

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 21 October 1999

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON A HEROIN REHABILITATION TRIAL

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I bring up the report of the Select Committee on a Heroin Rehabilitation Trial, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I move:

That the report be noted.

The committee heard evidence from 72 individuals and organisations and conducted field visits to rehabilitation services and prisons in South Australia and New South Wales. Of the 72 submissions to the committee, 33 expressed support for a trial, 19 opposed it, and 20 were neutral or unclear on their opinion. The committee is of the view that the list of submissions, witnesses and site visits attests to the breadth of opportunity the inquiry has provided for input from our community. Several attendants today carried away the body of *Hansard* which constitutes evidence.

This report constitutes a major milestone, both nationally and internationally. For the first time in Australia, and to our knowledge the world, the option of treatment using medically prescribed heroin is considered by a parliament in the context of other treatment options as well as law enforcement and education responses to heroin use.

The committee has been able to draw on the latest information from the Swiss studies, the report on those studies issued by the World Health Organisation, as well as expert knowledge and research on the nature of heroin dependence, alternative treatment approaches and the capacity for interaction between judicial and health systems. If the government of South Australia accepts the key recommendations we make and takes steps to implement them, South Australia will be at the cutting edge of world research and action in respect of drug rehabilitation and abstinence treatment. We have the opportunity in this state to add considerable value to the world body of knowledge on this matter. The committee urges the House to seize it.

I will deal at the outset with our recommendations in respect of heroin by noting that the trend of increasing heroin-related deaths is continuing to cause concern. If we are to better understand and more effectively prevent fatal overdoses, we need to increase our understanding of the physiological and pharmacological effects of heroin in long-term heroin users. Heroin is a drug the pharmacology of which has never been investigated to the extent required of most drugs in use in the community. An investigation of the pharmacology of heroin and the mechanisms of overdose would add to the international body of knowledge and potentially save lives not only in Australia but overseas.

The basis of recommendation one is that the government support a scientific investigation of the pharmacokinetics of heroin in heroin dependent people with a view to better understanding the development of tolerance to the different

physiological effects of heroin and thereby increasing our ability to prevent and respond to heroin overdoses. This is a new trial proposal, the logic of which appears to me to be unassailable. The committee also looked at medically prescribed heroin in the context of the broad treatment framework and took into account other responses to heroin use. We formed the view that medically prescribed heroin has a place but as a minor component of an overall treatment system.

Priority should be given first to the expansion and enhancement of current treatment services; and, secondly, to providing access to new interventions that have either recently become available, such as naltrexone, or which are currently being trialled and which are likely to become available in the near future, such as buprenorphine and LAAM. Trials of medically prescribed heroin in Australia should be a third priority at this point, but the committee stresses the desirability of planning to the greatest extent possible for a future need to implement such an option.

Evidence provided to the committee also points towards the desirability of identifying a pharmaceutical agent other than methadone that is attractive to heroin users and from which it is relatively easy to withdraw. The availability of such a drug as an entry level treatment could persuade heroin dependent users to enter a rehabilitation program within which subsequent treatment approaches could be planned depending on their individual circumstances and responses to treatment. Buprenorphine is the agent with the greatest potential to fill this entry level treatment role but, for some people, particularly those with severe dependence, a short-acting injectable opioid may have greater attraction.

There are several short-acting injectable opioids that could be considered, such as fentanyl, dihydromorphinone, pentazocine and nalbuphine. The committee excluded medically prescribed heroin from consideration in this role because its very strong attractiveness to users could be expected to negate the effectiveness of buprenorphine or other substitutes. Medically prescribed heroin would not be suitable for users with less established habits because of the risk that regular supply could increase the degree of dependence.

The committee's second and third recommendations therefore are that the government implement a buprenorphine program to primarily fulfil the role of an entry point treatment; and that the government conduct a scientific medical trial to investigate the acceptability and efficacy of short-acting injectable opioids other than heroin as substitutes for heroin for the purpose of stabilisation as an entry point to treatment and as preparation for progression to subsequent treatment, either maintenance or detoxification, leading to abstinence. If implemented, this would be the first time anywhere in the world that this approach has been tried. The World Health Organisation report on the Swiss heroin trials has hinted at it, but this committee goes further by recommending to government that it be done forthwith. In this way, South Australia could take a world leading role and add to mankind's body of knowledge on this vexed matter.

The majority of the committee supported a trial of medically prescribed heroin as a treatment for recidivists, reflecting the view that there may be potential benefits to some severely dependent heroin users and the community of maintenance treatment assisted by medically prescribed heroin. However, the committee acknowledged that complex legal and political issues currently make it extremely difficult to pursue such a trial in Australia at this time.

Independent legal advice given to the committee confirms the view that, as a consequence of international treaty obligations and commonwealth legislation, a trial of any sort involving medically prescribed heroin can proceed only with the cooperation of the commonwealth government. Furthermore, the committee concluded that a higher priority should be placed on the expansion of current treatment, implementation of buprenorphine, naltrexone and LAAM programs and a trial of other short acting opioids.

These considerations led to committee recommendation four; that is, the government actively monitor international developments with respect to medically prescribed heroin, and again consider the option of medically prescribed heroin for recidivists once more information becomes available and the other priorities recommended in this report have been implemented and assessed. The committee placed the highest priority on the expansion of existing treatment capacity. Less than one half of heroin dependent people in South Australia are currently receiving treatment. Reasons identified as contributing to the low rate of participation in treatment included: the limited range of treatment options available; dissatisfaction with methadone treatment; and difficult access to treatment resulting from waiting times, geographical, cultural or gender issues.

Recommendation five calls upon the government to substantially increase resources allocated to the treatment of drug dependence to facilitate greater access to a wider range of treatment options, this being the most effective way of reducing the harm associated with heroin use. These additional resources should be directed towards: the introduction of naltrexone, buprenorphine and LAAM; the expansion of methadone maintenance treatment; the decentralisation of treatment services provided by the Drug and Alcohol Services Council; mechanisms to facilitate contact with users not currently accessing treatment; the expansion of detoxification services; the greater provision of a range of different counselling and support services; the development of services that are culturally appropriate and reflect the needs of the Aboriginal and Indochinese communities; the provision of parenting advice, life skills guidance and child care and support services; and ensuring that the treatment is appropriate to the needs of men and women.

Evidence presented to the committee identified the effectiveness of initiatives such as needle and syringe exchange services to reduce the harm of injecting drug use by those who are not yet ready to enter treatment for their dependence. Supervised injecting rooms, while not specifically identified by the committee's terms of reference, were addressed by some submissions and witnesses. The committee notes that the establishment of supervised injecting rooms is controversial, particularly if such rooms are to be operated by government. This can be attributed to the perceived condoning of an illegal activity and the need for users to still obtain heroin illegally. The committee considers it an option worth pursuing as one means of addressing the escalating mortality from heroin use and therefore recommends further investigation of supervised injecting rooms.

The committee also recommends that the government maintain support for and, where appropriate, extend needle and syringe exchange services, as well as the capacity of groups and individuals who represent the interests of users to provide education and information to users. There is a need for all health professionals to be better informed as to the treatment of heroin dependence, particularly in the context of

a broadening array of treatment options. The committee makes recommendations in this respect.

The vast majority of submissions to the committee expressed a desire for the supply control activities and the illicit status of heroin to be maintained. Those who argue that the 'war on drugs' is failing and that law enforcement does not work are wrong. Although it can never succeed on its own, police action is part of the fabric which forms our response. Recommendation nine therefore calls on the government to continue enforcement efforts to contain the supply of drugs to users as part of a broad strategy which includes education and treatment.

The committee is highly supportive of initiatives that will assist law enforcement officers to deal with heroin users in a way that will produce better outcomes for the user, the judicial system and the general community. Indeed, the committee heard evidence that it is often a brush with the law that precipitates recognition by the addict of the need for behavioural change directed towards detoxification and rehabilitation.

Recommendation 10 addresses a range of police measures that should be enhanced. There are several questions about the efficacy and affordability of drug courts in South Australia. The concept of special arrangements and a special process for drug offenders is sound, but it may be more cost effective to establish within the Magistrates Court a system that incorporates and adapts the existing South Australian Drug Assessment and Aid Panel process to cater for that need. The committee is of the view that, before establishing a formal drug court in South Australia, the possibility of such an adaptation of the Drug Assessment and Aid Panel within the Magistrates Court should be examined and compared with the outcome and cost of the New South Wales trial of a drug court.

The committee notes and emphasises the difficulties faced by the presence in prisons of high numbers of drug users and the resultant high risk use of heroin and other drugs in the prison environment. The high rates of recidivism and the significant risk of overdose amongst heroin users on release from prison needs to be addressed. We can tackle this problem in prisons. Recommendation 12 deals with a range of measures to do so.

Evidence to the committee emphasised the diversity of factors underlying the initiation and continuation of heroin use. It also indicated the need to begin preventive education efforts at an early stage. Recommendations 13 and 14 therefore deal with a range of education and public information issues which need to be urgently addressed.

Recommendations 15 and 16 deal with a range of strategic issues and recognise the value of the National Drug Strategic Framework and the absence, or relative absence, of a South Australian strategy that reflects specific circumstances in this state. These strategies need to be coordinated.

Other recommendations deal with the way money is managed by the state government and call on the creation of a joint ministerial council and a joint task force comprising CEOs of key departments to coordinate the struggle against the heroin problem.

In summary, I report to the House that the recommendations contained in this report, if funded and implemented, will make considerable headway into the tragic drug crisis we face. Some will say that this report has gone too far. Others will say that it has not gone far enough. Those who seek to find fault will argue that the committee failed adequately to consider the ethical issues involved. Nothing is further from

the truth. The committee heard exhaustive evidence on the ethical issues, debated these at length and has delivered a balanced account.

In reality, the ethics of drug abuse and treatment of addiction are vexed. There are as many ethical opinions as there are addicts and as there are medical, spiritual, scientific and psychological professionals. No-one is wholly right and no-one is wholly wrong on the ethics of this.

I congratulate my fellow committee members on their commitment to the committee's work and I thank on behalf of the parliament our research officer Dr Linda Gowing, secretary Malcolm Lehman, and Hansard, without whom this report would not have been possible. Most of the committee went about its work with an open mind. There is a minority report, but I believe that the issues raised therein are addressed in the report itself. As evidenced by our concerns about home invasions and other drug related crime, we need to do more about this problem.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I have pleasure in following the chair of the committee in addressing this very important report. The report puts the medical prescription of heroin into perspective as one option in the context of a broad treatment framework for heroin addiction and takes into account other responses to heroin use. The report concurs with a view of many witnesses that heroin addiction is primarily a health issue but, because of its illegality, has implications in terms of law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

The committee recommends a coordinated approach covering treatment, education and enforcement in the context of an overall philosophy of harm minimisation. The debate around heroin trials has been emotive and polarised, with some firm and often intransigent positions being espoused. People's views are often dependent on their personal knowledge and experience of drug addiction. Some hold that the prescription of heroin sends the wrong message and therefore cannot be entertained. Others take the view that where there is life there is hope and that doing something as a last resort to keep someone alive is better than losing them to an overdose, disease or criminal activity.

Others believe that reducing the harms to society in general by keeping addicts out of crime and a criminal lifestyle, able to begin functioning normally, is a good reason to consider heroin prescription. The illegality of heroin has made it the bogey in the closet and has led to people taking positions that are inconsistent and illogical. One example of this is the view that the provision of medically prescribed heroin to recidivists is wrong but the availability of nicotine patches for addicted tobacco smokers is okay.

There was majority support for the notion of medically prescribed heroin for recidivists, but the committee saw it as only a third level priority for action by this government, and a trial of heroin prescription for recidivists is not recommended. We need to address the priorities of the situation we currently face in South Australia. While tobacco and alcohol are still the cause of most drug-related harms in our community—

The SPEAKER: Order! I bring the cameramen's attention to the rules for filming in this chamber.

Ms STEVENS:—it is undeniable that heroin usage has increased in Australia and South Australia, and of concern is the fact that the uptake is amongst young people. There has also been a disturbing increase in the number of deaths from heroin overdoses. There are specific issues also in certain populations, for example, in the Aboriginal community,

where heroin use has increased exponentially over recent times, in the Indo-Chinese community and particularly in our prison population. It is undeniable that, despite its relatively low prevalence across the whole population, the economic, social and health cost to our community is enormous.

In addressing the matter of heroin overdoses, as the chairman has indicated, the committee has recommended a scientific investigation to learn more about the action of heroin in heroin dependent users and to increase our ability to prevent and respond to heroin overdoses. The committee acknowledged the chronic relapsing nature of heroin addiction, the complexity of the condition and its precursors, the need to have a wide range of treatment options available that can be tailored to suit the individual, and the need to get in early and tackle the addiction in the early stages, before it gets established. Treating an addiction comes in two major parts, each of them complex. The parts are the addiction itself and then, perhaps the even harder part, the issues around why the addiction occurred in the first place. It also involves supporting the person in establishing a new lifestyle free of the addictive substance.

The issue of abstinence came up many times, and I want to say that dealing with an addiction and becoming abstinent is an incredibly difficult thing to do, as any reformed smoker would probably attest. I think it is very important that we always aim for abstinence, but we recognise that for some people this may not be achievable. But, we always keep trying and we acknowledge that there are gains in moving along the pathway to abstinence.

As the chairman mentioned, the committee members heard to our great concern that fewer than half the heroin dependent people in South Australia are currently receiving methadone maintenance treatment (that is the major treatment program available now), and there is a huge shortage in psychosocial and support services to addicted people and their families. As the chairman said, the reasons for that included the limited range of treatment options available; dissatisfaction with methadone treatment (the fact that it does not suit everyone); difficulties in accessing treatment resulting from long waiting times; geographical issues (the treatment centre is a long way away from the people who need the treatment and they just do not attend); and cultural and gender issues. As the chairman mentioned, the committee has made major recommendations to increase our effort in each of those areas. This will require a considerable increase in resources, but I urge the government to make a start across all areas. Let me put in a plea to not forget the importance of the ongoing supports that are required to help a person establish a new lifestyle.

The link between crime and heroin use in my view is undeniable. The committee recommended improved responses in the criminal justice system through diversionary mechanisms in the court system but, as the chairman mentioned, at this point we did not recommend a dedicated drug court. The committee also recommended the continuance of law enforcement mechanisms to contain the supply of drugs as part of a broad strategy involving education and treatment. We particularly recommended collaborative strategies with communities in both enforcement and education. The issue of safe injecting rooms was mentioned in a number of submissions but it played a fairly small part in our overall investigation. However, the committee has made the recommendation that this matter warrants further investigation.

I want to congratulate everybody involved with the putting together of this report. I want to thank all witnesses who

appeared before the committee and gave their time and effort in putting very important views across to us. I particularly want to refer to people who have had direct experience of the devastation of heroin addiction, with personal knowledge of it in their families and a knowledge of the issues affecting other families. It takes a great deal of courage to come and bare your soul and tell your story in the hope that something better can come out of it, and I hope that something has.

I would also like to pay tribute to Malcolm Lehman, our committee secretary, for his work, and particularly to Dr Linda Gowing, the committee's research officer who was invaluable in terms of her very great and comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, her brilliant analysis and organisational skills to keep us on track, and her ability to keep the massive amount of evidence in some sort of order. I would like to thank other members of the committee for their work. I certainly enjoyed the time spent on the committee. I believe that we have produced a report that adds value to knowledge here in this state, nationally and internationally, and I recommend the report to all members. There is a lot of reading contained in it, but it is easy to understand and I hope all members will take the time to look at it.

Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey): It is my pleasure to follow the previous speakers as a member of the heroin trial committee. I joined this committee in December last year with an open mind and very little knowledge of the world of the heroin addict. I have to say I had absolutely no contact personally with the world of the heroin addict or heroin users, apart from the desperate pleas of a mother who had presented to me what was a very disturbing picture of a world with which I had had no contact and could not even imagine existed.

The world of that heroin addict and what that family was going through touched me deeply and made joining this committee a priority for me. At the end of the period of months that we have worked on this matter, I have a lot of satisfaction in participating in the recommending of this report to the parliament. The world of the heroin addict is an incredible world and one that I hope most of us here will not have to experience. I have learnt about the debilitating effects of addiction. I have learnt about the all consuming nature of the illness—and it is an illness. I have learnt about the fact that it is a health issue primarily. I have also learnt about the downward spiral of the self-destruction of individuals as they enter the world of heroin addiction.

I have learnt of the devastating effects on the health and general well-being of addicts as they spiral down that slippery pole. I have also learnt of the devastating effects on the family and the community as a whole. It is an issue that affects us socially and ethically, and it creates an enormous debate in the community on what should and should not be done to help these sufferers of addiction. I had an open mind when I came to this committee. I had an open mind because I had not viewed the ethical debate: I had not listened to or heard the many sides of the debate. I knew very little about addiction. I knew very little about what was already being done to try to help addicts. I knew very little about the deficiencies in the research into what causes addiction. I knew very little about the deficiencies in resources available to those trying to help addicts.

Overall this committee has worked very hard, and the report it is presenting today will be a valuable report, as mentioned by the member for Lee, that will be able to be used

by this government, hopefully, and nationally and internationally. It is an extremely important report in my view because it addresses a number of issues that have been presented in previous format—but addressed them from a difficult angle.

The use of heroin as a prescription medication to lead to abstinence was the substance of the inquiry. It was the majority view of the committee that, whilst the ethical arguments will be debated forever—in perpetuity, I guess—as to whether or not the medically prescribed injection of heroin is appropriate and in fact above all would do no harm, it is a very sensitive issue and it is unlikely that we will ever get consensus on that matter. However, there can be and are many differing views, and it was the majority view of the committee that, while the prescription of heroin was not unethical in the view of the committee, it perhaps is not appropriate at this stage for the South Australian government to be considering heroin trials. It is an important issue because, whilst work is being done in other places and countries, South Australia should not be duplicating that work but should be adding to the database and wealth of information that can be collected and collated in the fight against this dreadful disease, addiction and illness.

We have the opportunity through this report to expand the programs here in this state, to look at underpinning the work being done overseas and adding to the collection of data by looking at other short-acting opioids—others that are not subject to the same legal problems that heroin would involve in this country, and also looking at the trials currently being undertaken with prescribed drugs such as buprenorphine, naltrexone and LAAM, which are all showing potential. It was the majority view of the committee that they should be the emphasis for medically prescribed treatments for drug addiction at this time in this state. I fully support the majority view of the committee.

I highly commend the efforts of our research assistant, Dr Linda Gowing, who has worked very hard and has been the backbone of the work this committee has done. She has managed to pull together a group of people who had very open minds and give them the information to be able to assess adequately a very difficult and complex issue and provide us with the backup support we needed to make what I believe were the right decisions and the right recommendations for this time and this parliament. I also thank our secretary, Mr Malcolm Lehman, and I thank all the other committee members who worked very hard on this brief. It has been a very challenging and interesting brief, and I certainly hope that the results of the efforts of the committee, the research assistant, Dr Linda Gowing, and Malcolm Lehman will all be rewarded by the government's adopting the recommendations within this report and assisting society in the fight against drug addiction.

Mr SNELLING (Playford): Decisions we make in this place cannot be made in an ethical vacuum. Even decisions we believe will have largely positive consequences must be checked against those agreed principles upon which an ethical society functions. With regard to the provision of heroin to addicts as a means of treatment, these principles are contained in the various codes of medical ethics from the dictum *primum non nocere* to the Helsinki declaration. The core value is that a doctor's first responsibility is to the welfare of his patient. Any action that might compromise that, even if there are proven benefits to society at large, is morally reprehensible.

It is unfortunate that, in the community debate on the provision of heroin to addicts, there has been scant mention of the welfare of addicts. The debate has largely revolved around the perception that the war on drugs has been lost and that there would be benefits to society from undertaking a heroin trial. I hope that my minority report goes some way towards redressing this imbalance.

Heroin causes death because it is a highly toxic substance. With the possible exception of pain management in terminal cancer patients, it has no therapeutic value whatever. It is illegal on a state and federal level, and Australia is signatory to international conventions on its prohibition. Mr Speaker, you will be asking how, given the illegality of the substance, its manifest dangers and the clear ethical criteria militating against its use, this parliament could possibly be contemplating a heroin trial. I put it down to the policies of despair, to learned or even willed helplessness on the part of decent people who should know better.

To summarise, I will quote from my minority report, as follows:

The debate about heroin trials and safe injecting rooms has overshadowed many of the promising developments in the treatment of heroin addiction.

There is a danger in governments pursuing licentious drug policies in the hope of being seen to be 'doing something'. Such policies are very seductive for a public that has been led to believe that the 'war on drugs' has been lost. Furthermore, policies like this have the potential to pave the way for more widespread use. In the context of harm minimisation as the prevailing philosophy governing drug policy, the public may ultimately be exposed to greater harm.

It would be disastrous for the government to undertake a heroin trial out of a feeling of hopelessness at a time when we are on the verge of many promising new treatments for heroin addicts. Such a course would sell short those who have been unfortunate enough to become addicted. We would, in fact, be 'abandoning these people to their addiction'.

In view of these issues, I recommend that the state government pursue treatments for heroin addiction that are clearly directed towards abstinence. Such treatments that have the best interests of addicted individuals in mind might include short-term stabilisation on opiates, such as buprenorphine or Kapanol, before assisted, perhaps rapid detoxification followed by intensive counselling, social support and relapse prevention with naltrexone.

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I move:

That the Social Development Committee investigate and make recommendations to the parliament in relation to the rapidly expanding area of biotechnology in the context of its likely social impact on South Australians.

This is a very important motion, and I am pleased to move it. It is a very general motion, and it is deliberately worded in the way in which it is because it is an area of enormous interest and, I suppose to some people, an area of concern. In drafting this motion, I did not want to restrict the committee in terms of its deliberations and investigations. What I am seeking through this motion (and I trust members here will support it) is an informed, rational discussion and analysis, with appropriate recommendations on how we cope with what is a significant and major revolution occurring right at this very time.

The debate or discussion so far about biotechnology—which encompasses, as we know, not only the human species but animals in general, plants and the total biological

component of the earth—has not been helped by some of the comments made by people such as Prince Charles, who has referred to genetically modified food as 'Frankenstein food'. The consequence of that sort of comment, and comments from other people, is that in the United Kingdom and Europe this debate is virtually off the rails at the moment. It has reached the point where it has become virtually hysterical. That is unproductive and unhelpful because, whether we like it or not, biotechnology is here, it will be around and we have to deal with it in a sensible and responsible manner.

