

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 26 October 1999

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

### QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the *Notice Paper*, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 1, 14, 23 and 24.

### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

- Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal—Report of the Presiding Officer, 1998-99
- National Wine Centre—Report, 1998-99
- Promotion and Grievance Appeals Tribunal—Report of the Presiding Officer, 1998-99

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

- Crown Development Report—Carrick Hill Trust Temporary Marquee
- National Road Transport Commission—Report, 1998-99
- Planning Strategy for South Australia—Report, 1998-99

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

- Department for Administrative and Information Services—Report, 1998-99
- The Industry and Commercial Premises Corporation—Report, 1998-99
- Playford Centre—Report, 1998-99

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

- Police Act—Regulations—Variation.

### BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. D.C. KOTZ**: The Belair National Park is the oldest national park in South Australia, and this government places great importance on protecting such a valuable natural resource so close to the metropolitan area. Members would be aware that in 1997 the lessee of the Belair National Park golf course, Murtfam Pty Ltd, purchased the adjoining caravan park lease. Murtfam proposed the redevelopment of the caravan park by extending the leased area by 6 hectares into a degraded area of the adjoining park and incorporating conference and function facilities, lodge and ecocabin accommodation, and a range of new camping sites.

In accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act, any such development would be required to meet with the provisions of the Development Act and the hills face zone planning requirements. As such, a proposed three month public consultation period was postponed whilst further clarification was sought on legislative provisions and how they may relate to that proposal. So, from the outset, a commitment was made to consult with and consider community opinion prior to making a decision on whether the

proposal should proceed. In this I was ably assisted by the local member for Davenport, the Hon. Iain Evans, who has continually consulted his constituents on this issue and provided me with regular feedback.

National Parks and Wildlife SA have been negotiating extensively on this proposal, both with the proposer, Mr Howard Murton, and with the local community, and I commend the national parks officers for their informed and inclusive approach to this issue. Following discussions with national parks officers and representatives of the local community, Mr Murton has advised me that he is formally withdrawing the redevelopment proposal.

I have been heartened to see the level of community support for the Belair National Park over the past few months, and I would encourage those who have expressed an interest continue to enjoy and involve themselves in the conservation of one of our most significant national parks.

It has been 10 years since the current Belair National Park management plan was adopted, and the status of the park has changed from that of a recreation park to a multiple use national park within that time frame. With that in mind, I am happy to announce to the House today a review of the management plan.

National Parks and Wildlife SA have begun preparing a new draft management strategy for Belair. Preparation of that plan will be carried out in consultation with stakeholders. The draft plan will then be released for at least a three month public consultation period with ample opportunity for further community involvement. As part of this process, National Parks and Wildlife SA will continue to work with Murtfam Pty Ltd and the local community to identify opportunities to enhance existing facilities within the existing leased area only. This will occur in a manner which is consistent with legislative provisions and the natural attributes of Belair National Park.

I take this opportunity to reiterate this Government's commitment to protecting the natural assets of this state. This is a government that listens to community concerns, and as environment minister it gives me great hope—

*Members interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER**: The leader will come to order.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ**: As environment minister, it gives me a great deal of hope to see the level of community interest in our national parks, and I look forward to working with the community on the future management of Belair National Park.

### QUESTION TIME

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)**: My question is directed to the Premier. Why has the government denied South Australians the option of paying their emergency service levy bills quarterly when new government legislation will require local councils to offer quarterly payments for council rates? Under changes to the Local Government Act passed this year, all councils will in future be required to offer home owners the option of quarterly payments for their property based council rates. However, under the property based emergency services levy introduced

this year, the State Government is not allowing quarterly payments.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister for Police and Correctional Services.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Hanna interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Mitchell.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Emergency Services):** It is not new news that for some time now as minister responsible—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Hart.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** —I have been advising the community, although not with the support of the right messages going out from the Leader of the Opposition, that they will be able to opt either to pay their emergency services funding accounts in one lump sum or in four monthly instalments. As well as that—

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The leader has already been brought to order.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** As well as that, if they are pensioners or self-funded retirees, there will be a \$40 remission on their principal place of residence. I also suggest that there is a quite significant difference between what councils are charging on a per annum basis for council rates and the emergency services levy. To put that on the record, I advise that for a house in Adelaide worth \$103 000 the levy will be \$83 and they will be able to pay it over four monthly instalments.

#### ADELAIDE AIRPORT

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Will the Premier inform the House of the success of the Adelaide Airport as both the gateway for South Australian exports and interstate and international visitors?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I thank the member for Colton for his question. There can be no better indicator of how the government over some six or seven years now has put South Australia back on track rather than increased through traffic at Adelaide Airport. With the upcoming release of the international timetable for the summer season 1999-2000 at Adelaide Airport, it is exceptionally gratifying to note that passenger movement statistics indicate that Adelaide Airport is the fastest growing gateway in Australia. It has a growth of 12.8 per cent, something the member for Hart and the opposition could only have dreamt of during the Bannon Labor government. No economic indicator through that period has the substance with the range of economic indicators we are now getting in terms of pointing the direction for South Australia's future.

One does not have to be an economist—and certainly the member for Elder does not qualify in this regard—to recognise that increase in traffic at the airport would ultimately have a direct impact on the South Australian economy. A growing frequency of international flights arriving and departing from the airport has two immediate purposes. First, it enables South Australian exports to move more quickly to the global marketplace instead of detouring through Melbourne and Sydney and having oncost, trucking or rail transport costs to airport terminals in Melbourne and Sydney and, secondly, South Australia's tourism industry will continue to grow, with more flights coming into Adelaide. In

fact the popularity of Adelaide as a world leader in many industries, including information technology and our water-based technologies, is already evident.

Leading accounting and consulting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers recently surveyed 138 South Australian companies over 12 manufacturing sectors, ranging from foods to metals, and found that production for many of these firms will increase in the December quarter. Numerous economic indicators pointing in the same direction should not and cannot be ignored. The Price Waterhouse Coopers survey comes hot on the heels of other third party endorsement of the South Australian economy. Only today Westpac released its market insights report for the June quarter and also points to positive signs ahead for South Australia. In fact, I am told that it is the first time Westpac has taken out the South Australian economy and issued a press release directly related to South Australia's economic movement.

It reports that consumer confidence in South Australia is at historically high levels. Consumer confidence is now 22 per cent higher than at this time last year. That is translated into a strong growth in consumer spending, with retail trade up by an average of 6.5 per cent in 1998. We have seen these economic indicators underscoring our export market performance. Our export market of \$5.3 billion in the last financial year was an increase of 6.5 per cent compared to a national decline of some 2 per cent in exports. Econtech in its 19 August report indicated a GSP growth of 3 per cent this year compared with the national average of 2.8 per cent, rising to 4 per cent growth in GSP in 2001-02.

On top of that, we have the growth in the tourism industry in South Australia. Previously in the House it has been noted that 32 000 South Australians are employed in this industry, generating \$2.7 billion worth of activity. The tourism and hospitality industry is a very significant source of jobs for young people, in particular, not only in the city but also in our country and regional areas.

Mr Speaker, as you highlighted to me this morning, we have the Tourism Commission initiative which the minister is overseeing in terms of bringing the *Today* program to broadcast out of South Australia for five mornings this week to showcase our outstanding tourism opportunities to an audience across Australia to which previously we have not had access. I believe that the cost of supporting that program in South Australia was of the order of a quarter of a million dollars, or thereabouts. That is the cheapest piece of marketing tourism publicity we could ever have, given the audience reach of that program, and I will be interested to hear from the Minister for Tourism the early results of that program.

I have seen just a couple of extracts of it coming out of Port Lincoln, also showing whales in the Bight and activities on Kangaroo Island; and, as I understand it, they are going up to the Prairie Hotel—in other words, providing a snapshot of South Australian tourism opportunities. This is something that the opposition in government never even thought of. It had no lateral thinking, no vision, no plan and no strategy to even contemplate doing something a little different to showcase South Australian tourism opportunities.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has the call.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I am sure you were. These segments have not only highlighted the importance of salinity control and practices upstream (particularly in Queensland and New South Wales) to protect that finite resource, the lifeline of South Australia—the Murray River—but they have

also been able to showcase the tourist potential of this State. That is all underscoring a renewed—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I bring the cameramen's attention back to the rules of filming in the chamber.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** It is clear that South Australian businesses are entering the new millennium with a renewed vigour, a renewed sense of determination and a renewed confidence and are constructively working with the government. The signs that we see emerging of new investment, new jobs and new growth are set to continue for the next few years. I can assure the House that we will be seeking to maintain the momentum that has been established over the longer term.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** Given that the Premier has had a month to find out, can he now tell the House what has been the total cost to the taxpayer of advertising promoting the emergency services tax, including television advertisements, both in the first version of the tax and after the recent changes were made to the tax? On 28 September, the Premier took on notice a question about the cost to the taxpayer of government advertising of the emergency services tax.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** When I receive the information, I will communicate it directly to the member for Elder.

### INFORMATION ECONOMY

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** Thank you, Mr Speaker—

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** My question is directed to—

*Members interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** Third time lucky, sir. Can the Premier outline plans the government has to ensure that South Australia remains at the forefront in the area of information technology and economy?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I am delighted to answer this question. Isn't jealousy a curse! The Leader of the Opposition is concerned that minister Robert Brokenshire is explaining clearly and concisely what the emergency services levy is for. If we contrast that with the only publicity recently of the Leader of the Opposition, his historic snapshot of the good times and the bad times in South Australia, he is featured in only one of those snapshots: in a photo with former Premier John Bannon. I can understand why the leader wants to walk away with great speed from that photo and that era, because it is a reminder—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** No. It is a reminder to the electorate that when members opposite had the Treasury benches, when they were in government, they had clearly—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will resume his seat.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the leader again. The chair has given members a fair go this afternoon. I will no longer

tolerate scattergun interjections across the chamber. Members be warned: if you want to leave early, please continue.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Mr Speaker, I will leave it at that and move on. What we see is Victoria plunged back to the dark ages of the Olympic typewriter while we in South Australia move on to the iMac computers. What we have seen since the election of the Bracks government in Victoria is its move away from information technology and information economy.

*The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Yes. And herein lies an opportunity. Here is a bit more government advertising: it is South Australia advertising in the *Melbourne Age* (I know that displays are out of order, so I will not display it) saying that if you do not want us in Victoria in terms of information technology and information economy businesses we will have them in South Australia. This is an opportunity, given that they in Victoria have abolished the Minister for Information Technology or Information Economy, because they are going back to the dark ages. Let us remember that Peter Beattie has taken a budget in Queensland back to deficit for the first time in 22 years. That is what happens with the election of Labor governments: deficits and debt are run up. It is demonstrated by their actions in Queensland and their actions in Victoria.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I guess the honourable member would want to remain silent on the fact that information placed on the web late last year in relation to the ALP factions in South Australia is a stark reminder that the information economy is here and that the days of the printing press are well and truly over. The member for Hart has been rather vocal today in his interjections, but in the recent estimates committee, I think, he said to the Minister for Information Economy that all this information economy was a little foreign to him. As I understood it, in this area the member for Hart is supposed to be the spokesman on behalf of those opposite, and he was waiting, as are many of his colleagues, to educate themselves about this new information age.

Perhaps the deputy leader could help out in this regard, because the deputy leader, as I understand it, comes from a marketing background in companies specialising in mining and technology. I suppose the deputy leader might be able to help the member for Hart in terms of information economy. Of course, double nothing is still nothing. I am sure that we will still not get a policy out of the opposition.

I remind the leader that in January this year he said that this was to be his policy year. Well, we have not seen much policy yet, because Victoria has decided to do away with its information economy minister. There is no seat around the cabinet table for this portfolio, and this is something which those of the other side have failed to grasp. Members opposite get 'IT' confused with Cousin It from the *Addams Family*, so unable are they to grasp what the information economy is all about.

Let us contrast that with a range of initiatives that have been put in place by this government over a period of time. We put in place the EDS contract, which brought savings and economic development to South Australia. We put in place the Playford Centre, which has been identified as the coordinator for the state's single focus bid for the federal BITS program—that is the Building IT Strengths Program, for the benefit of members opposite. That program has a pool of \$78 million available, which is targeted to increase benefits and funding to small and smart companies around the nation.

Playford will lead a bid on behalf of 35 South Australian based stakeholders for those funds.

The Ngapartji Multi Media Centre is widely acknowledged as the leading centre of its kind in Australia. We have the Arising Awareness of IT and the Information Economy demonstrated by the recent Wired Up event held at the Wayville Showgrounds, which grew by 100 per cent this year over last year. In addition, we have the Pathway SA announcement, Networks for You, Talking Point, and a great number of projects produced by the public service in response to the seed funding pool which was made available in the last budget. We will also, of course, move to electronic cabinet, with the first section of that cabinet meeting next Monday.

Members will recall that we announced in recent months the successful bid for the WITSA (World Information and Services Alliance) conference, which has been won for Adelaide in late February 2002. The last conference drew no less than President Clinton and people of like stature from around the world. South Australia and Adelaide have now attracted that conference for early 2002. There will be some—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Well, I give you the drum—you won't be. Some 1 500 key political and industry delegates from all over the world will attend that conference. The Minister for Government Enterprises is currently in Boston speaking at a global conference led by Don Tapscott, an eminent author, as part of the Alliance For Converging Technology. He is taking part in a presentation on how governments can involve citizens in the process of decision making.

We are delivering in information economy in the information technology arena in a tangible way. There are real outcomes for real people, jobs for our kids and training through our schools in our program to equip our young people with access to computers so that they can become computer informed and, in doing so, participants in the emerging economy as we see it in the next millennium.

We are not ripping out the heart of the very sector that will prove to be the lifeblood of the 21st century. The election of the Bracks government in Victoria provides an opportunity for South Australia to open up in key mainstream policy areas, to have that investment located in South Australia and to create a vacuum in Victoria. The vacuum in Victoria is an opportunity for us, and we will prove that opportunity over the next few years.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. Will the 12.8 per cent interest rate charged on late payment of the new emergency services tax be imposed at the full rate as a lump sum on the first day on which a Bill becomes overdue or will that interest rate be incrementally charged, say, over a 12 month period, and how will this penalty be calculated?

