. The Commonwealth Bank has closed its branch at Kilburn. This was the last banking service that existed in the Kilburn-Blair Athol region. If any local businesses or any of the local residents want to do any banking they must now get themselves to the shopping centre at North Park to be able to go to the banks there. This is extremely inconvenient for our elderly citizens, in particular, who do not necessarily have easy access to private transport—the aged and infirm. I note that the Prime Minister recently made a comment about closure of bank branches, when he said that banks have social obligations. Of course, I would agree with the Prime Minister, except for the fact that at law, of course, the banks, as private entities, have only one responsibility, and that is to their shareholders and the maximisation of profits to those shareholders. They have, at law, no community service obligations. It is no use extolling rhetoric to these banks. You either have to make it part of their legal requirements or, in fact, you own a bank yourself—that is, the government—so that you can make sure that they carry out a community service obligation. I regret to this day that it was a Labor government that sold off the Commonwealth Bank after the Commonwealth Bank was established in the first place by a federal Labor government under the leadership of Andrew Fisher in 1911, and the then Treasurer, King O'Malley, who was also a former member of the House of Assembly here in South Australia prior to his moving to Tasmania and becoming a member of the federal parliament for that state and subsequently a treasurer in a commonwealth Labor government under Andrew Fisher's prime ministership.

I would like to commend the contribution of the member for Mitchell in his thought provoking Address in Reply speech concerning the abolition of the Legislative Council. Members would know that I support, and have advocated for some time, the abolition of the Legislative Council. I will not take members through all the reasons which I have expounded in the past on that issue.

I support the comments of the member for Mitchell that deal with enhancing the powers of standing committees of the House of Assembly, if we are to get rid of the Legislative Council, so as to better scrutinise legislation and to enhance the powers and authority of minority groups within the House of Assembly—namely, the opposition party—to enable them to compel ministers and public servants to appear before

those standing committees to give evidence under oath so that the government can be far more accountable and transparent in its actions.

I was interested in the formula that the member for Mitchell put forward with respect to the election of House of Assembly members which seemed to me a combination of constituencies with direct election of single members in those constituencies with a top up provided on a proportional representation basis so that the party with the majority of votes ended up with the majority of seats in the House of Assembly. I am not necessarily wedded to his formula in that area, but I think that we ought all to start looking at the issue of how elections in the future will take place—whether, in fact, single member constituencies will last well into the next century as they have this century. I believe now, with an increasing number of voters wanting greater choice in representation in parliament that we might end up with a greater likelihood of proportional representation coming into the House of Assembly, similar to Tasmania, where so many members are elected from each of the Federal divisions that are represented in that state.

I realise that that may mean more Democrats, Independents or whatever you want to call them in this Chamber and that many of us here who represent the major parties would say that we do not want them. But it is not so much what we as major parties want: it is what the voting public will want and demand. As more and more people over time become less and less wedded to each of the major parties, they will demand that the different political parties they support, provided they attract sufficient voting numbers (even if it is not 50 per cent plus one), have some representation in this parliament. I do not think that it would mean the end of the world if we in fact had a PR system of election to the House of Assembly based on the Tasmanian system.

If we consider the recent Victorian election, there will be a minority Labor government with three Independents holding the balance of power, as exists here, but it is probably even more tenuous in Victoria given that at least two of those three Independents are probably from more conservative political backgrounds and that the upper house is dominated by the Liberal Party. Even with single member electorates in Victoria, there will be a tortuous path for the new Premier, as I believe he will be, Steve Bracks, to work his way through. Likewise, we in South Australia have a minority government. We had a minority Labor government under the Bannon regime from 1989 to 1993. There were virtually minority governments in Queensland with single member electorates both under Rob Borbidge and then with Premier Beattie (except for a recent by-election win that he had, but that is still not clear in any event given certain events that may take place in that state over the coming months).

So, it is not uncommon for minority governments to operate in Australia even with single member electorates. That being the case, I do not see the sky having fallen in on any of those states; life is not more difficult. But, as we saw in the last parliament, even when the Liberal Party had a 37-10 majority in this chamber, because it lacked a majority in the upper house it still had to negotiate its way through with respect to legislation. Certainly, it could not be defeated through a no confidence motion, but its legislation had to be steered through a potentially hostile upper house. Again, in a sense, it is almost like being in minority government status when one looks at it over two chambers. Therefore, I think that the day is coming fast upon us when not only will the Legislative Council be abolished but in fact the means by

which we elect our House of Assembly will change quite radically.

I refer to the Victorian election and, in particular, to the vote for the Labor Party, the vote for Independents in regional areas and the unrest that has been developing in those areas for some time. Ever since the Victorian election result the present Premier of South Australia and his ministers, in every second ministerial statement and every second word, have referred to regions, the importance of the regions and how they will now hold cabinet meetings in the regions in different parts of the state. Well, just holding cabinet meetings in regions will not assuage the anger of people in regional South Australia. One has only to look at this government's actions over the past six years to see the gutting of employment in these regional areas. I give two very simple examples of this government's lack of commitment to regional development.

Some three or so years ago this government contracted out to private industry road maintenance in the Hawker area. Eight workers who were previously employed by the Department of Road Transport lost their jobs. Their places were taken by workers who did not live in the township of Hawker. I believe that these workers lived in Adelaide and that they worked two weeks on and two weeks off. They spent their wages primarily in Adelaide. Perhaps the local pub did a bit of business at the end of a working day, but their children were not at the Hawker school and the like. So, that had a profound impact on a small township in terms of the loss of income for, say, the local butcher and in terms of the children and parents participating in local school affairs.

In the last 18 months the accounts department of SA Water centralised its accounting functions in Grenfell Street in the city. In places such as Berri, Port Lincoln, Mount Gambier, Crystal Brook and elsewhere some 13 clerical accounting jobs were lost to regional South Australia—they were centralised in Adelaide. It is my view that governments must lead in this area. Basically, if we are to talk about regional development, we can give all the rhetoric that we like and talk about all the incentives we will give private industry, but they still will not move. Governments have to take the bull by the horns and literally pick up some of the work of government agencies and put that work out into the regions, even if initially it is more costly to do so. Only when the government provides the sheet anchor in terms of basic employment and maintaining those basic government services in those areas will private industry tend to follow, if there is a market where they can sell their goods or services. It is not just the state government that has done it, but commonwealth governments, both Liberal and Labor, and more particularly the Liberal Party at a federal level with respect to a whole range of cutbacks in commonwealth jobs out in regional South Australia. Only with that type of concrete action will we see any abatement in the bush of the anger and resentment that they quite rightly feel at the loss of services and employment opportunities in their local regions.

In the last few minutes that I have, going back to the Victorian election, what was very good about it was the lesson it taught political apparatchiks, professional politicians, pollsters and the like, except for Newspoll, who all forecast another landslide win for Mr Kennett. He was Mr Popularity, seen as strong and decisive, although arrogant, but someone who got things done. He may have been high-handed and secretive on a number of issues, such as the Auditor-General, the ambulance service and Crown Casino, but in all those the professional view was that the public

would wear it because of his other so-called assets, and that the Victorian public was concentrating on the football finals. Well, they were all wrong—as was I, and I join that throng—just as they were in South Australia in October 1997.

I do not claim to have foreseen accurately the election results in Victoria, although I had some misgivings. I had a gut feel that something would go wrong with respect to Mr Kennett, but I went along with the rest of the polls and dismissed my gut instincts as simply wishing for the best. My gut instincts were right, as were those of some other people. However, it seems to me that the electorate in all states of Australia, and particularly because this is a state parliament, wants at least these basic five tenets followed by a state government. First, the effective provisioning and funding of basic services, such as health, education and police. Secondly, the generation of jobs to the extent that state government resources permit. The voters know that states have limited financial capacity to spend up big on this particular item. They recognise that this is primarily a national government's responsibility, but they do not want a loss of jobs caused by state governments going about privatising the people's assets.

Thirdly, they want an effective and well-resourced public service to provide the public with reasonably quick and efficient service to address each of our needs. That is, they hate muzak on the telephone whilst waiting to push buttons to go to a service provider who tells them that they have the wrong department or section. Particularly in the smaller states like South Australia and the regions, they know that public sector jobs provide the sheet anchor for the community in terms of maintaining a viable community. Fourthly, the government must be open and transparent in its dealings. The voters will not condemn a minister for making a mistake—only if they try to blame others for it or try to deny their own culpability or try to lie about whose responsibility the mistake was. Voters want and must be able to have faith that their government is at least honest in its actions and intent. Whilst there may be arguments as to the policy line that is adopted by the government, the voters have the right not to be lied to.

Lastly, the electorate knows that state governments have scarce resources, and recognises that there are limits as to how generous governments can be to different causes, but it wants its governments to be able to act compassionately, to the extent possible, to assist those in need. Any government that can fulfil these five basic tests will enjoy longevity in government and the enduring respect of the electorate years after those governments have ceased being in office. Unfortunately, I fear that this government is failing on all five basic tests.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): May I first of all say that it is quite a novel pleasure to follow the member for Ross Smith, given the level of commitment that he has made in recent times to the pursuit of organisational goals within the organisation to which he owed his original arrival in this place, the Australian Labor Party. There is no question about the fact that, whilst I do not reflect on or question his motives for so doing, he is nonetheless proving not only to the Labor Party in South Australia but to the Labor Party nationally and, more importantly, to all other political organisations (indeed, organisations of any kind—and we on this side of the chamber would do well to take note of this point) that, if they exist according to a set of rules in the way in which they function, then they ought to observe those rules, called a constitution, and stick to them, and not wander off into the wilderness and make it up as they go along according to

whatever seems to be convenient between a bunch of cronies who reckon they can pull it off on the day whenever the vote needs to be taken to do so.