One of the great revolutions of recent times has been the information technology revolution and, clearly, that has been driven, in large measure, by the development and expansion of computer technology. Interestingly enough, that technology in the computer area has helped to accelerate the development of biotechnology in areas such as the sequencing of genes, because the computer capability now enables us in the laboratory to do things that used to take months or even years. So, one revolution, the IT revolution—in particular, computerisation and the development of laser technology—has really accelerated the development of biotechnology.

In South Australia, we have many companies involved in this area—many of them have emerged out of the University of Adelaide—and that sort of development will continue. We are also engaged in various elements of biotechnology research at places such as the Hanson Institute, our universities and our other major teaching and research hospitals. So, we cannot pretend that we are not involved in biotechnology; we are. We are not major players in terms of the world, but what we are doing is significant and much of it is of a very high quality.

It is not my role now to single out areas that I consider to be the best, but we do have a good track record, particularly in the agricultural area and in the medical area as well. But what we do not have is an adequate social or legal framework to deal with what is emerging, not only in the agricultural area but also in the human area and the wider animal community.

The United States and Canada are very much into genetically modified food, and that is only part of the biotechnology revolution. That is particularly focused in the United States and Canada on such crops as canola (formerly known as rapeseed), maize and soya bean—plants that produce products that are used extensively in the food industry. Many people would be consuming them without realising that their margarines and so on contain some of those ingredients.

Where we are lacking is in an education program in our community. Canada has done a lot of work, particularly to inform primary and secondary school students about genetically modified food. In Australia, we have done nothing of that magnitude to make young or older people aware of the significance of genetically modified food.

A lot of negatives and a lot of positives are associated with genetically modified food. On the positive side, one is improved yields. Many of the large chemical companies support genetically modified developments on the basis that they can sell their chemical products because they have developed grains and so on which are resistant to their particular chemicals. As a result, they get an increased yield. However, on the downside the farmers can use those seeds only once, because they have a life of only one season. Then they have to buy that seed again from the agricultural or chemical company. They also obviously have to buy the

chemical from that company. On the upside, they get increased output and an increased yield, and therefore make more money. The potential downside is, as I indicated, that each year they have to buy their seed, and that is in contrast to current practice.

It is not simply about producing more food as a result of genetically modifying plants, but there is a whole range of other issues associated with this, and members would appreciate those. They include things such as taste perceptions and the bigger issues which apply not just to the agricultural area but to the human area as well; that is, whether people, scientists, companies and researchers are playing God by interfering with nature, or the alternative argument that people are only accelerating what nature and people have done through plant and animal breeding over many years.

I noticed in the paper this morning that the Prime Minister has spoken out, on the grounds of cost, against the possibility of labelling foods to indicate that they are genetically modified. I do not believe in the long term—and possibly even in the short term—that manufacturers will have a choice, because in the United Kingdom and Europe all the big retailers, including Sainsbury's, Tesco, Woolworths and so on, now indicate quite clearly in their stores that they do not stock any genetically modified food. It is a pretty tall order to claim that, but that is what they are focused on.

We are getting confusion in countries such as the United Kingdom because of what happened in relation to mad cow disease, which really has nothing to do with genetically modified food. Because people fed inappropriate offal and other residues to cattle does not in any strict sense have anything to do with the genetic modification of food; nevertheless, it has clouded the debate. What we see in the UK now is a tremendous focus on so-called natural or organic foods, many of which have their own inherent dangers in terms of the way they are produced.

I believe that the Prime Minister will eventually realise that labelling is a requirement. I would argue that consumers have a right to know what is in the food they are eating. Indeed, in the United Kingdom it is now mandatory for all takeaway foods and all restaurant meals to indicate whether or not they contain genetically modified food. It is not to say that there are not any risks with genetically modified food, because there are some, particularly in terms of what happens to the residues after the principal product from genetically modified food is used. For example, in North Carolina (and I was there in April), through genetic modification, they are now producing oil from tobacco plants. It is not oil that can go straight into a motor car, but it is in the category of oil that can be used for a range of uses.

I believe that people here in the agriculture or horticulture field need to be well aware of the fact that there will be a huge push towards so-called natural foods, organically grown foods. We see that happening now in terms of free range chickens and eggs that are produced by free range chickens, and that will extend in terms of cattle and so on being allowed to graze in open areas rather than in feedlots. That is a bit of a side issue in terms of this debate but, nevertheless, it is still important and the agriculture and horticulture sector need to be very aware of the consequences. Indeed, in terms of our wine industry, I would caution that markets such as the United Kingdom, where we are dominant, can easily evaporate if there is any suggestion that our wines are not natural or organic.

In terms of the human side of biotechnology, the potential is quite outstanding, including the potential for things such as the treatment of cancer, arthritis and a whole list of diseases. I am not so sure that the companies that are promoting some of this research are interested in prevention: I think that they are more interested in treatment through the use of their drugs. Nevertheless, there are other people involved in human medical research whose motives are not necessarily driven by financial consideration. It is possible now to accurately and consistently determine the sex of human offspring and those of other creatures, and that raises a whole lot of ethical questions as to whether people believe it appropriate that the sex of offspring be determined.

We would need to think of countries such as China when thinking of the consequences of that technology, which is available right now. We need to have appropriate codes of practice to deal with those aspects of genetic manipulation. We can move genes from one species to another and do all sorts of things between plants, animals and humans, and some people find that unacceptable. But at the moment we are not fully equipped in South Australia or anywhere in Australia to deal with the ethical and social aspects arising from that. I am not sure of the views of members in relation to the cloning of humans and animals generally, but that technology is certainly at hand and we need to deal with it.

I believe that it is technically possible now to enable people to live very long lives, and it may not be fanciful to suggest that people will technically be able to live forever through some of the outputs in biotechnology. It is a prospect that I have put to some people and most of them have declined the possibility of living forever, which I found somewhat strange. What we are talking about in terms of this motion is for the Social Development Committee to take expert evidence and to allow the community to have a say, because it is the next big revolution confronting us.

The implications are enormous not only for people in regard to medical aspects and in terms of the ethical dilemmas of general gene manipulation resulting in variations in species. The whole gamut is there before us and it will happen: the question is whether we are prepared and able to deal with it in a sensible, rational manner.

We are also confronted with what is, in my view, even more dramatic technology. I refer to nanotechnology (the prefix 'nano' being Greek for 'dwarf') which deals with minute, molecular, atomic particles which we can now rearrange using some of our new technology such as tunnel microscopes and so on. Using those instruments we can now create and manipulate the building blocks of our universe. At the moment, we are not prepared for the biotechnical revolution and, shortly, or even concurrently, we will have nanotechnology to deal with also.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

LIQUOR LICENSING (HOTELS NEAR SCHOOLS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Liquor Licensing Act 1997. Read a first time.

Mr HANNA: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Essentially, this is a planning issue. The concept is simple: pubs should not be located next to schools: kindergartens, primary schools or secondary schools. Although I have said

this is a planning issue, because of the peculiar nature of hotel licences it is appropriate for the Liquor Licensing Act to be amended.

I say, first, that the origin of this bill lies in Woodend in the suburb of Sheidow Park where currently there is a proposal for a tavern or pub to be developed in what is now a shopping centre situated on Lemon Road. For practical purposes, that shopping centre shares a car park with the local Woodend primary school and it is also situated adjacent to the Woodend kindergarten.

I do not believe it is appropriate for a pub to be situated next to a primary school or a kindergarten. It is the overwhelming view of the local community that has led me to take the matter further and bring this measure before parliament. However, I do not think this is just a local matter; I think a general principle is involved.

There are plenty of options for pubs or taverns to be developed in commercial zones, strip shopping centres or shopping centres. However, I think that reasonable limits must and should be placed on pub developments, and I think it is a most reasonable limit to say that pubs should not be located next to schools.

I will say something more about the particular local example at Woodend which I have mentioned. As far as the general community is concerned, the history of the matter goes back two weeks when some residents were advised of the liquor licence application to be made by Peter Hurley or a body associated with that well-known hotelier. In one sense, the history goes back longer because the Woodend shopping centre, the premises which are the subject of the liquor licence application, were originally placed there for the general benefit of the community, and the people in Woodend have bought their homes in reliance on having a local shopping centre with a variety of services offered there. That has proven not to eventuate for various reasons and the premises are now partially leased but far from fully leased, and one thing on which everyone in the area agrees is that better use could be made of the shopping centre. However, both the local community and I say that the premises should not be used for a pub or tavern.

As I said, two weeks ago notice was given under the Liquor Licensing Act provisions to a few local residents that there was a proposal for a liquor licence to be granted in respect of the premises. It rapidly became clear that the proposal was for a pokies tavern to take over the whole of the shopping centre complex. The car park associated with that shopping centre is immediately next door to the Woodend Primary School and school children walk home through that car park.

The community reacted very rapidly and passionately to the proposal. Just by talking among themselves, a few people managed to organise a meeting for the evening of Monday 11 October in the hall of the local primary school. I attended and addressed that meeting about the various options available if people wanted to protest against this particular development. The main issues that arose out of that meeting were that parents did not want their children to be under any risk at all of exposure to any anti-social or unsavoury behaviour which could possibly be associated with a pub development. That has been the major issue.

I am the first to say that the vast majority of hotels most of the time do not cause any problems whatsoever to their neighbours, whether they be residents or primary schools or whatever, but the fact is that sometimes some unsavoury elements will go to a hotel and either behave badly or leave

behind debris in hotel car parks which you would not want primary school children to be exposed to, for example, broken glass or syringes—and I must say I have seen these in other hotel car parks (which I will not name) despite efforts by the licensee concerned to keep a clean shop. The fact is that there is a small element of risk and if we can keep pubs away from primary school children then I think that can only be a good thing. We can minimise that risk—even if it be a relatively small risk—right now.

I have made it clear that there is widespread community opposition to this particular development and it was that community opposition which led me to consider the broader policy issues. It seemed to me that nowhere in the state of South Australia should we be putting new pubs next to schools.

The bill is of very confined operation. It deals only with hotel licences being granted to premises adjacent to schools. So, even where we have, say, a primary school separated by a main road from a pub that would not be covered by this bill. I am talking only about hotels being located right next door to schools. That is inappropriate. I must say that when I have spoken to members of the community, to mums and dads and a wide range of people in the community, I have not found anyone who disagrees with that concept. It is simply an inappropriate use of premises to situate a hotel next to a primary school. Those two uses are incompatible and I have found very broad agreement on that issue.

I mention a side issue. If this proposed development at Woodend proceeds it is intended to contain 40 poker machines. I am on the record as saying that there should be fewer and not more poker machines. I think they have caused more trouble than anything the community has gained from them. There are, of course, a few unfortunate people who become addicted to them. I do not think that is the main issue in respect of this bill, although I am aware that the Hon. Nick Xenophon, a member of the upper house, is active on that issue. He has highlighted the dangers of yet one more pokies venue which we do not need.

I am sympathetic to that view, but I must be honest and say that the purpose of this bill is to keep the risk of antisocial behaviour sometimes associated with hotels away from primary and other school children. I will say something about the timing of the operation of the bill. This bill does absolutely nothing in respect of existing hotel sites. If someone is presently running a hotel next to a school this bill will not affect them. I realise that to take such a drastic retrospective measure would not be accepted by this parliament and I would not want to injure the commercial interests of existing hotel operators under those circumstances.

However, we can draw the line right here and now and say that no more hotel licences will be granted in respect of premises next to schools. That is what this bill is about. In terms of existing applications, I believe there is only one and it relates to that Woodend development which I have mentioned. This bill will catch those developments. So, where an existing application has not been granted it cannot be granted as of today (21 October 1999), and that is in the bill. There is an urgency about this. I am hoping that the government will respond to this bill—not today, necessarily, but next Thursday when this bill next comes before the parliament.

I hope that, by that time, the members for Chaffey, Gordon and MacKillop will also have considered the principle behind the bill because time is of the essence as a current application is on foot. I have spoken with a represen-

tative of the Hickinbotham Group (the owners of the building in question) and I have made my position clear. I have also shared a joint radio interview with Peter Hurley, the proposed licensee of the premises. An interesting aspect of this case is that Mr Hurley has relied on supposed evidence of community support. It has become clear that that evidence of community support was fraudulently obtained.

I believe that Peter Hurley has been misled in terms of what he has heard about community support. It is very clear now that the community is overwhelmingly against this development. I have spoken with the President of the Hotels Association, Mr Lewis, who has expressed his concerns about existing users. I have reassured him that no existing hotels next to schools will be affected but, other than that concern, he has indicated that the association will not be taking any official stance on this policy initiative.

I must summarise because I have only limited time to speak to the bill. In summary, it is a very simple concept: we should not have pubs next to primary schools. It is an incompatible use of land. It is a planning issue, but because of the liquor licensing regime there must be an amendment to the Liquor Licensing Act. There is overwhelming public support for this bill not only in Woodend in respect of the local development to which I have referred but generally in terms of the principle. I believe this is a commonsense issue on which I would expect bipartisan support. I have spoken with the Hon. Wayne Matthew about it and I am still hopeful that the Liberal Party will endorse this proposal.

I am hopeful, too, that the members for Chaffey, Gordon and MacKillop, who are not bound by party room decisions in the same way in which Liberal and Labor members are, will approach this proposal with an open mind. I trust that they will speak to their local mums and dads about the idea, and I sincerely believe they will find very strong support for the principle underlying this bill.

In the time remaining to me I will briefly explain the clauses of the bill. There are three clauses, and they are quite simple. The first clause simply gives the name of the legislation as the 'Liquor Licensing (Hotels Near Schools) Amendment Act 1999'. The second clause indicates the timing of the commencement of the legislation. It will be taken to have come into operation on 21 October 1999 and, should a licence be granted while the bill is being considered, that will be deemed to be null and void. In other words, by the very introduction of this bill I am giving a signal to the prospective applicant that it would be unwise to proceed with such an application. He would be advised to adjourn his liquor licensing application until this bill is dealt with. Nonetheless I believe that this bill should be expedited through the parliament so that the developer concerned has a clear message, yea or nay.

The third clause of the bill is the chief clause which makes it clear that the licensing authority cannot grant an application which would result in a hotel being adjacent to school premises. I commend the bill to the House of Assembly.

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mr HILL (Kaurua): I move:

That this House expresses its total opposition to the use of any site or sites located in South Australia for the storage of Australian or international long-lived intermediate or high level radioactive waste.

The Howard government is charting all South Australians on a dangerous course of action, one with consequences which will be felt for thousands of years to come. Rather than doing anything to stop it, John Olsen's government seems content to play dumb and let its federal counterparts have their way. I am talking about the Howard government's push to locate Australia's only national radioactive waste repository and storage site in the central north region, Billa Kalina, in South Australia.

What the government calls consultation has been conducted for the past few years to find a site for disposal of Australia's low level and short-lived intermediate level radioactive waste. Somehow along the way, South Australia has also become the preferred site for the storage of long-lived intermediate level wastes—a very different kettle of fish altogether.

Currently Australia's radioactive waste is stored at 50 sites around the country, usually at the place where the waste is generated, such as universities and hospitals. However, we are told that universities and hospitals are not in the nuclear waste storage business and do not have the expertise or space to continue storage operations. Instead, the government says that we should have a national repository to gather all the waste together. It is unclear how the government came to these conclusions when it appears that there is no consensus as to how much waste currently exists. There has been no formal audit of the existing waste since 1986, no real attempt to consolidate best practice waste management techniques for the radioactive waste industry, and no method structured to forecast future waste needs.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much discussion in the chamber.

Mr HILL: Establishing a national waste repository may well become the convenient means for the industry to hide mistakes and inefficiencies in operations. Be that as it may, the originally stated purpose of this repository was to store what is known as low level waste and short-lived intermediate level waste. These types of radioactive material must be actively managed for 100 to 300 years. After that time it is presumed that the waste will have deteriorated enough to be relatively safe to be left to its own devices.

These waste materials come from past activities and also from ongoing medical procedures and university research. These activities will continue to produce waste that needs to be dealt with in some way. However, we believe that the Howard government consultation process did not fully address alternative means of disposal, especially regional on-site methods. The important fact that, annually, 75 per cent of the lower level waste stream comes from operations at our only nuclear reactor has not been realistically acknowledged.

The option of storing waste on site with the reactor has not been thoroughly canvassed. That seems largely due to political rather than scientific reasons. Also, the planned repository goes against the recommendation made in the 'No Time to Waste' report of the Senate Select Committee on the Dangers of Radioactive Waste (April 1996) which said that it was best to store all waste in secure above-ground repositories.

In the 1997 document by the Bureau of Resource Sciences, 'A Radioactive Waste Repository for Australian Site Selection Study—Phase 3 Regional Assessment: A Public Discussion Paper', the only sorts of waste mentioned for location at the repository were the lower level wastes. However, by June 1999 we were looking at a very different

prospect. The 'National Radioactive Waste Repository Site Selection Study Phase 3: A Report on Public Comment' by Industry Science Resources states:

To secure the benefits of shared infrastructure, the government has also indicated that it will consider collocating with the repository a store for Australia's long-lived intermediate level radioactive waste.

On questioning from Senator Nick Bolkus on 15 February 1999, Senator Nick Minchin revealed some interesting policy. He said:

Once a preferred site has been identified [since named as the Billa Kalina region] for the national radioactive waste repository, it is government policy that the site will also be considered for the collocation of a purpose-built, above-ground, national storage facility for the storage of Australia's small quantity of long-lived intermediate level radioactive waste. The long-lived intermediate level solid waste that will be returned following reprocessing of fuel rods will be suitable for storage at the NSF.

That was in answer to a question on notice. The consultation process was significantly less than adequate on the question of storing low level wastes. It was non-existent when it came to the question of storing higher level wastes. In fact, the government utterly failed to make clear its real intentions, and that is to use South Australia as a storage site for some of the world's most dangerous known substances—radioactive wastes that will be around for up to 250 000 years. It is difficult to understand just how such a crucial policy detail could have been so thoroughly skimmed over in any genuine consultation process. In any event, it now appears that, if South Australia hosts a national radioactive waste repository, it would also have to welcome a national storage facility.

To really appreciate the ramifications of this duplicity, I must explain some of the technicalities of the nuclear waste cycle. Long-lived intermediate level waste is the highly radioactive waste created from the operations of our nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights. Long-lived waste is similar to high level waste in its radioactive levels. It differs only in that it contains less heat. In fact, in the United States, the substance that the Liberal government is terming long-lived waste could actually be called high level waste. Annually around 85 per cent of Australia's higher level of waste comes from the operations of the reactor. Some of the elements in that waste, including plutonium, need to be managed in isolation for up to 250 000 years. These are the sorts of substances that this Liberal government and the federal Liberal government want us to take responsibility for without even asking.

Naturally, the requirements for the storage of higher level waste are quite different from those of lower levels. World's best practice to date generally indicates that, in the short term, secure above-ground storage is the preferred method. For the long term, very deep underground storage is the nuclear industry's chosen method. However, this theory is yet to be successfully implemented anywhere in the world. Given the nature of these substances, there is no guarantee that either of these methods is totally secure. After all, how can any government guarantee any course of action for the next 50 years, much less for the next 250 000? The main reason we have these high level wastes and the majority of our low level waste is that we have a nuclear reactor. This reactor is located at Lucas Heights in New South Wales and was constructed in the 1950s for the purpose of research into nuclear power. In the late 1960s the reactor was adapted for scientific research purposes and is now also used for the production of neutrons for scientific, medical and research purposes. Although the reactor was state of the art in its time, it is reaching the end of its life. The time to choose to either build

a new reactor or discontinue our active role in the nuclear cycle is upon us.

Again, there have been studies and inquiries into the ins and outs of this question, and again the federal liberal government has implemented its own style of consultation and decision making and determined to build the new reactor without regard to other advice and community opinion. This decision goes against a number of fundamental recommendations of experts and Senate committees, and it fails to rationally consider the economics of the situation. The question of the economics of building a new reactor is very important. Building a new reactor would cost about \$300 million. A lot of things could be purchased in the health and science areas for that sum of money.

According to 'A new reactor at Lucas Heights' report by the Senate Economics References Committee of September 1999, the committee found that the federal government was remiss in a number of areas. It found (page xxi) that the government 'relied largely on the vested interests of ANSTO and those involved in, and dependent on, the nuclear industry'. The committee found that a number of conclusions were far too hastily drawn and recommended that more research into some significant areas be conducted before approval for a new reactor could be made.

One of the most fundamental government failures centres on the question of radioactive waste disposal. The report found that the question of waste disposal must be sorted out before any decision about a new reactor is made. This is where South Australia comes in—the easy out of sight, out of mind solution to the federal government's problems. The pressure is on them to find a higher level waste disposal site as quickly as possible in order to proceed with the construction of this new reactor. As they have already indicated their preference for the Billa Kalina region, it is hard to believe they will look very hard for a different site, no matter how much so-called consultation they want to pretend to conduct.

Our state government's role in this is at best confusing. During budget estimates, the minister for mining and Deputy Premier Kerin, who on this point resembles Homer Simpson in his attitude to uranium and radioactive material, denied all knowledge of any higher level waste repository being proposed. In the estimates committee of 29 June 1999 he said:

That issue has not been raised—certainly with me anyway—by the federal government. My understanding at this moment is based on low level radioactive waste as per the documents that were pretty widely distributed within the community. That is the basis of the public consultation that has taken place.

It is inconceivable that the Deputy Premier did not know about this extraordinarily significant proposal. As I mentioned before, his federal counterparts had clearly made their intentions known, both in their public reports and through the media. In addition, the South Australian government has been required to take ongoing part in a commonwealth/state government consultative committee on the management of radioactive waste, whose terms of reference specifically include consideration of the means of disposal of long lived intermediate level waste. Either the Deputy Premier failed in his duty to understand the workings of his federal counterparts and his own committee or, much worse, he failed in his duty to look after the best interests of South Australia.