**Mr Foley:** You've clean bowled him.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Emergency Services):** I am not sure who is trying to clean bowl whom over there at the moment, because last week we saw two members of the opposition with their haircuts and new styles, and I note this week that even the member for Elder

has had a haircut and new style. Does that mean that the member for Elder will clean bowl the member for Hart for a seat on the opposition front bench? The fact is that anyone who purchases goods or a service, using a department credit card, Bankcard or whatever, pays an interest rate for late payments and, if you are overdue with your payment, as has already been specified in this parliament, you will be paying a 12.8 per cent rate on the overdue amount.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Hart and the member for Elder for the last time.

#### YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Year 2000 Compliance advise the House how prepared South Australia's airports are for the year 2000 date problem? Recent media reports state that airlines such as Ansett and Kendell will not be operating flights on new year's eve.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Minister for Year 2000 Compliance):** The member for Flinders asked the question for very good reason because, obviously, the honourable member's electorate is very dependent upon its reliable airport service from the Port Lincoln airport, which is ably managed by the local council in that vicinity. Many members probably were concerned to hear recent media reports announcing that, among others, Ansett Airlines and Kendell will not be operating flights between 11 p.m. on 31 December and midday on new year's day. That has led a number of media outlets to speculate that in some way this could be associated with the year 2000 date problem.

I am pleased to advise the House that I am personally aware that this is not the case and I am able to come to that conclusion after detailed briefings from the companies concerned. Earlier this year I met with Mr Peter Sheehan from Ansett Airlines. As the millennium program manager for that company, he was able to take me through, step by step, Ansett's very successful program with all its local, national and international airline arms and, after that briefing, I have every confidence that the company is able to fly should the demand be there. However, the issue is that there is insufficient demand for those flights and, therefore, those flights will not be occurring.

Similarly, the Kendell Airlines Chief Executive Officer, Mr Geoff Breust, has advised that demands for their services on new year's day are not as they would like them to be, but their aircraft are ready for flight. They certainly are able to fly, but the bookings over that period have meant that it is simply not economically viable for them to have flights during that period. Both airlines have emphasised that their decisions are not a reflection in any way, shape or form on their preparedness, or indeed on the preparedness of the aviation industry as a whole in Australia. They are quite satisfied with their preparations and those of the industry in relation to the year 2000 date problem.

Not only has much work been done on this problem by the airlines in Australia and the rest of the world but significant work has been undertaken to ensure that our airports themselves are ready. There are 22 licensed airports in South Australia, with the majority of these being operated by local councils and, of course, with Adelaide and Parafield Airports being privately operated by Adelaide Airport Limited. Parafield Airport (which, as members would be aware, is an

extremely heavy trafficked airport from both light aircraft and a training perspective) has had an extensive and intensive year 2000 problem testing exercise under way through Adelaide Airport Limited. That company has indicated that the remediation and testing work in critical areas such as runway lighting is on schedule, and likewise with Adelaide Airport.

The company has also indicated that in the case of both airports contingency plans are in place should a minor unexpected failure occur. Therefore, Adelaide Airport Limited is absolutely confident that its airports will be ready and available for use and business as normal on 1 January 2000.

Amongst the balance of the airports, several bodies have responsibility for our regional airports, principally local government authorities, Air Services Australia, and the Australian Airports Association, and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority also has a responsibility. The Australian Airports Association has been working very carefully and closely with the regional airports across South Australia to ensure that they are aware of the problem and take appropriate action.

In order to ascertain the preparedness of regional airlines, my office recently undertook a survey of the owners of each of our regional airports, and I am pleased to advise the House that all regional airports have assessed the year 2000 risk. At the time our survey was undertaken, only one airport in the state had not completed its rectification, and that airport has now completed that work. Further, all airports now have in place contingency plans in case there are any minor failures that were not previously detected.

In addition to the responsibility of local councils, Air Services Australia is responsible for the navigation and control equipment at all but one of our regional airports throughout South Australia, the exception being the Kimba airport. Obviously, air traffic control is an area that is particularly essential; it is a complex area of airport responsibility and one that must be in place and working appropriately.

Air Services Australia has in place a very comprehensive year 2000 project, which has been in place since 1996 and which has covered all aspects of air traffic control, navigation and communication facilities across Australian airports. I am pleased to be able to advise the House that they too have announced that all work in South Australian airports has been completed.

The good message for South Australians is that all our airports will be operating as normal. They will be prepared to take passengers and goods and transport them to and from those destinations. I expect that in the early stages of the new millennium South Australian airports will demonstrate that they are well ahead of many airports in other parts of the world, and we expect that will inject confidence in the South Australian domestic scene among local and international businesses.

#### ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I direct my question to you, sir. When will the government answer the opposition's questions asked in estimates committees four months ago, and will you, sir, direct the government that the answers be supplied to the parliament? Between 22 and 30 June the opposition asked a series of questions relating to government expenditure, including consultancies, executives on salaries of \$100 000 or more,

interstate and overseas travel by public servants, government advertising and use of government credit cards. Standing orders require that the replies to estimates questions be provided within two weeks.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair on this occasion has no authority or responsibility to direct the government to respond. I am sure the government has heard the deputy leader's question, but the chair has no responsibility in that area at all.

#### YOUTH

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** I direct my question to the Minister for Youth. Will the minister advise the House how the youth of South Australia can participate in the development of government policy?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Youth):** I thank the member for Hartley for his question; his interest in youth sharply contrasts with that of those opposite. Last week was youth week, and the opposition saw fit to ask not one question about youth.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The shadow minister corrects me; she said she asked two questions. However, they were both on YACCSA, not on youth. There is a difference. I want carefully to acknowledge the work of my predecessors, the Hons Dorothy Kotz, Joan Hall and Bob Such. When we came to office—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Spence!

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** When we came to office, every minister heard repeatedly that youth wanted to be empowered and heard. We hear this repeatedly and still hear from the young people in this state. I am pleased that young people are in attendance to see how the shadow minister treats the question.

What we saw repeatedly was young people who wished to be heard. What those young people said to us is, 'Your generation asks us what we think and, when we proceed to tell them, they totally ignore our answers. Your generation say they want to listen to us and then completely ignore us.' For four Ministers for Youth in this government, this issue has perplexed us, and we have moved as a government slowly and steadily towards the empowerment of youth.

In answer to the honourable member's question, I would like to highlight just a few of the things that this government has done to actually empower youth. First, this year in Youth Week, we had a speak out on the republic. The key speakers were videotaped and those tapes have been sent to regional and rural South Australia so that young people in regional and rural South Australia can form part of the debate. It interests me that, generally speaking, the media in this state are running what a whole range of people think on the debate and are not concentrating very much on youth. It would strike me that people in the age group of 14 to 15 have a much greater interest and a much greater stake in the forthcoming decision of the Australian people than do people in their upper years. But, as this House knows, we have established Youth Plus, a ministerial advisory council comprising 15 young South Australians between 13 and 24 years of age—

*Ms Key interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The shadow minister interjects, 'They are all Young Liberals.' That is an absolutely outrageous statement. It is completely without fact. I challenge her to repeat it outside this House. I am sure that

that will now be on the parliamentary record, and I will circulate it to as many of the youth in this state as I can, to show the calibre of the thinking of those opposite. The Chairman of Youth Plus is on the employment council, and that is a pivotal position of trust for a young person.

In addition, other ministries are equally and actively involved in the area of youth. In her capacity as Minister for the Environment, the minister has a youth environment council which works in concert I believe with the Minister for Education. There is an Aboriginal youth action committee which is actually funded through the Minister for Human Services and, through work which we have previously done in the youth portfolio, we are advocating the inclusion of and encouraging young people onto a range of boards and committees.

Finally, and most importantly, our outreach to youth, because youth are switched on, is in fact to empower youth through a variety of means of intelligent technology.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I notice the shadow minister guffawing opposite. That is the same member who, when he was Minister for Youth and Employment, had a remarkable record. He comes on the airways regularly and bleats about unemployment. I would remind the House that in less than two years, between December 1990 and September 1992, unemployment in this state increased by 44 600, and youth unemployment peaked at 44 per cent. When I took over the portfolio, it was all doom and gloom, but the fact that he does not acknowledge is that 666 000 South Australians are now in work, more than at any time in the history of this state. Some 17 000 more people are employed today than were employed 12 months ago, and while the youth unemployment rate is not as good as it should be it is falling. We can be proud of that, which is more than the shadow minister can be of his record.

As I said, the youth maze, the web site for youth, is proving extraordinarily successful. That site has had a large number of hits. We ask a range of questions and through that range of questions the government is seeking to keep itself informed on youth issues.

I am pleased that mine is not the only ministry to avail itself of the web. Other ministers have asked us to put questions on the web so that they can canvass what youth thinks on a range of subjects. That is proving successful. The involvement of youth across a range of issues is proving successful, but what is proving most successful is that the youth of South Australia are getting the message, that here is a government that does not just talk about them and give them lip service but here is a government that cares, is excited about what they can contribute, sees them as part of the now—part of today and not merely part of tomorrow—and is prepared to include them and not exclude them as did the party opposite when in government for a decade.

#### ELECTORATE INFORMATION

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's oft stated concerns about the cost of providing answers to questions asked in parliament, how does the Premier justify the fact that the government has used taxpayers' money to gather complex and detailed information on an electorate by electorate basis that has not been made available to non-government members of parliament, and how much did it cost the taxpayer to gather this information? The opposition has

a minute dated 17 September last year from the then Chief of Staff to the Premier (Mr John Chapman) addressed to all ministerial chiefs of staff and headed 'Electorate information'. The minutes asks for 'information on projects and grants by electorate and on statewide (or multi electorate) projects'. The minute asks for information 'which can be used to help document a case that the state is making progress in the right direction'. It asks for information on the project such as commencement and completion dates, the project receiving the grant, the location and electorate of the project, and so on, to be provided by 12 October 1998. A handwritten note on the minute suggests that the information was for a seminar of the Parliamentary Liberal Party held in the following week. No Labor members have been provided with this information. How much did it cost to do all that?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** The simple response to the question is 'So what!' I would have thought that any member of parliament worth their salt would have a running list of every project they had championed within their electorate, including information on who had received the funding and which projects they were pursuing. What on earth is wrong with that? This is an opposition so bereft of any questions, so bereft of any policy ideas that it has to go around on this sort of fishing exercise. What arrant nonsense.

#### GOLDEN OLDIES RUGBY TOURNAMENT

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Will the Minister for Tourism inform the House of the economic impact and the broader benefits gained from Adelaide's hosting the Golden Oldies Rugby Tournament last week?

**The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism):** I thank the member for Heysen for his question because I am sure he will find some extraordinary information contained in some notes that I would like to share with the House. The Golden Oldies Rugby Tournament actually completed its four or five day event on Friday, but celebrated its end of tournament with an enormous dinner on Saturday night at the Wayville Pavilion. I understand that it was the largest sit-down dinner ever held in South Australia as it accommodated 3 500 people. I have to confess that it was one of the rowdiest and most raucous activities I have ever attended.

The tournament itself needs to be put into perspective because it is a 30 000 strong worldwide sporting movement that they freely admit has a focus on fun, friendship and fraternity. The emphasis is certainly on fun, because there are a couple of figures here that I thought might be rather interesting. When they opened the tournament 3 500 people attended the cocktail party last Sunday. I understand that over the next few days there were 2000 people having their meals each day at what was called the West End Club and the alcohol consumption was fairly excessive, with 100 000 cans of beer and 14 000 bottles of wine being consumed in the West End Club over those days.

I suppose the great thing for the tourism industry was that there were 3 000 participants, and that accounted for an estimated 10 400 room nights during that time—and it is a good news story that one could not get a room anywhere in Adelaide. I am told that many of the restaurants and hotels were absolutely astonished at the amount of food and alcohol that was consumed over the week—I rather suspect that the restaurateurs and hoteliers were probably among the groups of people who were rather sad to see the tournament wind up.

Another aspect of this tournament was the enormous activity that took place in the regions of South Australia. Last Thursday, a picnic was held at Mannum. I understand that that was quite an extraordinary event, and I think many of the hotels at Mannum had very urgently to put in requests for replenishment of their food and alcohol stocks. During the week, many of the South Australian wineries in the close regions received a number of visitors from this tournament.

The member for Stuart and I happened to meet a few people at Arkaroola last week who were on their way down to participate in the Golden Oldies tournament. They were planning to spend several days in the Clare Valley, and they asked us which were the appropriate wines that they needed to order.

I think it is very important for us to recognise that an overwhelming majority of the participants in this tournament were competitors from interstate and overseas. I thought that the names of some of the teams that participated were rather good, and I am sure that members would like to know that the Old Vulgarians were from England; the Aberdeen Strollers were from Scotland; the Rugga Rhinos were from South Africa; and the Old Boys from Prague, of course, were from the Czech Republic.

These major events—particularly the one-off events—are extraordinarily important for our state, because they enable a whole range of these people to become great ambassadors when they go back to their own countries and, in particular, they give us enormous emphasis with media focus over the duration of the event. I would like to pay a particular tribute to Mr Hugo Klynsmith who is the past President of the South Australian Crippled Crows Golden Oldies Rugby Club. Mr Klynsmith in particular, was very instrumental in assisting this government win the event for our state, and I think the work that he did ought to be recognised by the state.

As I mentioned earlier, a vast number of the competitors were from interstate or overseas, but the interesting factor, from my perspective, is the enormous boom that has been generated by this event. It was not just the accommodation and alcohol sectors that were so well patronised, as I mentioned: I understand that many of the family members spent considerable sums of money in the retail outlets, and some of the price tags that I understand were being shown around the hotels were extraordinary. The tour operators enjoyed a great boom, as did the taxis and hire car companies—and I am sure that the member for Peake would be delighted to know that the taxi companies did particularly well.

I would like to pay a tribute to the sponsors who were very involved in helping us to stage this event. The early estimate (although we are waiting to obtain the final results) is that the impact of this event will be in excess of \$15 million. Mr Speaker, I know you would be delighted to know that many of the Golden Oldies competitors attended the Glenelg Jazz Festival over the weekend, where I am told attendances were in excess of 25 000. So, I think that is very impressive, although—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J. HALL:** I don't know about the alcohol consumption down there. I conclude by suggesting that the calendar of events and major activities that we have coming up over the next few months are very important. Whilst I will not go through them all, the next one with a particular international focus which I know will interest all members of this House is the International Horse Trials, which are to be held between 4 and 7 November and which are important for

the Olympics selection. I urge all members at least to be involved in participating in one of the three days down at Victoria Park.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I draw members' attention to the use of ministerial statements on occasions.