Members of society at large, if that society is civilised, need to know what it is the various organisations to be found within that civilised society are there to do and what rules they will use as the vehicle for conducting their affairs in that organisation. So, I commend the member for Ross Smith for what he is doing. It takes the function of political organisations, in particular, but organisations in general, as we go into the next millennium, to a new level of accountability and responsibility: write down what you are going to do and then do it, and do it according to the rules that you wrote down; in other words, plan the work and then work the plan. I am also happy to acknowledge the honesty and frankness with which the member for Price has always dealt with such matters throughout the time that I have known him, and that goes way back beyond coming into this place.

The remarks that were made by the Governor were not really the remarks of the Governor's own mind, and I am compelled to draw attention to the fact that I often find some amusement, if not dismay, in these kinds of remarks. When the term 'into the next millennium' is used in the context of this current year being the last year of the second millennium, there are two observations I want to make. People who say that cannot count. There are a thousand years in a millennium: there was no day zero, month zero, year zero. Year zero is a nonsense, and we use the zero on the end of the digit to indicate the end of a decade or century. Another point I make in passing is that next year, whilst everyone thinks it is a leap year, will not have 366 days in it; there will be 365. That has to be so, otherwise we get out of kick with the reality of the calendar and the rate at which the earth rotates around the sun, which determines that.

We are not in the last year of the second millennium, and in any case those of us who are Christian or who accept the Calvinist calendar need to remember that it is grossly offensive to parade that in front of people of other religious beliefs who begin their counting of time at some other point in history than the presumed birth date of Christ—and I acknowledge the remarks which were made recently to the chamber by the member for Spence on that matter. It would therefore be helpful if people knew the difference between the beginning and the end of a millennium.

I am reminded, seeing the Minister for Correctional Services sitting at the bench, of the difference between the ministry and the cabinet. I saw a press release at the time the cabinet was reduced in size to 10 and the ministry expanded in size to 15 when the Premier was quoted as having said—and I am sure he did not say this—that he 'welcomed Mr Brokenshire to the cabinet'. In fact, that is not so. The ministry and the cabinet are not one and the same. Whilst I do not reflect on the competence of the member for Mawson to be a member of cabinet—that is not my point at all—my point is quite simply that at this point the member for Mawson has not been sworn in as a member of cabinet: he has been sworn in to the ministry. I will have something further to say about how it is a matter of convenience, and how it is seen to be irrelevant to pay attention to those details. If one is sloppy and ignorant of those details, one will be sloppy and ignorant in the way in which one deals with matters of constitutional import. I will come to that again later.

Other matters in the speech with which the Governor opened the parliament and upon which I wish to make some

remark are those which drew attention to some quite remarkable achievements in the South Australian economy during the past year. The Governor said:

In the building industry, housing starts increased by 5 per cent in the last year—the highest in four years—whereas they fell 6 per cent nationally.

That is quite incredible; quite an achievement for the government. The support for the Riverland has maintained an economic growth in the Riverland of 30 per cent per annum for the past four years. I pay a tribute to not only the current member for Chaffey for the diligence and determination with which she pursues her work but also her predecessor, a friend and colleague of mine, Kent Andrew for the work that he did. But, it came off a low base and it was a base that was either deliberately or out of ignorance—I do not know which—driven down by Labor Party policies in South Australia as well as federally.

Labor did not know what terrible consequences it was visiting upon our regions when it pursued those policies—when Keating was Treasurer and Hawke was Prime Minister; and then Keating himself became Prime Minister and continued to do some absolutely silly things that resulted in depression for most rural economies. On that point, let me say, too, that I am pleased that the current state and commonwealth governments have at last—especially the commonwealth government—agreed to the recommendations of the Murray-Mallee Task Force, the formation of which I instigated.

Indeed, the whole question of the examination of the adverse impact of government policies on rural communities and their ability to remain viable was something to which I drew attention when it was not sexy to do so back in the early 1980s and demonstrated that no rigour was being used—I will put it as bluntly as that—by bureaucrats and politicians making those decisions. They were butchering rural and regional Australia with high interest rates and other things of that nature to address problems which had nothing to do with them. They did not bother to provide compensation or to provide the means by which an amelioration of the adverse consequences could be obtained.

The Murray-Mallee Task Force, having succeeded in its work, has appointed a facilitator to ensure that we get the right things done to secure the viability of communities throughout the Murraylands-Mallee region, and I commend Sally Pederick for successfully being appointed to the role of facilitator. She comes with a very impressive pedigree, having worked in land care and the like, helping communities to develop local action plans for revegetation, soil conservation and other practices that result in sustainable farming becoming very much a part of what the Mallee is doing. She now moves into ensuring that not only will the technology of agricultural practice be sustainable but also so that the other elements of a successful society in that part of the state will be properly put in place, in a conscious and deliberate way so that the social and essential infrastructure is put in place and maintained in the area that I represent. I will work closely with her, and I look forward to that. I thank everyone who applied for the position of facilitator. It will not be an easy job.

As we look at His Excellency the Governor's remarks, we see the point being made that securing Tasting Australia, Tour Down Under and things of that nature meant that South Australia got itself favourable publicity. We ought not to get hooked on the expenditure of millions of dollars from the public purse on projectitis, where sufficient rigour is not

applied in the analysis of the benefits that will flow from it. In the time that we have been in office here, I can see instances in which we have decided, after looking at some chickens guts or something of that order, as to what we will do rather than using appropriate rigour to make those judgments. We do not do a careful enough analysis of the benefits compared with the costs. In consequence, we are bringing ourselves, whether I would say so or not, into some bad odour with the wider community who can see the folly of some of those decisions.

On the other hand, though, I am pleased to note that the government has a program to have rural arterial roads sealed by 2004, saying that that is a part of tourism infrastructure. I am still belly-aching about the fact that it is a long way off to seal the only remaining unsealed section of the Murray Valley highway, if I can call it that, from Walkers Flat through to Bowhill. Nowhere between Khancoban country and the mouth is the road unsealed except there, and we cannot seem to focus our minds on it and get it fixed. It is about time we did. It is about time we gave it some fair priority. Just because I am polite about it does not mean that it does not matter. It does matter. It matters probably more than some of the other decisions that have been made relating to the expenditure of social infrastructure in rural and regional South Australia to do that and some of the other things such as getting appropriate quantities of power into the Mallee area to enable the industries that value add on the horticultural production that is now being established on the groundwater there to be undertaken locally. Without that power, they cannot be; it is not efficient.

So, I commend the government and draw attention to His Excellency's remark that 'my government asserts that this also means continuing to support and nurture our more traditional state economic resources such as agriculture and manufacturing as they manage to change so that they continue to compete successfully in global export markets'. I want to draw attention in a moment to what I have always maintained as being an essential part of policy in that direction, that is, getting our export related production into gear, and the advocacy which I made some 10 years for the establishment of a council which looked after and encouraged the development of trade between South Australia and those places from which our migrants have come in recent times, whether in Asia, Europe, North America or South America, Africa or anywhere else. Of course, it has resulted in the Liberal Party's adopting a policy of not only having an Office of Multicultural and International Affairs but also, and more importantly, having another organisation, now properly positioned within Department of Industry and Trade, called the Council for International Trade and Commerce of South Australia, of which I am a member, elected in that role as a member of that council in my own right, not as a member of Parliament. The work it does to support the country's specific business councils and chambers of commerce enables us to penetrate those markets in each of the countries where they exist in a specific way. I move on then and remark on the following proposal:

A number of legislative amendments will be made to assist the further development of the petroleum, mining and energy industries—

and I say to that 'Hear, hear!'—

and a provision will be made under the Petroleum Act to allow for development of geothermal energy in the future.

I do not know that it has to be just the Petroleum Act; it could be an act that stands alone. There are hot rocks elsewhere underground in South Australia not only in the Cooper Basin. They are there, of course, because of the proximity to radioactive bodies close to the surface, relatively speaking, of the earth's crust which generate that heat and make it so readily available and cheap. We need to look at that and use it carefully as a source of sustainable energy in the longer term. More heat is trapped in the centre of the earth than the species of homo sapiens will ever be able to exhaust before it, in turn, probably disappears from the surface of this planet, earth.

I am also pleased to note that early in the piece we have introduced a bill to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the Hindmarsh Island bridge. If ever there was a case of political deceit pursued by a bunch of people who wanted to stop something from being done that was it. Hindmarsh Island bridge and women's business, as I have said before, was nonsense. It was cooked up as a means of trying to prevent the bridge from being built and there are, if you like, third parties in that whole arrangement who muddied the waters, can I say in rhetorical terms, for their own interests. They used the Aboriginal people and got them to develop this view that there was some secret women's business when that was piffle.