The undertaking to store higher level waste brings a set of problems not before confronted. These include, first, transporting these very hazardous substances and then, second, storing them for time periods beyond our comprehen-

sion. It is difficult to imagine planning 250 000 years ahead on anything, but that is what we are doing when we establish a storage facility of this type. Compounding this difficulty is the knowledge that one mistake involving these deadly substances could be fatal for living beings for many generations to come. As if these concerns were not enough, we must ask ourselves if we can economically afford to gain the reputation as Australia's nuclear waste dump. In a speech given to the Securities Institute of Australia in September this year, the President of the Winemakers Federation of Australia, Brian Croser, stated his concerns. He said:

I must say I think it would have damaged the industry no matter how remote, how safe. Association with a nuclear dump, if it was publicised, with the wine industry of south-east Australia would be a detriment, a serious detriment.

Local groups are not too keen on the prospect of living next to a nuclear dump, either. Mr Joe van Homelen, the administrator of the Woomera prohibited area, is worried that locating even the low level dump nearby could jeopardise the use of it as a rocket range. Reported in AAP on 16 September 1999, he said:

A location of the radioactive waste repository within that area is not our preferred position because we feel there could be conflict.

The Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta Aboriginal Corporation has written a letter to the Hon. Mike Rann. It reads in part:

We say, 'No radio active dump in our ngura—our country.' It's strictly poison—we don't want it. . . . They want to put poison in our ground. We want our life. . . . we love where we belong, the whole land.

As if the prospect of becoming Australia's radioactive waste dump was not enough on its own, the possibility exists of an even greater threat, that of the importation of international radioactive waste. The federal government currently is saying that only Australian waste will be stored in this facility. Of course, just a short time ago they also said that we were only to be hosting lower level radioactive wastes here. Can we afford to trust them on this?

Australia possesses no laws prohibiting the importation of nuclear waste from other countries, even though Deputy Premier Homer Simpson seems to think otherwise. In a letter dated 25 July 1999, he wrote:

It is illegal to import radioactive waste from other countries into Australia. . .

However, as I understand it, on licence, one can do that. In fact, Pangea Resources has already started a campaign to site an international nuclear waste storage site in Australia and has indicated interest in Western Australia and South Australian sites specifically. I have some documents which show that to be the case. They show Pangea's intention to attempt to seduce us with money. Pangea is like a vulture waiting on a rock. Time is on its side. It will wait and, when times get tough, wear us down. Why wouldn't it?

I appeal to all members in this parliament to step out of party politics to consider one of the most important questions they will ever face. I know there are some government members who have not yet made up their mind on this issue, the member for Unley being one of them. I ask them to consider the welfare of all current and future residents of our state. In the last few weeks we have seen serious nuclear industry accidents in Japan and Korea, in systems supposedly fail-safe. They serve as painful reminders that any human activity carries with it the inevitability of mistakes. Should we allow ourselves to become exposed to similar sorts of risks? Clearly, if the federal government has its way, our state will become home to some of the most dangerous substances

known, with the responsibility to care for them for thousands of years to come.

In addition to this horrifying prospect is the genuine and logical possibility of South Australia's becoming the international site for radioactive waste. Is this really the legacy we want to leave future generations? Do we want to become known as the parliament that allowed this impossible burden to be placed on our children and grandchildren? We have the example before us of the Western Australian Parliament uniting yesterday in the support of a bill to oppose the siting of any international style waste dump within its borders. As the chosen site of the national waste dump, we have to go further to ensure the safety of our current and future citizens. I urge members to consider this matter carefully and support my motion.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN secured the adjournment of the debate.

EAST TIMOR

Notices of Motion: Other Motions—Ms Bedford to move:

That this House calls on the federal government to take those steps required to counter the destabilisation of the ungoverned province of East Timor in the lead-up to independence.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): I seek leave to move my motion in amended form.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the member read out the amended form and provide a copy to the table for circulation? The chair has considered the amendments proposed by the member for Florey and believes that they are significantly different from the motion before the chair. An amendment such as that indicated by the member for Florey usually involves a minor change. The chair would suggest to the member for Florey that she move the motion in the original form as it appears on the notice paper. The honourable member can still refer to the points she has raised in her suggested amendment or she might like to give notice of that amendment for next week, but there are substantial changes to the motion and the chair cannot accept those changes.

Ms BEDFORD: I understand that this exact motion has been moved in another place as an amendment, so I am not certain why there is a problem.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point is that the member for Florey gave notice of a particular motion that appears on the notice paper. The amended form is substantially different. The chair cannot accept the major amendments that are suggested to the original motion, and the chair would again indicate that, if the honourable member wishes to move the motion in its original form, she can still refer to the matters she has indicated in what she proposed as an amendment or she may prefer to give notice to move the motion in an amended form, as she has indicated in the House today.

Mr De LAINE: On a point of order, sir, the process of moving a motion in an amended form is fairly common in this place, and I wonder where the line is drawn as to whether it is a simple amendment or a very complex amendment. What is the dividing line?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The practice of the House in the past has been that, if it is a simple amendment, it is accepted, but if members wish to look at what is proposed as an amendment by the member for Florey and at the original motion they will find a significant difference between the

two. The chair has determined that that should be the ruling and I would ask the member for Florey to consider the ruling of the chair.

Mr HANNA: On a point of order, sir, I simply ask for clarification on your ruling. Are you ruling that the amendment is against the spirit of the motion as originally moved?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The chair has already indicated that there are major differences. There is much more material in the amendment being proposed by the member for Florey than in the original motion. The whole purpose of giving notice of motion is to give some indication of the issue to be debated on a further occasion. But, as there is a considerable difference in the information that is provided, I would ask, again, the member for Florey to take the ruling of the chair into account, and I do not uphold the point of order.

Ms BEDFORD: I have been seeking copious instructions, as well as the instructions I have received from you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I have been advised that I should ask that my motion be discharged from the Notice Paper.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member indicating that she does not intend moving her motion? If she is, the House can accept that motion and then the opportunity would be provided this afternoon in the business of the House for the member for Florey to give notice of a different motion to be considered next week.

Ms BEDFORD: I would certainly welcome that opportunity.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member does not wish to proceed with the motion before the chair.

ROCK LOBSTER LICENCES

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I move:

That this House notes that the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development has failed to equitably and fairly manage the allocation of recreational rock lobster pot licences for 1998-99 and calls on the minister to release the report by the committee under the chairmanship of Mr Martin Cameron convened to investigate complaints about the allocation of licences in 1997-98 and make recommendations about improvements to the system.

Members would probably remember that, on Monday 6 September, applications for rock lobster licences were called, and the system which was to operate was that people would telephone in for the licences, and the system was to open from 8 a.m. There were an estimated 1.6 million calls on this system on that day, which resulted in a breakdown in the telephone system in the metropolitan area. There were also other problems that were evident with the system. In some cases, the wrong number was advertised, so people trying to get through were calling the wrong number and, when they finally did get through, they were advised that they had to start all over again. Some people were given an alternative number and, although there was some reassurance by the government this did not advantage them, there are questions in some people's minds about that system as well.

The applications were for a \$45 non-transferable licence for an adult person, which enables the person to take up to four lobsters per day for the next two years. I refer back a little further to 1997, which was the time of the previous allocation of rock lobster pots where there also problems. At that time the number of licences was reduced from three per person down to two per person, and at that time a number of difficulties were encountered with that system. In fact,

the Hon. Ron Roberts, who was then the shadow minister for fisheries, wrote to the Deputy Premier and said—

Members interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: I know. He does always have good ideas, and he writes a good letter, too. He said:

Dear minister, I have been approached by a number of constituents from the West Coast of South Australia who have expressed concerns over the recent allocation of recreational rock lobster pot registrations. I understand that the freeze on new recreational pot registrations has been lifted and that a number of new registrations were available from 1 September 1997. I also understand that this was advertised in a number of regional newspapers as well as in the *Advertiser*.

The concerns that have been raised with me concern professional rock lobster fishermen allegedly obtaining extra recreational pots, not only for themselves but in at least one instance two pots for the wife of the person in question, and two for each of the three children. In this instance, that relates to 10 recreational pots plus a professional rock lobster licence within the one family unit.

My question to you as the minister concerns whether the above situation is in fact the case and, if so, how many professional rock lobster fisherpersons have obtained recreational pots? As I understand the situation, recreational pots are exactly that: pots for recreational fisherpersons.

In response, on 26 September, the Deputy Premier, Hon. Rob Kerin, began by acknowledging receipt of the letter. He then said:

With the opening of new pot registrations on 1 September, applications from the community at all PISA offices were extremely heavy and all available pots were allocated by 11 September. Numerous public notices had been placed in the major city and regional newspapers to ensure that rural centres had the same opportunity to apply for a pot registration. However, the short period of time from the issue of the notices to full subscription meant that even a short delay in applying resulted in some people missing out.

There were also some other problems which were raised when the regulations came before parliament, and the Legislative Review Committee of the parliament heard evidence from the Director of Fisheries on 8 July 1998. At that stage, the Director, Gary Morgan, confirmed that there were problems. For example, he confirmed in his evidence that a licence was issued to a child who was less than 12 months old.

In response to these problems, the government set up a group that undertook the task of reviewing the system. This group was reviewed by Martin Cameron, and the group was asked to do two things. It was asked to conduct a review of the problems that had been described in the allocation the previous year and to recommend to the minister how these issues could be resolved for the 1998-99 allocation. I think it is only reasonable that we should be able to have access to this review to find out what that committee saw as the problems and how they should be solved. It is equally obvious that the government should have been aware that there were likely to be problems with the current allocation of licences, given the difficulties that had already occurred in the 1997 year. It would not have been hard to see that, given the number of applications in 1997, there was very likely to be a heavy demand for licences under the 1998 allocation.

Basically, what the government decided to do was, again, conduct a first come, first served type allocation. But instead of a physical first come, first served allocation, it decided to conduct it over the telephone. The government outsourced this telephone allocation system to Venue-Tix. There is some debate about whether the problem with the telephone lines was due to Venue-Tix or due to Telstra's inadequacies, but the fact of the matter is that it could easily have been foreseen

that there would be a heavy round of applications this time—as, indeed, there were. People sat on the telephone for absolutely hours and hours to try to get access to these licences and they found the system extremely unsatisfactory.

There have been numerous complaints, and indeed numerous complaints went to the Ombudsman, who is now investigating the details of those complaints in relation to the 1998 allocation. I welcome the Ombudsman's undertaking this task and look forward to the results of that. But it is important for this parliament to look back to the Cameron committee's report to see exactly what were the allocations and to see how, in terms of the way in which the system works, it might be better done in the future; hence my motion to the House. We would not want to see a repeat either of the 1997 allocation or the current year's allocation where a number of people felt that they were dealt with most unfairly. Indeed, many people are calling for the licence allocations to be frozen and for the system to be recommenced this year under a fairer allocation policy.

My request is very reasonable, and the minister needs to ensure that there is wider consultation in developing a system, as the system this year has been a demonstrable failure. I am sure that the people who spent many hours on the telephones ringing the wrong number would completely agree with me.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development): I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the deputy leader's motion: it gives me an opportunity to straighten up some of the facts. I have great sympathy for those people who waited on telephone lines for a long time. The system really did turn out to be the wrong one. Even so, whatever you do with it, there will never be enough to go around. That is one of the big problems, so there will always be a lot of people who miss out. I have great sympathy for those who have missed out. There certainly will not be a recall. I do not think that will solve the problem at all.

The deputy leader referred to wider consultation. Let me provide a summary of what we did. There was an enormous number of calls, one of which was from the Hon. Ron Roberts, and he called for an independent review of what happened last time and for there to be a better way of making allocations. Well, the committee actually did that. The committee chaired by Martin Cameron had a broad range of stakeholders on it. The committee considered all the issues and recommended to me the first in, first served telephone system, something with which I argued there would be problems. We did not envisage the technical problems, but I had some problems in terms of using the telephone system. I told the committee that I would prefer a postal ballot. Members of the committee did not agree with my reasoning: they felt that first in, best dressed on the telephone system was the way to go. So, we were at loggerheads on that.

The committee suggested that this issue be put back to the recreational fishing committees and the organisations to give them a say, and that is the 'wider consultation' which everyone called for last time. The recreational fishing committees, SARFAC and a range of organisations unanimously decided to use the telephone system. I did not agree with that, but if I as minister had acted on my own by calling for a ballot system against the wishes of the Recreational Rock Lobster Advisory Committee, the recreational fishing committees and all the organisations, I am sure I would have been answering a lot of questions in this House over the past few weeks, because exactly the same number of people would

have missed out and I would have been accused of being corrupt, etc. So, that is where the telephone system allocation method originated.

In fairness to the people behind that decision, it should still not have been as bad. I think that the Olympics committee might know a bit about this as well, but there is a lesson in this, whether in relation to concerts, football finals or whatever: the technology has actually caught up with these telephone systems. I have had letters from people claiming that they made 1 200 calls, and this sort of thing, because of rapid redial. There are banks of phones on rapid redial. During the morning there were 483 161 calls from Mount Gambier alone. So, technology has caught up, and that really added to the frustration and broke down the system.

There have been a lot of anecdotal stories about different telephone numbers. Certainly, there was a mistake: two newspapers actually printed the wrong number, and they have apologised. There was the issue of mobiles: I am assured that mobiles came into the system before the blockage actually occurred. Venue-Tix has provided written confirmation that calls to the administration number, apparently broadcast over a number of radio stations, would be cycled to its selling system, resulting in no advantage for callers on that number. Obviously, a lot of people are emotional about their rock lobster pots. The Ombudsman has gone through all those issues and declared the process fair and equitable although, like me, he is not particularly happy with the way it went.

Certainly, next time I will be a lot more insistent on going for a postal ballot unless we change the system completely. If we are to keep the current licensing system, there should be a postal ballot with heaps of independent observers so that later there are no accusations of corruption. There are a lot of other issues about children, dogs and so on. That is worth absolutely nothing to them. People have to go to the post office to get their licence, producing proof of age and identity. Even if it was a young child or a dog and they found a way of actually getting themselves identified, the licence holder would have to be the one doing the fishing, and a dog pulling lobster pots would be quite a sight to see!

I still have one or two concerns with the process. A report was undertaken as a result of a survey in the lead up to this process, and it has been out for scientific review. According to the survey, it looks as if the recreational rock lobster pots we have are catching less than the allocation for recreational. To take the easy political way out, we could just create a whole lot of new licences. I want to make sure from a resource point of view that that survey stands up scientifically. If the science stacks up and the management of the resource is correct, that may give us some flexibility for some more.

There have been accusations of country versus city missing out, and it is quite interesting to look at those figures. Eyre Peninsula is one area which, I will openly admit, I have some concerns about because of the wrong number being printed in a couple of newspapers. Extra pots would give us the opportunity to fix that and, hopefully, give other people another crack, but that will depend on the science. For instance, comparing 1997 with 1999, I can cite a couple of instances to show that the country versus city problem did not have an impact. The South-East and Kangaroo Island (which have post codes beginning with 52) in 1997 had 47.54 per cent of the licences and in 1999 have 47.36 per cent, so there is very little change there.

In fact, Yorke Peninsula, the area covered by the very capable member for Goyder, had 4.84 per cent in 1997 and

actually cracked the 6 per cent in 1999, so I congratulate the honourable member on the proactivity of his people although, no doubt, some people on Yorke Peninsula believe that the peninsula was disadvantaged. I have no problems with releasing the report of the Cameron committee. I am not knocking those people: they did a terrific job with a very difficult issue, and technology let them down. They felt that the telephone system was the way to go.

As I said, I was not in agreement with that and, when we put it out to wider consultation to find out what the recreational fishers actually wanted, we found that they wanted the phone option. And I thank them all for coming in and sharing the blame when everything went wrong! But, obviously, the committee has done a great job. As the minister, I have to take the kicks.

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I do not know about the calls for wider consultation: I think that the wider consultation was the thing that went wrong. I might have a discussion with the Hon. Ron Roberts, who has the answers to most of these things, and see whether we cannot come up with a much better system.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): I move to amend the motion, as follows:

Delete all words after the word 'House' until the words 'calls on the minister'.

It would be most unfair and it would give undue credit to the minister to single him out as being responsible for this fiasco. This was far too big a fiasco for the minister to create on his own. His colleagues who were part of it ought also to accept some of the credit for such a significant event.

I have spoken on this matter in the House before. I do not want to go over the whole issue again in detail, but I do want to put on the record two points. By 10.30 a.m. on Monday 6 September I was calling on the minister's office and then the acting minister's office—as the minister was overseas (I think in Hong Kong) minister Lucas on this day held the baton—to pull the pin.

It should have been realised early on that day that this had gone horribly wrong and that the best way to get out of a pickle such as that was to get out of it early, simply by saying, 'We're going to do this again in a fortnight's time because we've got it wrong.' Unfortunately, as the day rolled on the situation got worse.

After the event, I offered another solution to the minister, which was to say, 'We've got it wrong, we didn't have the guts to rub it out earlier in the day, we can't rub it out now, but we can do two things: we can issue these licences for one year only and, in turn, we can do something which used to exist on the old licences (for this season only), and that is say to people "You can borrow them."'

By doing that, we would not have increased the number of professional pots in the hands of amateurs, but, to some degree, we would have increased the effort. Based on the present statistics, the fishery is in a very healthy state which, I might add, is a compliment to the professionals. The biomass is on the up, the healthiness of the stock was proved at the opening of this year's fishing season, which is the best ever, and there is some fantastically healthy stock.

Having said that, I felt that, for this year only, we could have done that to correct the situation and then examined the whole issue. Unfortunately, that was not done either. I agree now that we need to look at the earlier report, but we need to

put in place something which is far better than what we had this year. We cannot rely on technology, because that is unfair. If you do not believe me, talk to the little old lady from Port MacDonnell who rang me in tears the next day. She has one of the original dial telephones and she spent the whole day dialling the numbers with her finger. She is one digit short, and obviously for that reason she did not get a licence.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I rise in support of the amendment moved by the member for Gordon. I concur with his comments about the level of fault that can be sheeted home to the minister regarding this issue. How to allocate limited resources when there is a large demand is a vexed question. I have had some experience of trying to work through that process. I see many parallels between this issue and one on which I have spent a lot of time over the past couple of years: the allocation of water resources.

The same issues often arise when we talk about taxi plates in the city and a whole host of other situations where we have limited resources and a high demand. I think we would be doing a disservice to a great many South Australians and, in particular, the tourism industry along our coasts if we continued with this farcical situation where we have a huge demand for amateur rock lobster licences, very little idea of the amount of fish caught by the amateur industry and something like a ballot or a first in, best dressed system or any other system of allocating this resource without having some strategic planning in place.

I think we have to realise that the tourism industry in the small towns along our coasts, and particularly in the South-East (at least as far as I am aware), plays a very important part in the economies of those towns. The tourism industry to a significant extent relies on people coming to those beach resorts and having access to the rock lobster fishery. A person telephoned recently and told me that he was a little dismayed that the government might take my advice and declare the whole process null and void because he was one of the lucky ones who had secured a licence and he had recently invested \$41 000 in purchasing a boat and associated equipment to go fishing for rock lobster. He did indeed tell me that he would be prepared to pay \$10 000 if he could acquire a licence which he could hold for 10 years. He said that he was going to retire, that he was going to move to a coastal village and that he wanted to spend as much time as he could in his new boat catching a few crayfish for him and his wife to feast on. He was prepared to spend a large amount of money on it, and that is one of the issues we should recognise.

We have a substantial professional rock lobster industry. We have ownership of pot licences in that industry which are fully tradeable, and I call on the minister to look into and come up with a process or a protocol whereby we can actually transfer some of the quota from the professional side of the industry to the amateur side. I am not suggesting that that be done by any sneaky back-door method, but I would suggest that we have an open system whereby anyone can buy a professional rock lobster licence and convert it to a number of amateur licences which would reflect the lower effort involved with amateur licences.

Professional licences currently sell for between \$20 000 and \$30 000 per pot. I am not sure what the estimated catch per pot is, but I would suggest that it is at least 20 or 30 times more than that which would be caught in the average amateur pot, so we might be able to convert one professional pot into 20 or 30 amateur pots. I am sure that plenty of people would

be prepared to pay \$20 000 for a professional pot and convert it to 20 amateur pots to be sold in pairs to some mates for a few thousand dollars each. I think that would be viable. It would not necessarily have an adverse impact on the fishery although, as the member for Gordon said, the fishery is going along well and is being managed in a responsible manner at the moment. Generally, amateurs fish inshore and professionals fish offshore, and that would be one of the management issues that would have to be taken into account if there were any transfer of effort from the professional side of the industry to the amateur side.

I wish to highlight that we have a great unmet demand and, if we cannot meet that unmet demand, I believe it will seriously impact on the growth of the tourism industry; it will also impact on the leisure activities of many South Australians who wish to visit seaside resorts and participate in the fishery. Even if we get right the number of licences allocated to the amateur industry, there are plenty of anomalies. Anyone can go to the seaside at the moment with a diving suit or wetsuit, an aqualung or even a snorkel, and, without any licence at all, catch by hand any number of crays, or, indeed, get around the rock pools or go out in a boat and use a drop net to catch crayfish. I do not believe that we have a very good handle at all on the amount of effort put in by amateur fishermen in catching crayfish. I believe that about 125 tonnes of fish is allocated to this part of the industry.

I have heard figures that perhaps a little over half that figure is being extracted from the sea by the amateurs. I do not know how we can make sensible decisions in respect of the amateur side of the industry unless we have a much better idea of exactly how many fish are being extracted. One way that may be achieved—and I emphasise the words ‘may be achieved’ (and I have discussed this proposition with the minister although, I might add, he is not very keen on the idea, but it does have some good points)—is that, instead of selling licences to people to catch the fish by means of pots, we sell tags to be attached to the fish.

Amongst other things, we can then manage the amount of catch. In fact, there could be a different colour tag for each week of the summer. The tags could then be sold at a managed rate so that the effort stays the same right across the summer, and those unfortunates who have their holidays in February rather than at Christmas can still have some access. I am sure that modern technology would allow us to develop a system of tags that could be applied and that could have some method to them. The minister put it to me that if tags were sold a person coming in from the fishery would see the inspector on the beach and suddenly start applying the tags to the fish.

However, I am sure that modern technology could design a tag that had a half an hour time delay, or some such mechanism, built into it. I am sure that is not beyond the technical expertise of the minister’s department. I have been given some information that those sort of tags may already be available in trout fisheries in some countries. That is one way we could better manage the allocation of this resource whilst at the same time getting an exact figure of how much fish is being extracted. We need much more discussion on this issue. I would be delighted to see the colour of this report so that we can read what those people who have been involved have had to say.