### LYELL McEWIN HOSPITAL

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** Will the Minister for Human Services explain why a patient who was admitted to the Lyell McEwin Hospital for surgery on a broken ankle awoke from her operation to find that several teeth had been removed? Will the minister take action to obtain an explanation for this extraordinary mistake?

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Ms STEVENS:** Yes, it is not funny. Ms Janine Lang and her husband revealed on television last night that while Ms Lang was anaesthetised for an operation on her ankle her top four front teeth were removed. Ms Lang complained that the hospital did not indicate during pre-operation tests that her teeth needed to be removed and that the hospital did not seek approval from her or her husband for teeth to be removed. The hospital has refused to tell Ms Lang why her teeth were removed but did however write to the South Australian Dental Clinic agreeing to pay for new teeth. When Ms Lang went to the clinic for an appointment she was informed that the approval had been withdrawn and that she had to obtain three quotes. Mr Lang described this as the sort of thing that happens at a panel beater.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** Firstly, the event occurred at the Lyell McEwin Hospital. When I heard that this matter was being raised publicly and when I first heard about it I immediately asked for a report, which came through yesterday. As a result of that report I have written to the Medical Board of South Australia and to the Dental Board of South Australia asking them to investigate jointly the issue and to see whether appropriate standards of professional practice and conduct were applied by the staff involved. I believe that the medical board and the dental board are the appropriate bodies to investigate this matter and take action or make recommendations to me in terms of what matters. They have that responsibility in terms of professional standards under the act, and I think it is appropriate that they investigate. That is why I have referred the matter to them.

### BASIC SKILLS TEST

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** Will the Minister for Education highlight the achievements of students in South Australia in the basic skills test conducted in August and why it is so important for young South Australians?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education):** It is pleasing to see this year that South Australian students—  
*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my right will come to order.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** —in their year 3 and year 5 basic skills test have delivered the best ever results since those tests began. I believe that it shows that the government's commitment towards the Early Years strategy is starting to bite and starting to yield dividends for this state. First, I congratulate the teachers, because it is a matter of excellent teaching methods that also contributes to this situation in that the work that our teachers are doing ensures

that literacy and numeracy standards of our young people improve. It is good to see that more year 3 and year 5 students are at a satisfactory level than in previous years: 85 per cent in year 3 are satisfactory in their literacy (a 6 per cent increase on last year) and 91 per cent in year 5 are at satisfactory level, which is the highest that we have seen since the start of the basic skills test.

It is also good to see that Aboriginal students continue to improve. There has been a marked literacy improvement from last year. This year's results show that Aboriginal students are, on average, eight months ahead of last year's students. I also recognise that there is a lot of work yet to be done in this particular area, and that is why a few months ago I released in consultation with Aboriginal parents an Aboriginal education program and plan for the next five years to look at how we can improve that literacy and numeracy component of our young Aboriginal students.

There were also pleasing results in terms of numeracy. Students are more advanced than last year. This was the best ever performance by year 5 students: in the two years since they undertook the year 3 test they have advanced by three years—a significant improvement. What is more, widespread support exists among parents for basic skills tests. A number of parents say to me now, 'Finally we have something in our hand that we can use to compare our children with other students in the classroom to see how they are going.' This year has seen the highest participation rate of 88.9 per cent, which confirms the widespread acceptance of and call for the basic skills test. I hope that this support and these results will silence the union critics.

Many benefits accrue from having literacy and numeracy skills. They are the building blocks not only for further development in education but also in terms of the social wellbeing of young people in our community. Many members of our community are afraid to fill out forms: when they see an application form in front of them, because of their problems with literacy they are hesitant and fearful. Improving the literacy skills of our young people will ensure that they will be more confident citizens within our community.

In addition, literacy and numeracy competence improves behavioural problems in classrooms. It has been demonstrated that, if young people do not understand and cannot comprehend what is going on in the classroom because they are behind in their literacy and numeracy skills, there are more behavioural problems in the classroom. So, this is another factor which is helped by improving numeracy and literacy: students not only acquire new skills but also see themselves as valuable members of the community—their self-esteem is raised. Satisfactory achievement in literacy and numeracy skills is critical if our young people are to deal with the information technology world which they will enter not only through jobs but just through being a member of the community.

However, this improvement must continue. In terms of satisfactory achievement, there is still room to improve. The government is committed to building on these results, to continue the learning focus and to continue teacher training in this area. I am pleased to announce that the government will again commit \$2 million this year for students who fell into levels one and two (that is, the two lowest levels of the basic skills test). This funding will allow additional help to be directed to those young people to ensure that in next year's test they achieve a better result.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Is the government still charging members of the public \$32 in respect of vintage motorcycles under the emergency services levy? If so, when will the promised new fee of \$8 be introduced and when will owners be reimbursed for the difference they have overpaid? I have been informed by a constituent that, since the announcement that the amount charged to owners of vintage motorcycles would be reduced to \$8, he has been charged (and has paid) the fee of \$32 on 3 July, 21 September and 16 October.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (Minister for Emergency Services):** As I stated almost a couple of months ago, there would be a remission with respect to historic vehicles; owners would be charged \$8 based on the fact that if their vehicles were registered for 90 days of road use alone a year they would pay \$8, the equivalent of a quarter of a full year's levy. This was something which the government perceived to be fair and equitable. We have listened to the—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE:** We do listen, unlike members on the other side, particularly the member for Wright at the back now who is yelling out and who definitely did not listen when she deserted her community and left a notice on the door so that she could attend some factional fight between the opposition leader and some of the others. That is not the what we call listening—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE:** The fact is that we are working through the regulations at the moment concerning the remittance, and anyone who has already received an account and were charged more than the \$8 will have that full amount remitted as soon as possible. I suggest that that would be ready in the very near future. So, the honourable member can advise her constituent that, if they had an account that was over and above the \$8, they will be fully remitted to 1 July this year.

## IRRIGATORS

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. What incentives are there for irrigators to use their water more efficiently?

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage):** I think most people in this House would understand that, over the many years of contribution that the member for Hammond has made, his interest in this area is well and truly highlighted by the manner in which he has assisted irrigators in his own area. This government has a strong commitment to encouraging the efficient use of water by irrigators, and this has been demonstrated clearly during the recent cabinet meeting that was held in the Riverland when the Premier launched the Loxton irrigation scheme.

It is sometimes too easy for all of us to turn on the tap and then forget about the value of the water flowing from it. A recent study into water and the Australian economy found that, if today's water use arrangements were to continue over the next 20 years, the demand for water would outstrip supply. This is a challenge for all of us. It certainly is a challenge for irrigators to utilise our existing water resources much more efficiently, and therefore it becomes more academic.

Quite bluntly, if we do not do things better, the water for further industry expansion will just not be available. The threat of saline soils and saline water also provides a very powerful incentive to improve our water use techniques. For several decades now South Australia has led the way in Australia in water resources management. We have led the nation with the introduction of the Water Resources Act 1996, and that was the first integrated water resources management legislation in the nation. Of course, the Hon. David Wotton (who was the minister at the time) certainly moved towards very distinct reforms for South Australia which continued to be built on the foundation of the 1996 act. The current Water Resources Act 1997 is indeed the most advanced in Australia.

This state was also the first to require formal community involvement in water resources management through the South Australian Water Resources Council. We have now taken that community involvement much further to see the establishment of six catchment water management boards and three water resources planning committees throughout the state.

South Australia is the only state to have a statutory state water plan. This plan provides a focus on encouraging the use of non-traditional water resources such as stormwater and the reuse of stormwater. The volume of treated sewage effluent and urban run-off being used in South Australia has almost trebled since 1996, and through the use of new technologies such as aquifer storage and recovery these new directions in water resources use are being taken up at even greater rates.

It is anticipated that this use of non-traditional water resources will again double over the next five years. To take irrigation beyond the year 2000, obviously we need to go further again. We need to manage our natural resources in an integrated and comprehensive manner and to ensure their ecological sustainability for the future. The results from such forward planning will be tangible. Apart from the increased availability of water resources for further development and the obvious impacts on our environment, improving our irrigation techniques will also bring financial rewards.

Under South Australia's state food plan, the food industry aims to grow turnover from \$7 billion to some \$15 billion by the year 2100, and around half these targeted \$8 billion product improvements are expected to be achieved through better use of existing resources, including the more efficient use of water. The industries arising from irrigation in South Australia have given us a lot to be proud of, but the challenge is to ensure the sustainability of clean, reliable water resources, capable of supplying growing industries and quality drinking water, and this is now being addressed not only by South Australia but also by the whole of Australia.

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### REPLY TO QUESTION

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I think I should add a little more information to an answer I gave earlier today, because the member for Elizabeth, who asked the question, did not understand. The patient involved went into hospital for surgery on a broken leg, and that is what was being treated. Under anaesthetic, problems arose with the patient's teeth;

serious health risks were involved with the teeth. A dentist was called, and three teeth were removed. This was done under the full professional advice of the surgeon and dentist involved, because of the health risk. That is why I have called in the medical and dental boards to ensure that the appropriate standards were applied.

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### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** This week I received a letter from one of my constituents, expressing her concern about the spread of the disease Mundulla yellows, which is destroying our native trees and other shrub species. Christine noticed that a gum in her garden showed signs of yellowing and was deteriorating in some sections. She has had to cut the branches away and is genuinely concerned for the survival of her tree. This problem was first documented in about 1980 by Geoff Cotton at Buckingham, which is near Mundulla in the South-East of this state. Since that time surveys have revealed that this disease is spreading and is not only destroying mature eucalypts; it is also taking its toll on banksias, xanthorrhoea and acacias, to name a few. I understand Mundulla yellows also affects seedlings and saplings, so this means that where mature trees have succumbed to the disease the seeds they deposit which create regeneration are also lost.

While we have many pressing and desperate issues to contend with, this one urgently needs funds injected into research so we can learn more about the disease and hopefully find ways of containing its spread; it certainly appears to be spreading quite rapidly. It is extraordinary that there is so little government interest in this matter. I have heard nothing from either state or federal governments about this issue. While I believe the federal government should take the initiative and provide sufficient funding for proper research to be undertaken, state governments should also be lobbying their federal colleagues on this, as well as putting in state moneys. The disease has the potential to destroy our native vegetation and is actually doing that, and that directly impacts on our bird life and wildlife, and threatened species will be placed at even greater risk. Areas that are suffering salinity problems will be affected even more than they now. Given that Mundulla yellows is already destroying trees in our suburban gardens, it certainly appears that the devastation will have no bounds.

In a worst case scenario that was put to me (but it may not be beyond reality), I was asked, 'Can you imagine travelling to the Flinders Ranges and seeing dead tree after dead tree, the wildlife gone because their habitats have gone? The only place we may be able to see some of our threatened species will be in a zoo or a wildlife park.' Given that Mundulla yellows appears to be non species specific, consider the devastation it could have if pine trees were susceptible (although I do not suggest that they are); that would devastate our pine forests and the associated industries. I guess that if that were the case a lot of money would be injected into it straight away. Our tourism industry could be affected; the potential to market our nation as having some of the most diverse country in the world, including wide open spaces,

pristine beaches and natural bushland might be lost, along with the much needed tourism dollars. So, perhaps the Minister for Tourism might spare a thought about that.

While we are not at that frightening stage of the disease, though the current situation is frightening enough, if we continue to deny the much needed funding into research, at some stage that scenario could become a reality. At a recent conference on Mundulla yellows, Dr Paton from the University of Adelaide called for funds to be established that will allow environmental problems to be addressed before they become a major threat. Mundulla yellows has the potential to be a major threat, and indeed it is now. If we do not put in money we will ignore it at our peril. I note in the documents provided to me that the effect of this disease appears to be wider spread at roadsides in rural areas and less widely spread away from the roadside. This is obviously very fortunate but, given that we know so little about this disease, it may be possible simply for vehicle movements to be the catalyst in spreading it, or perhaps insects. This just highlights the fact that we know so little about it. Like Christine and many others we urge the government to make proper funding available.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** Last Saturday 23 October, I had the privilege of representing the Minister for Education at the opening of the extensions to the Hub Library at Aberfoyle Park. The Governor, Sir Eric Neal, performed the official opening and, as usual, not only entertained people but also impressed people with his commitment and interest. He jokingly distinguished between passionate librarians and librarians who have passion. The extensions, which exceed \$1 million, were funded in a partnership arrangement between the Margaret Cutten Foundation (Margaret died a few years ago and left quite a bit of money), the Friends of the Hub Library, the City of Onkaparinga (which was the major contributor), Aberfoyle Park High School Council and the Department for Education, Training and Employment. It is an excellent example of a joint use library; it has been in operation for nearly 10 years but has now been greatly expanded. It is to the credit of all those people and organisations that we now have a much bigger library, offering a greater array of services.

The Mayor, Ray Gilbert, attended, as did many other local people. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Local Government attended, and the member for Kaurana was also present. I congratulate all those involved. I should say that the Treasurer, Hon. Rob Lucas, was not there, but it was his arm that I gently twisted a few years ago when he was Minister for Education which made this possible.

The next matter I would like to raise is the progress being made on the beautification of Main South Road from Darlington to O'Halloran Hill. The southern partnership meeting on Friday, which is a meeting of MPs, the mayor, the city manager and other managers from the City of Onkaparinga reached the point where a concept can be developed in beautifying that stretch of Main South Road. We know that the new expressway has been beautified with tree plantings, and the intention is to plant a long, spectacular avenue of mature eucalyptus maculata trees, along Main South Road.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** That is a spotted gum. It will be complemented with native shrubs. Subject to support from the Department of Transport, the intention is to establish an area highlighting the agricultural produce of the district, so there will be a little vineyard, almond and olive display and

so on. It is all still at the conceptual stage, but it is progressing well and I commend all those who are involved and supportive of it. It is something I have been keen to see happen for a very long time.