It distressed me to see it happening and to be unable to prevent it from continuing to happen to the point now where still a large number of young Aboriginal people, particularly young women, believe that there is some significant belief. What nonsense! What a terrible tragedy it was to invent religious beliefs of that kind and have them incorporated, as it were, into the notion of folklore as though they were something about which there ought to be strong feelings that have been inherited for thousands of years. Piffle!

I could go through His Excellency the Governor's speech, and perhaps I will do so on one other point alone, that is, the area of growing concern about the equity of property valuations, particularly in the peri-urban areas, and the consequent effects of such valuations on state and local government charges and levies. This has been a great concern of mine for a long time, because where land that was once zoned, and properly zoned, say, for broad acre agriculture is then valued by some city valuer for its industrial or residential purposes that are indeed not countenanced in the zoning that has been ascribed to it, it is iniquitous. It is wrong, and it is unfair to the owner. Just because land immediately adjacent to it, which has been zoned for more intensive development for residential purposes or for industrial purposes, has changed hands for a higher price than would have been the case for, say, broad acre farming, it does not mean that the land zoned for broad acre farming ought to be then valued and the rates and taxes and other charges should be levied on it at that higher valuation.

It is not for the purpose of manufacturing industrial development of any kind or residential development. It is for the purpose of broad acre farming. So, it ought to be valued at its highest value, given its location and other considerations, wherever it may be, for that purpose and not some other. I look forward to seeing that legislation, because I know that it will address this inequity which I have long felt we have ignored. The Labor Party could not address it during its time in office, but now I see that we will. It is high time.

I am worried about the direction in which our state parliaments seem to be going, particularly this parliament with the practice of the Treasurer coming into this chamber

to deliver the budget speech. One day there will be a cock up over that. The Treasurer will not be subject to the discipline of the Speaker: he cannot be, because he is not a member of this chamber. If the Treasurer becomes involved in an altercation during debate in this chamber, there is no standing order to deal with that. I think that is destructive of the idea that there needs to be a bicameral parliament and that we need to have a chamber of review.

Any reforms of the parliamentary system that we make ought to more clearly define the roles of the houses to do the things that must be done. The upper house ought to do more of the review of government projects and expenditure and so on, and the Assembly ought to be a house of government in which the committee structure is more about policy than about the review of the activities of government and keeping the government accountable.

I am distressed by that. I am also compelled to observe that, if this proposition to turn Australia into a republic and alter the constitution to facilitate that becomes a reality, there will be a further blurring of the separation of powers in an arrangement within the structure of government. It is really like a political Chernobyl. If the referendum question passes in the affirmative, honourable members and members of the general public who advocate the establishment of a republic do not realise the meltdown that will result.

As the proposal stands, the legislation that will be passed to amend the constitution should the yes vote prevail will allow the prime minister to sack the president. The president will have no recourse whatsoever, and his or her reputation will be impugned forever. They will never be reinstated even if the prime minister got it wrong.

The next and most important point is that the president will not have to be replaced by the most senior candidate. They will come along in order, of course, with the most senior governor from the states. The states may choose to abolish the office of governor and, according to the way in which most states' constitutions are written, then there is the head of government. So, there will be a prime minister and a premier, and the prime minister can simply sack the president and then point to each of the senior premiers or senior governors around the state and say, 'You're sacked, you're sacked' until he gets the premier or the governor whom he wants to be in the job for three months.

He would be able to do what Khemlani was willing to do for Jim Cairns and Francis Xavier Connor. However mischievous, deceitful or well intentioned they may have been in 1975, what they proposed to do was in breach of the constitution and the law. You cannot govern without the rule of law, without the passage of legislation through parliament. Yet, that is what those men proposed to do.

In the future, if this republic question gets up, within three months the prime minister will be able to wreak havoc on this country and its constitutional functions and conventions because, not only will the prime minister be able to sack the president and as many of the other people in line in seniority until they get to the one they want, they will then be able to change by decree the reporting relationships of the armed forces and the roles and functions of the courts during that period of three months and parliament will not need to sit.

You only have to look at what has happened in Pakistan to see what I am talking about. I have seen that kind of thing happen elsewhere. If it works well now and it is not broken, do not fix it, or if you intend to fix it make sure that you think through the consequences. That is my piece of advice for those people who are thinking more in terms of fashion and

fad than fact. They are not thinking carefully and differentiating between feelings and facts on this issue. I have very strong feelings about this issue. It is part of the Liberal Party's constitution. Under clause 3 those of us who are elected to this parliament are required to swear that we will uphold our party's constitution. That says that we see the Crown of Australia—not the crown of any other country—as sovereign, distinct and separate from the head of government.

The head of state is not the head of government. We say we believe in bicameral parliaments, yet I hear my colleagues talking openly about exactly the opposite. That is in our constitution and we swore when we sought endorsement in the first place and every occasion since that we would uphold that constitution and the objectives stated in it. It distresses me that we are not living by our own rules in that respect. It seems to me that we have a 'corporate box' mentality; a bunch of cronies sit around and talk to each other while they have a few chardonnays and a couple of cheeses. If they believe they can pull it off, they do it. They forget about the effects on the average Joe.

Mr Koutsantonis: What's wrong with chardonnay? I've seen you drink it!

Mr LEWIS: I don't mind admitting the fact that I won the Rudy Buring Memorial Prize for Sensory Appellation when I graduated from Roseworthy. Those people who take the occasion to live off the fat of the land and to make decisions in that kind of atmosphere and ignore the vast majority of the population and their interests in the outcomes of such decisions are kidding themselves; they are out of touch. Just because it is seen to be fashionable elsewhere does not mean it is necessarily better to go down this road of a republic in Australia. We would be dunces to vote yes to that.

I do not want to make reflections unduly, but I am compelled to say that I believe that a good part of the yes case comes from those inverted snobs, most of whom are of Irish extraction and who want revenge, and nothing else. That distresses me.

Mr Koutsantonis: That's outrageous!

Mr LEWIS: No, it's a fact; you go and talk to them. Where does Keating come from on this question? He has not made one reasoned argument.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Such): Order! The member for Peake will refrain from interjecting.

Mr LEWIS: Many of us travel overseas, and I am one of those people. I noticed a media release put out by the No Pokies Independent member in the other place 'Time for MPs' travel to be caught by the web'—I think he means published on the web. I do not have a problem with that at all. I have always believed that whatever we do we ought to be accountable for when we spend that money, and there is a great deal of benefit to be derived from MPs seeing what goes on elsewhere in the world and knowing what can be done to improve things here and what ought not to be done to make them worse.

I have no problem whatever with the public knowing where I have been and what I have done. For instance, I have recently been to Korea. I have led a trade delegation there which was very successful. All nine companies that participated in that trade delegation got business connections in many countries. The least number of countries was four and the most number of countries in which any one of those companies made connections of substance was 11. There was not just one connection but several from which they can negotiate and develop substantial trading relationships

appropriate to their business interests. You see, it was the Asia Pacific—

Mr Koutsantonis: Are they republics?

Mr LEWIS: Some of them are; some of them, such as Thailand, Malaysia and Japan, are monarchies. I have no difficulty with that at all. That was not part of the agenda. What we were trying to do at the SENTEC Centre in Seoul was discuss ways in which we could reduce tension through reducing barriers to trade among places such as Kazakhstan and Australia or wherever—it does not matter—and to allow those people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, sell their products on a wider market in competition with everybody else, and get the prosperity that comes from so doing. Then they do not need aid packages. They do not need to feel as though they are living on charity from some other direction.

I am pleased to have been given the honour and responsibility of leading that delegation and I report to the House that I believe it to be an outstanding success. It is a pity that more firms did not go: for such low cost they could have achieved so much. I commend the Premier for also attending at the same time and for concluding the arrangement of a commercial nature as well as cultural, and so on, between Chungchong-Namdo (that is Chungchong Province in Korea) and South Australia. I would like to pursue that some other time in some greater detail.

Suffice to say now, though, that I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that has been done by two of my late constituents, Allen William Brian and Paul Herman Proeve.

Time expired.

Mr SNELLING (Playford): His Excellency's speech has led me to consider the valuable role that he plays in the constitutional life of South Australia and to reflect on the larger constitutional questions that are to be put before the Australian people in November. A civilised society derives its moral authority from beyond the exclusively temporal. Western civilisation is indebted to christianity for much that is distinctive and central to its achievements from rejecting the practice of slavery to political pluralism and a concern for social justice and human rights. This century has been littered with attempts to create the purely secular state.

The absence of the restraining influence of christianity on the state has been catastrophic in many of these experiments. At the extreme end, the millions who have been slaughtered in Stalin's purges and Hitler's final solution are a testament to the need for restraint. A state that sources its authority in God succumbs less easily to the hubris of state power. Hence, I am attracted to the argument that the Crown is a symbol of something greater than itself and a reminder of the ultimate source of all authority. But better a pious republic than a Godless monarchy.

I am also mindful of my party's support for a republic. However, I make the point that this does not commit me or anyone else in the party to blind support for the model on offer. An uncritical republican stance is no contribution at all to the evolution of the republic we need to have. When Robert Manne blithely dismissed the public's concern with the detail of the model as 'a second order issue', Michael Duffy was right to rebuke him for being both frivolous and contemptuous of legitimate public disquiet in the worst traditions of our local elites. The republican movement must accept a good deal of the blame for the fact that the debate on the model has been so impoverished.