Harking back to issues in respect of water, those people who have held licences in the fishery and who have, more than likely, contributed to this report to a greater extent probably look at the situation in a different way than people

without licences who have been sitting on the outer and who would like the opportunity to go out and do some fishing. I support the amendment as proposed by the member for Gordon and commend it to the House.

The SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Goyder and the member for Chaffey, the member for Gordon has moved an amendment to leave out all words after, ‘House’ and up to the words ‘1998/99 and’. A clerical adjustment is necessary for the amended motion to be more meaningful. I suggest that the honourable member move to insert the words ‘recreation rock lobster pots’ before the word ‘licences’ in its second occurrence. If the honourable member concurs, will he so indicate.

Mr McEWEN: Yes, Mr Speaker, I agree.

The SPEAKER: With the concurrence of the House, I call on the member for Chaffey.

Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey): I will briefly contribute to this debate and I indicate that I support the member for Gordon’s amendment to this motion. The recent allocation of licences for the 1997-98 recreational rock lobster pots is a good lesson in crisis management and how, at all times, you should first work to avert crisis. When crisis does arise it needs to be managed. The process, I believe, was allowed to go on for far too long. In my view the crisis should have been nipped in the bud at an earlier stage within the process and, once it was realised that there was a problem, the process should have been stopped and the allocation cancelled and started again. However, that is in hindsight. It is easy to be critical in hindsight. We need to learn from what has happened and go forward. With that in mind, I support the motion to release the report so that we can look at it and learn from what happened in this particular instance.

It is interesting that the reason that this form of allocation was adopted was due to the fact that there was an attempt to make access to the pots across the state more equitable. The previous allocation system where one had to personally front up to the office to apply for a licence was not fair on those who were unable to get to an office on the day. Whilst it was an attempt to have a more equitable way to allocate licences, it turned out very early in the piece that it was going to be a disaster and it should have been addressed at that time.

I concur with the views that have already been put forward by the member for Gordon and the member for MacKillop. However, I would differ with the opinion of the member for MacKillop in that the purchase of recreational rock lobster pots on the basis of how much you can pay would be inappropriate for those who are not able to afford to outlay considerable sums. The recreational rock lobster pots should not be available just to the haves: the have-nots should be able to have access to the resource also. I refer to the little lady of senior years in the member for Gordon’s electorate who was dialling on the telephone, and I think that she may not be able to spend thousands of dollars to purchase a recreational rock lobster pot.

However, the other idea of having tags should be pursued by the minister because the objections that have been put forward in relation to a black market and the honesty basis of the system would also apply to the existing system. Just because you have a pot does not mean that there is not a black market now. I can assure members that the demand far outweighs the availability of access to this resource and that there is a considerable black market already operating. Those issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and we need to learn a lesson from this exercise and move forward.

Whether we are talking about a ballot, tags or different ways of allocating licences, it is very important that we do learn the lesson of the past few months and that we move forward. The report released in the parliament will give us the opportunity to debate what has been presented and enable us to look at other options. I am hopeful that the minister will ask for input from other members outside his own party in relation to this issue and how the allocation can be conducted in the future.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): This certainly has been a very hot issue in my electorate, and I will be pleased to support the amended motion by the member for Gordon because I would very much like to see the report by the committee, which was set up to investigate the complaints about the allocation of the recreation rock lobster pot licences. I feel very disappointed for those people who missed out on the allocation, particularly those who tried all day. Many people who contacted my office said that they began dialling for their pot allocation at 8 a.m. when the telephones were opened and they finished dialling at 4 p.m. when the telephone system had closed, and they got the engaged signal the whole of the day.

That, in itself, one could partly accept and say, 'Well, look, it is very competitive', but it was the matters surrounding that that concerned me. I heard the suggestion that Telstra was so overloaded that it had to cut off certain areas from time to time and that Yorke Peninsula was one of those areas that was cut off. So throughout that time anyone trying to dial had no hope of getting through to record their allocation. The other thing that disturbed me were reports that other persons were given mobile numbers which would get one through. However, I checked that through the minister's office and it was shown to be totally false and the people who did that had no greater chance of getting through than the people who dialled the ordinary number.

I would like to thank the minister for the way in which he has looked into this matter. Certainly I know the telephone line between my office and his office was running hot for a few days after the allocation, and what his office was seeking to do to address the issue in those first few days was most appreciated. Since then, further investigations have taken place. Not only was the report which we are asking to be released prepared but also the Ombudsman became involved—and I recognise that the people who looked into the process believe it to have been fair and equitable. I personally question that. I know that some of my people are very disappointed because they have had recreational pots for many years and now they will no longer have them and therefore their lifestyle will be changed significantly. I guess that was always going to be the case with the population overall, and at least it gives other people a chance to enjoy the recreation of catching rock lobster.

Earlier, the minister quoted some figures for Yorke Peninsula, namely, that in 1997 there were 158 recreational rock lobster licences, comprising 4.84 per cent of the population, and there are now 219 recreational rock lobster pot licences, comprising 6.62 per cent of the population.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

Mr MEIER: In other words, Yorke Peninsula holds 6.62 per cent of the state allocation, so there has been a significant increase. I must accept those figures and acknowledge that our entitlement has increased, and that is only fair and right because our population has increased during that time too. Indeed, Yorke Peninsula is one of the best recreational areas in the state.

There is a lot more that I could say, and I have certainly said a lot to my constituents. I recognise that this situation has not gone as it should have. I compliment the minister, who warned the people who suggested to him that a phone-in system would be best that it would not work, and the minister was correct in that situation.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: It doesn't happen too often.

Mr MEIER: No, but when everyone else suggested to him that a different system should apply, the minister felt that he was the odd one out. In this case he certainly was not the odd one out, and I hope that an appropriate system will be devised for two years' time when the pot licences are again reallocated.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I move:

That this House notes federal Minister Kemp's recent attempt to replace HECS with a student loans system despite Liberal election promises to the contrary, recognises the impact this would have in disfranchising all but the most affluent students from participation in higher education in this state, and opposes any plans to deregulate university fees, implement voucher subsidies for university education or introduce education student loans at market interest rates.

This week the federal minister for higher education's real plan for the future of universities was revealed. Despite last year's promises to the electorate that deregulation of university fees and voucher subsidies were not on the Liberal's agenda, federal cabinet documents leaked to Labor showed otherwise. This must concern the South Australian Liberal government.

Most members of this House would acknowledge the negative impact that such plans would have in South Australia, and this motion is aimed at sending a strong message from this parliament to the federal government that these plans should be dropped for good.

The Prime Minister was at first reluctant to reject the proposals this week, emphasising the deep desire that his government secretly has for their eventual implementation. How can we truly believe that the Prime Minister has sincerely ruled out these plans when, despite his election promise, a cabinet proposal was secretly prepared by Minister Kemp in direct contradiction to the guarantees given only one year ago before the last federal election? The Prime Minister left the door open for its partial support earlier this week, before a later backdown was forced upon him by the tide of opposition around the country.

This Liberal government has form. Before the last election, the federal Liberal government's promise in regard to higher education funding, as stated in its policy document, was as follows:

The coalition will at least maintain the level of commonwealth funding to universities both in terms of operating grants and research grants.

What was done? Well, \$624 million was cut from operating grants and \$215 million from universities' discretionary funding over four years. What did it promise before the election? I quote:

The Coalition consistently has opposed changes to HECS rules after a student has begun study and will maintain this position in government.

Once elected, it lowered the HECS repayment threshold by \$8 000 to under \$21 000 now, well below the average weekly earnings, and increased the rate of repayment, immediately impacting on many people with an existing HECS debt. As

for what was promised, I quote from the Hon. David Kemp's media release of 17 April 1998. Before the last federal election, Dr Kemp said that the government had 'no intention of introducing vouchers for post-secondary education [or] deregulating university fees'. Further, at a press conference on 16 September 1998, again before the federal election, the Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, said:

As far as West is concerned, David Kemp had something to say about our attitude to vouchers and things like that, ruling them out absolutely.

In parliament after the election on 1 December 1998 my federal counterpart, the Hon. Michael Lee, asked:

Does the minister recall saying in April this year that the government 'had no intention of introducing vouchers for post-secondary education'? Will he confirm that this commitment applies for the life of this parliament?

Mr Kemp answered 'Yes.' What happened; what was the real story? On 28 June 1999 cabinet gave approval for Dr Kemp to develop a proposal for reforming higher education through the deregulation of administration and fees. So, we have all those promises to the people of Australia, total disregard for the guarantees made and turn-arounds made instead.

Let us look at the plan that was proposed—a plan that would send the cost of university education well beyond the reach of many Australian families under a new, deregulated system that was secretly planned by the Howard government. The key components of it were deregulation of fees, vouchers for use in public or private institutions and a universal loan scheme with real interest rates. That came to light via the Hon. Michael Lee last Wednesday. The Prime Minister played with words, but that document indicated a move to a voucher system, breaking clear commitments from the Prime Minister and the minister. Dr Kemp had also previously ruled out deregulating university fees, yet now we find that a cabinet submission was subsequently prepared which stated that his preferred option was a demand driven system characterised by fee and admissions deregulations. He also stated that institutions rather than government would set the price for a course of study. So, universities would be setting their own course.

Even the cabinet submission admits that there are eight institutions that appear to be operating at a deficit and that some regional campuses are at risk. The cabinet submission is acknowledging that universities are facing higher student staff ratios, less frequent lecture and tutorial contact, the persistence of outdated technology and gaps in key areas of professional preparation. So, clearly the government has a four year strategy for universities, beginning with its first cut of \$800 million from higher education in the 1996 budget. It has starved universities of adequate funding ever since and now, when universities are in deficit and at risk, they are offered a new funding source, which is students. That is the government's plan—a proposal to scrap HECS and replace it with a loan scheme. This means that, with real interest rates, a graduate's debts of \$40 000 could easily mount up to repayments of \$100 000 and young people may have to chose between buying their first home and buying a degree. We have seen overseas the prices that private universities charge for their education. The submission also flagged a cap on student loans which would mean that the loans would not cover the cost of most expensive courses, making these courses in the future only available to the wealthy. This was on Wednesday.

Then on Thursday we had the Prime Minister playing with words and trying to keep Dr Kemp's dream alive. He

confirmed that approval had been given by Cabinet for that submission to be compiled and was splitting hairs on the voucher issue, trying to pretend that, if vouchers were introduced under another name, then the commitment was met. That was the Prime Minister's approach on Thursday. Then on Friday, there were radio interviews all day in which the Prime Minister specifically refused to rule out applying real interest rates to student debts. In fact, he said on 3AW, 'That is an issue that needs to be considered.' Clearly he was keeping alive this prospect of a \$100 000 fee for our university students.

It was not until Monday, five days later, that the Prime Minister backed down and gave an indication that this would not go ahead at this time. This is, of course, Dr Kemp's third massive failure in one year. He was sacked from the employment portfolio last October. His own backbench rolled him on his ideological obsession with voluntary student unionism. This parliament contributed to that sentiment in passing without dissent a motion put forward by the Labor Party against voluntary student unionism, and now being overturned by Prime Minister Howard.

I would like to conclude with a poem that was sent to one of my colleagues from Gerry of Glandore. Called, 'The Kemp Song', it reads:

He's been a frickin' evil doctor
 For thirty frickin' years
 The place he wants to ruin
 Is the space between your ears.
 He wants to keep you stupid
 He wants to keep you dumb
 Unless you're born a rich kid
 He thinks that you are scum.
 He blames the Labor Party
 Whatever he gets asked
 It's always Labor's problem
 From administrations past.
 He will not answer questions
 He tries to weave and duck
 To drag the truth from David Kemp
 You'd have to use a truck.
 He ignores the oath he promised
 To tell the truth and serve
 The payers of the wages
 He thinks that he deserves.
 But nothing ever happens
 That's his fault in any way
 He claims the blame for nothing
 So how does he earn his pay?
 The courses he approves of
 Are the ones that lead to work
 'Cause History, Maths and Drama
 Are all just ways to shirk.
 He wants to see a work force
 Of thoughtless, docile drones
 He wants to see a country
 Of selfish yuppie clones.
 He wants you paying up-front
 If you want a Uni place
 And if you have to borrow
 He'll charge you 'market rates'.
 It's all in aid of business
 To keep its taxes low
 You and I can suffer
 So corporations grow.

That poem is indicative of the sentiment amongst university campuses. Indeed, at the rally at which I will be speaking in a short while, that sentiment will be expressed by South Australian students who have been contacting my office and

those of many of my colleagues to express their disgust at this latest betrayal by the federal Liberal government of promises made to students prior to the last federal election.

Mr MEIER secured the adjournment of the debate.

[Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 p.m.]

DRUGS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I have raised the issue of drug use in our community in this House on a number of occasions. That is because it is one of the most important issues facing our society today. It is an issue that does not just affect the people addicted to drugs; rather, it affects all of us in some way, through families, friends and the cost to the community in health care, rehabilitation, law enforcement and crime. As members will appreciate, it is a very broad issue and as a broad issue there is no one or single simple solution. That is why my government has taken a coordinated and comprehensive approach to this issue.

The South Australian government's drug strategies have been developed within the parameters of the national drug strategic framework. The dominant theme of this framework is harm minimisation. We have to be realistic. Despite the best efforts of the government and the community, there will always be some people who will want to experiment with drugs. That is the reality of a modern society. To accept it does not mean that we condone it, but by accepting the reality we are in a better position to try to minimise the harm that drugs can do to our society.

Essentially we want to stop drugs being brought into Australia; we want to catch those who traffic in drugs; and we want to educate our young people that there are better options than taking drugs and inform them of the harm that drugs can do. We want to offer those who do decide that they want to use drugs, for whatever reason, a way out, a way to get them off drugs and back into the community. The South Australian government is actively pursuing this strategy.

Policing initiatives such as Operation Mantle aim to crack down on drug trafficking and drug dealing. There are harsh penalties for those caught dealing in hard drugs. We have also introduced drug education programs into our schools which target not only the students but also parents. Earlier today the Select Committee on a Heroin Rehabilitation Trial was presented to Parliament. I welcome this report and I am pleased to say that the South Australian government is well ahead of other states in many of the strategies it has in place. That said, we still have 15 000 heroin users in this state, 5 000 of whom are classified as dependent users. That is too many, and we need to act.

I am pleased to say that many of the recommendations made in the report have been implemented in this state, and those which are not in place are being looked at in some form or another. The government is taking part in alternative pharmacotherapy trials to help addicts to get off heroin. We have in place a needle exchange service, with plans to extend this. We also have in place an education program in our schools, and we are close to a drug court trial. As well, I announced earlier in the year an illicit drugs cabinet subcommittee, which I chair and which is made up of the Attorney-

General, the Minister for Human Services and the Minister for Police. As well, we have a drug action task force, chaired by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, reporting directly to me.

Clearly, there are some more contentious recommendations in the report. There are two potential strategies on which the government has yet to decide a position, namely, heroin trials and safe injecting rooms for heroin addicts. Personally, I am to be convinced that these are an effective means of control. I am told there is only anecdotal evidence to suggest that they are. But that said, we are prepared to look further into the matter to see if the proposal has merit, as suggested by the select committee.

The report also calls for research to be undertaken on the scientific effects of heroin in heroin dependent people. I am advised that, while some research is being conducted in South Australia on how heroin affects breathing rates, more research is needed. I am told that we have the expertise to do that research in South Australia. So, we can again be at the forefront of breaking the cycle of this insidious problem.

I welcome the report and its recommendations. I commend the Chairman and the select committee for the evidence they have coordinated and presented to the House for consideration. The parliament and the people of South Australia can be assured that the government will look closely at the recommendations. As I said yesterday in this House, what is needed is a balanced approach to the issue of law and order, and that includes a balanced approach to drug reform. The two are clearly linked.

The government will closely consider the report's recommendations with a view to developing a position on this highly emotive issue. The bottom line is the safety of our community. Whatever decision we make will be made because we believe it is in the best interests of reducing the harm that drug addiction causes in our society. And, above all, the South Australian government's drug strategy is focused on abstinence. We want to be able to help people to overcome their addiction so they can once again become part of our community. This is an issue that needs a cooperative effort between government and the community to make sure that South Australia is a better and safer place to live for everyone.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Operations of the Auditor-General's Department—Report, 1998-99

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

Dental Board of South Australia—Report, 1998-99

Medical Board of South Australia—Report, 1998-99

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

Land Management Corporation—Report, 1998-99

Lotteries Commission of South Australia—Report, 1998-99

SA Water Corporation—Report, 1999

South Australian Totalizer Agency Board—Report, 1998-99.

QUESTION TIME

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. Given that construction has just been completed on a new 14 bed intensive care unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, built at a cost of \$4.7 million, why is the government now actively considering transferring intensive care to other hospitals? In a letter to the government dated 28 September 1999, Dr Rowe, Chairman of the Medical Staff Society at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, says that failure to incorporate an intensive care unit in the redevelopment as outlined in the government's options paper is a critical mistake. In August 1998 the government told the Public Works Committee that a new intensive care unit was needed at the QEH to meet the western community's needs over the next 30 years. The submission said:

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is the first choice hospital for major disasters occurring at the Adelaide International Airport and the Port Adelaide docks.

Why is the minister seriously considering closing what he has just opened?

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I have raised in this House previously the fact—and, in fact, it even came up last night during consideration of the Auditor-General's Report—that there is a process of consultation on a range of options taking place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by the North Western Adelaide Health Service Board. Dr Kathy Alexander has been engaged to work through those options with the local council, the local community and, in fact, the staff at the hospital of which Dr Rowe is one. Whilst a process of consultation is taking place—and before the board of the hospital has made any decisions and recommendations to me—I would have thought that if there was any proposal to put forward it should go to the board of the hospital or to Dr Kathy Alexander. I will certainly not stand here—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—and pass judgments on what is a range of options being considered there but not yet agreed to by the board. This parliament is not about hypothetical cases; that is TV stuff. It is inappropriate for the minister to consider hypothetical cases. Wait until the community has dealt with the issues, the board has made recommendations and a referral to me and then I will consider those options. Until then, I will not comment.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Premier tell the House what the positive decision by the ACCC in relation to charges for the new terminal at Adelaide airport will mean for the development of the airport and, in particular, what impact this will have on South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I welcome the ACCC's determination today to endorse a passenger facilitation charge—

The SPEAKER: Order! The cameraman on the left will bear in mind the rules for filming members on their feet.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:—for a multi user, integrated terminal facility at Adelaide airport. This is a new domestic/international terminal facility. It is something that we have been working on now consistently for about four, if not five, years to ensure that we get adequate infrastructure at our airport. Some time ago when this passenger facilitation charge was mooted it was at a fee of \$3.45. That \$3.45 fee would apply to international, domestic and regional tickets. The member for Flinders raised with me her concern about the impact on regional transport by airlines operating within South Australia, as did the member for Gordon.

As a result, we put a submission to the ACCC asking them—and it was back in June this year—to take into account the regional areas of South Australia in that they ought not be paying the same fee as a domestic or international service. I am pleased that the decision means that international passengers will be paying a \$6 fee, domestic passengers will pay \$4.09 and regional or South Australian airline commuters will pay \$1. Following the representations and taking those up, there has been a very successful outcome that will not impact against intrastate service. From a user perspective, be it the airline or the passenger, there is a direct correlation between the level of service provided and the payment for the service. In this context, as the principal facilities of the new terminal focus on servicing the domestic and international airlines and their passengers more than on the regional airlines, there is a strong case for this adjustment downwards on the charge levied on regional airline passengers, commensurate with the value that they are receiving from the service provided to them. As I understand it, the regional airlines will operate from the existing domestic terminal when the new international domestic facility is built.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: There are no air bridges. I am glad that has been raised. On the question of air bridges, the House might be interested to know that the proposal is for a \$180 million to \$190 million facility scheduled to be completed early in 2001. The new two story terminal building will be constructed adjacent to the current international terminal. The new terminal will feature 10 aerobridge gates capable of accommodating the range of aircraft using Adelaide Airport, both domestically and internationally. The terminal will be accessed through a raised road running the entire length at the first level. All gates will have aerobridges to provide cover for passengers walking between aircraft and terminal buildings.

It will be a state-of-the-art terminal coordinated by the one operator, allowing for efficiencies of operation and consistency in service, and will be the first of its kind in Australia. This new terminal will integrate all domestic and international services and will be one of only a few airports in Australia providing for seamless transfers between domestic and international flights. Therefore, this new facility will be perfectly suited to meet the demands of the emerging aviation market in South Australia. Having had quite inadequate and inappropriate terminal facilities at our airport for some considerable time, we are about to step into the new generation with an appropriate airport terminal for South Australia.

I highlight the fact that the representations of the members for Flinders and Gordon have in fact been incorporated in the recommended structure of the ACCC, which will now allow the contracts to be signed for the building to proceed and for South Australia to be serviced with a first class facility, the first of its kind in Australia.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. Was the Public Works Committee misled when it was told that the redevelopment of the intensive care unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was the most urgent project in the state and was given an assurance that the new works were part of the major redevelopment being planned for the hospital? On 15 July 1998 the Public Works Committee was told by Mr Zissler, the Director of Capital Assets in the Human Services Department:

This development is urgent and urgently needed now. I am aware that some committee members visited the site and other members are always welcome, but it has the most urgent need for resolution in our state today. . . We assure the committee that this redevelopment is being considered in the light of the major proposal for the Queen Elizabeth site.

The government is now actively considering transferring intensive care to the Royal Adelaide and Lyell McEwin Hospitals.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I believe that the Public Works Committee was accurately informed. Once again, though, the honourable member is jumping to conclusions. We are in the process of consultation: no decision has been made by the government at all. The consultation is going on and not even the board has made decisions, let alone the government.

Member interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I suggest that the honourable member come along and listen to some of the briefings. The honourable member asks, 'Why are we looking at what services are provided at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the Lyell McEwin Hospital?' It is for one simple reason: I would have thought the honourable member would be out there supporting her own local hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

In the period from now until 2011 we are expecting a population growth of 22 per cent in the Elizabeth and northern suburban areas, whereas in the western suburbs of Adelaide we are expecting a decline of 3 per cent in the population over the same period.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No, I am not closing it at all. Here is a hospital with two campuses; the growth area is in the north, and that is where we are looking at putting—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—as much of the activity as possible, particularly as it relates to that growth. That is a natural conclusion to reach. I urge members to become involved in local consultations so that they can have an input which will then go to the board of the hospital and which, finally, will come to the government for decision.