Returning to the topic of education, I commend the Minister for Education for providing to Craighburn Primary School generous funding in the order of \$100 000 to assist in the expansion of the administration area. That assistance is greatly appreciated and most welcomed by the school. I refer also to money provided to upgrade the Reynella East Primary School oval to tackle drainage problems that have existed for a long time. I say to the Minister for Education, 'Well done.'

The next item refers to the SHIP program (Students with High Intellectual Potential). One of my local high schools, Aberfoyle Park High School, is one of the schools involved in this program. Throughout the state there is a great interest by parents to get their children involved in this program. It is having a positive spin-off effect on the delivery and development of curriculum in the schools involved. At the moment there are three SHIP high schools—the Heights, Glenunga and Aberfoyle Park. However, as there is at this stage no guarantee of ongoing funding beyond 2001 in those schools or any other, I urge the minister to look at that matter very closely. I also urge him to consider what is currently an anomaly whereby students attending some of the special interests schools in the metropolitan area, including Urrbrae and Adelaide High, receive a travel subsidy but no such subsidy is provided for students attending any of the SHIP high schools.

Finally, I welcome the reference group on welfare reform announced by the federal government at the weekend. It is long overdue and very much welcome.

**Mr HILL (Kaurana):** Today I would like to raise a couple of issues involving foreign affairs. First, I will refer briefly to East Timor. I do not want to speak in any way about what is going on there, other than to wish well the troops representing Australian Interfet forces. I particularly want to pay tribute to three friends of mine who have been very active for some 25 years or so now in the campaign for an independent East Timor—Mr Andrew Alcock, his wife, Cathy Hepinstall, and Mr Bob Hanny. For 25 years, those three people with others whom I do not know have been very active in running the campaign for an independent East Timor. I was on their mailing list some 25 years ago and over that 25 years I have been impressed with how they have maintained the faith in that campaign. I must say that I lost my confidence many years ago that they would ever succeed, and I was astonished by the way they just kept going at it. I want to pay my very deep respects and express my appreciation for the way they maintained their faith. That is a faith that has been proved to be correct by the tremendous outcome of a free ballot in that country. I guess all of us would wish the people in East Timor the very best in building a democracy in that place.

The other issue I wished to speak about was Papua New Guinea. I was very pleased to represent the SA branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in August at a meeting of the CPA regional association. That was my second visit to New Guinea. I first visited Papua New Guinea in 1975. As many members would know, Papua New Guinea is our closest neighbour. It is closer to us geographically than New Zealand, and some might say in terms of political and cultural associations—

**Mr Lewis:** It is less than one kilometre.

**Mr HILL:** Indeed, it is less than one kilometre, as the member says. It is our closest neighbour. In 1975 when I visited Papua New Guinea it was going through a very important time. It was the time of an independent government. This most recent visit in August this year was a time when the new Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta, had taken over, and I was very pleased at the regional conference meeting to meet Sir Mekere. He asked me where I came from, and when I told him I was from South Australia he expressed great pleasure in hearing that because he had attended Flinders University for 12 months and he has very strong memories of this place.

There is no doubt that Papua New Guinea is facing a very difficult time, but in Sir Mekere and the government that has been elected and put in place, I think they finally have a government that is able to deal with some of the problems. In his address to the conference, Sir Mekere outlined some of the issues where he believes there needs to be reforms. In particular, economic reform is required. I will not go into that now, but he also talked about political reform. I would like to raise some of the issues that face the Papua New Guinea people in terms of politics. We think we have trouble here in the Labor Party and Liberal Party when it comes to the odd preselection battle, but when you look at the problems they face in their country it is just astonishing.

Currently they have a first past the post system. In a society where becoming a member of parliament is very much treasured and very well paid compared to ordinary people, it is not unusual to have 30 or so candidates running in an election. With 30 candidates running in an election with first past the post, it means that candidates win with less than 5 per cent of the vote. So, it is an absolute lucky dip as to who gets into parliament. Most members only ever serve one term, so for the time they are there—and this was admitted quite openly by the leadership in Papua New Guinea—many of them try to get as much wealth out of the system as they can for themselves.

This is not aided by two other problems that they face in Papua New Guinea. One is the phenomenon of party swapping which happens all the time when governments are being chosen. The other thing is what is known as their slush fund. Sir Bernard Narokobi, the Speaker, who addressed the conference, referred to it openly as a slush fund, and it is worth approximately 1 000 000 kina each year; that is about \$A500 000. I just say to anybody here who would contemplate the idea of introducing something like that in Australia how alien to our culture is the idea that each member of parliament would be able to distribute \$500 000 a year in his or her electorate at his total discretion to anybody he likes. It is no wonder there is so much corruption in that society.

The other point I would make is that Papua New Guinea is suffering from an absolute outbreak of violence. It is just terrible how Port Moresby has been turned into a hostile environment. We read regularly in the press of many violent outbursts.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Thank you, Mr Speaker—

**Ms Breuer:** Here we go!

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Well, I am pleased that the member is pleased to hear me. On Sunday I was privileged with the federal member for Grey and the Hon. Tim Fischer to attend the opening of the revamped Pichi Richi railway line. It was a great family occasion, when a huge number of people came out to witness this historic event. I would like

to commend all those people who were associated first with the opening and secondly with all the hard work of revamping the line from Woolshed Flat to Stirling North. There is no doubt that it will be very popular. The people who have run—

**Ms Breuer:** Did you get blotto on the train?

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I certainly did, and I enjoyed it very much. It was a great occasion. I am looking forward to seeing the railway line come into the Port Augusta railway station, which will then provide a great opportunity to assist with tourism in that part of South Australia.

One of the interesting points Mr Fischer made was that, the more one thinks about the decisions of the early 90s, how foolish and how wrong it was to rip up railway lines in South Australia, and the people responsible really do have a great deal to answer for. What they did in the north of South Australia has now made it very difficult in the future to hook up Pichi Richi with Peterborough Steamtown. I remember the great battles that we had to save the narrow gauge line from Peterborough to Eurelia, when they wanted to pull the lot up. We successfully saved that section of line, but the section from Eurelia that goes through to Bruce and Quorn was pulled up. You can still go out to Bruce.

It was a great occasion, and many people had an enjoyable afternoon. It was very important that a plaque was unveiled recognising the great service that the Country Women's Association in that part of South Australia gave to the troops passing through Quorn during the Second World War. They actually brought the old hut back and put it into its original position, and it is now used for various purposes. It was very interesting to hear some of the stories that were told by the ladies who participated in that particular project.

The other matter that I briefly raise this afternoon is the pastoral industry. I believe the House should be aware of the difficult situation facing many of my constituents in the pastoral areas of South Australia, particularly in the sheep zone. I do not know whether the House is aware that the price of wool is historically low. The price of sheep is not as good as it could be in many cases. Pastoralists have suffered poor seasons, have in many cases suffered from grasshoppers and generally have undergone a very difficult process.

I want to place on the record that the time has come for us to look favourably upon their circumstances and to provide these people with some assistance to ensure not only that the great benefits which the pastoral industry has provided to South Australia in the past and which it will continue to provide in future are not only recognised but also that we allow those people the opportunity to continue to make a decent living because they are suffering greatly. They have been the victims of bureaucracy and other unfortunate occurrences. There needs to be within the ranks of government a sympathetic approach.

Economic rationalism is all right in theory, but in practice it has many unintended consequences. Bureaucracy is a wonderful thing itself: it is self-perpetuating, insensitive and in many cases fails to recognise the human hardship and difficulties faced by many people, particularly in isolated parts of the community. Most of those people in small to medium-size pastoral enterprises through no fault of their own are suffering. If we have money to spend in other unnecessary ways such as on soccer stadium and such things, there is no reason why we cannot find the resources to assist these people to educate their children, which is very important, and to ensure that they have some of the services that the rest of the community takes for granted.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** Today I have a number of questions regarding the BHP sale of BHP Long Products. Initially, the announcement was greeted with great optimism in Whyalla and, although I would still like to carry the optimism through, more and more people are becoming concerned about the decision. The city is holding out and we are bearing well, but many questions need to be asked. It is important for civic leaders to keep control of emotions in our city. We cannot bury our heads in the sand. If there is a way in which we can pursue the state and federal governments to put pressure on BHP, we need to do so. Perhaps we need to look at a steel assistance plan for our part of the state and for those other plants that are affected.

The Premier and Leader of the Opposition have actively pursued the Adelaide Darwin railway. The Leader of the Opposition particularly for many years has been pursuing this and has realised the importance of this to our city. I am pleased about this and would certainly welcome it, but it will not solve our problem because it would be only about three years work for BHP and Whyalla if it got the contract for the rails for this railway.

The city also welcomed the Premier's announcement that Whyalla would be preferred site for the ship breaking industry and, although 1 000 jobs would be very nice for our city, we have to be realistic about this also. Nothing has convinced me thus far that the company will proceed with this project. It is the dirtiest industry in the world. Whyalla is not stupid. While we would welcome the jobs, we should not do so at any cost to our city. Environmental issues are the major concern, particularly with our emerging aquaculture industry.

We have lived with a dirty industry in Whyalla for 50 years and do not want another. Despite attempts by BHP to clean up emissions from the pellet plant in Whyalla and some \$30-odd million investment in this, it is still a major problem in the city; residents are still very unhappy with the emissions from the plant; and the EPA seems to be able to do nothing.

Where do we stand for our future? I wish I knew! My concerns are these. The BHP steel plant in Whyalla is old and, to a large extent, run down. The blast furnace is 17 years old—way beyond its lifetime. The coke ovens are accepted as being worn out. The pellet plant has major structural problems and the odds are that the structural steel mill will be closed. BHP has made a big investment in the caster, but in the BHP budget overall it is minimal.

Paul Anderson, the new CEO, says that shareholder value is of utmost importance. So we cannot kid ourselves—we have to face reality. If the company believed that it had good returning assets, why would it want to sell this company? Why did a major company like BHP, with the financial advice it receives, not secure a buyer in advance of this announcement? Why announce something like this without a buyer in mind? It does not seem to have any real set plan on how it intends to sell the business. There has been suggestion of a public float or an outright buyer, but this surely should have been decided before the proposed sale was announced.

BHP has given assurances that the company will not close and that a new company will come in, but what if no-one does? In Newcastle people have tried to be positive about the announcement, but if we look at the history of BHP's exit from Newcastle we see that it started to prepare Newcastle in 1995 when it announced an industrial land project called Steel River which was to generate 2000 jobs, in addition to many other community projects and commitments to the

community and to its workers. The management at that time—Australian management—had some social responsibility to the workers and felt that the exit of BHP from their community should be handled carefully.

The process took four years and the workers were prepared, but the costs were phenomenal and Paul Anderson, the new American CEO, has said publicly that this will not happen again. So what happens to our city if a buyer does not come along? We have a city of 24 000 people with an infrastructure to carry 30 000 people, and we may have no future. BHP is hoping for a buyer. This is a company that has in the past relied on land grants, on mining leases, on port facilities being provided and on government assistance to survive, and the prospect is frightening. State and federal governments must ask BHP what is its real intention in relation to Whyalla. Does it intend to sell or is this a sign that in perhaps three or four years time it will close our plant?

Time expired.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I pay a tribute to the organisers of the Ngarrindjeri Ngrikkuluw on Saturday and Sunday last. It is splendid weather to have activities of any kind at this time of year, and the Ngarrindjeri people at Raukkan (what we have otherwise known for a long time as Point McLeay) did extremely well to organise a whole weekend of celebrations. They otherwise called it the Raukkan centenary corroboree. It was the first major cultural event to be held by the Ngarrindjeri people in 100 years. I was going there not only in my own right but also on behalf of—

**Ms Stevens:** When?

**Mr LEWIS:** On the weekend—Saturday and Sunday. I was not there on Saturday. I was pleased, though, that they were able to organise such an event and invite everybody to it—it was a splendid celebration. There is no question about the fact that it can become for them a major celebration and one of the main ways in which better understanding can be developed between people who are Aboriginal in extraction and other Australians who live here and who do not understand much of the culture of the plethora of tribes and groups across the landscape of Australia prior to the arrival of Europeans.

I turn now to another function that was held on the weekend, namely, the public meeting at Walkers Flat on Saturday (in some measure that is the explanation why it was not possible for me to be at Point McLeay—at Raukkan—at that time). The Murray and Mallee Local Government Association had called a public meeting which I chaired, for 11 o'clock for people who were concerned about aspects relating to the government's decision regarding commercial fishers in new reaches proclaimed between Swan Reach and Nildottie and the other Nildottie to Walkers Flat. I commend the assistance given to that public meeting through the addresses provided by the Mayor of the Mid Murray Council, Mayor Ian Mann, and Dr Gary Morgan from Primary Industries SA, as well as the remarks that were made by the member for Schubert and the Hon. Ian Gilfillan from another place. The meeting, to my mind, was very commendable with respect to the way in which the people who wished to speak conducted themselves in the process and in the way in which they also listened to anyone else who was providing information or opinion or asking questions during the course of the meeting. I suppose I remark upon it because, whilst it is a subject that is very controversial and close to the hearts of those who attended and who have been affected by it, they were so well behaved. In other places in the world one would

not have expected them to even remain seated, leave alone rise to their feet and conduct themselves civilly in putting their differing points of view about the merits of the decision that the government has taken.

A long time ago I made it plain to the minister that I think the decision to relocate these commercial fishing reaches in the Murray is wrong. It is not solving anything. Native fish stocks in the river system in South Australia are already under pressure, and to relocate those fishers from one place to another does not relieve that pressure at all. Indeed, it only creates confrontation between the people who own the shacks, the people who go up there on a day-to-day basis to catch fish and the commercial fishers, who have their nets and gear strung out across the river in various locations. It does not help at all. The way forward is not to hunt wild stocks for commercial purpose. That is primitive. The way forward, is to farm the animals on the dry land as well as the animals from the water. Finally, I commend the people who attended the underground water resources meeting at Parilla last night, who equally conducted themselves so well.

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

Second reading.

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

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

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

Leave granted.

This Bill amends the *Judicial Administration (Auxiliary Appointments and Powers) Act 1988* by adding to the definition of 'judicial office' in section 2 the office of commissioner of the Environment, Resources and Development Court. At present, there is no provision for auxiliary appointments to that Court, but only for permanent appointments, either full-time or part-time. This Bill makes such provision.