Those critics who point out that the official yes case literature has five blank pages where there should have been arguments clearly have a point. If, as I expect, there is a 'No' vote in South Australia and insufficient support nationally, the ARM should reflect on its own failures to persuade people of a case that clear majorities were willing to support. Significant changes to our constitution are quite rightly difficult to bring about. They oblige political parties and broader movements for social change to bring the people with them. As long as a significant proportion of the population feels wary of proposed constitutional change, referenda are bound to fail.

I am surprised that the republican movement allowed Paul Keating to set the republican timetable. It is wishful thinking to believe that a referendum to allow an Australian republic before 2001 will be successful. Gratefully remembering Britain's role in the defence of Australia during the Second World War, and deeply attached to the present Monarch, too many Australians find the notion offensive. Notwithstanding his brilliance, Paul Keating only intensified those reactions when he started to give us unreliable history lessons and to question the patriotism of anyone who disagreed with him. As Bob Hawke pointed out, the most natural time for change would be at the end of the present reign.

If his argument had been accepted so would the change itself and there would have been plenty of time to sort out the fine print. Instead we have a model which a great many distinguished legal minds say is unworkable. I am not a lawyer, but I know enough about the nuts and bolts of government to share some of their practical concerns. If the theory of competing mandates applies to direct election, as the ARM argues, it must also be a problem with a president who enjoys the support not only of a tokenistic appointment committee but a two thirds majority of a joint sitting of the federal parliament.

If the former Chief Justice of Australia, Sir Harry Gibbs, says there is likely to be a Mexican stand-off in the event of a dismissal, the ARM should do more than dismiss his arguments with a sneer. Reassurance without substance is not very reassuring. Time does not permit a rehearsal of all the potential problems, but I will briefly list them. Instant dismissability of the president undermines the checks and balances to executive power. I cannot see any sense in having more than one deputy president, each able to assume the full powers of the president.

The notionally secret deliberations of the appointment committee would also inevitably become public, as Richard McGarvie has pointed out, and would deter the most suitable people from allowing their name to be put forward. None of these problems can plausibly be dismissed as frivolous, nor can the inevitable changes involving the High Court in constitutional crises. The non-justiciability clause was an afterthought, so badly drafted as to be an open invitation to the court to decide to which particular parts of the Constitution it actually applies.

Thoughtful republicans as well as monarchists are worried about these time bombs. Most of us have children and want them to grow up in a politically stable climate such as we ourselves have enjoyed. On this occasion I shall be voting 'No' because I cannot in all conscience do otherwise. My problems are with the model on offer rather than republicanism generally, and I am not alone in my concerns. To the 30 per cent of Labor voters who share them, I can only say that they should feel free to follow their conscience.

Mr MEIER: Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

Mr De LAINE (Price): I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply as moved by the member for Hartley. Again the government's opening speech was delivered by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Eric Neal, and I wish to pay tribute to Sir Eric and Lady Neal for the ongoing wonderful job that this ceremonial couple, leaders of our state, do in their everyday job as Governor and Governess of the state. I have attended many official functions around the state with Sir Eric where he has been an official guest and have always been most impressed by his professionalism, his friendly disposition, his understanding of issues and his keen interest in all aspects of life and the development of our great state. I look forward to continuing to meet with Sir Eric and Lady Neal at future engagements around the state.

In his opening speech, His Excellency referred to the passing of two former members of this Parliament, the Hon. Don Dunstan, a former Premier of this state and member for Norwood and a great South Australian, and also the former member for Goyder, Keith Russack. These two gentlemen were greatly respected in this Parliament and their passing is very much mourned.

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

Mr De LAINE: In His Excellency the Governor's speech, as prepared by the government, there was no mention of health, and that is no wonder because the state's health system is in crisis. I have never seen it as bad as it is at present. Over the last six years we have seen nothing but funding cuts to hospitals and bungled attempts to privatise parts of our health system. On top of that, an additional \$36 million has been cut from hospitals this financial year.

In my own area, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has seen ward and bed closures and a whole range of cuts to services. There is a proposal to drastically cut maternity and obstetric services at this once great hospital. That proposal is outrageous because it will deprive western suburbs' women of access to those services.

I understand that a government review of maternity and obstetric services in the metropolitan area has recommended that only three hospitals should provide such services: the Women's and Children's Hospital at North Adelaide, Modbury Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre. The so-called experts who conducted this review say that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will not require specialist maternity and obstetric services. That assessment seems completely to disregard the demographics of the western suburbs, given the area's high unemployment and a high percentage of families without their own private transport. It will severely disadvantage the families and women, in particular, of the western suburbs of Adelaide.

Another major factor to be considered is that, over many years, the QEH has developed a wonderful system of support for women of non-English speaking background so that they can have their babies in a friendly environment, being cared for by staff and volunteers who understand their culture and needs. This vital aspect will be lost if these proposed changes are effected.

I believe that five hospitals are required to provide maternity and obstetric services for the Adelaide metropolitan

area, namely, the Women's and Children's and Modbury hospitals, to look after the central suburbs; Flinders Medical Centre to look after the southern suburbs; Lyell McEwin Hospital to look after the north; and QEH to look after the west. I cannot see how those services can be provided at only three hospitals. Anything less than that would put at risk many mothers and their babies.

Another facility that is at risk because of funding cuts and rationalisation is the world class renal unit at the QEH. As an example, I will quote an incident that occurred some years ago when a Labor government was in office. An acquaintance of mine, a German chap, had some fairly severe kidney problems, so he took some long service leave and decided to go to what he understood to be the best renal facility in the world, which was in Florence, Italy. He went to the hospital in Italy and the specialist who saw him asked him where he lived. When he said that he lived in Australia, the specialist asked, 'Whereabouts?' My friend said, 'South Australia.' When asked, 'Whereabouts in South Australia?', my friend replied, 'Adelaide.' The specialist asked him, 'Why on earth didn't you go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, because it is regarded as one of the best renal units in the world?' That is a sobering reminder that this hospital has been a great hospital over many years and has had a world class renal unit. I understand that that is at risk, given cuts to the health system in this state.

Another area about which there was virtually no mention in His Excellency the Governor's speech was manufacturing industry. There was specific mention in his speech of mining, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, the building industry (including housing) and the food industry. While these industries are extremely important to our state's economy, the days are long gone when the state relied almost entirely on agriculture and mining. Manufacturing industry has taken over as a major contributor to our economy, certainly over the last 30 or 40 years.

Of major importance in the area of manufacturing industry is, of course, our motor vehicle industry, which is absolutely vital to our state's economic health. The question of tariffs is crucial to this industry. The stupid and senseless policy of the federal government to reduce tariffs further will place enormous pressure on our motor vehicle industry. I believe that tariffs are too low even now, and to further reduce them would, I believe, be suicidal. It would probably make sense if other countries were lowering tariffs at the same rate as Australia, but they are not.

Generally, other countries are maintaining their high tariff levels, especially in relation to motor vehicle production, and some countries are raising them to very high levels—some up to 200 and 250 per cent. I think that charity begins at home and we should protect our own industries and the jobs of South Australian workers. The capital investment that is required in the motor vehicle industry to set up plants to build automobiles and the enormous investment on top of that to develop and produce new models is such that, unless investors can be sure of receiving returns, they will not invest in the industry in this country. Tariff protection is absolutely essential to protect that investment and to keep everything on track in that regard.

The other problem that we have in this country in addition to that relating to investment is the volume of scale of motor vehicle building. We do not have the population or the market to spend the extra billions of dollars needed to produce the vehicles cheaper than we do. This is reflected also in the fact that we need to keep tariffs up to protect this vital industry,

because without the motor vehicle industry the state's economy would virtually collapse.

I would like to say a few words about the Mount Barker freeway upgrade, which is a wonderful and massive project, which will cost \$138 million. It is a lot of money to cut probably five minutes off the journey between Crafers and Glen Osmond. I suggest that this money would be much better spent on our health system: it would fix up the health system and probably fix up our education system as well. As I said, it would save possibly five minutes in travel between Crafers and Glen Osmond, so it seems a lot of money in that respect. Nevertheless, it is a good project.

The only other problem I see with this project is that, once it is finished, unless Cross Road, Glen Osmond Road and Portrush Road are substantially widened to disperse the traffic quickly, it will create a bottleneck at the main intersection at Glen Osmond. Traffic will travel more quickly from Crafers down to Glen Osmond but it will be held up at this major intersection. I hope that that is not the case, but I think it will be. Apart from whether or not the freeway project should have been undertaken, I wish to focus on the way in which the massive project is being undertaken and managed. I have occasion to use the Mount Barker freeway fairly frequently these days, so I have observed at close hand the progress of these roadworks.

I pay tribute to the contractors for their professionalism and thoroughness in performing the work and particularly for the way that they have managed and continue to manage the traffic during the construction stages. An enormous amount of work is involved in the project. I must say that an enormous volume of traffic uses that freeway every day, both in peak periods during the morning and evening and at all other times. Not only have the contractors and the project managers handled the project extremely well—and continue to do so—but the traffic management is something to behold. I pay tribute to the managers for the way they have diverted traffic at different stages of the construction so as to minimise delays when building new roads, new spur roads and so forth. Even when they were blasting the major outfalls of rock there were very few delays in this regard.