DRUGS

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Can the Premier please explain to the House the role that volunteers in South Australia are playing in addressing the drug problem, particularly among our young people?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): Volunteers within our community are undertaking an important role, a specific role and a coordinating role to further extend, I guess, into the broader South Australian community the downside of drugs

and to encourage people to be sufficiently self-confident to reject peer group pressure to be involved in antisocial behaviour or, in fact, the drug scene.

I had the opportunity this morning to visit Alberton Primary School with Port Power football club and Darren Mead. Even though I am a Crows supporter I was happy and delighted to support this initiative of the Port Power football club—with some trepidation. Port Power put forward a program and the government has committed \$60 000 towards that program. Russell Ebert, four time Magarey Medallist, will coordinate young Port Power players going into schools in the broader community. The message, effectively, is that it is not smart to be involved in graffiti or to be involved in the drug scene. These role models will encourage these young kids to have healthy lifestyles and to be involved in team sports within their schools and the broader community, and, hopefully, get these kids to follow the lead of their heroes such as Gavin Wanganeen and Darren Mead.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I can assure you that Kevin Foley's name did not come to mind. The program aims to encourage these kids to follow their heroes, their champions and their role models. I commend the Port Power football club for putting up the initiative. I think it is a good initiative. It is a pilot project. They will be going to schools not only in the Port Adelaide area but throughout the city and country areas. If the pilot project works—and I have every confidence that it will—there would be no reason why this program could not be further expanded into other areas.

There is no doubt that we have to educate our young people against being involved in the drug trade and antisocial behaviour. I think this is a very positive step. We have seen, and I have reported to the House previously, how the United Kingdom government has a program of starting education in primary schools to help develop self-esteem and self-confidence in young people so that they feel strong and confident enough, when they are being pressured to be involved in drugs, graffiti or whatever antisocial behaviour one might like to nominate, simply to say, 'No, I am not interested in that: I have a different path I want to follow; it is the successful path.'

I also say that it is a credit to the principal and the teachers at Alberton Primary School. The behaviour of the students, their focus and their interest in it this morning was exemplary and I would really like to publicly commend the school because I thought the way in which it was structured today—just the attitude of the principal and the staff and the response of the kids—reflected not only the staff but also obviously their parental guidance and, if that is an indication, then we are on the right track to being able to tackle drugs amongst our young people. Importantly, I commend Port Power for the initiative and what they are trying to achieve and I wish Russell Ebert and the players every success in their program.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Given the statement of the Minister for Human Services today that the board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital must first make a decision on government options to downgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, why did the government reject the recommendation of a strategic report prepared for the board of the North Western Adelaide Health Service that the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should be planned on a total of 320 beds?

The opposition has a copy of a strategic plan report dated March 1999 prepared by John Bisset Associates International Pty Ltd in consultation with the Queen Elizabeth and Lyell McEwin Hospitals, the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Universities of Adelaide and South Australia. The report says that, based on national benchmarks for hospital bed utilisation, the core redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should be planned on 320 beds plus 70 transitional beds. The Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Medical Staff Society has written to the government saying that plans by the government to downgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to 210 beds are not credible and grossly inadequate, even allowing for the closure of obstetrics, gynaecology, neurosurgery and renal transplantation.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I am delighted that the honourable member has raised this issue because the only ground on which that report was rejected was the fact that it could not fit within the time frame for capital funds within the Department of Human Services. The government has agreed that the broad recommendations of that report be included in the redevelopment, but there be an extension—I think it was one or two years—to achieve that report. Although it was rejected in terms of the time frame that was put forward, it was not rejected in terms of the scope of the redevelopment that took place. And so, all it comes down to is in fact a staging—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Just listen. All it comes down to is staging the development rather than achieving it in one stage. Therefore, I am delighted that the honourable member in applauding the proposal that has been put forward will support the broad recommendations on a staged basis for the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

DRUGS

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Human Services inform the House of the progress on current trials being held in South Australia to find new alternative treatments for heroin addiction?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): I am delighted that the chair of the select committee has raised this issue. It is a very significant issue indeed and it was an issue that the Department of Human Services and I took up through the Drug and Alcohol Services Council in giving evidence to the committee. First, let us recognise the extremely high cost of heroin addiction within our community. It is estimated that in the broadest terms the cost of heroin addiction is somewhere between \$100 million and as high as \$300 million a year if all aspects are taken into account. It is therefore very important indeed that there be effective treatment for those with a heroin addiction. As the Premier said in his ministerial statement, there are about 5 500 addicts, but only about 2 000 of those people are currently under treatment. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that we as a community broaden the range of treatments available to make sure that, if possible, all those who are willing and who have a heroin addiction are able to undergo effective treatment.

The majority of the 2 000 people under treatment at present are on a methadone program. Through the Drug and Alcohol Services Council the Department of Human Services has been trialling a number of alternatives to methadone. Three specific alternative therapies are being trialled. One is the rapid opiate detoxification under anaesthetic. This involves 40 people already selected who have all undergone the detoxification. It is the first major trial in Australia that compares rapid detoxification with normal detoxification for someone with a heroin addiction. All the participants then go on to naltrexone, and all 40 participants will now be on naltrexone for a period of 12 months. At the end of this period, in about the middle of next year, 2000, we will be able to do a comparison between rapid detoxification and normal detoxification together with the impact of naltrexone treatment. I am looking forward to that. As I said, it will be the first such trial carried out in Australia and will provide very important information.

The second alternative therapy treatment is buprenorphine, which is another alternative to methadone. It is acceptable to heroin users, has very few side effects and is very safe at high doses, allowing alternate day usage. One of the problems with methadone at present is that different people respond to methadone treatment in different ways. Methadone is fine for some, but for some people a daily treatment of methadone means that they go through withdrawal symptoms within the 24 hour period. A number of people on the methadone program have written to me about the agony they go through each day and also the difficulty of going to receive their treatment every day, because they have to go to a pharmacist to get their methadone. Under this treatment they would be able to go every other day, and it is very safe treatment indeed.

A third alternative treatment is called 'LAAM', levo-alpha-acetylmethadol. LAAM is another methadone alternative. Its action has a long duration, allowing alternate day use. It provides a great deal of flexibility for the people involved, and people taking it are less susceptible to diversion back onto heroin. This is therefore a very important trial that is being undertaken. We need 80 participants in this trial. We are not able to recruit all those people, so we have gone out into the community to look for volunteers from outside our normal drug treatment programs under the Drug and Alcohol Services Council. Once recruitment is completed they will be on this trial for a 12 month period and the initial data will be available after six months. I expect to be able to report back by the middle of next year on the effectiveness of these three trials.

A number of other trials are being put in place by GPs in the community, and I particularly draw the attention of the House to two of them. One in the northern suburbs is Drug Beat, which does a lot of work trying to help those who have undergone detoxification and are receiving naltrexone. It helps them get the community support which is so important. I pay a tribute to the work that Drug Beat does in the northern suburbs. Certainly we have given some assistance to Drug Beat by making available two Housing Trust four bedroom homes so that it can use them for the people involved over a six week period. Another is a program that is under way at McLaren Vale using a GP for a week. Those involved are under close supervision for the withdrawal period, and they then go on to naltrexone for a 12 month period, with the Wesley Uniting Mission providing the ongoing support for them.

One issue that arises with naltrexone is that it is extremely important that those involved get ongoing support because a person on naltrexone who has undergone detoxification is very susceptible if he or she is again offered heroin and goes back onto it. Therefore, it is extremely important if we are to have effective programs to ensure that they not only go through the appropriate treatment but also that they get broader community support to take them outside their heroin environment that they have been in and therefore to reduce the risk of their going back onto heroin in future. I commend to the House those three trials in particular, under which we are therefore creating some realistic alternative treatments here in South Australia.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given claims made in question time today by the Minister for Human Services that no decisions have been made 17 months after the Premier himself announced the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, does the Premier have confidence in the way this project is being managed by the minister? I can see him shaking his head and I can understand why.

The Hon. J.W. Olsen interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Well, you might think that hospital services in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital—

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader will ask his question or I will withdraw leave.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Okay. In May 1988 the Premier announced that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be redeveloped at a cost of \$43 million. On 23 June 1998 the Minister for Human Services said that he had met with board members of the hospital, that a plan was being worked on in detail and that work would begin in 1998-99. On 10 August 1998 the Public Works Committee was told that a major redevelopment proposal would be presented to government by the end of March 1999 because it was the most urgent works needed in the state.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): In the first response to the Leader's question, yes. Understand? No equivocation: yes. In relation to the capital works program and the health budget, I simply make this point: over the past six or seven years we have increased in general terms by 24 per cent, or in real terms by 16 per cent, total funding allocation to the health area. As the minister has indicated to the House on at least two, if not more, occasions, a capital works program is being coordinated through the Department of Human Services that will take into account the needs of South Australians. The provision and delivery of infrastructure for health services is a priority of the government. That has been clearly underscored by the allocation of funding to enable those capital works to be undertaken.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders has the call.

DRUGS

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing advise the House of the government's strategy for community education in relation to drugs in sport?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): There are a number of ways, of course, in

which sport and recreation can be used by government and by the community in relation to education in regard to drugs. The most direct way, of course, is by funding to the various sporting associations, and the government has spent around \$50 000 to \$60 000 in educating the sporting community—whether that be from the grassroots level to the elite level—about drugs in sport. The government runs a drugs in sport project that is managed on its behalf by Sports Medicine Australia. The drugs in sport project really is about working with the sporting associations, both at state and local level, so they develop the appropriate policies in relation to things such as doping, the use of banned performance drugs, smoking, alcohol consumption and responsible serving practices (in which I know the Attorney-General has a very strong interest), codes of conduct relating to the use of illicit drugs and alcohol, and procedures of notifying appropriate medications and medication limits. The drugs in sport project is receiving a higher profile, with the Olympics just around the corner. I think there also has been a more aggressive reporting of drugs in sport cases by the media over recent years—and the swimming championships in Perth are probably the most relevant example of that aspect.

There are other ways, of course, that government is involved in educating the community regarding drugs in sport. Through the Program and Development Fund it can influence things such as what is served at facilities, and whether they are to be non-smoking facilities—and, of course, Living Health (which has been rebadged and reworked) was, I suppose, an example of government trying to influence the control of smoking at least in that regard. Government also can influence through accreditation programs—whether it be through coaching accreditation, official accreditation or player accreditation. It can, through the accreditation process and the courses available, influence the education of participants so that there is a less chance of drugs being used, and better education about the reasons why drugs would not be used. There are also simple strategies such as increased participation. I know that in the member's electorate an officer has been employed through Active Australia, a commonwealth program, to go around and increase participation in some of the Eyre Peninsula area. That has been highly successful. If I recall correctly, the officer's name is Craig Haslam, and he has been very successful in the electorate of Flinders in increasing participation. Simple things such as those I have mentioned can send quite a strong message to the community, particularly with respect to young people: they provide an active outlet for their energies and their attention and quite often direct them away from involvement in drugs.

At a more elite level, with the Olympic Games being held next year, there is more focus by the commonwealth and state governments in the testing of lead athletes, and discussions are being held between various state and government ministers about the necessity for improved testing regimes. At the moment we are having discussions with other states and the commonwealth about what the government's whole of government response might be regarding that aspect. So, a range of activities can be undertaken in relation to sport and recreation, some of them at the very practical local level and some at the elite level. But certainly all of them are aimed at educating people about the problem with drugs and why they really have no place in sport.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

Ms BREUER (Giles): Does the Minister of Education still stand by his statements to this House that the decision for schools to enter into Partnerships 21 agreements are purely voluntary? If so, will the minister please advise the House of whether directives or incentives have been given to school principals to ensure that their schools agree to involvement in Partnerships 21 and what procedures are involved in sacking a school council if they do not agree? In the last 24 hours I have had numerous phone calls from parents in the Mintabie school community. A new school council was elected at its AGM this week, and this included a number of parents who were opposed to participating in Partnerships 21 in the first round until they are able to get more information. These parents believe that a meeting was held at the school after the council meeting, and they believe that legal advice has been sought through the district superintendent with respect to whether the school council can be dismissed and a new election held because of their opposition to the principal's very firm stand in supporting the Partnerships 21 plan for their school.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education): I thank the member for Giles for her question: she certainly supports the schools in her area very well, and I appreciate the fact that she usually advises me of any problems there. To answer her question, yes, Partnerships 21 is voluntary. The incentives in terms of the package itself for those schools which sign on include an \$80 per student payment to the school in the first round and \$70 per student in the second, third and fourth rounds. I have just looked at the global budgets, which will be released to all those who have indicated an interest, and those budgets ensure that any school that undertakes Partnerships 21 will be no worse off than they are under the current system. As I said, the signing on or the participation in getting more information is totally voluntary. I would be very interested if the member for Giles would like to give me the information she has, and I will certainly follow it up for her.

DRUGS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Will the Minister for Police outline what action is being taken to deal with the supply of illicit drugs?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): Clearly, the police portfolio and the correctional services portfolio are important parts of an overall holistic approach to drug strategy in this State, as clearly highlighted by the Premier today in his ministerial statement. In order to answer the honourable member's question I need to go back through a little bit of history.

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I feel again today for the shadow spokesperson. The honourable member really gets upset every time our government gets scores on the board, scores that are going on the board in a positive, goal kicking sense and not the sort of scores that were taken off the board as the honourable member and the Labor Party were destroying our state. I can understand why the honourable member feels rather wounded today, to say the least. I note that he has not had the haircut that a couple of other members on the other side have had, so clearly he sees himself as going only

to 2IC and not to the one in charge of the Labor Party in the next few months.

There have been reported increases in the availability of heroin in Australia as well as a disturbing increase in the number of deaths attributed to heroin. I refer to a report from Victoria in January indicating that more people died from heroin overdoses that month than were killed on the road. That is a startling piece of evidence which clearly shows the dilemma and the problems facing Australia today. At the APMC (Australasian Police Ministers Council) in the middle of 1996 a direction was given that a national heroin supply strategy be developed. It was also requested that there be a national supply reduction strategy for illicit drugs other than heroin.

Therefore, two reports were developed: the National Supply Reduction Strategy for Illicit Drugs other than Heroin; and the National Supply Reduction Strategy for Heroin. In November 1998 when we were in New Zealand at the ministerial council on drug strategy it was requested that those two reports be integrated. The integration of those two reports and the proposed strategies with respect to that integration are now items that will be discussed by us all at this Australasian Police Ministers Council meeting in Sydney in November. I believe that, as a result of the integration of the reports, the proposed strategies will greatly assist in addressing a number of identified areas of common concern involving both heroin and other illicit drug use.

While the strategy is required to counter high level heroin traffic and serious offences relating to all illicit drug use, it still needs to be clearly acknowledged that many people and families are being hurt and that there is a lot of social disruption in South Australia and Australia as a result of the activities of smaller traffickers of illicit drugs. Clearly, therefore, from a police enforcement point of view, it is acknowledged that we must target the lower level suppliers and distributors of drugs as well as the Mr Bigs who were highlighted in the report tabled today by the select committee.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: It is going well because we have a commitment to looking after our community and we have a very strong police presence. The operation dealing with low level drug traffickers in this state is known as Operation Mantle, and I am pleased to say that it has been in progress since October last year. I would like to bring members up to date with the detections—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: The member for Hart may not be interested in this, but as he has aspirations to be the Leader of the Opposition I should have thought the member for Hart would be interested in the core social issues that are destroying his constituents' families. The member for Hart, if he spends any time in his electorate, would have experienced the situation that I and, I am sure, many members of this House have come across, with parents in our offices crying because their families have been destroyed by people who peddle drugs to our young people.

I should have thought that someone who aspires to be the Leader of the Opposition would be very concerned about the initiatives led by our Premier that are happening in this state right now. In the past 12 months, 86 people have been arrested for heroin possession, 60 for amphetamine possession, 251 for cannabis and 26 for other drug possessions. As a result, hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash and stolen property has been recovered. Finally, in answer to the honourable member's question, I report that the mounted

division is doing a very good job in the South Australia Police. They are now going through suburbs, patrolling back streets and laneways and looking at the issues of illicit drug use, etc.

The Police in Schools program is also very important in allowing police to pick up intelligence when it comes to a range of legal issues. In the Correctional Services Department, the Straight Talk program is having a major impact in getting the message across to young people that if you take drugs it is committing a crime; if you are involved in dealing with drugs, it is committing a crime; and, if you hear what happens in the prison system, it is far better to stay with mainstream society and keep off illicit drugs.

HANCOCK, Ms C.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): Does the Minister for Tourism credit the success of the Best Kept Secrets campaign to the hard work of Carole Hancock, former head of Tourism SA? In a statement on 3 November 1998, the minister said:

Creativity, quality and innovation are just some of the qualities that this government seeks to develop and promote in our state. . . *The Book* is a demonstration of South Australian ingenuity and quality from front to back. . . The outstanding results of *The Book* do not stop there either. Calls to our travel call centres have more than doubled during the first two weeks of distribution.

In response to a question from the member for Fisher, the minister said:

I would have thought that they [the opposition] might be proud of it. It is important to start feeling good about our state and, unquestionably, this campaign is adding to that.

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): I am delighted that the member for Peake has asked such a question, because it gives me an opportunity to outline to him the importance of the secrets campaign and what it is actually doing for the state. I do not happen to have with me the latest edition of the secrets book, stage 2, but one of the most important things that has happened since the release of this campaign is the enormous creativity that has been demonstrated not only from within the Tourism Commission itself but also from within our outstanding advertising agency and the group that has been involved in the creation of this, which started probably seven or eight months before it was released.

The government was extraordinarily courageous and innovative in making the decision to let loose with this, because the results that are coming from across our borders are quite extraordinary. The most important thing about it is that is giving each of our regions the opportunity to showcase to not only South Australians but Australians all the products they have. It is also giving the regions the opportunity to participate in major events. They are very actively involved in a true consultative process with the Tourism Commission on a regular basis now. The member for Peake smiles, but I am sure his electorate—and the taxi industry, the transport industry and the restaurant industry—is benefiting enormously from the success of tourism.

I think it is great news. I would have thought that, in particular, he would be delighted to know there is a huge increase in employment. There is a great increase in confidence and we are pleased with the results. I invite him to take great notice of *Secrets* Stage 3 which will be released in a few weeks—and I will make sure I personally give him a copy, signed and autographed. It is very important and I think all members ought to take great advantage of these documents because they should make us all extremely proud of South

Australia, extremely proud of what we do, and extremely proud of this state as a great destination.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

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

DRUGS

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Can the Minister for Youth Affairs advise the House what adverse effects drugs are having on the youth of the state and what programs are available to assist in their rehabilitation? Yesterday, the minister explained in some detail the value of Operation Flinders. I seek from the minister whether he is prepared in his answer to canvass the great work done by Mr Les Nayda when he had young people working on the dog fence—another of those projects which bureaucracy got rid of.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government): I thank the honourable member for his question and I know of his long-term interest.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I merely observe that I acknowledge the success of the recent operation of charisma bypass given to the member opposite. Drugs, especially among our youth with nothing but potential in front of them, is an issue which cannot be taken lightly. One of the adverse effects is the fact that too many of our adult population see the issue of drugs as being a youth only issue. Drugs affect all our community. Those adults who are happy to actually foist it onto our young and say, 'This is a problem for the young' are misguided indeed, and misrepresent the position of drugs in our society. One of the adverse effects of the drugs debate on youth is an adult society all too willing to hide from its own failings by saying, 'Drugs are a problem for youth.' Drugs are a problem for us all, not only illicit drugs but also licit drugs, and it is a problem which I would urge this parliament to do as the Premier advises his government to do, namely, address it seriously and in some depth.

I will now refer to one of the recent outcomes of Youth Week, into which the government put a lot of money and which is proving most successful but which unfortunately has not much been commented upon by the Opposition—except in the northern Messenger Press which I believe gives this government some very positive comments this week. I note we are helping members out there and I note also they are not acknowledging the help that we are giving them through the youth portfolio in their own areas—but we will blow our own trumpet even if they won't.

One of the issues to come out of Youth Week was that some weeks ago the *Sunday Mail* conducted a survey on the drinking age. In that survey they highlighted binge drinking and they asked me to comment. My comment was basically that I did not see a problem. However, if there was a problem, I would discuss it with young people through the South Australian maze, our avenue to young people in this state and through Youth Plus. I have done that, and I report to this House that 100 per cent of young people see no problem with the drinking age being at 18. I accept that, because the Minister for Transport was kind enough to provide me with this information. She says:

For your information, of all drivers—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I am most thankful, sir, that the member for Peake has passed 24 so that I do not feel encumbered to represent him. The Minister for Transport—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I thank the member for that wise observation. The Minister for Transport says:

... of all drivers and riders who were killed or injured and tested for blood alcohol concentration in 1996 (which are the latest figures available), the 20-24 year age group accounted for the largest number (99 or 25 per cent) of positive tests. The detection rate for the group [in total] was 20.2 per cent. In comparison, 44 (11 per cent) of the positive tests were in the 16-19 year age group [with] a detection rate of 11.4 per cent.

Those statistics would suggest that, if there is a problem, it is that problem with the early 20s age group not a problem with our youth, and indeed, while youth acknowledge that any passage to adulthood (be it a permission to smoke or a permission to drink) has with it a cusp period, a period of two or three years, when people will illegally try to assert their adulthood by obtaining alcohol or cigarettes, no matter what the drinking age may be the same problem remains.