Auxiliary appointment is a method of providing additional judicial resources to a court when a short-term need arises. An auxiliary appointment may be made for a term of up to 12 months, with the possibility of extension for a further 12 months. It is to be contrasted with permanent appointment. Examples of the use of auxiliaries include the situation where a judicial officer is on extended leave or where, due to a legislative change, there is a temporary increase in the workload of the court. The use of auxiliary appointments helps to prevent or reduce temporary backlogs in the work of the court, and increases the capacity of the court to deal expeditiously with new matters coming before it, and so improves the efficiency of the court's service to litigants. This was the original rationale for the Act.

By providing for the appointment of auxiliary commissioners of the Environment, Resources and Development Court, the Bill will extend these benefits to the users of that Court also. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

*Clause 1: Short title*

This clause is formal.

*Clause 2: Amendment of s. 2—Interpretation*

This clause amends the definition of 'judicial office' in the principal Act so as to include the office of commissioner of the Environment, Resources and Development Court.

**Ms STEVENS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (MAGISTRATES COURT APPEALS) BILL**

Second reading.

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

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

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

Leave granted.

The purpose of this Bill is to make sure that all appeals from the Magistrates Court are dealt with at the appropriate level. It ensures that the resources of the Full Supreme Court are not called in aid unnecessarily, but are available in cases which properly require the Full Court's consideration.

This is indeed already largely the case in appeals in civil and summary criminal matters. Those appeals already go from the magistrate to a single judge of the Supreme Court. However, in criminal appeals from a magistrate in minor indictable matters, the appellant (who may be the police or the defendant) presently has a choice as to whether to appeal to a single judge of the Supreme Court, or to the Full Supreme Court. In practice, it has been far more common for the appellant to elect to appeal to a single judge, but the option to go directly to the Full Court has been available.

In all appeals from the Magistrates Court to a single judge, whether civil or criminal, the judge can refer the appeal for hearing and determination by the Full Court, if he or she thinks fit. This means that where an appeal raises a complex legal issue, for example, it may be referred to the Full Court. There is also a further right of appeal from the single judge to the Full Court, but in summary matters, this is only by leave of either the judge or the Full Court.

The Government considers that there is generally no need for appeals to go directly from the Magistrates Court to the Full Supreme Court. They should ordinarily be dealt with by a single judge, as indeed they most often are. This is simple, sensible, and conservative of resources. However, the single judge should always be able to refer appropriate matters to be determined by the Full Court. The Bill will therefore amend the Magistrates Court Act to provide that all appeals from that Court lie to a single judge of the Supreme Court, who may in his or her discretion refer the matter to the Full Court.

The Government also considers that the further right of appeal from the single judge to the Full Court should remain in all cases, but should be by leave. That leave could appropriately be granted by either the single judge or the Full Court. By limiting the appeal to cases of leave, it is hoped to ensure that matters reaching the Full Court are those which raise issues properly deserving of the Full Court's attention. Accordingly, the Bill amends the Supreme Court Act to make the further appeal available by leave only. That is, matters reaching the Full Court from the Magistrates Court will be filtered, either by a single judge or by the Full Court itself, to see that they are appropriate for Full Court consideration.

This reasoning reflects the reality that few of the cases coming before the Magistrates Court justify the immediate consideration of the Full Supreme Court on appeal, while at the same time providing a sufficient mechanism of access to the Full Court for those cases which do.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Explanation of Clauses

PART 1

PRELIMINARY

*Clause 1: Short title*

*Clause 2: Commencement*

*Clause 3: Interpretation*

These clauses are formal.

PART 2

AMENDMENT OF MAGISTRATES COURT ACT 1991

*Clause 4: Amendment of s. 42—Appeals*

Section 42(2)(b) of the *Magistrates Court Act 1991* currently provides that an appeal in a criminal action (other than one relating to an industrial offence) lies to the Supreme Court. Subsection (3) provides that if such an appeal relates to a minor indictable offence the appeal is to the Full Court unless the appellant elects to have it heard by a single Judge.

The amendment removes subsection (3) and provides that all such appeals are to the Supreme Court constituted of a single Judge.

The amendment also empowers the Judge to refer the appeal for hearing and determination by the Full Court.

*Clause 5: Amendment of s. 43—Cases stated*

Section 43(2)(b) of the Act currently provides that the Court may reserve a question of law arising in a criminal action (other than one relating to an industrial offence) for determination by the Supreme Court and, in the case of a question arising from proceedings related to a minor indictable offence, the question is to be determined by the Full Court unless the parties agree to refer it to a single Judge.

The amendment alters paragraph (b) and provides that all such reservations of questions of law are to be determined by the Supreme Court constituted of a single Judge unless referred by the Judge to the Full Court.

PART 3

AMENDMENT OF SUPREME COURT ACT 1935

*Clause 6: Amendment of s. 50—Appeals against decisions of judges and masters*

Section 50(1) of the *Supreme Court Act 1935* provides for an appeal to the Full Court against a judgment, order, direction or decision of a judge. Subclause (3) of the proviso deals with the circumstances in which leave of the judge or of the Full Court is required for the appeal. Paragraph (a) is altered so that such leave is required in all appeals from an order of a judge made on appeal from the Magistrates Court.

**Ms STEVENS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

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

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 29 September. Page 32.)

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** The purpose of this Bill is as presented by the minister in his second reading speech: to provide the Minister for Human Services with the power to direct hospitals and health services that are incorporated under the South Australian Health Commission. The minister states that, under section 27(1) of the South Australian Health Commission Act, the Governor can establish an incorporated hospital or health centre to provide services in accordance with its constitution. While the act provides for the South Australian Health Commission to be subject to the control and direction of the minister, it does not articulate a similar requirement for incorporated hospitals and health centres. Individual constitutions vary. Some include provisions which variously require the incorporated body to give effect to the policies from time to time determined by the commission, and I understand that about 55 out of 79 of the hospitals or health centres are in this group. The rest (approximately 23) have in their constitutions words to the effect: to give effect to any directions given by the minister and act in accordance with and give effect to the policies from time to time determined by the commission. Further, in the minister's speech, as his main justification for this amendment, he said:

In the interests of accountability, it is desirable that the act clearly and unambiguously provides for incorporated hospitals and health centres to be subject to direction by the minister.

The opposition supports the principles of transparency and accountability and the right of the government—or any government—to ensure that there is proper coordination and delivery of health services to the community. We also believe and accept that, since the buck stops with the minister—that is, ultimate accountability lies with the minister—it is not unreasonable for the minister to be able to exercise a power of direction.

The opposition made those views clear back in 1995, when we were debating the South Australian Health Services

Bill, which this government attempted to introduce in its previous term. I want to quote from my opening comments in relation to that debate, and I refer to *Hansard* of Thursday 6 April 1995:

The opposition is in favour of constructive reform of the health system but only after full consultation and debate. We accept that the government has a mandate to replace the Health Commission with a department and to introduce regional organisations. We also accept that the minister will need increased powers to provide better coordination of health services.

I must also say, though, that the opposition supports other principles in addition to the principles of transparency and accountability. We support the principle of good governance, where legislation is developed holistically and major changes occur within a policy framework and are clearly placed in a context and in relation to the vision of the government regarding the delivery of health services. We also support the principle of a consultative and cooperative management style and the principle of proper community consultation—and, I must say, we have not seen much of this for a long while.

The opposition has some concerns and some questions in relation to this amendment and why we are seeing it, and our concerns certainly have been echoed by hospitals and health centres in South Australia. I want to put on the record some letters that I have received in relation to this matter. The first letter is from Ken Goodall, Executive Director of the Hospitals and Health Services Association of South Australia. The letter states:

Dear Ms Stevens, I am writing on behalf of members to express their concerns about the recently introduced bill to amend the South Australian Health Commission Act. You may have also been contacted by health services in your electorate regarding this matter.

The association is the industry body representing mainly publicly funded health services in South Australia. Membership includes health services in metropolitan and rural regions, state-wide services and aged care providers. HNSA is the state association member of the Australian Healthcare Association located in Canberra.

The concerns expressed by members relate to three matters: the role of community boards in the health system; circumstances surrounding the introduction of the bill; and specific aspects of the proposed legislation as it relates to providing clinical services and the ownership of assets. I will now address each in more detail.

Many members question the future role of community boards once a minister has the power to direct a health service. In fact, some question the need for boards should this bill be passed, while others are of the opinion that this is a surreptitious way of removing boards at a local level. The bill seems to have been introduced with undue haste, not allowing adequate time for consultation and discussion. As it is over 20 years since the introduction of the SAHC Act, the need for this amendment at this time is not apparent and no reason has been given other than consistency and need for accountability. Unfortunately, this approach leads many members to suspect there is some ulterior motive behind the amendment.

Ministerial direction in relation to clinical treatment of an individual is quite correctly exempted from the bill. Members are concerned that this exception does not extend to a class or type of clinical service such as obstetrics or orthopaedics leading to a health service being directed to stop a specific service and thereby undergo a role change. This is unnecessary and suggests a more centralised and less regional approach is being contemplated to the provision of clinical services.

Many of our health services have been built and equipped with local community funds, and this support continues today. Boards need clarification on whether the land, buildings, equipment and capital funds are in fact deemed to be held by the Crown. In the event the government of the day were to start accessing capital funds or selling assets for whatever purpose, then many members believe local communities would cease to help raising moneys. The association asks that you use your best endeavours to ensure these concerns are addressed before passing the legislation.

Copies of two other letters were faxed to me: one from the Lamerook District Health Services Incorporated, and one from

the Pinnaroo Soldiers Memorial Hospital Incorporated. I will put them on the record as well. The letters were sent to the member for Hammond and copied to me. The letter from the Lameroo District Health Services states:

We have been made aware of an amendment to the South Australian Health Commission Act that was introduced as a bill on 29 September 1999, lodged by the Minister for Human Services. The bill, titled the 'South Australian Health Commission (Direction of Hospitals and Health Centres) Amendment Bill', having the purpose to provide the Minister for Human Services with the power to direct hospitals and health services which are incorporated under the South Australian Health Commission Act. Concerns about this amendment arise around matters such as the apparent haste with which it is being handled, uncertainty around the ownership of assets and the power of the minister in relation to hospitals and health services providing a type or class of clinical services, for example, obstetrics or orthopaedic surgery.

However, the intent of this letter is to forward our dissatisfaction with the fact that we as hospitals and health services have not been informed by the Department of Human Services or any representative of government about this bill. In fact, if the Hospitals and Health Services Association of South Australia had not informed us of these matters, I believe we would not have been informed until all decisions had been made at the highest level. Given that this bill has serious consequences to the operation of our health services and was introduced with great haste and without informing us, it can only be assumed that the intention of the authors was to pass this bill without our knowledge.

I request that you explain the inconsistencies and issues that I have raised and look forward to your prompt response.

The letter from Pinnaroo echoes the same issues. Those are the sorts of things that have been said informally to me also from other areas, primarily in the country, about this bill. I shall run through them again. First, there is the lack of consultation. I really think that in terms of consultation, understanding the need for consultation and having proper consultative procedures the Department of Human Services has a lot to learn. What is the best way to get people offside immediately? Spring something on them; especially, spring something on them which may have the effect of their feeling threatened about their assets and about their power to have control over those assets or which may call into question their role as a board. That is precisely what this has done.

In terms of consultation, as I just said, the minister's department leaves a lot to be desired. The whole process of clinical reviews and how they have related to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its future has been an absolute debacle. I have said that on a couple of occasions in this House and have gone into great detail about it. What about the fact that when you make major changes you need to put them within a policy framework to ensure that the people they affect understand them, have a say about them and have all their concerns answered? Certainly, this takes time and effort, but in the end you do not have people thinking that you have a hidden agenda.

As it turns out, when people just go straight in—and I can only believe what these health centre boards are saying in that they had no idea that this was on the agenda—you can hardly complain when they think you have a hidden agenda. In terms of management, it is absolutely incompetent for it to be done this way. Anyway, that is what has happened—and it has happened again. It is the usual health commission botch-up in terms of process that gets everybody so offside. I remember that with the 1995 bill the same thing happened: race it through the House by introducing it one week and debating it the next. All hell breaks out and it is hopeless in terms of a process and getting a good outcome for health. So, lack of consultation is an issue all over again.

The question that people keep asking is: why do we need the bill? As I said, in his explanation the minister simply stated that it is in the interests of accountability, that it is desirable that the act clearly and unambiguously provide for incorporated hospitals and health centres to be subject to direction. I would like the minister to explain, since the South Australian Health Commission has been able to operate for over 20 years without this measure, why it is needed now. We know that funding agreements and performance agreements are in operation. What specifically has happened to make this a necessity now?

Why is this such a priority when the Auditor-General has flagged concerns in two reports about the problem of someone being both the CEO of the Health Commission and the head of the Department of Human Services and the fact that he considers that to be unlawful? I should have thought that was more of a priority than this amendment bill. Why is it so important that the legislation be amended in this way now? People are making all sorts of assumptions and guesses about why this is so. They are wondering whether this is about the need for country hospitals to change their role or whether it is because country hospitals will not do what the department wants. It has been suggested that perhaps this legislation relates to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the fact that the downgrade which the minister wants to proceed with might cause problems and that he wants to be able to direct it.

I would like the minister to say why we need this legislation and why we need it now. In that respect, I again refer to the debate on the 1995 bill, because Minister Armitage spoke about the status quo in terms of control. The member for Goyder said:

I bring to the minister's attention a couple of other points that the chairman of the board of directors of the Southern Yorke Peninsula Health Services made with respect to clause 21. The letter given to me states:

Of particular concern is the concentration of such wide-ranging powers in the hands of two persons, i.e., the minister and the chief executive officer. There seem to be virtually no "checks and balances" on these powers.

I will address the second point which is also relevant to this clause. The letter states:

The minister's prior decision to maintain health unit boards of directors as the responsible body for the local health delivery seems grossly at odds with the provisions of the bill which require boards of directors to act in accordance with [the] direction of the chief executive.

Minister Armitage said with reference to that bill and the power of the chief executive officer to direct:

In the first instance, I have addressed the matter of the concentration of wide-ranging powers in the hands of two people on a number of previous occasions, but I indicate that those powers are in the present act, so there is no reason for anyone who is operating completely effectively and efficiently and without ministerial or chief executive officer interference under the present act to expect that, if they continue to provide services appropriately, anything will change, because it will not.