Earlier this year I was very pleased to be invited by the Minister for Transport to undertake a tour of this road work and tunnel construction. I was extremely impressed by what I saw. Listening to the engineers and hearing the problems that they had and have overcome, I was extremely impressed. In terms of the constructed roads, the drainage, the bridges and the tunnels, they have used quite a few examples of world first technologies to great effect, and I commend them for that. Stormwater management was a major issue. People do not realise that stormwater has to be managed, especially during the winter months when we get heavy rains. Apart from this winter, when there were some problems that held up work for a couple of months, generally they have been able to manage the stormwater extremely well by diverting it, collecting it in ponds and then dispersing it. That has really been a great feature of the project.

The batters, the parts where they cut down into the hillsides to form the roads at the bottom, have been kept at a very steep angle, mainly because the terrain, the rock and so forth is fairly stable. But they have done this to conserve as much native vegetation as possible, something for which I applaud them. Another interesting fact is that no foreign soil or rock has been brought into the area from any other parts of the state. The millions of tonnes of rock and earth that they have blasted out of the hills to form the batters, to make room

for the freeway and the tunnels, have been used to build up other areas, to make the roads and so forth. What they have taken out has gone back. It has been a marvellous project in that regard. It has been very well handled and managed. I believe that of the millions of tonnes that have been moved around in that project they will be over by only about 30 000 tonnes, and that material is being used to remediate an old quarry near Crafers which has been there for many years and which has been somewhat of an eyesore.

The twin tunnels have been punched through using world-class technology. They look excellent to me. The twin tunnels have connecting tunnels every short distance so that if there is an accident, a fire or whatever in one of the tunnels people can escape through these connecting tunnels and get out to fresh air. Also, there are double backup air conditioning systems in the tunnels. The state-of-the-art lighting in the tunnels enables motorists to enter the tunnels from darkness or bright sunlight outside and not be dazzled or blinded. It is just a gradual change from one light to another, and it is a very good innovation.

Hopefully, the firefighting equipment and its backup as a precaution against any disasters or accidents that may happen in the tunnels will not be needed. I was impressed also with the extremely small amount of damage caused to the almost pristine environment in that area. One does not realise how pristine and untouched the area is until you get off the main road and into the area where the work is being carried out and see the countryside and rock formations, trees and native vegetation that have been there for probably thousands of years. The project managers and contractors have been very careful to preserve and not disturb this almost pristine environment, so full marks to them for that.

I had occasion to meet with some parliamentary colleagues from the New South Wales Parliament earlier this year, and they were also taken on a tour of this project. They could not believe the magnitude of the project which was being carried out at a cost of \$138 million, when compared with a project near Sydney which cost \$60 million. In comparison with the Mount Barker project, they said it was more or less a road widening and major redesign of what amounted to a fairly large traffic intersection. I believe generally that the government does most things better than the private sector, especially large projects, but I have to say that this is one outstanding example of where the private sector is really doing a good job, and it is doing it very well in every aspect, so I applaud them for that.

Still referring to transport, I have had some concern for some years about the size and number of road trains on our roads. Late last year the government allowed for A-doubles to come onto our roads in addition to the B-doubles that have been around for sometime. I believe that the A-doubles, which are 11 metres longer than the B-doubles, are very dangerous. In fact, I think the B-doubles are almost equally as dangerous. They are far too big for our roads. Even the semitrailers have become far too large. I suppose we have to contend with the semitrailers, but an enormous amount of B-doubles come through the Adelaide Hills and no doubt this Mount Barker freeway project will make life a lot easier for those drivers. However, they are still too big and cumbersome.

Many of these vehicles have rolled over in recent times, and I guess the new project will eliminate many of those problems, but they are still too big. They need too much room to turn, and they cause accidents. There was an accident (one of many) on Grand Junction Road recently in my electorate

involving one of these, and I believe that the roads are not designed to take them. The corners do not provide sufficient room for them to turn properly. They have to move out at least into one extra lane to turn either right or left. I know for a fact that many of the drivers of these vehicles are very frightened. They feel that they are putting lives in danger and they are very unhappy about bringing these big vehicles into the city, but not to do so would cost them their job.

A marshalling yard was set up at Lochiel prior to 1994 where these road trains and B-doubles staged down to leave one trailer there and continue their journey into the metropolitan area. That procedure was done away with by this government late last year. It allows them to come into the metropolitan area. One person has spent a lot of money in setting up a marshalling yard near Two Wells. It is open 24 hours a day, specifically to unhitch these trailers from these big vehicles, but the minister has allowed them to come into the metropolitan area on designated routes, Grand Junction Road being one of them, but with no policing of them. I have examples of these big vehicles going off their designated routes and not being pinged because there is no policing of them. I think that they are far too big.

As far as the Adelaide Hills are concerned, another problem I have noticed is that an enormous number of these big B-doubles seem to leave Adelaide at peak periods, when commuters are trying to get home from work of a night, and come in with peak traffic of a morning. The minister should have a look at this and do what most other states do, that is, put restrictions on big vehicles using these roads at peak periods. In some states these semi-trailers and road trains are not allowed on certain stretches of road between certain hours, which cover those peak periods in the morning and late afternoon/early evening. It is imperative that the minister do this to avoid any possible accidents. Sometimes on Mount Barker Road you will find one road train trying to pass another. Because of their load and because of the gradients, they might take the best part of a kilometre or two to pass, and it holds up the traffic enormously.

Another area that I would like to mention is a pet hate of mine, that is, speed cameras. I believe that they have a place in our society: they are certainly a deterrent for people who speed, and that is a very important factor in road safety; but there has been a lot of criticism. Speed cameras are not being used purely for road safety but for revenue raising purposes. I believe that to be the case because of the locations in which they are placed.

There was a South Australian police code to the effect that they were not to be used in downhill spots; they were not to be hidden; and they were to be used in downhill spots only if those were regarded as black spots because of previous accidents. That code has not been adhered to. Those guidelines and that policy appear to have been thrown out of the window. These speed cameras are placed in all sorts of spots: on Cross Road and on the Mount Barker Road, for example, I have taken particular note of where speed cameras are placed, and they are placed at the one or two spots that are a little bit steeper than others, so that any motorist who just happens to let the car run on without applying the brakes gets pinged. And that is pretty unfair.

They are catching a lot of law-abiding citizens who do not hoon around the place but are responsible drivers and, because they are watching traffic conditions and watching what they are doing, they are not actually watching the speedo. The speedo creeps up to about 70 and they get pinged, and it is pretty unfair. They are also used on long

stretches of road where almost any speed would be quite safe but, once again, they catch people because it is safe to speed there. Again, it is revenue raising. They also catch people on the freeway where, at this stage, there are only two lanes each way. Where there is a big road transport, it is too dangerous, because of the concrete barriers on each side, to not exceed the speed limit and just be travelling at perhaps one or two kilometres an hour faster than the road transport. It takes such a long time to pass these vehicles that there is a danger that, if the road transport goes a bit off the track, it will crush a car against the concrete barriers. Therefore, I and a lot of other people, if we decide to pass a road train, do so as quickly as we can by accelerating and getting past quickly. Many times people just happen to do that in an area where there is a speed camera, and they get pinged.

I believe that this is very unjust. Those drivers are exercising commonsense and trying to overcome or to foresee a potential problem by getting past as quickly as possible but they get caught by the speed cameras. It is very unfair. A new policy needs to be put in place: use speed cameras by all means to ping drivers who are irresponsible but not, if possible, to ping law abiding people who are unlucky to be caught in a particular spot.

In relation to transport, I would like to mention a company in my electorate which has impressed me enormously. I had a telephone call from the proprietor of the company Air-Ride (SA) Pty Ltd which is based at Athol Park in my electorate. The proprietor, Mr Dimasi, has done amazing things. He has developed the best system in the world for putting road transport onto trains. It is a self-contained system. They just run up to a railway line; they run the trucks on; they do not go on top of rolling stock; they just roll on with a system which operates from a truck (I think a pneumatic system); and they latch into the trains and they can be put on. They can get goods from, say, Brisbane to Perth in a matter of about two to 2½ days. It keeps heavy road transport off the road.

Mr Joe Dimasi is very entrepreneurial. He has developed this system which is regarded universally as world-class, and he is under enormous pressure to sell his patent rights to overseas companies, particularly in America. He could sell it for many millions of dollars and live in happy retirement, but he chooses not to. He wants to contribute something. He is of Italian background but he was born in Adelaide. He loves Adelaide. This is a multi million dollar business which is in the stage of rapid expansion because he is getting sales from all over the world.

I have invited the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Industry to look at this product. It is very impressive, beautiful quality, and his workshop is A1. The housekeeping is very good. The workshop is clean and tidy, and he employs a lot of people. He is getting pressure from people who have built houses nearby and who say that the noise is over the top. Mr Dimasi is very community minded and responsible. He has arranged for the EPA to take readings, which were well below the accepted level. I am trying to work through those problems with the community, Mr Dimasi and the relevant ministers. Hopefully, the business can expand. Rather than work two or three shifts he is getting work done in New Zealand at great cost to avoid upsetting the neighbours. He wants to continue to expand his business. It is a multi million dollar business for South Australia. I applaud Mr Dimasi for his efforts in this regard rather than sell out to overseas interests and have the business lost to South Australia.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I recognise and commend the work of the Governor of South Australia, Sir Eric Neal, and his wife, Lady Neal. I know they play an important and valuable role in all aspects of the South Australian community. I also acknowledge that the speech that Sir Eric presented a few weeks ago was, of course, the speech presented to him by the government. I must say that I found the speech itself to be very disappointing—a thin speech lacking in detail and substance and lacking in credibility in terms of a solid future for South Australia.