This government, as the Premier has stated, is committed to addressing the problem of drugs in our society—nowhere more so than among our young, because, as the Premier said, if we can inculcate in the young good habits and habits of care for themselves and their bodies, then we are on the track to creating a better society of adults in the future. The government is doing it through a multi pronged approach with our youth. We have heard the Minister for Education talk of education policies within his schools. We have heard the Minister for Human Services talk about a lot of intervention policies and prevention policies within his portfolio. We have heard the Minister for Police addressing not only the positive policing of the issue among our youth—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: If the member likes, I will go through every ministry because, for the member for Ross Smith's benefit, every ministry is playing an active part in what, after all, is a community problem. I enjoy my new found rapprochement with the member for Hart, who seems more closely allied to me than he does to the member for Ross Smith. I find this exceedingly strange. Every portfolio, every minister and every member of these government benches is committed to looking positively at this problem—every member. Instead of the member for Hart sitting there reading his paper, as he daily does—sorry, reading the *Bulletin* as he is today; normally it is the *Financial Review*—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: It may well be, sir, that one day such members might aspire to higher office: they would do well to learn both the processes of this House and a bit of wisdom. If they want to serve the people of this state, instead of arrogance, there could be a bit of learning take place. This government will continue to try to do its best in the area of drugs, especially in the area of drugs for youth, and will not be deterred by the cackling opposite.

HANCOCK, Ms C.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): Apart from cabinet deliberations, did the Premier have any role in the appointment of Carole Hancock as Chief Executive Officer of Tourism SA?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): No, not that I can recall at all. This sort of left field question is like throwing out a fishing line and swirling it around to see if you can catch something. I am inclined to have a shot at the member for Peake. I noticed some comments in the paper recently

about the member for Peake, stating that his parents were signed up as—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I rise on a point of order, sir: can you please explain to me what responsibility the Premier has to members of my sub-branch?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, because you cut the Premier off mid stream. I am not sure what point he is about to make.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I understood that the member for Peake was the black sheep in the family, that his parents are actually Liberal voters and that his parents got signed up as ALP sub-branch members. According to newspaper reports, I understand—

Ms HURLEY: I rise on a point of order, sir. I believe it is now very clear that the Premier is straying off the topic of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order; we understand that now. I ask the Premier to come back to the substance of his reply.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am happy to check the record; I am pretty sure of the facts, but if I am wrong I will be more than happy to apologise to the member for Peake, as I understand he is doing to those signed up as his ALP branch members. But one person in the northern part of South Australia is still waiting for an apology: a blind Aboriginal person is still waiting for an apology from the Labor Party.

DRUGS

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Minister for Education provide details concerning strategies to support and train teachers who deliver drug education programs in our schools?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education): I thank the member for Schubert for his question. As all of us in this chamber who have children—and even those of us who do not—I am sure that one of—

Mr Foley: You've covered everyone.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: That is what I was hoping to do; I wanted to be—

An honourable member: Inclusive.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Yes, I wanted to be inclusive. Everyone has nieces, nephews, grandchildren or whatever. One of the pressing concerns in our society today is protecting young people from those who prey on the fact that they are susceptible and who wish to sell drugs to them. The member for Mitchell obviously does not consider that this is important, but it is important to those on this side of the chamber.

One of the areas in which I believe we can do that is certainly through education. If young people have the facts before them about the dangers that they are undertaking in getting involved in testing or trying drugs, they can be well equipped, knowing what they are facing and what might be the outcome of that. We are rewriting the curriculum, and part of that new curriculum will be a drug education area to provide up-to-date and factual information to our students.

In addition to that, this government is allocating \$400 000 to employ five teachers to travel around the state to ensure that professional development is provided to teachers in our schools, that they develop drug education resources in schools and that solid links between the schools and external agencies are developed so that not only do we operate within education but also that we are working with human services and the other range of facilities within our community. This

sort of support will increase confidence in teachers because they will gain additional knowledge about drug education. Student welfare response teams, made up of social workers and support services, will be established to ensure student safety where drug related incidents occur in schools. The new strategies I have outlined support the Premier's commitment to a whole of government approach to preventing illicit drug use. The strategies also interlink with both state and federal initiatives to prevent unsanctioned drug use in schools. We are aiming to reduce the number of incidents to ensure that young students have a knowledge of what they are getting involved with and what the outcome might be. We have to demonstrate to them that there are alternatives to drugs and substance abuse and it is my hope that that program will assist in that process.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): I was able to take part in a very exciting event yesterday down on the banks of the Torrens near the Festival Theatre. It was called the Festival of Water and it involved a great many children. I was there at the invitation of Jan Fitzgerald, the co-ordinator of the program through the Ardtornish School and with the blessing of her chairperson and members of the committee. The Kids Congress for Catchment Care, the group putting on the Festival of Water, originated in the Ardtornish Primary School, which is situated in the electorate of Florey.

Since 1992 the school has developed, implemented and maintained an extensive range of high quality environmental programs as well as forming working links with farmers, other educational institutions, government and non-government agencies and corporate groups. The common denominator has been action for the environment. The success of their programs has been widely recognised with the school winning two national environment awards and a large number of state awards for its efforts. You, Mr Speaker, may recall that their Telstra quilt—the environmental quilt we had on display in the Old Chamber—created a great deal of comment amongst other members.

The birth of the Kids Congress was a natural development of the work undertaken by Ardtornish Primary School as part of the contributaries project, and so began the first real ripple of activity. The contributaries scheme, a joint program between the Ardtornish Primary School and the City of Tea Tree Gully, involves the redevelopment of a reserve situated across the road from the school. The main objectives of the project are to improve stormwater quality and to provide areas for passive recreation and environmental education by creating a habitat for native plants and animals.

Students are involved in the regular removal and classification of litter collected in a trash rack in the upper levels of the wetlands, monitoring levels of litter and aquatic plant growth and conducting water quality tests, including pH levels, salinity and turbidity, conducting surveys of plants and animals and the selection of plant species for revegetation, seed collecting, propagating and planting. Data collected by students over a period of three years is used to determine the

effectiveness of nutrient removal in two wetland ponds and therefore their viability for other sites.

The concept of the school community being involved in monitoring water quality of a local section of the waterways spread to 20 other schools in the council area. This subsequently led to the decision to invite schools along the catchment, namely, that of Dry Creek, to each adopt a section for study, water testing and general rehabilitation. So, Kids Congress for Catchment Care was born. The congress is managed by student and adult organising committees working together. Students volunteer to be representatives on the student committee, which allows representation that is as broad as possible across participating schools.

The adult organising committee has representatives from all levels from reception to year 12 in participating schools and from government agencies, catchment management boards, local councils, community agencies, members, parents and tertiary institutions. One of the main tasks of the adult committee is to seek sponsorship and provide support, ensuring the success of the events program. Funding is an essential element in the program's success and has been provided collectively so far by the agencies mentioned already and by many private businesses, there being about 25 sponsor organisations at present. I was happy to be a sponsor yesterday and involved in the presentation of some of the awards.

A typical year in the Kids Congress for Catchment Care program involves several activities. I mentioned the Festival of Water we had yesterday where we saw nearly 2 000 students at the river's edge. The theme was bringing the community back to the waterways. The event is a celebration of the schools' achievements and an opportunity for students to be creative and have fun in a range of competitions. Model boats were powered by either sail or solar power, art work stories and the children also had the opportunity to perform drama presentations for those present. Also things like the Great Plant Out is planned, when they will be planting trees on either Arbor Day or Planet Ark Day. The ripple effect of the congress sees a nationally run project and the minister made a very exciting announcement yesterday that the International Kids Congress will be held here in Adelaide in the year 2000.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I wish today to canvass a matter here that I thought I should not canvass politically, but for personal reasons I will. I wish to comment on the turmoil in the Labor Party. That is its business, but when it affects individuals of integrity and decency, particularly colleagues of mine, I will add my support to a friend. I speak about the member for Price, the Hon. Murray De Laine. Most of my government colleagues are a little dismayed that the Labor Party factional machine will try to retire him against his wishes. I know we are the government over here and that is the opposition over there. I also remind the House that friendships extend beyond our individual benches, indeed across the chamber. I judge Murray De Laine as a very capable and fair man with a strong sense of justice and a fair go. He is not only a good Whip but also a well regarded local member in his electorate of Price. He has many friends over here and I hope that includes me. I hope the Labor Party wakes up to itself. If it thinks it can dump a member like Murray De Laine in a factional deal it should think again.

Think back and consider what history tells us about such issues. Back in the mid-1970s the Labor Party tried a similar stunt. The local people of Port Pirie wanted their local mayor

Mr Ted Connelly to be the endorsed Labor candidate and member in the seat of Pirie. But as we know the machine new better and chose a factional person. We all know what happened. Even with the intervention of the then Premier Don Dunstan, Ted Connelly won the seat as an independent and the parliament was a hung parliament. They had to grovel to Ted Connelly—another very honourable member of this place—to come back and support Labor. He came into this House and he never sat on either side of this House because he sat in your chair, sir, a most unique situation for a person coming in from outside. He was Speaker and did a good job considering he had not had the honour of seeing the House operate at all until he sat in the chair.

Again Labor got it wrong. It used Mr Connelly only to see him defeated at the next election—another Labor embarrassment! I urge the Labor machine to have some compassion in the principle of fair play, allow Mr De Laine to continue as an effective, respected member of this place. I offer my bipartisan support to Mr De Laine and wish him well.

I also wish to make comment about the ongoing dilemma the Labor Party faces with the member for Ross Smith, the subsequent legal proceedings and the ongoing hard feelings. Far be it from me to tell the Labor Party how to suck eggs, but I am amazed that long-term politically experienced people have got it so wrong. I do not believe any of us should judge any of our colleagues on our personal lives. What we do in our personal lives should always be just that—private. One of the few unwritten rules of this place (and it is generally abided by) is to tackle the ball and not the man or the woman. The issue involving Mr Clarke has been well canvassed publicly. Mr Clarke has friends on this side of the House and there is respect for his abilities. What has happened is a private matter and I pass no judgment. If any decisions are to be made about that, it should be the people of his electorate, especially in a general election.

If the Labor Party was concerned that its position could have been in jeopardy, it knew what to do: run an Independent candidate in tandem. That is one of the oldest tricks in the book. Again, there are precedents on issues such as this but, for obvious reasons, I will use no names. However, it has occurred on both sides of this House. Parties in the past have sat in judgment on their parliamentary representatives on personal issues. In nearly every case the aggrieved member, after losing endorsement, has stood as an Independent and has won, often beating very high profile candidates. If in doubt, let the people at large decide.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VENNING: That should be so in the case of Ralph Clarke. It is between him and his electorate, and I feel that the Labor machine should butt out. I am a believer in the party-political system, but overriding that is the acknowledgment of the principle of the member and electorate relationship. In the end, the people will always have the final say, and what we have seen here is no credit at all for the current leadership of the Australian Labor Party.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): In the past few weeks, I have had the great pleasure of again visiting the city of Port Pirie—in fact, on several occasions. As opposition leader, I have regularly travelled to country South Australia, especially the upper Spencer Gulf. It was certainly good to get back to Pirie. While I was there, the local community raised with me two very important issues

that I want to bring to the attention of the House and to the government.

First, there is the issue of the old Risdon Park High School site. The government must urgently address the future of the Risdon Park site no longer being used as a school. Its facilities are simply standing there neglected. Local people in Pirie are worried that it is now simply being degraded by vandalism, and it has become a real problem for police. Meanwhile, good quality taxpayer-funded infrastructure is simply going to waste and, in Pirie, what was once the Risdon Park school has become a blighted site. We need urgent action by the government. It is an issue of genuine concern for local people. The Port Pirie *Recorder* has been very active in following this important issue and, indeed, it organised a petition on the matter, collecting no fewer than 1 300 signatures.

I believe that it is important for the government—perhaps through the Deputy Premier—to sit down with the local community and council and work through a series of options for the future use of the site. Certainly, we on this side of the House are happy to be part of that process and to work for a positive outcome for the people of Port Pirie. I know that the Hon. Ron Roberts in the Legislative Council, a resident of Port Pirie, has raised the idea of the site being redeveloped as a retirement precinct. I believe that that is a good idea and a great start, and it is one that I understand has received local support. I am also confident that there are many community groups with positive and creative ideas of how to use the facility in Port Pirie's interests and in the interests of local community groups.

I understand that there are rumours circulating that the government wants to bulldoze the buildings, and the latest story is that the government wants to sell off the site. I suppose my central question to the Premier and the Deputy Premier is: is that what local people want? Has the government listened to local views? The disposal of school land in other parts of the state, especially in suburban Adelaide, has been a real problem: communities have lost open space and green space as well as the facility. Here a community could lose infrastructure that could be practically used for the benefit of local people. So, let us not waste this opportunity. I certainly urge the government not to bulldoze the infrastructure and to listen to local people in Port Pirie about how the buildings and the site might be used in the future.

The other matter I want to raise is that of the Port Pirie Hospital and the impact that state government cuts are having on that excellent facility, which has a reputation for having a dedicated staff—doctors, nursing staff and support staff. While in Port Pirie I met with two expectant mothers, who have been told that the maternity ward of the hospital will be closed over the new year period for some weeks, due to budget restrictions, and that if they were to have their children at the hospital they would have to be then kept in a general ward. Of course, general wards in hospitals treat a range of people who are ill, who have been injured, who have had surgery or other treatment.

I think it needs to be recognised by the government that pregnancy and childbirth is not a disease, an illness or an injury. Keeping young mothers and their newborn children in a general ward could be upsetting for the mothers in terms of their privacy at this special time, and disturbing for other patients. It is certainly not a nurturing environment for new mothers. So, as we enter the year 2000 our health services, both in country and in city areas, are being cut, not improved. I know that the dedicated and committed members of the staff

at the hospital are also concerned about these developments: it happened last year.

Port Pirie is a major regional centre, and there is real concern that this action is to be taken at the Port Pirie Hospital. We know that the health budget has been cut by \$30 million and that country hospitals have been hit with a \$6 million share of the cut. Certainly, I have heard of the damage that that will do to the new Mount Gambier Hospital in terms of its services, and the same will be true in Port Pirie.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I wish to raise some general issues relating to the heroin problem and the drug issue in general. I note that a number of matters have been raised in question time regarding strategies to address the problem. If adequately funded, those strategies would make considerable headway into the tragic problem. The reality is, of course, that the ethics of drug abuse and treatment of addiction are very vexed. There are as many ethical opinions as there are addicts and as there are medical, spiritual, scientific and psychological professionals. No-one is wholly right and no-one is wholly wrong with respect to this issue. But let me simply say that it appears to me that, in order to treat a sick and dying heroin addict, we must first keep that person alive. Those who argue against some of the proposals put forward to solve the problem, particularly new approaches to treatment, need to consider the lives of victims as vigorously as the principles that might exist if the world were a perfect place. However, we all know that, because we are human beings, the world is not a perfect place.

It is quite apparent that the community at large is very concerned about crime, home invasions, drug-related crime and health. It is quite apparent also that the problem of heroin addiction is a juggernaut that threatens the very vitality and well being of our community. It is threatening to deliver a far more fearful burden upon us if we do nothing other than that which we are already doing. In the interests of the generation to come, we need to do more. It simply needs to stop. More addicts need to be in treatment. Instead of supporting their illicit addiction through house breakings, car thefts, prostitution, bag snatching and other crimes, these people should be on the road to rehabilitation. It is better for them and it is better for us all. We as a community have surely had enough. We are all victims of drug abuse, and we must all participate and contribute towards finding some answers.

After listening to debate in the House over the last 12 months regarding this issue of drugs and drug reform, I would like to make an observation. I think that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Human Services—and, indeed, all members of the House—are to be congratulated for the approach they have taken to address this terrible issue. I have been encouraged by the bipartisan way in which the issue of heroin abuse—and drug abuse in general—has been approached. It is quite apparent that all members of the House feel that we have a real opportunity to better our community by finding solutions. Although our opinions might differ on what those solutions might be, it is encouraging to see so many members actively engaged in the debate.

It is also interesting to reflect on some side issues, particularly the much discussed issue of MPs' travel. I note with interest that, particularly in respect of this debate on drug abuse, the debate would have been diminished had it not been for the opportunity for some MPs (and I am speaking principally of myself but also others in the House who I know have travelled in order to examine this issue) to travel and

benefit from the experiences of others overseas. We members of parliament get quite a bashing over travel, but on this problem of drug abuse here is a real living example of how valuable that travel is to broadening our views, broadening our vision and helping us to come up with new solutions to old problems, because we need to learn from others who have been down the same road that we must travel.

I also am encouraged by the fact that here is an issue on which all parties in the House can work together. I feel that the South Australian parliament has an opportunity to really make a stride forward and that we can feel confident that the actions we may be able to address and take in the coming months could really add to the world body of knowledge on this terrible dilemma.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake): All this talk of branch stacking has inspired me to see whether members opposite, who claim to be virgins in the area of branch stacking, were indulging in this activity. I obtained a letter, dated 27 August 1999, that the member for Unley, Mr Mark Brindal, has distributed to members of the Liberal Party. In the interests of security, I have blanked out the names of the people to whom he sent the letter. The letter, headed 'Mark Brindal, Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace', states:

I write with regard to your membership of the Liberal Party and I understand that you are currently a member of the Unley and Parkside branch [of the Liberal Party].

You may be aware that the Clarence Park branch has changed its name to Kings Park branch. I am now looking at consolidating the support base within this branch and to turn it into the most vibrant and active Liberal Party branch in South Australia.

That is quite an indictment on what it is currently, I suppose. It continues:

To do this effectively, I would ask that you transfer branches. Therefore, Kings Park is the branch that I ask you to transfer to, as it is the branch that I am a member of. Please note that there is no cost to effect this transfer. You may also wish to note that for your convenience the Kings Park branch holds meetings during the day as well as in the evening. . . Thank you for your ongoing support. I look forward to catching up with you soon.

It is obvious to me that a certain junior minister has lost the support of his own sub-branch.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. This House recognises people by their titles. There is no title of 'junior minister' in this chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I have raised that matter in months gone by.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The member for Unley, the Minister for Local Government (and this information is on the letter to his branch members), Minister for Employment, Minister for Youth, Minister Assisting for Environment and Heritage has lost the support of his sub-branch members. It seems to me that Mr David Pisoni has the support of local members. It looks as though the members of the Unley constituency will not have the opportunity to vote against the member for Unley, because David Pisoni will do their job for them.

I have also stumbled upon something else that the member for Unley has done. Earlier, it was quite surprising to hear the member for Unley attack Ms Jennifer Rankine about not attending a Labor Listens function—something that was not her own fault—when 'Brindal's Bungle' was reported in the *Advertiser* of 1 September 1999, as follows:

High school students were assembled and the sandwiches for afternoon tea were laid out.

The poor little kiddies were out there, waiting for the Minister for Youth to appear and give them a cheque for \$1 300. Where was the minister? He did not turn up. Do you know why? Because he was too busy branch stacking. He was out there trying to convince local members of his branch to transfer to his branch to consolidate his position—

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I rise on a further point of order, Mr Speaker. It is wrong to impute improper motives to a member. Improper motives have been imputed to me, and I take objection. As a matter of record, I was addressing children in Whyalla on the date in question.

Mr Koutsantonis: Oh, is that right?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: That is right.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The matter has been put on the record.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The member for Unley says that he was at a meeting in Whyalla. We will check that, because from what I understand he was not at a meeting in Whyalla. I could be wrong, and I stand corrected if I am.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: And apologise.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: And I will apologise. I haven't accused you of being in Whyalla, but we shall see. I would be very careful if I were the member for Unley about making remarks in this House. This is not a branch of the Liberal Party. The honourable member cannot get up and say whatever he likes, as he does when trying to convince members whose support he has lost. In this House members are required to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We heard earlier the member for Schubert, who is interjecting out of his place (I thought I would let you, Mr Speaker, know about that)—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That's right. I remember earlier that the Minister for Tourism tried to knock off the member for Unley from his preselection. Of course, had it not been for the gallant effort of Mr Dean Brown, the former Premier of South Australia, to save the member for Unley, he would not be here now. But, of course, how did the member for Unley repay the former Premier? How did he do it? He came up with a cunning plan to do him over, a cunning Boldrick-like plan from *Black Adder* to do him over, to knife him in the back. Just as the member for Finnis, the former Premier, saves him ever from doom, what does the member for Unley do? He knives him in the back. I think Mr David Pisoni of the Liberal Party will find vengeance for former Premier Dean Brown, because it is obvious from the minister's own letters, his own desperate pleas for help within his own branch, that he is finished.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): The honourable member seems to have worked himself up into a considerable lather about one or two matters. I am not sure whether or not it relates to the dramatic downturn in the number of his branch members, but I was interested in his comments because when reading with some interest the *Advertiser* of 14 October—

Mr Koutsantonis: It works both ways, doesn't it.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, it is particularly illuminating.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is interjecting out of his chair himself now.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, sir, and I am pleased for your protection, because I am easily put off and quite nervous when dealing with these sorts of matters. However, it was

brought to my attention in this ongoing saga in relation to branch stacking—

Mr Atkinson: So, memberships have gone down.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Not only have they gone down but also the member for Ross Smith has made some interesting comments. This is what the report states:

'They are no loss to the Labor Party.' Mr Clarke said the fact that sub-branches in Labor strongholds had only slightly more members than sub-branches in Liberal [Party]. . .

That was interesting. In Coober Pedy (and I want to talk a bit about the north of South Australia because it is an area that is well known to me)—

Mr Atkinson: Why don't you visit the place?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The honourable member obviously knows little about it. If he thinks that I live in Adelaide, he is really mistaken.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order. The honourable member has limited time.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Let me say to the honourable member that I spend more time—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

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

The Hon. G.M. GUNN:—in the bush of South Australia than he ever will. In relation to Coober Pedy, to Campbelltown and also to Spence—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have for the benefit of the honourable member very active Liberal Party branches, and I do know how to organise them. I always regard as one of the great joys of my political life attending annual general meetings. However, in relation to Coober Pedy, when the branch stacking took place, they got 68 members. Then the member for Giles had to apologise at the school council meeting for the conduct of the branch stackers. They are now down to 18. At Marree, obviously Reg Dodd ran around the Arabunna community and got up to 25: it is now down to three. In Port Augusta, they went to 73. The member for Spence must have got up there and they are now down to 26.

Mr Atkinson: We'll be back.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: We look forward to it. The member for MacKillop will be interested in this. Down at Millicent they did not have enough members; at Campbelltown they did not have enough members to have a quorum.

Mr Atkinson: He is looking for the preferences.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It is fairly obvious that the member for Ross Smith might be interested in preferences, too. I would think that probably the opposition Whip might also be interested in preferences, but we will talk about that at a later stage. I am interested to know when they are actually going to apologise to Mr Kingsley Smith, because he has made some interesting comments in this article in the *Advertiser*, and I think it is worth again bringing to the attention of the House that Mr Smith has been a victim. If any member of the Liberal Party even thought about signing up someone who did not know about it, I wonder what the member for Hart and the member for Elder would be saying. We are waiting with bated breath for this rather unfortunate chapter in the political history of South Australia to run its full course.