In relation to the second matter, the boards of directors have a number of guidelines for the provision of services. They provide services within the act, according to their constitution and according to the service agreement with the health unit and the Health Commission. The chief executive's power of direction comes into operation only when the boards of directors or health units step outside those matters. The direction of the chief executive is there not to address the matters that I have talked about before within the act—the constitutional service agreements—but to address the issue if a particular small country hospital suddenly decided it wanted to provide cardiothoracic surgery. Clearly it would be in no-one's interests for that to occur, and the chief executive officer may direct that the boards of directors are outside their service agreement, and

accordingly there would be an expectation that they would come back within those agreements.

I ask the minister to explain what has happened now to make him do this. What sorts of issues have arisen in particular health units across the state that mean that this needs to happen now?

The second point I raise concerns the problem that I perceive when you bring a very important change into a very large bill without any explanation of how it will affect other mechanisms within the parent act. The letter from the Hospitals and Health Services Association raises the question of how this relates to the role of hospital and regional boards which are empowered to administer hospitals and health units in accordance with their approved constitution. Will this mean the emasculation of those boards? I want the minister to answer that question. Will this mean that people will no longer want to be part of a board, and, as the board members ask, what will happen when there is a conflict between a ministerial direction and the role of the board? What does the minister envisage in that case? Will this mean that the direction will stand and the people would resign?

I think there is a problem when something like this is introduced in isolation. I wonder whether the government has abandoned its original intention, which it announced at the beginning of the last term, to replace the South Australian Health Commission with a department, because I would have thought that if the government intended to do something such as this, which essentially neuters the independence of the health commission from the minister—which was the intent behind the establishment of the South Australian Health Commission—it would have brought down an appropriate new act as the previous minister attempted to do but with which he failed because, I believe, of his own shortcomings in terms of parts of that act.

I wonder why the government did not bring down a new act and be quite open and above board about what it wanted to do in terms of its vision and strategy for health services in South Australia, including the formation of a department and the power of direction of the minister to whom the department head is answerable, and also including all the issues as they relate to boards, regional boards and other structures.

If this was done we would be able to see how it all fits together with the policy framework and the government's intentions. By doing it this way, it is almost like a trickle down effect. Piecemeal changes are made: we will have this change now, and presumably we will have another change in a few months' time to fix up the issue in respect of the chair of the Health Commission and the chief executive officer of the Department of Human Services. I should have thought that a better way to proceed would be to enact new legislation in line with what the government intended in its last term.

When I began my speech I quoted the fact that the opposition is in favour of constructive reform of the health commission and acknowledges the government's right to change that structure provided that there is adequate consultation. As members would recall, that original bill failed primarily because the then minister for health would not countenance any accountability mechanisms for privatisation as it existed then. I would have hoped that the current minister could move on from that and produce an entirely new bill.

The opposition notes that there are limitations to the power of direction in the Bill before us. There is the limitation on giving directions in relation to the clinical treatment

of a patient. The question that is being asked—and it was asked in those letters to which I have referred—is: what about a class of clinical services which could, in the end, affect the treatment of patients, because they would not be able to get obstetrics or whatever it was about which the minister gave directions?

There are also limitations on the sale or disposal of land or any other asset that is not held by the crown. This is a very important point for many country hospitals and health units. People want clarification about equipment facilities on which they have worked for countless hours and over many years and the millions of dollars that have been raised across South Australia over time by local communities. People are very sensitive about ministerial direction in relation to those things—and they were mentioned in the letter to which I referred. Essentially again—

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** The bill specifically relates to only property owned by the Crown. It is very specific.

**Ms STEVENS:** Yes, the minister is saying that it is very specific in relation to property held by the Crown, but the point that is made in this letter is that the boards need clarification on whether the land, buildings, equipment and capital funds are deemed to be held by the Crown. There seems to have been some suggestion, I understand by some departmental officers in some circumstances, that have made boards uneasy about what is held by the Crown and what is theirs and what this direction could mean. Again, it seems to me that, if this had been handled better and if people had been given the opportunity to be consulted, these things could have been ironed out and perhaps they would not be as concerned as they are now. Nevertheless, they are the comments that are coming back. I would like the minister's view on that.

The other question is: what is the definition of an asset? Does it mean trust fund? What does it mean? The minister is shaking his head, but I would like it on the record. Will the minister address that issue in his response?

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**Ms STEVENS:** I would still like you to address that because that is what is coming back to me. In the minister's bill there is a part that says that a direction must be given in writing and particulars of any directions given must be included in the incorporated hospital's or health centre's annual report. The opposition will move an initial amendment in the committee stage requiring that any direction be also published in the *Gazette*. In order for a minister to give a direction some conflict or disagreement must have arisen. We do not think it is good enough for it just to be included in an annual report which is hard to access, hard to gauge and hard to monitor across the whole system, and we believe that this should be published in the *Gazette* as soon as possible. That is one amendment that we will move.

Our second amendment restricts the decisions as they relate to specific personnel matters. The amendment that we will be putting in that regard is the same as that in the Public Sector Management Act and it restricts a direction relating to the employment of a particular person or the assignment, transfer, remuneration, discipline or termination of a particular employee. The opposition notes that in giving this direction there is no requirement at all for the minister to have consulted in any way and we will be giving some thought to this between now and when the bill reaches the upper house in relation to further amendments that may ensure that people do get to know about these things.

As I have said before, the track record of consultation (or should I say lack of consultation) of the Health Commission

is legend. It seems to constantly make the same mistake in terms of its inability to understand what consultation means. We certainly will be giving some thought to some other amendments when we get more information back from the field in relation to other matters, but we will be raising those when the bill reaches the upper house.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** This particular bill, which was introduced to parliament on 29 September, nearly a month ago, has of recent days generated just a little interest around the constituency. Last night I attended a function at Jamestown at which an officer from the hospital told me that I had been sent a fax during the day; needless to say that I had not seen it because I was visiting part of my constituency. I had already received one from the Booleroo Centre Hospital. I did receive the following letter from the Hospitals and Health Services Association of South Australia which states:

Re: South Australian Health Commission (Direction of Hospitals and Health Centres) Amendment Bill.

I am writing on behalf of members to express their concerns about the recently introduced bill to amend the South Australian Health Commission Act. You may have also been contacted by health services in your electorate regarding this matter.

Yes, that is correct. It continues:

The association is the industry body representing mainly publicly funded health services in South Australia. Membership includes health services metropolitan and rural regions, statewide services and aged care providers.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** What's the date of the letter?

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** It is dated 25 September. I did point out earlier that the Bill was introduced on 29 September. The letter further states:

The concerns expressed by members relate to three matters; the role of community boards in the health system, circumstances surrounding the introduction of the bill and specific aspects of the proposed legislation as it relates to providing clinical services and the ownership of assets. I will now address each in more detail.

Many members question the future role of community boards once a minister has the power to direct the health service. In fact some question the need for boards should this bill be passed while others are of the opinion this is a surreptitious way of removing boards at a local level.

The bill seems to have been introduced with undue haste not allowing adequate time for consultation and discussion. As it is over 20 years since the introduction of the South Australian Health Commission Act, the need for this amendment at this time is not apparent and no reason has been given other than consistency and need for accountability. Unfortunately this approach leads many members to suspect there is some ulterior motive behind the amendment.

Ministerial direction in relation to clinical treatment of an individual is quite correctly exempted from the bill. Members are concerned that this exception does not extend to a class or type of clinical service such as obstetrics or orthopaedics leading to a health service being directed to stop a specific service and thereby undergo a role change. This is unnecessary and suggests a more centralised and less regional approach is being contemplated to the provision of clinical services.

Many of our health services have been built and equipped with local community funds and this support continues today. Boards need clarification on whether the land, buildings, equipment and capital funds are in fact deemed to be held by the Crown. In the event the government of the day were to start accessing capital funds or selling assets for whatever purpose then many members believe local communities would cease to help [in fundraising].

The association asks that you use your best endeavours to ensure these concerns are addressed before passing the legislation. Please contact me . . .

It is signed by Mr Goodall, Executive Director. The comments from other hospitals are of a similar nature. I would be most grateful, when the minister responds to this debate, if he can set out the reasons in detail.

Let me make my own position quite clear. I believe that hospitals can be successfully run only if they have local community boards, and I think it is very important that the minister indicates that that will continue. I know that he has done it in the past and that the role of these people has been absolutely essential in the good management of hospitals. I have to say that in my constituency the local boards have played a very important role in ensuring adequate health services and maintaining very strong community ownership of those facilities. I am of the view that this provision would be used only on the rare occasions that something is drastically out of order. I would not envisage that any minister would want to buy into a public controversy by lightly or capriciously giving a direction to a local board. It would only be as a last resort after (I would anticipate) a considerable amount of representation and activity had taken place.

One thing this government has done is that it has supported the small rural hospitals in South Australia. It has not closed any, and I would have to say that in my constituency a considerable number of resources have been placed in them to ensure that they can continue to provide an excellent service to the community. The minister knows me well enough to appreciate that I hold these small rural services such as hospitals and schools very close to my heart. I would not support any course of action that I believed would be used to suddenly start beating people over the head. I know that from time to time I have annoyed the regional health boards—and one of them in particular—when I have taken the part of the local board. I make no apology for doing that, and no doubt I will do it again in the future.

Those small communities are concerned that their independence is in no way affected. So, I look forward to the minister's response to a matter that has now evolved into one of considerable interest throughout rural South Australia. It is interesting that the activity has taken place only in the past few days. I do not know whether someone has gone out and wound up the ratchet or put a bit of petrol on the fire—

*Ms Stevens interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** It was introduced on the twenty-ninth.

*Ms Stevens interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Yes, but on other occasions when things go wrong, board meeting or no board meeting, they seem to be able to get on to me pretty quickly. This minister has been most helpful in looking after the interests of those small communities.

**Ms Stevens:** I'm sure they'll be looking forward to his response.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** We are looking forward to it. I am aware that even more onerous provisions apply under other acts of parliament. One of the things that must be remembered is that at the end of the day the minister has to wear the responsibility for providing all the resources. If something goes wrong, the member for Elizabeth would be the first one to stand in the House and blame the minister, even though the minister has no responsibility to give direction.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Yes, even on individuals—like today, when the minister could not possibly have any idea of, or accept any responsibility for, the case that was put. The member for Giles ought to be the last person to start being critical of this, because her hospital's management was one of those which did leave a bit to be desired in the past. I know that in recent times it has greatly improved and it is coming

up to the mark but in the past (and the honourable member is going very quiet now) I am fully aware of what went on there. I have very close contact with the regional boards of the country hospitals and I know that the management has left a bit to be desired. Perhaps the honourable member was not listening. Perhaps she got Eddie Hughes on the radio as she or someone did this morning. No wonder Whyalla has problems with people like that getting on the radio.

**Ms Breuer:** That's pretty personal!

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I can't help it; it's a fact. If the cap fits, wear it. The honourable member passes out bouquets over the chamber, but a few have to come back, perhaps with a bit of interest. I know the honourable member is keen to hear the minister respond, and I do not want to take up the time of the House unnecessarily. I look forward to the minister's response.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** Unlike the case of the member for Stuart, at least a couple of hospitals in my electorate brought this matter to my attention in a more timely fashion and did not wait a full month until they had their monthly meeting to do so. Several hospitals have contacted me on this issue with some degree of concern, and I have met with the minister at their behest and discussed this matter with him. The minister gave me a reasonably plausible explanation for introducing this bill. One of the things I have learnt in the relatively short time I have been in this place is that acts of this parliament that rely on the goodwill of a minister are poor pieces of legislation. I would add that I believe that the current Minister for Human Services, who controls the health budget and health portfolio, is a particularly good minister and I think he has considerable empathy for this role that he is undertaking, but I have noticed that when you have an act of parliament that relies on the goodwill of a minister, as sure as eggs one day you will have a minister who does not have that empathy and who does not perform his or her role in that portfolio position for the benefit of those persons to whom the portfolio and policies are directed. The history of politics is littered with ministers taking a political stance for ideological or even baser reasons.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr WILLIAMS:** As I said, the history of politics is littered with that. I think we should get it right and ensure that provisions in any act should allow for the frequent situation where ministers do things that are not necessarily in the best interests of the state. I will leave it at that.

A couple of issues have been raised by the hospitals in my electorate. One of them is the lack of consultation, as the member for Elizabeth has highlighted. It is a very small bill. Perhaps governments and ministers decide that the amount of consultation is directly linked to the size of the bill; because some large bills have considerable consultation, they might feel it is not necessary for small bills. It has been raised with me that there has been a lack of consultation and that at least to the hospital boards it has come out of the blue. I will read from a letter I received just today; this is the second letter I have had from the Penola War Memorial Hospital Incorporated. I have met with them on this issue and the latest letter states:

This board remains concerned at the way the bill has been introduced into the parliament without reference to or consultation with local hospital boards.

I and other members have previously highlighted the problem we have with the provision of health services in regional and rural areas, where it seems that the size of hospitals dictates

that we miss out all the time, because we cannot attract the professional staff that we would like. Consequently, we have a spiralling down of the services that can be provided by small hospitals, and I have highlighted previously the number of hospitals—only two out of six or seven hospitals in my electorate—that still provide obstetric services, whereas only a few short years ago they all did. This is a problem. Hospitals and hospital boards are very concerned with changes that they see could be significant in the sorts of services that they can provide to their communities, when these changes are introduced without, in their opinion, adequate consultation. They go on to say:

In view of this lack of information and consultation, we would urge that the passage of the bill be delayed until there has been an opportunity for boards to be more fully informed.

I took note of the speech of the member for Elizabeth when she said that she would support the bill in this House but that would give some time to think more about the matter between now and when it is debated in the other place. That is a fairly sensible attitude to take.

As to the bill itself, the other issue relates to giving the minister the power to direct the boards. Obviously we must ask the question, 'What is the point of having hospital boards and health boards if the minister is to have this sort of power?' I know that this is not a simple question and I understand the responsibility that the minister has in administering the huge budget for which he is responsible, and the problems that can arise in his not having the power and having health and hospital boards able to make of their own volition decisions that might go against the policies of the Health Commission and the general policies of the government, and his having no form of redress. The health boards and hospitals in my electorate question whether this is a bit of a sledgehammer to crack a nut scenario, and whether this is not a little over the top.