I want to concentrate on some of the themes that flowed through that speech that I found particularly galling, and I will demonstrate that the government is far away from what it is saying it is doing. On a number of occasions over the past few years I have mentioned my concern that the government appeared to have tunnel vision and was doctrinaire in its approach to governing, that it thought it was more important to reduce debt than to look at our society and our community in a balanced way and to balance those social and economic issues in what it provided for the state. I have made those criticisms over the past few years on a number of occasions. I want to quote from the Governor's speech some statements that I found quite galling, as follows:

... it is imperative that quality of life receives the same level of priority as economic growth and debt reduction.

Another quote referred to 'achieving a balance'. Further, the Governor said:

My government's goal is that our state move forward into the new century as a far fairer society.

Those remarks and other similar remarks were made, but nowhere in the speech was anything said about our hospitals, about the vast unmet need that exists in disability services, or about addressing the lack of services at a community level, many of which have fallen victim to and been cut by this government's policies and funding priorities. Just to mention a few, I refer to domiciliary care services, early intervention services, family support services, attention to child protection, foster care and foster care services and the plight of pensioners who see their fixed incomes disappearing as the continual switch to services that have to be paid for by the user continues at an alarming rate. So, all these things are happening and have been happening over the past three or four years, and all of a sudden we hear that the government's goal is that we move forward into the new century as a far fairer society. I will quote what I see as the mother of all quotes of this nature in this speech. On page 2, the Governor says:

For my government it means maintaining a just approach, regardless of criticism, so that the young and old, the affluent and those with special needs, the healthy and those unfortunate enough not to be so, can all feel that they are listened to, and that their priorities are being, or will be, addressed.

What a joke and what hypocrisy that is, because the government says this in the full knowledge of the destruction that it has brought in all the areas and more that I have just mentioned. I wonder whether the Premier and his ministers read the 1999-2000 state government budget submission by the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS), entitled 'Social justice in the new millennium'. On page 5, it talks about low income households—and this may be news to the Premier and his Ministers—as follows:

In 1998, 47 per cent of the South Australian population were in receipt of some form of government allowance. Over one year from 1997 to 1998 there was a 9 per cent rise to 53 470 in the number of people receiving the disability support pension. In the

years from 1986 to 1996, the number of South Australian households with incomes below 60 per cent of average weekly earnings rose from 25.8 per cent to 41.7 per cent.

More than 40 per cent of South Australian households have incomes below 60 per cent of average weekly earnings. I think the government has a huge amount of listening to do. It is just so astounding. It seems as though the government is living in a completely different world for it to say that its goal is to move forward into a fairer society and then in this very speech to completely neglect to mention any of the issues that I have just raised.

Over the break it was clear that the issue on everyone's lips in the community seemed to be hospitals and health funding. As the shadow Minister for Health, I will spend the rest of my time talking about those issues, because it is quite clear not only that the government has systematically cut and decimated the system but also that it has been incredibly incompetent in its management of that system.

The Leader of the Opposition in his contribution has spoken about the crisis facing our public hospitals, and he was backed up by a number of my colleagues on this side of the House. They have all spoken about, and we all know about, people waiting in corridors for beds, surgery cancellations, elderly patients being turned away, budget cuts and more bed closures.

The Olsen government has blamed the Howard government and the Howard government has blamed the Olsen government. The federal minister says that it is all South Australia's fault, and Dean Brown says that cabinet refused his request for more funding. In July this year we saw the cynical way in which the Olsen government used a meeting of state and territory leaders to deflect attention from the fallout of the decision to cut the latest \$36 million from our hospitals this year.

On Thursday 8 July 1999, the Premier announced that state and territory leaders would meet on 23 July to discuss reform of the health system. The Premier said that states needed more money from the commonwealth and advocated reform of the national system, including Medicare and the introduction of fees.

To set the scene, just two days before the Premier's meeting the Minister for Human Services announced that 'public hospital beds in South Australia are basically full' and that elective surgery would be cancelled. The Premier supported the minister by saying that the system had been at breaking point and he was going to Sydney to discuss increasing pressures being placed on the states. Here was the Premier doing a job on the federal government while \$36 million of his own cuts were coming through the tunnel. And remember that this \$36 million is \$36 million on top of a total of \$230 million that was cut cumulatively from health services during the first term of this government.

So far, these latest cuts have resulted in the closure of 18 beds at the Flinders Medical Centre; 25 beds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; the loss of 50 000 outpatient services; 23 beds at the Lyell McEwin Hospital; 11 beds at the Daws Road Repatriation Hospital; six beds at Noarlunga Hospital; and cuts to country services at Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln and the Riverland.

Although the Premier blames everyone else, South Australians know that this government is ringbarking our public health system. All over the state (the western, northern and southern suburbs of Adelaide and rural areas) people are concerned about the future of health services. They are concerned not only about hospital services but also, as I have

mentioned, mental health services, early intervention services, domiciliary care, and dental services—and the list goes on. They know that the system is not as good as it was—and they are right: no-one can deny that.

For every dollar spent on health by Labor when we were last in office in South Australia the Olsen government now spends 78¢. This is just the latest hospital crisis created by this state Liberal government. Let me remind the House of a few of the other crises that have occurred since the election of this government in 1993. The headlines say it all. An article on 20 September 1995 under the headline 'Hospitals cash crisis' states:

South Australia's hospitals are reeling under savage budget cuts which will lead to further bed closures, reduced services and the loss of hundreds of jobs.

An article on 21 September 1995 under the headline 'Hospital cuts may cost lives, say health chiefs' states:

Lives are at risk because of huge funding cuts to the state's public hospitals, health authorities have been warned.

An article on 28 September 1995 under the headline 'Surgeons hit health rationing' states:

The state government's system of funding health services was slammed yesterday by some of South Australia's leading surgeons as confusing, cheating and disguised rationing.

An article on 3 November 1997 under the headline 'Losing patience in a full hospital' states:

Seriously ill patients are waiting for more than a day in corridors at the state's busiest emergency department because the hospital's wards are full.

An article on 11 May 1998 under the headline 'Hospitals on the sick list' states:

Patients are being denied baths, refused help with eating and are not being given enough information on treatment as overworked public hospital staff struggle with a worsening funding crisis.

An article on 21 July 1999 under the headline 'Elective surgery cut as hospital beds fill' states:

The Premier, Mr Olsen, said the public health system had been at breaking point or under pressure for some considerable time.

An article on 22 July 1999 under the headline 'Repat doors closed for first time' states:

On Monday patients waiting to be admitted were turned away while others had elective surgery cancelled.

An article on 13 August 1999 under the headline '50 000 more casualties' states:

The QEH cuts outpatient treatments.

An article on 7 September 1999 under the headline 'Patients told to buy bandages' states:

Public hospitals introduce user pays.

That is just a snapshot of the trail of destruction that has been wrought on this state's health services by this Liberal Government.

Let me remind members of the real Liberal focus on health and what has happened with recurrent budgets since 1993. After promising to make hospitals more efficient and to return savings to the health system, the Brown and Olsen governments have done precisely the opposite. From 1994 to 1997 the Brown and Olsen governments focused on cutting expenditure on health services and hospitals with a brief exception prior to the 1997 election.

Budget cuts, service cuts, amalgamations, staff cuts, bed closures and privatisation are the issues that have dominated the government's agenda over that time. The first four liberal budgets—half when Dean Brown was Premier—cut a total

of \$230 million in real terms, adjusted for inflation, from health. These cuts were in line with the statement by the then health minister, a statement that was often proudly made by that former minister, that health had to make savings of \$70 million a year. In the 1997 budget, just before the state election, Premier Olsen announced: '\$45 million boost for health means hospitals can provide more services'. In the 1998 budget he announced: 'no cuts in funding of public hospitals'. However, leaked departmental papers revealed that hospital growth funding had been cut by \$13 million over three years, so we actually had a de facto cut. It was a dishonest and misleading statement from the Premier. Certainly, there were no cuts to the actual dollars, but the government failed to make provision for the obvious growth in demand for services that everybody knew was occurring—a de facto cut.

In the 1999 budget the human services minister announced cuts of \$46 million to be levied on the human services department, \$36 million to be levied on hospital services, \$30 million of which would come from metropolitan hospitals and \$6 million from country hospitals. This is the record of a system that is continually being put into crisis by the government. The system is being put into crisis because the Olsen government has no vision and no plan for how our hospitals will deliver services in the future and how these services will link with community-based services and provide needed health care for a new century. It has simply tried one idea after another in an uncoordinated, incompetent grab bag of half baked, ill conceived strategies that have left the South Australian health system seriously deficient.

I will back up those comments of mine with some quotes from the Auditor-General's Report of this year in which the Auditor-General makes special comment and indicates concern about strategic planning in the Department of Human Services—the very thing I am talking about. The Auditor-General's Report states:

The department's strategic plan does not:

- identify clear mechanisms for implementing each strategy identified in the plan;
- assess the resource implications for each strategy;
- provide a framework for monitoring progress towards the department's objectives against identified indicators. The strategic plan prepared by the department is not supported by appropriate business plans which translate high level strategic planning into practical plans to guide implementation of each strategy.