An honourable member: We'll be all right; we'll come back.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: We look forward to you coming back. Earlier today in question time I mentioned the great work done by Mr Les Nayda when he was running a program for juvenile offenders in the north of South Australia. I urge the appropriate minister to reinstate that program. They were working on the dog fence and repairing it, and it was far better to have them out doing something constructive than to have them incarcerated.

Time expired.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

In committee.

(Continued from 20 October. Page 198)

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Venning): I call on the Minister for Government Enterprises and Minister for Information Economy. The time allocated for the examination of this line is 30 minutes. Are there any questions?

Mr WRIGHT: On page 117 of the Auditor-General's Report, in respect of the South Australian Totalisator Agency Board, the auditor refers to an amount that 'included an abnormal expense of \$2.1 million representing interest previously recognised as income in 1998'. The minister has in another forum referred to the fact that he took Crown Solicitor advice in respect of that, and I accept that. But the TAB's advice to the racing industry for 1998-99 was to budget for the same moneys received in 1997-98.

What gave the minister the confidence to provide an assurance of this type to the racing industry when in the previous year the racing industry had received an abnormal item of \$2.1 million?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: First, the assurance was given by the TAB. I am interested that the shadow minister identify exactly what the racing industry was told, particularly given that there is some dispute within the racing industry as to what it was told about abnormal results from the year before. So, I am fascinated that the shadow minister acknowledges the abnormalities that were there. More importantly, the advice was provided to the racing industry by the TAB, as is expected.

What is absolutely clear (and has been alluded to by the shadow minister) is the fact that in the intervening time I had sought legal advice from the Crown Solicitor about the interpretation of the Racing Act, and the Crown Solicitor's Office advised me that TAB interest on the capital fund should form part of the capital fund and, therefore, is not available for distribution to the government or to the racing industry. In other words, this was not taking money away from the racing industry and giving it to the government; it was, from the Crown's Solicitor's perspective, money that should only be available to the capital fund.

That advice arrived on a certain date—I am not sure what it is, but I will be happy to tell the honourable member later—and when I became aware of the opinion I advised the TAB board accordingly. The simple fact of the matter is that, whilst the TAB board had been under a certain impression, the subsequent legal advice that I received meant that I had no option but to take the action that I did. The reason why I say that I had no option but to take the action that I did is that I understand the political game reasonably well, and one thing that I understand particularly well is that if I had received

legal advice from the Crown Solicitor that a board for which I had responsibility was, in the Crown Solicitor's opinion, breaking the law, and I did not take the appropriate action, I am absolutely sure that the member for Lee and probably most members of the opposition at some stage would have quizzed me about this.

Indeed, I can even hear the calls for privileges committees and all sorts of things because I was disregarding the law of the state. The simple fact is that the legal opinion, upon which governments rely—and Labor governments have relied on the Crown Solicitor's opinion when they have been in government—was that the money could not be distributed; it had to be part of the capital fund as it was interest that had been gleaned on the capital fund. That decision became known to me after the advice had been provided, but I still maintain that, in following what the Crown Solicitor says is in his opinion the letter of the law, I have done nothing but what the parliament would expect a minister to do; in other words, to ensure that the legislation as enacted is upheld.

Mr WRIGHT: I have not disputed that legal advice, and that is why I asked the question very specifically. My question was more about the confidence that the minister may have had in respect of the advice the racing industry was given to budget in 1998-99 for the same amount of money they received in 1997-98. In respect of that issue, what discussions and negotiations has the minister had with the racing industry in regard to its budgets, given the effective loss of \$2.1 million from the 1997-98 financial year?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Before moving onto that question, I would like to add that there is no doubt but that governments are required to take everything into account in making decisions. Accordingly, any advice which a statutory corporation might provide to any body—in this case such as the TAB provided to the racing industry—is obviously provided on the best advice at the time—and that was done. I do not believe that the honourable member is actually suggesting that the TAB board did anything other than that. If he is, maybe he can be clear. But I do not think he is: I think he is asking, 'What level of confidence did the board have in advising the racing industry of this?' It had the confidence that to the best of its knowledge, using all its predictions under the present circumstances, this would be the distribution. The fact that the circumstances changed, as I have identified, I think everyone would acknowledge is a change of circumstance but a legitimate change.

In relation to the discussions I have had with the racing industry, Minister Evans and I had one particular discussion with representatives of the racing industry regarding future ownership of the TAB, the general state of health of the racing industry and so on. Factually, I know that Minister Evans has had a number of discussions with the racing industry. Given that he is Minister for Racing, that is appropriate. As well as those discussions which the Minister for Racing had with the racing industry, I know that the TAB has had written communication with the racing industry advising that its distribution in 1999-2000 excluding extraordinary items (which is a standard way of doing things) would be of a certain figure and that has been discussed with the racing industry.

May I add, following further advice, that in addition to being as open and as transparent as we can be, or as the TAB can be with the racing industry in the present circumstances, the racing industry was advised that the annual distribution would be X but that the timing of those distributions in relation to quarters may not be exactly the same. We are

providing as much information as we can recognising, of course, that there is no fixed income for the TAB. The TAB is a game of chance, as I am sure the honourable member knows—and, indeed, the honourable member nods in acknowledgment of that. The advice to the racing industry can only be on the best advice possible, but by providing those sorts of levels of assurances regarding distribution times and so on the TAB in my view is clearly making an effort to provide as much information as it can.

Mr WRIGHT: The Opposition has been advised that expenditure on consultancies during the scoping study of the TAB is in the vicinity of \$5 million. Can the minister provide information as to the accuracy or inaccuracy of that? If that figure is not correct, how much money has been spent during the scoping process of the TAB in the lead up to the sale, perhaps, of the TAB? How much has been spent on consultancies?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In the first instance, the individual contracts, of course, are commercially sensitive and the honourable member would know that. However, the government would have absolutely no hesitation, if the decision were taken to sell and it were to be sold, in identifying the total cost as a percentage of the final figure because that is really the only way to look at these things. Figures which are a lot of money in gaining a large quantum of revenue or income for the taxpayer clearly are well spent; if that percentage is too high, that is another matter altogether. But it is a matter of what the taxpayer gets for such expenditure and, as I said, as a percentage of what we believe the price might be if a sale were to take place it would be illuminative for everyone—and it is not from preliminary figures that I know in any way out of the ballpark of the sort of figures that consultants cost for these sorts of exercises.

Ms HURLEY: How did SA Water manage to spend \$6.4 million on consultancies last year? I gather from the minister's previous answer that we are lucky to know the amount.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: What page is that on?

Ms HURLEY: I do not have a specific page number for that question, so we can go onto another question if the minister is not aware of the figures.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am unaware of the reference. If I can have the reference, I am happy to answer the question.

Ms HURLEY: I will ask my next question then. On page 138 the Auditor-General has said:

There remains scope for improvement in export performance. Can you explain this comment?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In essence, the point that the deputy leader makes is that there is a suggestion that the export performance can be improved. The very important thing is that this must not be read out of context. The Auditor-General's Report states:

The triennial evaluation reports for United Water and Riverland Water concluded that the South Australian water industry is growing significantly and that the growth would be unlikely to have occurred without the Adelaide contract and the Riverland contract.

The Auditor-General's Report then goes on to state:

Notwithstanding that observation, the reports acknowledge that there remains scope for improvement in export performance.

In other words, this is not a finding of the Auditor-General: the Auditor-General is not saying that the performance was not good enough. It is a fact that the actual triennial reports—

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: No, the triennial evaluation reports identify that the export value which has been brought to South Australia through the contracts has been greatly exceeded.

Ms HURLEY: Where does it say that?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: It has been greatly exceeded.

Mr Foley: The contract is a crock. Don't tie yourself. It's Olsen's contract.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The simple facts belie the repeated attempts of the opposition to pour scorn on what is a great success story. Under the United Water contract the target of \$68.4 million was not only achieved but exceeded by the fact that that contract brought in \$103.5 million. The Riverland contract, which had a target of \$18.6 million, achieved \$18.9 million. Those figures are not United Water's figures, Riverland Water's figures, or SA Water's figures, they are a triennial review that has been agreed by independent arbiters who are indeed some members of the largest accounting firms in the world. That means that the people who are on the ground exceeding the targets of the exports have said, 'We have done better than we were required, but we understand that, if we continue to make the effort, if we continue to go the extra mile, we might be able to do better.'

For the opposition to claim in any way that this is some failure of the contract that the Auditor-General has winkled out by going through the reports and the figures in a detailed manner, is completely fallacious. What has happened is that the contracts have been a stunning success, whether or not the opposition admits it. The member for Hanson laughs. The member for Hanson is the shadow spokesperson for workplace relations. I wonder whether she would like to come with me—and I extend an invitation to her to come with me—to the next meeting of the Water Industry Alliance that I attend, because I attended one a short time ago as last evening in the dinner break. That is a group of people who are absolutely focused on export, who are buzzing with the excitement in their industry and who regularly are employing more people. Why are they employing more people? They are doing so because the contracts are succeeding and there is about a \$40 million excess from what the expectation was. I would extend an invitation—

Mr Wright interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The member has accepted; that is fantastic. I would like her to come along and explain to the Water Industry Alliance how the contracts are not working. Let her explain—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I look forward to her attendance at a Water Industry Alliance meeting shortly where she can explain why she and her party continually denigrate the success of the water industry contracts. As a final example of that, the member for Hart interjected, 'Has the Pica factory yet started?' The member for Hart knows absolutely categorically that it has.

Mr Foley: No, I don't, that is why I asked the question.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The member for Hart says he does not. For a man who is grooming himself (and I mean that literally) to be the next Leader of the Opposition—and he had better hurry because the member for Kaurna is right behind him—that is an extraordinary admission, because with the Pica factory—

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am answering the questions that have been asked of me. The member for Hart

full well knows that on at least two occasions previously he has asked me about the Pica factory, and on one occasion I was unable to give him the assurance that it had opened because it had not. The next time I delighted in telling him across the chamber that it had in fact opened, yet here we are, 12 months later, with the member for Hart doing his darnedest to pull down the contract. He knows the Pica factory has opened, so why does he continue with these frivolous, incorrect and outrageous claims?

The reason is because the opposition knows that this contract is working. If it does not, it is not listening when it goes out into the water industry. It knows it is working. The opposition does not like admitting it, so it continually brings up the old, incorrect, wrong shibboleth. The member for Hart's interjection is a perfect example of that. Let me assure the member for Hart that it has opened; let me assure the member for Hanson that I look forward to taking her to the next meeting of the Water Industry Alliance; and let me assure the deputy leader that the contracts are not only working but they are also doing better than expected.

Ms HURLEY: I refer to the consultancy, page 154, note 24.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Yes, I have now found this independently, may I say. The corporation used consultants on a wide range of tasks, as members would expect such a corporation to do in order to ensure that the services which they are providing and the advice they are giving the government and the opportunities for the best water services in South Australia are at the cutting edge. They used consultants for tasks including engineering consultants, outsourcing consultants, financial consultants and so on. The figures that are of most interest are as follows: the operations and services cost for 1998-99 was \$178.5 million; and the capital expenditure for the year was \$92 million. That gives a total of \$270 million.

This means that the consultants, who were giving advice on these matters, received 2.4 per cent of all operation services and capital expenditure programs for the corporation. As I said in answer to a previous question, that is the way one ought to look at these consultancy fees. Obviously, a figure of \$6.4 million is a large amount of money taken in isolation but, if one looks at the fact that it was consultancies dealing with a \$270 million quantum of advice that was being sought by SA Water and one realises that it is indeed only 2.4 per cent of all operation services and capital expenditure, it puts it into perspective, and that is a reasonable percentage to ensure that SA Water is absolutely up to the international mark which the water industry is now exhibiting in the provision of its services to South Australian constituents.

Ms HURLEY: I turn to page A.2-75 which deals with the South Australian Ports Corporation. The Auditor-General says:

Included in this stage is preparation of a number of legislative measures to facilitate the sale and associated regulatory and access regimes to apply once the sale is concluded.

My recollection is that on the web site it states that no legislation is required except to set up the regulatory and access regimes. Will the minister clarify that matter?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: As part of the PortsCorp sale, one of the issues which is most concerning the government is to ensure that the appropriate access regimes are identified in a legislative fashion. May I take the opportunity to identify to anyone who might read *Hansard*, or indeed to the opposition, that an access regime is a legislated form of law in South Australia: it is not just something which one

would put into one of the contracts that one might write with any potential purchaser of PortsCorp because that is a misapprehension that I know, unfortunately, some people have at the moment.

So, there is legislation related to the access regimes which will ensure that, if and when PortsCorp is sold, there is no opportunity for present or future operators to have a monopoly which, obviously, would then create monopolistic prices that would be to the disadvantage of South Australian exporters and users of the ports. The government will not see that occur; hence the legislative process which is in train.

In concluding my answer, may I congratulate and acknowledge the fact that the deputy leader has been to our web site. I thank her for that because a number of parliamentarians might not have made that effort. It is good to see the government's efforts in the information economy being acknowledged by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms HURLEY: In that case, I refer to page 103 where the Auditor-General notes that the intention to proceed in principle with the sale was made in April 1999, and the government has indicated that the sale process is expected to take approximately 12 months. Is this still on target?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The government believes that the legislative program with our sittings factually may mean that that is marginally delayed—marginally only. Our process, which we have in train, is that a number of discussions are occurring as we speak around South Australia with a number of parties who may have an interest in the sale as part of the sale preparation. The plans of the government would be to continue the process of listening to the input from South Australians and others as the sale preparation proceeds, and at the same time in parallel to continue with the legislative framework and to make a point in the early stages of the first sitting next year—which I believe is April—to introduce the legislation immediately and to have the processes ready then. That means there might be a slight delay but to all intents and purposes it is in train with the time frame we were setting.

Ms HURLEY: I turn to page 12 and the management of the EDS payments and receipts. The auditor states:

Audit review identified that there are no formal administrative procedures documenting the checking processes that are to be followed with respect to the EDS billing and recovery processes.

He goes on to state that the department acknowledges the complexity of this process and the lack of formal procedures and advised that it intends to perform an independent review of the process. Has that review been started, and where is it?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In identifying that, my advice is that because of the fact that the review is in train the matter is well in hand. In identifying that, in the first instance I would also inform the committee that this is a matter for the Minister for Administrative Services, Hon. Mr Lawson, in another place. I will pass that question on to him.

Ms HURLEY: I suspect that that also applies to my next question. I refer to A.3.102, which talks about the EDS building and would ask the minister: what proportion of the building is still untenanted; what proportion is tenanted but at sublease rates lower than those which the government is required to pay under the head lease; and how much did the government lose on the head lease during 1998-99 and how much does it expect to lose in 1999-2000?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The deputy leader is correct: it is a matter for another minister, and I shall pass on the question. As the member for Adelaide and hence possibly a more frequent user of that part of North Terrace than the

deputy leader, I would say that the building itself has led to a regrowth of that area of North Terrace, exemplified by the fact that other hotels and apartments and so on are being put up in that area. With the decision to build the convention centre, I believe that over the next few years the western end of North Terrace between King William Street and Morphet Street bridge will become a really important centre for business, and my view is that the tenants in the buildings in those areas will be patting themselves on the back later. I also acknowledge that interest is being expressed in those buildings all the time.

Ms HURLEY: On page 9 under 'tendering and contracting' the report speaks about Supply SA being responsible for tendering procedures and management of contracts. The pre-qualification system was implemented in March 1998. In March 1999 there was a requirement for a number of contractors to reregister. I believe that a number of contractors have found this process difficult and that DAIS has delayed the requirement for contractors to reregister until such time as the issues can be satisfactorily resolved. The issues include the inability of many contractors to meet year two requirements in quality assurance, the appropriateness of the quality assurance detailed requirements and the inability of many contractors to meet the financial capacity requirements in the second year, as well as the suspicion that South Australia might be falling further behind other states and territories in its benchmarks.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I shall pass the question to minister Lawson, who has responsibility for this area.

Time expired.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. The time allocated for the examination of this line is 30 minutes.

Mr CONLON: At the bottom of page 608 the report states:

In the previous report comment was made on the findings of an audit review of compensation payments made to firearms dealers..

It states at the end that a further review was performed, with audit advising the department that its findings were consistent with those reported in previous years. Does that mean there is still disagreement between the police on the one hand and the auditor on the other? If so, why; and have you done anything about it, because I asked you a question about it last year?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Over this past year we have been working on improvements to finetuning all the issues around the firearms buy-back scheme, including compensation to firearms dealers and also some issues outside the firearms buy-back scheme that have to do with licensing and registration. I understand that the department is doing everything it can to tie up these loose ends, and I will undertake to bring a detailed briefing on this issue back to the honourable member as soon as possible.

Mr CONLON: Do I understand this to mean that the commonwealth and the department still disagree with the audit finding? How will the dispute be resolved if they do disagree with each other?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I will put the whole statement on the record. The report states:

In the previous report comment was made on the findings of an audit review of compensation payments to firearms dealers for compliance with commonwealth government approved guidelines. The department's response, which was supported by the commonwealth government, indicated that it did not concur with the audit findings. A further review of compensation payments was performed

during 1998-99 with audit advising the department that its findings were consistent with those reported in the previous year.

Clearly the commonwealth and the department disagree with the findings of the audit report. It is a matter that we must resolve, and I will have to find a way forward on that matter as soon as possible.

Mr CONLON: Near the bottom of page 609 in dealing with the Police Department, the Auditor-General identifies contributions from the Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts for traffic policing services increasing by \$7 million. What is the total payment from the Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts, and how is it spent by the police?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: There is a range of contributions specifically from the transport department (not from urban planning and the arts) for traffic policing services. Within that, the department also directly contributes some money to assist with programs such as RBT through the Motor Accident Commission. I do not have the specific break-up of that figure here with me at the moment, but I will make sure that that is provided to the honourable member. It should come back fairly quickly, because it will not be very hard to find the break-down.

Mr CONLON: If I understand it correctly, most of this funding is spent on using police on overtime to perform traffic duties. I have raised before the issue in estimates as to whether or not police engaged in these duties are free if there is an emergency to respond to other calls. I was advised that it is not their first duty but that they would be available to answer emergency calls. It is my understanding that that is not the case, that police once engaged in these sorts of duties funded by the Department of Transport will not be allowed to perform any other duties and will not respond to any other calls. I want to know if that is the case. If it is, is it purely on overtime? Should it be that way—I do not think it should be.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I concur with the honourable member on the issue from the viewpoint that if police are on overtime and are on special duties, primarily they should be focused on special duties. Having said that, the honourable member and I probably agree, and this is an issue I will clarify further with the commissioner. From what I have been briefed on by the department, if an significant issue comes up and the general police in that area need back-up support, they would by radio link be able to call those officers to assist. If it is not a significant issue, they always have sufficient police within the general area to do the job.

To give an example of how I believe it should work (and as the honourable member and I know we cannot direct operationally how they manage those resources, and I am not suggesting that for one moment), officers were recently called to perform some specific duties. As other circumstances arose in the local service area of Adelaide, traffic police and CIB personnel were called to back them up. That is a sensible way of utilising resources, and I cannot see why, if there is an urgent need, the same utilisation of resources should not occur. I think that the honourable member and I agree on that and, whilst we are not in a position to direct operational issues, I will further take up the matter with the commissioner.

Mr CONLON: Perhaps the minister can give an answer on the specific circumstances raised with me. I raised the matter before and no answer was given. I was advised by a police motor bike traffic officer that when staffing an RBT, I assume on overtime funded by the Department of Transport,

he recognised the driver of the vehicle pulled over as a person who was a regular offender in the area of illegal use of motor vehicles. He says that upon approaching the man he hunched over the steering column in what appeared to be an attempt to hide the steering column from the view of the police officer, indicating that the car was probably hot wired. Upon the police officer leaning into the car, the person concerned drove away in an attempt to flee. He was followed by the officer on his motor bike, who chased him to a nearby golf course, where he found the car abandoned. Upon calling back he was instructed that no-one would be released from the RBT to pursue the offender and that he himself should return.

I find that unsatisfactory. I understand their primary duty, but I do not think that those officers should be distracted from one of their core duties of locking up the bad guys. Is that a satisfactory situation for the minister? I should like to know why it happened. I know that we cannot direct operational duties, but the minister is entitled to tell the Police Force what are its core duties.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: It is an interesting afternoon, because the honourable member and I are agreeing on a number of matters. It is nice for the honourable member and me to agree on some points. I will get my staff to seek a detailed briefing note on that specific incident. I ask the honourable member to help me by giving me the date of that incident. As police minister, I believe it would be most unsatisfactory if an officer in his line of duty detected criminal activity with a certain individual who has come into an RBT station and is then told that there will be no back-up and to return and not pursue that offender. That is absolutely unsatisfactory. I understand that a sworn police officer is required, in any instance where they can see an offence or potential offence taking place, to investigate it as part of their duties. For them to be called back would be unsatisfactory. I would have thought that the officer in question did a very good job in possibly detecting a stolen vehicle and offender. It is not satisfactory to me. If the situation is as outlined, it will have to be redressed. I will seek a full briefing if the honourable member can give me the date.

Mr CONLON: I am not sure I can do that as I am unsure that the officer concerned wants to be identified. It is not always easy being brave in this world. I assure the minister that I was told that story by a serving officer. There are a number of comments on the audit findings on the police department in terms of salaries and wages, accounts payable, non-current assets and the firearms control system. While none are identified as being terribly serious, it seems that a fair few points have been picked up through auditing. Is the minister satisfied that proper measures are being put in place to improve controls in the areas identified and, if so, what are they?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: On the last point I can understand that the officer concerned does not want to be identified. I will seek a detailed briefing on the general principles and will pass it on to the honourable member when I have looked at it. It always helps if there is a date as you then have a reference point. Sometimes I see that there is a general policy and it is right, but a particular officer in charge in connection with that incident does not necessarily adhere to that policy, and that is why I asked for that information.