I note from the minister's second reading explanation that 'it is not intended that the power be exercised capriciously. It would be reserved for matters of some policy or financial substance.' We are not quite sure about this, because the minister did not enunciate what policies or what financial substance he was getting at, and I hope in his response he might get a little closer to informing the House exactly what he had in mind. The minister says that the power will not be exercised capriciously but, unless he defines how it will be exercised, we will never know. We will never be able to determine whether it has been exercised capriciously. I find the use of that word a little intriguing.

The minister also said in his second reading explanation that the Health Commission is subject to the control and direction of the minister, and that the constitutions of some of the hospitals use terminology which makes them subject to the policies of the health commission. I must admit that I have not had the opportunity to look at the act or at the opportunities that might be available to us, but it might have been more sensible to make all hospital boards include something to that effect in their constitution, so that all boards would be more responsible directly to the commission which in turn is responsible to the minister in a direct sense. That would give a much better guarantee that a minister in the future would not act in a capricious manner.

I highlight that I do have hospitals in my electorate that are concerned about this issue. In my discussions with the minister on this matter, he assures me that the intent of the bill is not such that he will close down rural hospitals or force rural hospitals to reduce their services and turn themselves

into day care centres or nursing homes. I believe him when he says that, but I am still suspicious about giving this power to a minister in the future. I am a little concerned. Having heard the opposition spokesperson's comment about having some more time to think about this between our debate and when it is debated in the other place, it will give me the opportunity to take the minister's response back to the hospitals that are concerned.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I appreciate the contributions by honourable members to this debate. It has been a very constructive contribution by all of them. From the outset, I would like to touch on a number of the key points, particularly some of those raised by the health and hospital association, by the individual members and particularly the matters raised in letters they have read to the House.

First, I will explain the present situation. We have a large number of incorporated bodies within the health sector, and invariably they operate under a very wide range of various constitutions. Under some of those constitutions, they are required to comply with the instructions of the South Australian Health Commission—in a very general sense. Under some of the constitutions, hospitals and health centres include a provision requiring them to comply with the minister's directions. So, for a significant number of them, already that is a requirement, but it does not apply to all. It was felt that it was important that there be consistency across all those units.

My main concern is that I am responsible to this parliament for an expenditure of over \$1 000 million each year. Yet, when it comes down to the crunch point, I have limited powers in even making sure that that money is appropriately spent. As an example, whilst I as minister am responsible for the appointment of boards to a number of the major metropolitan hospitals, with respect to many country hospitals—and it varies from constitution to constitution—I do not even have a representative sitting on the board. Therefore, there is this significant amount of money being spent in hospital units in which I do not have someone on the board as my representative, even though it is the state—and ultimately I to this parliament—that is accountable for all that expenditure.

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** But there is not a power between the regional boards. I have some powers over the regional boards, but the only power I have is in fact withdrawing money in the future. In fact, after a request and everything else, if a health unit ultimately refuses to give appropriate information, sound accounting procedures should allow the minister to access that information, particularly as it is the state's money.

**Ms Stevens:** Has this happened?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** At the end of the day there has not been anyone who has bluntly refused, but in some cases it has taken a lot of persuasion to make sure that we got access to appropriate information. It has taken considerable time in some cases to access that appropriate information, both in terms of the expenditure of a particular hospital and the level of activity of that hospital.

Some of the comments made seemed to come from a negative point of view. In some ways, this is also from a positive point of view. Let me give an example. The state may decide to spend a considerable amount of money on the upgrade of a hospital. With respect to many hospitals, the land is invariably in the name of the community or in the

name of a trust. I was asked by some members in their second reading contributions about who owns most of the hospitals. It is too difficult to say because it has to be judged hospital by hospital, but I recently saw a crown law opinion in relation to hospitals on Eyre Peninsula. Different assets of the hospital sit in different ownerships. Some are in trusts, some in community ownership and some may be in the ownership of the Crown. The vast majority do not sit in the ownership of the Crown. There is one particular hospital where the government decided to spend a significant amount of money—some millions of dollars—on upgrading the hospital. Having spent that money we had no guarantee that the assets that had been developed would continue to be used as a hospital service for the community and could have been used by the local hospital if it wanted to provide aged care and not the basic hospital service. They are some of the assurances and protections that are important here.

If the state spends \$5 million on upgrading a hospital we want to ensure that in the foreseeable future those assets are used for hospital services and not for some other purpose of the community board or the hospital, in relation to which the minister does not even have a representative. There are a number of issues like that where I have seen over the past two years a serious lack of protection for the state and for taxpayers' money, even though at the end of the day the hospitals in perhaps all cases have finally agreed to give some sort of protection. In some cases it has taken some time to achieve that level of protection, which is important.

This Parliament has given the power of ministerial instruction to virtually every statutory authority in the state. The minister has the power to direct the Health Commission but the Health Commission does not have the power to direct an individual incorporated body.

*Ms Stevens interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** That is one option we looked at, but this Parliament would feel safer putting that power with the minister because it is traditionally the minister, rather than a statutory body, who then is accountable to this Parliament. The minister has the power to direct police, but he has to notify this Parliament. The minister has the power to direct ETSA, but it has to notify this Parliament. For virtually every other statutory authority that power exists, but it does not exist in terms of incorporated hospitals and it is the biggest single area of expenditure in this state. I am merely trying to achieve protection for the public purse and clearly the minister will not become involved in the day-to-day running issues of the hospital and if he or she did they would soon make a fool of themselves because this parliament will know of those directions.

I know that the suggestion has been made by one speaker that we should look at how we should notify this Parliament of how the direction was given and I will give further thought to that. I had never envisaged that this would apply to the employment of individual staff within the hospital unit and I am willing to give some consideration to that sort of issue as well.

I come back to some other issues that have been raised. The Bill itself protects the minister from ever giving a direction on an individual clinical service. It is appropriate because the minister is not there to make those judgments and therefore could not give directions. In terms of a class of service, personally I have strongly argued that I should not be there as minister dictating whether or not doctors in a particular hospital can carry out obstetrics. That is invariably judged by the royal colleges, which make those judgments

and give approval to individual doctors. I have not attempted to interfere with that in any way.

However, there could be some classes of clinical services—and the honourable member herself raised the point in her speech—for example, if we found a small country hospital trying to equip itself to carry out complex cardiac surgery, where a need existed to ensure that the broad protection was given to the patients who go into that hospital. There was a recent coronial inquiry in relation to a death that occurred in one of the incorporated bodies and the Coroner made a specific recommendation in terms of the type of surgery that was carried out that was seen as high risk surgery for which there needed to be a vascular surgeon present or nearby. In this case a country incorporated unit carried out surgery, an unfortunate rupture occurred, there was not a vascular surgeon handy and the patient died as a result of that. The Coroner, if I remember rightly, made recommendations in terms of this type of surgery not being carried out in incorporated units where there was not a vascular surgeon.

The only way I can make sure that that occurs is to issue a broad general instruction to the hospital units to comply with the advice of the Coroner and I would have thought that that was appropriate. I do not think in any way hospitals could then argue that that is an unreasonable thing to do, and I do not think the honourable member is suggesting it because she raised the point in terms of cardiac surgery. We want to ensure that patients who come to the hospitals are protected against unsound clinical practices.

Another example could be that in a particular incorporated unit you may find a doctor with specialisation in a particular procedure and, where they are carrying out a huge number of such procedures, those procedures might be marginal in terms of the broad health needs of a community. Therefore, there could be at least a question raised. For example, there could be a case of obesity reduction in a patient. There could be a specialist who, because he or she has those skills, is carrying out an enormous number of those procedures. That hospital could have a huge waiting list for much more fundamental surgical procedures, but the money is being directed towards where the skills are of one particular clinician who operates within that hospital.

On one occasion we drew attention to this with a hospital and asked them to reduce a particular type of marginal procedure which we did not believe had the highest community need. Again in this case the hospital has agreed to do it, but if it had not how do we protect the use of the public funds in such a case? There would not have been a need in that case for an instruction, but if our request had failed there could be a need. Again this is coming back to protecting public money and ensuring it is not being wasted.

The issue was also raised in the second reading speeches in terms of the haste with which the Bill has been introduced. The Bill has been sitting on the table of the Parliament for I think one day short of four weeks. Anyone who understands parliamentary procedure would appreciate that that is a long time. These rather superficial claims of undue haste sound good in terms of getting media attention, but there has not been undue haste. This matter was to be considered after three weeks; it was due to be debated last week and the opposition asked whether we would defer it for one week and I agreed. I suppose, therefore, this is clear proof that there has been no haste. It has been there for four weeks. Four weeks is certainly not hasty in terms of the procedure of this parliament. The normal procedure of this parliament is that there be one clear week and in this case we have had, effectively,

four weeks during which the legislation has been on the table of the parliament. And, as I said, I agreed with the request of the opposition last week to delay it for a further week.

I think the other issue that concerns me at times is that, if a particular incorporated board were to decide to grossly overspend its budget, even though the state is funding the health services in that area, it is putting at risk the ongoing health services for the broader community, because it could, in fact, be taking such a risk that it might run up very substantial debts that ultimately may even put the assets of the community-based hospital at risk.

**Ms Stevens:** Have there been any examples of that?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** There have been examples where hospitals have overspent their budgets very considerably without even meeting standard service deliveries. In those cases, with time and patience, we have had to coerce the board of the hospital or incorporated body to sit down and negotiate with us and try to work through those problems. Again, I would have to say that we have had cooperation. However, ultimately, we have to be very careful, because if there was a deliberate misappropriation of funds, by the time one went in and tried to request an incorporated body to work with the government, in fact, if it is misappropriating funds it is unlikely to cooperate and one could well end up with significant over-expenditure and significant liabilities that, ultimately, to protect the public, the state would probably have to pick up. In those circumstances, again, I think we need to be able to move with reasonable speed in wanting to protect the funds of the public.

I think that covers most of the issues that have been raised by honourable members. The very fact that we intend to make any instructions public gives the process an air of transparency, whereby the hospital, the community and any member of this parliament can then question any of the directions given by the minister. I think that that in itself is probably the greatest protection, and it is the traditional protection that has been used by this parliament when giving this sort of power to ministers in other areas. If it is good enough for the police, I would have thought that it would be good enough for this area also, because the police invariably guard their independence greater than probably almost any other sector within the community.

I wish to touch on one point that the member for Elizabeth raised about the Health Commission, as such. I do not intend to abolish the Health Commission. I think that the Health Commission plays an appropriate and an important role. There need to be some amendments to the Health Commission Act specifically to deal with the problem that has been identified by the Auditor-General and the ongoing debate, if you like, over whether or not the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Human Services and the Chair of the Health Commission is an appropriate sort of position. Although Crown Law has said that it is legal, the Auditor-General has requested that it be clarified by amendments to the legislation. I respect that, and I have said that I will bring legislation into the parliament. But certainly I want to reassure everyone that, first, it is my intention to maintain the Health Commission and that, secondly, I intend to maintain community boards.

In fact, I have been a fierce defender of community boards, and they all know that. I have stated that fact hundreds of times as I have moved around the state. I see the community hospital board as being a very important link between that incorporated health unit and the community itself, and I appreciate the enormous effort that those

community boards make on a voluntary basis. I appreciate the enormous support that they receive from the local communities, and I have been the one out there who has been wanting to recognise that. For instance, the Booleroo Centre Hospital made a contribution of about \$450 000 to its addition recently. During discussions with the Snowtown Hospital, it made an offer of very substantial funds that could be put forward for development, particularly for aged care for that hospital. There has been a promise of funds from a number of other hospitals. Renmark Hospital, whose representatives I met with recently, has offered funds for part redevelopment of that hospital as well.

So, in fact, I have been the strongest supporter of the individual community boards and the individual community hospitals. Equally, I would argue that the regional boards have worked very effectively in trying to achieve a higher level of coordination between the individual hospitals. Although there are one or two incorporated health units that still complain about regional boards, the vast majority of them, in fact, praise the work that is done through the regional board, and it certainly has pushed the decision making from within the central office of the Health Commission out into the regions themselves. I am a supporter of having the decisions made as close as possible to the local community but, at the same time, making sure that there is appropriate coordination between the individual hospitals.

I urge other members of the House to support the bill on the second reading. I again thank members for their contributions to the second reading debate.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

**Ms STEVENS:** I move:

Page 1, line 25—Strike out ‘Crown’ and insert the following:  
Crown; or

(c) relating to the employment of a particular person or the assignment, transfer, remuneration, discipline or termination of a particular employee.

**Ms STEVENS:** As I flagged in my second reading speech, my amendment is an addition to the list of directions that cannot be given. My amendment ensures that a direction cannot be given relating to the employment of a particular person or the assignment, transfer, remuneration, discipline or termination of a particular employee. As I mentioned in my speech, this is essentially a safeguard. It is consistent with the provisions in the Public Sector Management Act, and I think it is self-explanatory.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can I seek clarification from the member for Elizabeth. I presume we are talking about the first amendment to clause 3, page 1 line 25?

**Ms STEVENS:** Yes, ‘Strike out “Crown” and insert the following’.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** In terms of the first amendment as it relates specifically to employment (which is what I think is the issue here) I tend to support the amendment. However, the honourable member tabled the amendments only half an hour or an hour ago. Frankly, I would like to take some advice, with a view to supporting this in another place, if the honourable member is willing to do that, just to make sure that we have the right wording. Some of these matters are in fact covered, because they are health commission employees or Department of Human Services employees. In terms of the complex relationship between what is implied in relation to health commission employees under the Health

Commission Act or under the Public Sector Management Act (and I cannot interfere with the employment of any individual at any rate), I would like to make sure that there is not a duplication or a slight conflict in any way in this amendment. I hope that the honourable member is willing to take my word that, whilst I am very sympathetic to carrying out the intent of the amendment, I would like the wording of it checked before we formally put it into the legislation but with a view to amending it in the upper house accordingly. Therefore, at this stage I urge that we vote against the proposed amendment even though it is my intention to move a very similar amendment, if not the same amendment, in another place.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I do not know whether the minister has adequately answered this question, but why is it necessary that it incorporate a hospital that is subject to the direction of the minister? Why can it not be that an incorporated hospital be subject to the direction of the health commission?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I think that the honourable member is talking about the clause rather than the actual amendment; is that right?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Yes, I am.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That question should be delayed at this stage.