And don't we know it! We can see the result from what is before us. They have no plan, never had a plan and really do not know what they are doing.

Let us look at some specific examples. After wasting four years on failed plans to privatise hospital services the minister now has a new and secret plan to rationalise services in the north-west and massively downgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This was a new plan prepared without public consultation; a new plan prepared without the input of clinicians or nurses at the hospital; and a plan made public only by virtue of its being leaked. While the minister argues that this new plan is an options paper for discussion, the fact remains that it contains only one option—a bit like a democratic election in a dictatorship with only one candidate! This new plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is the culmination of five years of confusion and indecision. I want to detail what has happened to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital during this period as an example of how this government works. If it were not so serious it could be mistaken for a comedy.

The government's first move was to announce in August 1994 a plan to amalgamate the management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Lyell McEwin Hospital. This process finally led to a report by Personnel Consultants Management in May 1996, which painted a bleak picture of the outcomes of amalgamation, the loss of staff morale and financial problems. Then, on 19 January 1996, the government announced a \$130 million redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The release said that expressions of interest had been called for the financing, construction and operation of new public and private facilities as part of the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

On 28 March 1996 the government said that 13 expressions of interest had been received for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital redevelopment and, in September of that year, the health minister announced, 'Queen Elizabeth Hospital redevelopment moves into next phase.' But nothing happened, even though the Health Commission's annual report for 1996-97 revealed that \$740 000 had been spent on consultants in one year for advice on the privatisation plans. By 1998, the government had to admit that privatisation was off and, in May 1998, the Premier announced, '\$43 million committed for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital upgrade.' On 23 June 1998, the human services minister (Hon. Dean Brown) went even further when he told the Estimates Committee:

We expect to spend about \$43 million over the first three years of the project.

The minister said that a new intensive care unit, which had already been announced in the budget in May 1997 (and then again by Minister Armitage on 13 September 1997), would be the first stage. On 3 December 1998, the Minister for Human Services issued a statement which was headed 'Assurance on obstetric services' and which stated that suggestions made by me that obstetric services might be closed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were alarmist. But then, on 18 February 1999, the minister released the government's obstetrics review recommending that the maternity section at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital be closed.

Finally, the opposition obtained a copy of a paper entitled 'Future service directions for the North Western Adelaide Health Service' dated 14 September 1999. This secret plan proposes that Queen Elizabeth Hospital surgical procedures be restricted; that advanced surgeries requiring intensive care support be sent to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and to the Lyell McEwin Hospital; that all major trauma cases be referred to the Royal Adelaide Hospital; that obstetrics be restricted to low-risk deliveries; that cancer services be downgraded; that the main base for renal medicine (including transplants) was yet to be decided; that dental services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital be closed; that the statewide bone transplant services be relocated; and that some teaching units be transferred to the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

It also included a reduction of a further 100 beds. So much for those people living in the western suburbs who were accused of being alarmist when they thought their obstetrics service might be downgraded. That was just a drop in the ocean compared to what was coming. So much for the government's commitment to consult the community before making any decisions to downgrade obstetric services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So much for the decision, just 15 months ago, to give priority to the expenditure of \$4 million on a new intensive care unit. This latest plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been prepared without consulting the

community or clinicians at the hospital: naturally, both groups are outraged.

Now, as a result of the government's inability to manage professionally the planning process for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the community faces even longer delays before anything is done about the ageing facilities at that hospital. As a result of the amalgamation with the Lyell McEwin Hospital (which we certainly would not have done) the delays at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will again delay the much needed increase in services in the northern suburbs through the development of the Lyell McEwin Hospital and other initiatives in the north. So, my own community will suffer greatly too.

The ongoing confusion about the roles of our hospitals is mirrored by the capital works program. Statements by the government about a budget boost for spending on hospitals are inaccurate. They reflect capital works that have been delayed, recycled and reannounced. It is clear that the Olsen government intends to break its promises to spend \$43 million over three years from 1998 upgrading the QEH and \$40 million over four years to upgrade the Lyell McEwin. The future roles of the Queen Elizabeth and the Lyell McEwin Hospitals, now the subject of the secret options paper, clearly have not been decided. The Lyell McEwin Hospital redevelopment has been announced in every budget since 1996 and, like the residents of the western suburbs, people living in the north are becoming angry about these delays. South Australians are all a bit jaded by the jazzy press announcements about old projects. It is about time the Olsen government got on with the job.

During the 1997 election John Olsen said that hospitals would be quarantined from budget cuts. During the debate on the sale of ETSA the government said that the sale of ETSA would fix all our hospitals and provide additional services, including a \$100 million redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but the Minister for Human Services has told the estimates committees that, because of the budget cuts, waiting lists for elective surgery will increase from \$9 000 to between \$18 000 and \$25 000. The Minister said, 'Many of those people will suffer while they are waiting.' South Australians now see a government that can spend tens of millions of dollars on consultants and on gimmicks but then says that it cannot give sick people a hospital bed or other vital health services when they need it. It can erect a soccer stadium for \$30 million that is a white elephant and build a National Wine Centre, but sick people are not a priority, and nor is the orderly planned provision of health services for the South Australian community.

The Premier says that he is listening, that he changed the emergency services levy because he listened, but he has closed his ears and his heart. He has remained unmoved on the question of health services, and in the Governor's speech this most significant of issues rated not one mention. I say as I have said before that the government stands condemned not only because it has failed in compassion and humanity in relation to services for the vulnerable in our community but also because of its manifest incompetence and mismanagement. The state of our health system will be a major reason why this government is tossed out, just as Jeff Kennett has been tossed out, at our next state election.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The Minister for Industry and Trade raised issues about John Cambridge today, and the House needs to be given some essential background here. The story about Mr John Cambridge, now Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Industry and Trade, and his business interests first broke in an article in the *Australian* of 15 September. It is alleged that Mr Cambridge, while Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Asian Business, under the Department of Premier and Cabinet, had become a director of an Australian company, the Zhong Huan Australia Group, nine days after that company purchased the former tax office in King William Street. It was also three weeks prior to the Premier's flying off to China with Mr Cambridge to negotiate a deal with that company to redevelop the tax office into accommodation for overseas students. Mr Cambridge had not declared his interest in this company to either his CEO or the Premier, with whom he was travelling.

The article also revealed that Mr Cambridge was a co-director of the SA Golden Investment Fund, a \$2 shelf company, with one of the key directors of the Zhong Huan Group, Mr Harry Tu. Mr Cambridge had not informed his CEO or the Premier of this interest either. Prior to the story being published, the *Australian's* journalist was told by the Premier's media advisers that they were attempting to seek comment from Mr Cambridge but that it was difficult to get hold of him because he was in Singapore on 'government' business—their word not ours. On 22 September the *Australian* revealed in another article that Mr Cambridge had yet another directorship with a Singapore based company. The journalist went back to the Premier's media staff and asked if Mr Cambridge, while in Singapore, had been given permission to attend a special meeting of that company on 14 September this year.

There was a great deal more checking and finally the word came back to the journalist that, yes, Mr Cambridge had been given verbal approval by the Commissioner for Public Employment (Mr Ian Kowalick) for two days' leave of absence while Mr Cambridge was there on government business. In fact, that story was backed up by the Acting Commissioner for Public Employment (Christine Charles), who advised that the act did not require written permission.

As more emerged on this story, so the comments from the Premier's office began to blur and change. By 30 September a document was faxed from the Premier's office to journalists which showed that it was not just verbal permission but that Mr Kowalick had given written approval for Mr Cambridge's leave. A second document was faxed out showing that Mr Cambridge had written to the Premier on 7 September informing him that he was taking three days' leave of absence. Interestingly, it remains unclear whether Mr Cambridge sought permission and was granted it from the minister to whom he is directly responsible, that is, the Minister for Industry and Trade. We have also yet to see whether he declared to his minister his interest in New Toyo International.

In his extensive ministerial statement on this issue of 28 September, the Premier failed to correct the strong impression in media reports that Mr Cambridge was in

Singapore on government business. I spoke soon after that ministerial statement and had no information that the advice of the Premier's office was in fact incorrect. In defending Mr Cambridge later, the Premier's media office faxed to selected journalists a copy of Mr Cambridge's first-class return airline ticket to Singapore during his period of leave as evidence that he had paid for the ticket himself.

The ticket does not prove any such thing, but I understand that an enterprising journalist, using the information on the ticket, established that it had been issued at the TeeLee Travel Agency in Gouger Street. The journalist asked the agent who had paid for the ticket but the agent could not say. Why? Because according to the agent, the ticket, which was apparently just under \$4 000 worth, was paid for in cash. The Minister for Industry and Trade came into this parliament on 30 September and told the House that the Singapore company of which Mr Cambridge is a paid director, New Toyo, paid for the ticket. My only comment is that it is a highly unusual practice for an international company to pay with cash for a first-class flight for one of its directors to attend a special board meeting.