In looking at the Auditor-General's Report, by and large most people would concur that all of my agencies got a pretty good report card with the Auditor-General. Clearly, with respect to the CFS, some issues were raised in a qualified report. The honourable member is correct in identifying

instances where established controls had not applied throughout the entire financial system operating with SAPOL. The instance related to procedures operating in the salaries and wages and the accounts payable systems. The audit did not identify any material errors there. It was really internal control procedures that were identified as being inadequate. I have followed that up with the department, and it has indicated that appropriate action will be taken to address the matters raised by the Auditor-General over that issue.

Mr CONLON: I note that one of the significant features identified on page 606 was that expiation fees collected amounted to \$42.2 million, down from \$45.5 million in the previous year. I found this surprising, bearing in mind the attention given to traffic and the size of speeding fines these days. Was that attributed to a greater activity by fixed cameras operated by non-police personnel or is there some other explanation, as it is hard to understand?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: It is interesting to see that expiation fees were down. Primarily it concerns the fact that in looking at statistics what we have been doing with respect to getting the message across about speeding motorists is working at last. I will not be complacent on this for one moment. One of the problems that concerns me as police minister is that, whilst I understand that there has been around a 5 per cent reduction in recent times in the number of people caught breaking the speed limit, we have a problem with a significant number of people being caught exceeding the speed limit at a high rate, that is, 30-plus kilometres an hour over the speed limit.

So, what it says is that the advertising that we have been putting forward in recent times (which includes such things as the impact brochure that we developed in the past year), together with good policing work with respect to laser guns or speed cameras is working. Whilst both SAPOL and I are sometimes criticised (and I must say, again, operationally police make a decision with respect to where they put these pieces of speed detection equipment), I think that the very visual presence of police, whether involving speed cameras, laser guns or mobile radar on the badged police cars, is starting to get the message across. It will be a little while before we know for sure.

I would also like to say that we have only had the new high-tech speed cameras in place a short time, and they have not been operating as often as they probably will in the future, once they have ensured that these cameras are absolutely right when it comes to operations and the like. They wanted to go through all the processes of checking that everything was correct. It may well be that, when the new speed cameras are working at full capacity, that also might have a bearing. But I would like to think that we are finally getting the message through and that people are slowing down.

Mr CONLON: Do the expiation fees set out here include expiation fees for fines imposed through cameras not operated by the police department but operated by what are now, I assume, security people? Does this sum include those speed cameras, or are they dealt with elsewhere?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: My understanding is that it includes the speed cameras. Whilst the PSSD officers sit there with the speed cameras, the PSSD is controlled and managed by the South Australian police department and has dedicated South Australia Police officers who make all the operational decisions around that. So, my understanding is that that does include the speed cameras.

Mr CONLON: I understand that the positive aspect of it might be that people are speeding less. I would be interested

in a break-down of fees collected between the cameras and those operated by the police, because it is my view that, while police officers throughout the state generally are required to spend an hour a shift on traffic duties, some of them are struggling to carry out all their duties at the moment. So, I would be keen to know whether that is a factor.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I would be happy to organise a break-down for the member as soon as possible. I certainly appreciate the efforts that police officers put into trying, I understand, to do an hour or so on a shift of speed detection operations. As a result of the many country trips that I have undertaken I know that this occurs, even in areas such as Poochera and Minnipa on the West Coast. I once came across a general police officer who was out there on the road with his laser gun putting in some time there amongst all his other duties, because he is obviously concerned about fatality rates in his area. So, they do a good job of putting general policing in with laser gun work and the like in speed detection. I will obtain that figure and bring it to the member.

Mr CONLON: Again dealing with the police department, on page 617 I was interested to read some of the outputs identified in crime management, including targeting crimes against person and property, drug-related crimes and other criminal activity. I am concerned that these sorts of outputs are seriously being able to be addressed at present. I am particularly interested in major crime, and the unfortunate spate of murders we have seen in recent times, with the need to establish a task force in regard to the Snowtown murders. I am advised that there are only six detectives in major crime working on the recent bikie related multiple homicide. I believe that, in the past, we would have seen twice that number working on a homicide of that size. The minister may need to bring this information back. Can he confirm the number of police working on what I will call the bikie homicides for the sake of efficiency, and the staffing levels in major crime at present? I am concerned that they are down on their ordinary requirement, let alone what they may well need at the moment.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I would like to put on the public record my appreciation for the excellent commitment that has been made under extremely difficult circumstances in the past six months or so relating to major crime, particularly with respect to a series of murders that have been most unfortunate for South Australia. As members would know, generally South Australia has had a pretty good record when it comes to a very small number of murders per capita. This year, obviously, when the figures come through they will not look very good at all. I think it shows that, during one of the most extremely difficult times, the resources that have been made available for the Snowtown murders, which has involved a huge workload and demand on resources for SAPOL, and the outlawed motorcycle gangs murders recently in Adelaide, and the fatalities there, coupled with some other murders around South Australia, have been adequate and very good.

I have met with the senior officers involved in major crime, particularly with respect to Snowtown, and I received a full briefing on how the system works. They have their core group of officers who are working specifically on these crimes and, if they need to bring in other officers or expertise, they do so. So, to look at raw figures where you might say there was X number working on the outlawed motorcycle gangs murders investigation, or whatever, might be misleading, because the core group may be specifically dedicated to that. However, I understand that they bring in other expertise

and back-up police resources as needed. As the member would know, a great deal of investigation has to take place and, once offenders are able to be charged, a huge amount of resources go into the prosecution case. I will look at the figures and get back to the member. However, I want to reinforce that, when one looks at probably one of the biggest draws on police resources in that area in recent times, I think that the police and the department have handled it very well.

Mr CONLON: Page 619, paragraph 20, identifies SAPOL payments to consultants. Frankly, I do not understand how it is written. They incurred expenses of \$206 000, and in brackets there is the figure \$301 000. I am not quite clear what either of the figures mean. Can the minister advise what consultants were engaged by SAPOL and what they were paid for?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I am happy to bring back a detailed response on that aspect. Having said that, I think it is important again to put on the public record that SAPOL, particularly during 1998-99, has undergone one of the most extensive restructuring and strategic management directions through Focus 21 and the local service area models associated with the new act. Clearly, at a time such as this, in particular, one would expect that, whilst the resources have primarily come from the police department, with respect to issues such as these (and some of the others within the department), there would have to be some consultancy source from outside the department.

I understand that, thanks to the good work of police again, the whole new strategic management and direction of SAPOL through Focus 21 is coming in a couple of years ahead of some other states in Australia that started a similar process, and they have been primarily driven internally without the enormous amount of outsourcing that I understand other states might have used.

Mr CONLON: I look forward to finding out what the consultants were paid. I hope that they, too, were not attracting Olympic soccer to South Australia. I return to the St John Ambulance Service, 'Audit findings and comments', page 623. I note that in the accounts payable section the comment is:

... there was a need to ensure that the issuing of credit cards and the documentation to support credit card transactions complied with the relevant Treasurer's instruction.

I am keenly aware of the need for adequate controls. Has the minister addressed his mind to this finding, and what is being done about it?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: We are in the process of considering that issue and that comment. I will continue to work on that until I get a full report. I am not sure whether that suggests there is anything that is a major concern, but clearly some issues need to be addressed to make sure that the handling of those credit cards and, indeed, the credit card transactions and receipts do comply with our Treasurer's instruction.

Mr CONLON: I note in the reports of the various departments for which the minister has responsibility that the metropolitan fire service has certainly performed better in the independent audits than any single one of the other units. First, I put on the record my congratulations to the metropolitan fire service. I wonder whether, in the light of this and in the establishment of a new, overarching administrative unit for the emergency services organisation, the people from the fire service will be given the responsibility for these sorts of administrative items given their proven track record?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: A good question. I also put on the public record my appreciation and pride in what I have seen more every day since I have been minister by way of the professionalism and performance of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service. I congratulate everybody who has been involved in the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service. As a result of the initiatives of the Emergency Services Administration Unit (ESAU), clearly we will be able to capitalise on those very good management procedures and very good public servants who have been involved in the administrative side of the MFS functions and, therefore, the good report from the Auditor-General. Also, there are some other agencies, CFS and SES, that have had some specialists who have done very well. They will be in a position to support the MFS.

We will see a full focus, strategically, across the agencies, capitalising on the best practice of each agency to improve all of them, not the least of which will be those already doing well in that area. But there are some areas where I have not been satisfied with the performance of sectors of my agencies, and I believe that ESAU will be able to support them to improve.

Mr CONLON: I asked that because I note that in the Country Fire Service board section, while again not identifying anything that would cause us to lose too much sleep, it does identify some shortcomings in terms of internal control procedures, financial controls and the valuation of assets. Do I understand that the commencement of ESAU, as the minister calls it, will see the same standards being applied to financial controls within the CFS as apply to the MFS as apply across emergency services? I have never quite understood how, with the minister saying that everyone will keep their jobs, that will be achieved. Someone will be in charge of someone. How will it work?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Everybody will keep their jobs. I must say that the CFS has done an extremely good job overall in terms of how much it has grown and developed as a professional organisation, particularly since 1983. But, clearly—possibly because of a lack of resources—in the past the CFS has had some qualification in its report with the 1998-99 audit. Essentially, I suggest that that problem was a resource issue. We are now able to put the management of the values and the assets with respect to the CFS straight into ESAU. We will be able to utilise those best management practices of other agencies to get that addressed. I know at the moment that that particular section is working hard on those issues.

We will not lose any jobs, but through stopping some of the duplication of services within the agencies (but not necessarily straight away, because there has been a lot of work developing common models across the services for administration) I expect there to be some re-positioning of those jobs to support further some of those inadequate areas in terms of administration support, occupational health, safety and training, human resources management, risk management, strategic development and the like. So, in time it will be a re-positioning of some of those people to focus on specific sections within the Emergency Services Administration Unit.

Time expired.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee has completed its examination of ministers on matters contained in the reports referred to it.

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION (AUXILIARY APPOINTMENTS AND POWERS) (DEFINITION OF JUDICIAL OFFICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MAGISTRATES COURT APPEALS) BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IMPLEMENTATION) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 29 September. Page 37.)

Mr CONLON (Elder): The bill before the House, as I am repeatedly assured by the minister, is merely that section of the previous bill which lapsed at the end of the last session that dealt with the implementation of two bills previously passed after some lengthy debate. I understand that it repeats—and particularly in the case of this bill, it being only half of the previous bill—those uncontentious, formerly agreed transitional matters. I have the minister's assurance on that. I have checked the bill, and I understand that to be the case also. I would therefore be happy for this bill to proceed without further debate and without, at least from my perspective, the requirement for any committee stage.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government): I thank the shadow minister for his consideration and discussion with me on this matter. I am very pleased to note that, as is often the case in this House, there is a degree of consensus among political parties when a measure is sensible, succinct and should not give rise to debate. That is all I need to say, except to assure the member for Elder that, as speedy as the passage of this bill is, I am sure that there are other members of this House, when we come to the second case, who will delay him and me interminably while they debate their own particular issues. I think that the member for Elder will agree that we have saved the House a lot of time by quarantining that debate to another time. I thank the member for Elder and all other members of the House for their speedy consideration and passage of this bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Ms BREUER (Giles): On the weekend I raised a number of eyebrows with an article that appeared in the paper reporting my comments on the sudden interest in regional South Australia since the Victorian election. As usual it was fairly selective reporting but, basically, I stand by what was reported. It was not aimed at my own party but at the whole of this parliament, particularly at the government and government members who have country electorates. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition bore the brunt of my comments in that article. That was undeserved, as Mike Rann

has been one of the most visible MPs in country electorates during this and the previous parliament.

Despite the fact that Mike Rann lives in Adelaide, he has come out to rural South Australia and talked to people in rural electorates for many years. He is certainly appreciated by country people for his visible presence and his efforts at working in those electorates, finding out the issues for country people. I personally appreciated the help he gave to my campaign, and he still comes out to my electorate on a regular basis. This is what a real member of parliament is about: not a politician but a member of parliament, someone actually prepared to go out and talk to people, to listen and actually to hear their concerns and act on them.

So many members in this building listen but do not hear what is being said. I am interested to see whether they have heard what has been said in the Victorian election and what was said to Kennett, and whether regional Australia will have a say in the future direction of our country. When I spoke to the *Advertiser* I was angry and upset because the reality of the BHP situation and the potential sale of BHP had really hit home for me. My family is about to be broken up.

My brother and I were born in Whyalla. Our parents came to Whyalla in the late 1930s and lived there all their married lives; my mother still lives there. My brother's wife was born in Whyalla and her family live there. I have two children and my brother has two children, my two nephews (Bradley and Dale). They are very much loved and like my own children to me: we are a very close family. But the sale of BHP will mean that Gary and Sue and their children will have to move away because his job with BHP will no longer be available, so our families will be split. I mention this because this is typical of what will happen to many families in Whyalla. They will be split and families will have to move away from our community.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: If there is a new buyer?

Ms BREUER: Not necessarily; a lot of the jobs will disappear. This is endemic in so many communities in rural and regional South Australia. This is the human side of what is happening in these communities everywhere. Today I spoke to members of the Ceduna council, who pointed out that their population has dropped by over 1 000 people in recent years. Port Augusta has suffered a population loss, as have so many other communities in the Stuart electorate. Murray Bridge has shrunk; Port Pirie has shrunk; Woomera has shrunk; and small farming communities throughout the state have shrunk. The biggest problem affecting all these communities in South Australia is this loss of their population.

Why are the Liberal Party country members not speaking out about this? Why are they not up there fighting about this and shouting for their communities? Why is the member for Stuart—when he is not fast asleep in this place in question time—not up having a go at his party? Why does he not say something about this instead of wasting our time telling us on this side of the House what we should be doing with our branches and with the way our party operates? We will sort it out, thank you very much: we do not need the member for Stuart's advice on this. He should do what he was elected to do and fight for his community.

What about the other country members opposite? Why do they not show some guts and get up and say something, as I did? At least I said it. They are gagged and bound and too frightened to speak out about their communities. This government only pays lip service: what does it really do about

regional South Australia? How many country government services have been pulled out? How many banks have closed in regional South Australia? How many schools have closed? How much industry and business has really landed up in country South Australia—stuff all! What has happened has just been lip service.

I was appalled by comments in an article in the *Australian* of Thursday 14 October, a week after Whyalla was told that BHP would sell long products. This article stated:

If there was any lingering doubt it was now *their* BHP, one of the two Americans recasting the Big Australian in their own image put an end to it yesterday. With abundant self confidence, new chief financial officer Chip Goodyear pulled down the shutters on the 'old BHP', which he dismissed as an 'enormous destroyer of shareholder value'. . . Mr Goodyear was brutal about the failings of BHP's previous, Australian, management. . . (BHP) has destroyed billions of dollars in shareholder value in decisions made over the past several years. The good news, Mr Goodyear said, was that such dark days were behind BHP. . . He re-emphasised that BHP was being transformed into a global minerals company that had a steel and oil component.

Further, Mr Goodyear said that BHP was on track to reduce its work force to about 32 000, about half the level of just two years ago. What about people? What about people's lives? What about the loyalty to the company that Whyalla and its workers have shown BHP for nearly 100 years? We do not count: only shareholder profits do. I know this is emotional, but that is what life is about now. People's lives no longer count: it is only big dollars. This is what is happening throughout regional South Australia.

A bank pulls out because it is cheaper for it to operate from the nearest town, and four employees go. That means that four families go from that community. The school may lose a teacher and the deli a part-time worker. It is very difficult for these people and it is all in the name of dollars for big business. And what does the government do about it? Does it do anything to put real employment back into those communities? It has task forces and cabinet meetings in the towns, but there are no real jobs, no decisions to relocate a government department into those communities, to establish a call centre in those communities or to give a company some real incentives to stay in a town or to relocate there.

This lily-livered lot of MPs over the other side shut up and do not speak out to preserve their communities. At least our shadow minister (Paul Holloway) goes out and talks to people in the communities and understands some of the issues for them. I have been talking to him today about these issues. At least labor will go out into those communities, move around the state and find out what is going on—as we have been doing for the past three years.

At least Mike Rann goes out there and listens to what is being said. But how many times has the Premier been to Whyalla in the past two years? We have not seen the Premier since BHP's announcement, but Mike Rann went up there and listened to what was being said.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms BREUER: I have never heard the word—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Ms BREUER: But not the Premier; the Premier did not go up there. I have never heard the words 'regional development' used so many times in this House as I have heard uttered this week by every minister and almost every member opposite. So, thank you very much, Mr Kennett: your counterparts here have a lot of catching up to do, but perhaps the reality of regional South Australia has finally caught up with them.

I was asked by an *Advertiser* reporter whether people were empathetic about what was happening in Whyalla and I said, 'No: they are sympathetic but they are not empathetic about this.' City members do not understand the agony, the hurt and the decline in our communities. They feel sorry for us, but they do not understand that hurt which I talked about with my family. The country members opposite do, but they just shut up and do not speak about this. I say to them, 'Don't be gutless; speak up; don't waste your time telling us on this side what to do and what is wrong with us. Get off your butts, have a go and do something for your communities.'

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Much has been said in the past few weeks about Barton Road at North Adelaide. I do not intend to talk about Barton Road because I am sure the member for Spence will give us all a chance of speaking about that at a later date. Rather, I would like to talk about another road that goes through the parklands about which I am sure all members of the House, because of the keen interest they have shown in protection of the parklands, would want to do something. I am referring to Beaumont Road. For those who do not know where Beaumont Road is, I inform the House that it was used many years ago as a connector from East Terrace and South Terrace, to enable people to cut through the parklands between that area which is Victoria Park Racecourse and the south parklands to get onto Greenhill Road. I think it has been closed for something like 15 years or more.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr CONDOUS: Yes, it could be more, but I am saying at least 15 years. It can no longer be used today because barriers have been built across the road with black and white strip panels to indicate that one cannot go through there at all. What is even worse is that at about 9 o'clock every morning between 60 and 100 cars are parked on both sides of that road. There is no charge for doing so, yet the Adelaide City Council has signs on the parklands which warn that, under one of its by-laws, if one parks on the parklands one will be fined \$63.

If members look at Colonel Light's original plan, they will see that there is no road connecting South or East Terrace to Greenhill Road. This was an idea raised by the city fathers probably 50 or 60 years ago to facilitate motor vehicle and horse transport connecting the city to the eastern suburbs. I find it disgraceful that about four, five or maybe six acres of parklands have been alienated for up to 20 years simply because it was once a road which has been left for the convenience of some very stately and beautiful homes on the opposite side of the parklands on Greenhill Road. Both the Burnside and Unley councils decided that they would rezone to allow those stately homes to be demolished because it would be a far greater revenue raiser for them to have offices running along that strip of Greenhill Road. I would say that today both the Burnside and Unley councils derive huge rates from those office buildings.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: Are you criticising those councils?

Mr CONDOUS: Yes, I am criticising both councils because they are using Greenhill Road to raise huge amounts of council rates. But how are they raising them? They are raising them because they are telling the ratepayers that they have beautiful views of the Adelaide parklands opposite, yet neither Burnside nor Unley council is contributing 1¢ to the \$6.5 million to \$7 million that the Adelaide City Council

spends every year on maintaining the parklands for recreational use by the public.

What is even worse is that they are allowing 100 people every day to park on those parklands without penalty—without the \$63 that you get on a December morning if you take your family to the Christmas pageant. Because there is nowhere to park, someone who has taken his wife and family of four children to the pageant might put half his car on the parklands verge and will be fined \$63. Yet we allow office workers on Greenhill Road to have a huge advantage over office workers in the CBD. The office workers in the CBD catch public transport into town because they cannot afford to park their cars anywhere in the city, but those who work on Greenhill Road have the right conveniently to park on Beaumont Road and just walk across to their offices. It is free parking all day. They take their cars to work five days a week and make absolutely no contribution whatsoever.

If we are serious about Adelaide's parklands, if we are serious about increasing the green belt, if we are serious about going back to Colonel Light's plan, there is only one thing to do: this parliament must make a decision to direct the Adelaide City Council to move in the trucks and front-end loaders, dig up that roadway, and replace it with grass, trees and shrubs; and to take away the present fences that prohibit people from walking along the south parklands from Anzac Highway through to Fullarton Road; and return five or six acres of parklands back to the city. That land is serving one purpose only, that is, to provide car parking for the office workers of Greenhill Road.

If we are really serious about the whole matter, I believe that the member for Adelaide should take up the issue immediately. I intend to put the matter to him, because there is no doubt that he is concerned about the parklands and would want to do something about it. However, I believe that the local member should take up the matter immediately with the council. I think, too, that the council would be very supportive of getting rid of the asphalt. Not only that, but also it would be sending a very clear message. I think it was wrong in the first place to create a de facto CBD on the Greenhill Road strip—the same as happened in St Kilda. If we did not allow that to happen in those days, every one of those office workers today would be working in the CBD and this city would be far better because of it.

I am simply saying this: let us get back five or six acres; let Burnside and Unley councils decide what they want to do about providing car parking, or let them run a bus service so that those workers can get to work on public transport, the same as those in the city must do. It is 20 years since a car has driven from South Terrace or East Terrace through to Greenhill Road, and simply to have asphalt which is serving absolutely no purpose at all is wrong in terms of city planning; it is wrong in terms of the destruction of the parklands; and it is not in the true interests of the recreational reserves that were put there by Colonel Light in his original plan for the use of the people of the city of Adelaide and the state of South Australia. I am giving notice today that the council should look immediately at digging up that entire asphalt strip and reverting it to green belt.

Motion carried.

MEMBER'S REMARKS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Earlier today it was alleged in a contribution from the member for Peake that on a particular date I was doing something other than that which I was doing. It is a matter of public—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have a copy of *Hansard*; I did not allege that at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The minister has the call.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I merely wish to clarify for the House one point of fact and it is this. On the day in question, which was 19 August, there was a mistake in my diary and I inadvertently did not visit some children at Cowell. On the date in question I was in Port Augusta addressing—

Mr Koutsantonis: You were in Whyalla.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Sorry, I apologise, in Whyalla. I thank the member for his correction. I was in Whyalla addressing the year 8 students from Saint John's school on political matters. It was the combined year 8 class. I believe Mrs Breuer, the member for the area, will confirm that to the House, if necessary. I have already ascertained from the principal that I will receive a fax, which I will supply to the member for Peake so that the House can hear his apology.

At 5.11 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 26 October at 2 p.m.