On 15 September, the day the story broke, the Premier was asked at a press conference about these allegations surrounding Mr Cambridge. The Premier said that he would investigate the claims but some hours later he withdrew the inquiry based on excuses given by Mr Cambridge that were even at that time obviously incorrect. Mr Cambridge's excuse for not declaring to the Premier an interest in the Zhong Huan (Australia) Group in January while he was with him in China was that he did not know that he had been made a director. He said it was done without his knowledge and, in any case, he was only an honorary director with no rights and responsibilities.

If Mr Cambridge was to be believed, he was alleging that his business partner, Mr Harry Tu, had broken Australian company law, because it is illegal in this country to appoint someone as a director of an Australian company without their knowledge. A check of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, however, indicates that Mr Tu did know the law and followed the law to its letter, right down to informing ASIC within the two-week time frame of Mr Cambridge's appointment as a director. That is, ASIC was notified of Mr Cambridge's 24 December appointment on 7 January this year. No indication is given in ASIC's documents that Mr Cambridge has any lesser rights and responsibilities than every other ordinary director of the Zhong Huan (Australia) Group. As we all now know, there is no such thing as an honorary director in Australia, and Mr Tu appears to be well aware of that fact. It is an insult to any Chinese businessman engaged in business in Australia, as the Premier appears to be suggesting, that because of their Chinese culture they do not understand Australian companies law.

However, it was on the basis of this flimsy and incorrect statement by Mr Cambridge that the Premier withdrew the investigation into his business activities. Until we get that investigation, we will not fully understand what is going on here and what the Premier has hidden. And there appears to be something to hide, by virtue of three clear misleading statements made to this parliament by the Premier on Tuesday 28 September. I will go through them one by one. The Premier said:

First, and most importantly, there was no deal. There is no deal at any level of any type between the Zhong Huan Group and the

South Australian government regarding the former tax office building in King William Street.

His visit to Zhong Huan in China, he said, was a 'courtesy call'. If that is true, the Premier has contradicted a spokeswoman from his own office, who told the *Advertiser* on 15 December (on the day the former tax office in King William Street was sold):

We are in the process of finalising negotiations with him ['him' being Mr Harry Tu from the Zhong Huan Group] and hope the negotiations will be completed in January.

If the Premier's statements to the House were true, the *Advertiser* journalist who accompanied Mr Olsen on his trip to Shanghai in January was either grossly misled or made up his own story. That journalist stated that the Premier would be signing 'an agreement' with the Chinese developer in Shanghai on 14 January this year. The journalist said the redevelopment required 'a formal agreement' between the state government and the Communist Party, which owned the company. Mr Olsen is now attempting to tell us that this journalist had just made up these facts all by himself.

The *Sunday Mail* also made up its own fanciful story, according to the Premier on his return from China. The *Sunday Mail* said that the Premier returned from a trade mission to China with 'contracts' worth around \$155 million in his briefcase. It said the first deal that he had negotiated was to refit the former tax office in King William Street. Mr Olsen also said:

I have been advised Mr Tu of Zhong Huan considered he should belong to an SA company in some way if he was to be involved in business here.

The Premier was attempting to explain why Mr Tu and Mr Cambridge became co-directors in the SA Golden Investment Fund in August and October last year. Mr Cambridge had failed to declare an interest in this company, as required under the act.

The following day, the opposition presented evidence that showed that Mr Tu became a director of Mr Cambridge's SA Golden Investment Fund five days after (and I emphasise 'after') he had set up a South Australian based company, the Zhong Huan (South Australia) Group. In other words, Mr Tu already belonged to a South Australian based company. So, the excuse given by the Premier to this House was wrong. The next misleading statement was:

It is not for this government to tell Mr Cambridge, or any other employee for that matter, how to use their leave or their spare time.

The act provides:

A worker must not, while on long service leave, engage in any other employment in place of the employment in relation to which the right to leave accrued. Penalty: \$1 000.

I am quite happy to elaborate on this further. I am quite happy to speak to any sort of independent inquiry, because the opposition is very keen to have a lot of questions about Mr Cambridge and his involvement with Asian businesses opened up and to have quite a few questions answered.

Time expired.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): During question time today I asked a question of the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance in relation to the preparedness of people in this state for the year 2000 date problem. I was very pleased that the minister was able to visit my electorate on Monday 11 October for the whole day. People may ask, 'Well, what is the Y2K issue? What is the problem about? What is (as many people refer to it) the millennium bug?' I would like to quote from a

pamphlet that most people in South Australia will receive in the next few weeks entitled 'Ready for 2000'. It states:

What is the millennium bug? The millennium bug is not really a bug. It is a computer problem that results from the 1960s and 1970s when computer systems were programmed to use only the last two digits to define the year. Many modern PCs and some other computer-based systems, plant and equipment have the date defined within them in the same way. On 1 January 2000 these systems may calculate the date to be 1 January 1900 or another incorrect date. This could cause malfunctions in a variety of ways, including entire shutdown of equipment or erroneous processing.

To those of us who are not so computer literate we might say, 'So what.' However, after working with the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance I appreciate that it is a very real problem, and I thank the minister and this government for undertaking its program during the last nine months or so. I believe that we in South Australia will be well and truly prepared for the date problem that may occur on 1 January 2000.

We visited many businesses. We visited various private computer businesses that run their own computer services and provide internet services. We also visited the four regional councils that constitute the electorate of Goyder. In fact, the first council visited was that of the Wakefield Regional Council at Balaklava where we spoke to Mr Phil Barry, the Chief Executive Officer. The minister was very satisfied with the way the Wakefield Regional Council has gone about seeking to address the Y2K bug. It appears from the discussions held that it will be well and truly ready for the end of the year and the beginning of the next year and that there should not be any problems. In fact, the write-up in their local paper, the *Plains Producer*, if my memory serves me correctly, indicated that about 70 per cent of the businesses contacted said that they had undertaken the necessary investigations to ensure that they were covered for any potential problems that may arise.

The second council visited was that of the District Council of Barunga West, the former councils of Port Broughton and Bute. Again, we spoke with its Chief Executive Officer, Mr Nigel Hand. We certainly were quite satisfied and happy with the way the Barunga West Council has undertaken its work. The minister, again, indicated that he believes there should be no problems. In this respect the government has sought to keep a tab, if I can use that terminology, on the various councils and asked them to report on a regular basis about what they have done and what they are continuing to do to ensure that they are not affected by the Y2K date problem. In fact, the minister had a detailed list from my electorate. Nevertheless, lists are one thing: having personal conversations with those who are responsible for seeing that the list gets through is another story in itself. It was great to be able to check on some of the specifics and on individual items that the government had asked for.

A little later in the day we met with the District Council of the Copper Coast and its Chief Executive Officer, Mr John Shane. Again, he briefed us on what his council was doing and had done to date with the Y2K problem. It appeared that another council should be in a satisfactory situation by the end of the year. The last council we met with was the District Council of Yorke Peninsula, based at Maitland. The discussion there followed along a similar line, and several other

members were involved in that discussion including the Mayor, Mr Malcolm Thompson, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ray Agnew, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Roger Wood, and the IT Coordinator, Cherry Farrow. I would like to thank all those persons for giving of their time to talk with the minister and to help ensure that the District Council of Yorke Peninsula will be able to venture into the year 2000 without any real problems.

As I indicated earlier, we also met with various private computer firms. We first met with the firm of RBE Electrical at Balaklava. That firm is overseen by Mr Rod Nankivell and his wife Brenda. They had many questions of the minister on a variety of issues, and certainly made it very clear that they had a lot of extra service work in the past few months to undertake checks on private computers in the main and also business computers to see that they were right up to date. They felt that, generally speaking, the people in the Wakefield Plains area were ready for the year 2000.

We also called at a computer firm at Ardrossan, Agricultural Business Systems, run by Mr Richard Cane and his wife Leanne. Having started from almost nothing a few years ago, it has grown to a very large firm, providing internet services to much of Yorke Peninsula. Again, various issues were addressed with them. They also felt that the people in the area generally speaking would be right up to date with any year 2000 problems. At Wallaroo, we visited Wallaroo Computers, run by Mr Darren Jerrett, assisted by Mr Ben Bateman and also Christie Videon. Likewise, our discussions were of a similar nature to our earlier discussions. At Maitland, we met with Mr Ian Eglinton of Eglinton Electronics. The story there was very similar.

People might ask, 'How does it affect us as ordinary people?' There are many areas where it will not affect us, but there are some things that we should have checked, including the video recorder, camcorder and camera, where problems may arise if the year is used in setting either recording times or there is an on-screen date display or, in the case of a camera, where the date is printed on the photograph. Certainly home computers and their software are at risk. In fact, people are advised to see their computer retailer or specialist to ascertain whether their computer meets the criteria for the year 2000.

Other machines that may cause problems include the answering machine, if a date is used to identify messages; internet access; the fax machine—again, if a date is printed on the fax header; mobile phones, if a date function is used in the phone; an ordinary phone if a date is displayed on the phone, but again it is generally pointed out that this is a low risk; and even an electronic organiser if a date is a key ingredient of it. An item of equipment such as an air conditioner or heating system, where dates are used in controlling the mechanism, may be at risk, as is a security system. Again, in this latter case, people are advised to see their installation company or manufacturer. So, much information has been given to people throughout the state. Indeed, I believe that the minister has done an outstanding job in seeking to educate the people of South Australia.

Motion carried.

At 8.48 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 20 October at 2 p.m.