**Ms STEVENS:** I have heard what the minister has said. I take his word that he will give it consideration and address it again in the upper house.

Amendment negatived.

**Ms STEVENS:** I move:

Page 2, line 1—After the word ‘writing’ insert—  
and must be published in the *Gazette* as soon as possible

This amendment is fairly self-explanatory, requiring as it does that, when the minister gives a direction, it must be published in the *Gazette* as soon as possible. We believe that it is a more appropriate accountability mechanism than having it only in annual reports, which are often difficult to access. Certainly, if you look right across the whole system, it is difficult to get an overall view. We believe that this is an important addition in terms of accountability.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Again, I am happy to give some thought to where the instruction appears. At this stage, the written instruction must be published in the hospital’s annual report. I presume the honourable member is concerned because that is not tabled in this parliament and therefore is not made readily available to this parliament. I would like to check on what procedures we need to go through to put it into the *Government Gazette*. Does it have to go through Executive Council? I would not have thought it appropriate to bog down Executive Council with this type of information, but I am willing to look at how it is done in a way which brings it to the attention of this parliament and is therefore readily available to this parliament.

I think that with some of the other acts it is required to be included in the annual report of those statutory authorities when they are tabled in this parliament. It may well be that that is the more appropriate way to do it: to include it in writing in the annual report of the health commission which is brought before this parliament. Otherwise, I am willing to give further thought to other means if that is acceptable to the honourable member. Again, I would like to be able to give this whole issue more consideration. Certainly, I had given it some consideration, because the honourable member raised it during briefings with my staff, I was willing to have it included in the health commission report which is tabled in this parliament.

The *Government Gazette* issue has only just been brought to my attention. I would like to give that further thought. If the honourable member again is willing to say that I will meet with her and discuss the appropriate way of tabling the instruction, we will move that in the upper house. I do understand the point the honourable member is making and have some sympathy that it should be in a document that is readily available to members of parliament and to this parliament.

**Ms STEVENS:** The other issue that is very important is that it be available in a timely fashion. The problem is that if it is in an annual report, first, it is not readily accessible but, secondly, annual reports come six, seven or eight months after the fact. I expect that this power of direction would not be used very often and, as I mentioned in my contribution, it would need to be of a fairly serious nature to get to that point. It is a matter of accessibility but timely accessibility, which is why I wanted 'in the *Gazette* as soon as possible'. I am happy to discuss that but am anxious that it be included when the bill is before another place.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** One issue that the honourable member might be willing to consider is whether the minister be required to table that instruction in this parliament within seven sitting days, or something like that. That does not therefore involve the *Gazette* and some of those complications, but I understand the honourable member's point that it should be available in a timely manner. I would be happy to look perhaps at requiring the minister—and this is done every day before question time—to table any such instruction given in this parliament within seven sitting days, because that would enable it to be done in a timely way and to the full exposure of the parliament. If the honourable member is willing to consider that and perhaps defer this, we could look at drafting a suitable amendment which could be moved in another place.

Amendment negatived.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Why does the minister feel it is necessary that there be a direction directly from the minister to the incorporated hospital rather than its being the health commission which can direct the hospital? After all, I believe that the health commission is subject to the direction of the minister and provides the policy. Surely if this clause provided that the incorporated hospital is subject to the direction of the health commission it would have the same effect but we would have the additional layer between the individually incorporated hospital and the minister.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I appreciate the member for MacKillop raising this issue; in fact, it is an issue to which I gave thought when this was being prepared. In fact, I raised this issue with cabinet. Originally, I had 'direction from the minister and/or the commission'. On further consideration of that, I came to the conclusion that it is far greater protection for the incorporated health units if it involves only the minister, because the minister is publicly accountable in this parliament, whereas the health commission does not have the same answerability as such within this parliament.

The other problem is that there is only one minister but there are a large number of people within the health commission. You have to be very careful that you do not get any blurring between a true direction from the health commission or an implied direction from the health commission, because they deal with the health commission on a daily basis in many areas. Further, who gives the direction within the health commission? In fact, I reached the conclusion that it should be only the minister, because I believe it gives the greatest

protection to the individual incorporated health units. There is only one person, it is very public, and that minister is accountable to this parliament. I have seen other cases where you could have a commission and the staff of a commission who could very readily almost give instructions on a fairly frequent basis. The minister would then suddenly have to table those instructions in the parliament without even knowing about them. I think that would lead to even greater confusion for incorporated health units.

From my discussions with incorporated health units, I think they would rather receive an instruction from the minister than the health commission, because they receive many notifications from the health commission, but they know that they are not instructions, whereas they receive very few notifications from the minister. It would be clear that any direction from the minister would have to be made formally under notification of the act and it would have to be made known to the parliament. From my experience of the parliament and the way in which legislation applies, this matter has been dealt with in this way quite deliberately to give incorporated units more protection than they would otherwise have.

**Ms STEVENS:** I note the minister's comment that the government intends to keep the South Australian Health Commission. If the minister is allowed to give directions, I think that would undermine the whole purpose of having a commission that is independent of the minister in the delivery of health services. It seems to me that you are having a bit of both and that it would be preferable to have one or the other.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Every time the honourable member asks me a question, I am quite willing to say that she has raised an issue about what is going on in a health unit but that I have no responsibility, that the honourable member knows that under the legislation I have no power or accountability, and that therefore I will not bother to answer her question. I think the honourable member would be the first to object to that. Where public money is being spent, I think it is necessary to ensure that the minister has some accountability.

**Ms STEVENS:** I agree that there must be accountability, but make it cleaner.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I think this does make it cleaner in respect of where the accountability lies. It makes it more difficult for the minister. It is a constraint on the way in which the minister uses this power, because the minister is accountable to the parliament.

**Mrs MAYWALD:** My question relates to how this power of direction can be used in respect of the appointment of directors to boards. Will there be any implications in that area?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The answer is 'No', because those powers are already set up under the constitutions, and the constitutions for individual incorporated units vary. However, I made the point earlier that under the vast majority of them, at least in the country, the minister has no representative at all on boards. That can be varied only by varying the constitutions.

If you look at how the constitutions are written, you will see that they are all different. They all have different ways of varying the constitution to allow the minister to make an appointment. That is one of the problems: the minister does not have any power of appointment to individual boards, particularly of country hospitals. It is almost an article of faith: the minister, who ultimately is accountable for the expenditure of public moneys, is given no assurance that the

moneys are being spent in the way they should be and, if there is any evidence that they are not being spent appropriately, he has no way of stopping that. That is the justification for this legislation: where there is evidence that the money may not be being appropriately spent, it gives the minister the ability at least to investigate those circumstances and try to determine the facts. At present, there are limited powers to investigate the matter on a timely basis.

**Mrs MAYWALD:** Is it envisaged that this power of direction may lead to ministerial appointments to boards and changes to constitutions to enable that to occur in respect of regional hospital boards?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** No, because I do not believe that this power can override the constitutional powers of boards. In other words, if the minister gave a direction to an individual unit that there 'shall be a ministerial appointment to the board', I do not think that that ministerial direction could override the constitution of the incorporated body. In fact, I am certain that it cannot. So, I think the minister would not have that power. I will check that with crown law, but I do not think the minister would have that power, and certainly that is not the intention.

**Ms STEVENS:** I am interested in the minister's last statement that he does not think that a ministerial direction can override the constitutional power of a board. What about the power of the board—

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** The constitution of the organisation.

**Ms STEVENS:** But the constitution of the organisation sets down the fact that it provides health services to an area that it manages. What if the board determines that it will offer certain services and the minister directs otherwise? It seems to me that the minister is saying that he does not think that the minister could override that power if the board was acting within its constitution.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Under their constitutions, incorporated health units already have the power to provide services. So the minister would not be, ultra vires, going against the power of the constitution. The constitutions clearly stipulate who appoints the boards. In the constitutions with which I am familiar, there is no power for the minister to make an appointment to the board. The minister cannot, by any unilateral decision, change the constitution of an incorporated body. In fact, most require consultation and a public meeting to change the constitution—the power is very much in the hands of the local community.

For example, before one incorporated body could go ahead with the upgrade of its hospital it had to have a public meeting. It had to advertise the meeting with so many days' notice; it had to fully explain to the public meeting what changes to the structure of the hospital would be carried out, how much money would be spent, and matters such as that; and the public meeting had to formally ratify the upgrade of the hospital before it could go ahead. I think that highlights the fact that the power lies with the local community.

The minister and the government are only the funder. We can strengthen accountability by making sure that, as one would expect, the funds are spent for the public good in terms of health care and on an ongoing basis. What concerns me at times, as I mentioned earlier, is that you could easily spend money for the capital upgrade of a hospital and 12 months later find that that facility, which is in the name of the community and on community land over which the government has no control in terms of the assets as such, is not being used for health care but for some other facility. In such

a case, the minister would have limited powers. He might withdraw the recurrent funding, but he could have spent \$4 million or \$5 million of capital funds over which he has no control.

Clause passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### **HIGHWAYS (ROAD CLOSURES) AMENDMENT BILL**

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### **MOTOR VEHICLES (HEAVY VEHICLES SPEEDING CONTROL SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL**

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### **TRANSPLANTATION AND ANATOMY (CONSENT TO BLOOD DONATION) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 29 September. Page 32.)

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** The opposition supports this bill. First, I want to pay tribute to the Australian Red Cross Blood Service of South Australia and the efforts of the Red Cross in terms of its services across our country. We are certainly lucky to have an organisation of such high calibre to organise and operate this very important and critical service to our hospitals in this country. I have been briefed on the bill but, as I said, it is a very straightforward bill, essentially based on the current age profile of active blood donors in South Australia.

The majority of persons (about 57 per cent) are aged over 40. As the supply of altruistic donors is declining, there is concern for the future supply of blood as fewer than 4 per cent of all persons aged younger than 25 years donate blood regularly. I have been told that, based on age penetration, only approximately 30 per cent of donors under the age of 30 have donated more than once, supporting the view that the younger segment, first, do not have the time to donate due to lifestyle; and, secondly, only donate to have a free blood test. This highlights an opportunity for the blood service to educate young people about blood and the role of the blood service and to give students the knowledge to make an informed choice about donating blood and becoming committed blood donors, which we need.

Currently 40 000 people in South Australia are aged 16 to 17 and the Red Cross says that, from interstate experience, it knows that this segment is a willing and economically viable donor base. Currently, South Australia and Tasmania are the only two states that do not allow persons between 16 and 18 years to donate blood. In 1987, the New South Wales legislation was altered to allow 16 to 17 year olds to donate. As a result of these changes and the implementation of a schools collection program incorporating 350 schools, this sector now accounts for 6 to 7 per cent of all donations in New South Wales. Last year New South Wales students donated 12 500 units of blood. Without this supply the blood service in that state would not be able to satisfy the demand for blood and blood products. Victoria obtains approximately 4 000 donations per annum from this age group.

For all those reasons, we support this bill. A spin-off in relation to lowering the age group and the intention of the Red Cross to approach students in schools is an opportunity to get young people involved and to help them understand and perhaps become involved at this age in a very important community service. I understand that, in terms of the relationship with the school sector, it is envisaged that initially the blood service will make written contact with schools when the legislation has been passed, hoping to obtain coverage in school newsletters and to raise general awareness of the issue and its importance to the community of South Australia. Then they would follow this up with posters and other literature.

It is then envisaged that the blood service may share Red Cross youth officer resources to assist in the implementation of a youth donor program, as Red Cross currently has a schools community services program. Efforts would initially primarily concentrate on targeting and recruiting schools into the youth donor program, schools that are located in a reasonably close vicinity to the Pirie Street centre. It is also envisaged that initially a donor transport service would be utilised to transport students to and from the Pirie Street centre. However, a mobile school visit program would likely to be established in the future with an anticipated increase in future funding.

We support the bill. It is quite clear that we need to continually encourage people to do this when they can and that people become donors when they have blood that qualifies for being donated.

*Ms Breuer interjecting:*

**Ms STEVENS:** The member for Giles has just mentioned a very important point to which I was coming; that is, the fact that you cannot donate in the country because there is nowhere to give blood. That is an important issue and it was something that was mentioned to me by the Red Cross. Perhaps the minister might like to make a comment about the fact that people who wish to donate in the country are unable to do so because of the lack of ability to do so. I would like to hear his comment on that and whether there is any way in which that can be changed. I believe that that was the case in the past but is no longer so. Obviously that is a source of blood that is no longer available to us. I am sure that there would be many people in the country who are also community service minded. Certainly they prove that in many other ways and I am certain that they would want to do this as well.

I make one further comment. An article in the *Advertiser* on Saturday 9 October headed 'Blood supplies dry up as donor leave banned' has been drawn to my attention. The article states:

The Howard Government's decision to ban blood-donor leave could mean the difference between life and death, the Red Cross said yesterday.

The removal of blood donors' leave from industrial awards by the Workplace Relations Minister, Mr Reith, had contributed to a decline in the number of donations, the Red Cross told a senate inquiry into Mr Reith's second series of industrial changes.

'Four hours (leave) per donor per year. . . could be the difference between life and death for a premature baby, an accident victim, a burns case or someone suffering from leukaemia or haemophilia,' Red Cross National Human Resources Coordinator Ms Marie Sellstrom said.

Donors had complained of employers denying them the time to donate blood, she said.

Was the minister aware of that development? Has he made any representations to his federal colleague, because it is a very good example of the incredibly narrow-minded approach

to one section of government which has the consequence of severely affecting another section? If we are trying to encourage people to give blood—and we all agree that it is important and necessary for this to occur—then surely the incentives must be in place to encourage people rather than discourage them, which apparently Mr Reith's bill is doing. The opposition supports the bill.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I appreciate the remarks made by the member for Elizabeth. I was not specifically aware of the point that she raised, although a week or so ago I may have heard some vague, imprecise reference to it on radio. I appreciate the honourable's support for the legislation and I too would certainly like to publicly acknowledge the work of the blood bank. It is extremely important. People would acknowledge that Australia has a blood transfusion system through the blood bank which is regarded as one of the best, if not the best, in the world. I meet with the Red Cross on a regular basis to discuss issues. We have also had discussions at ministerial conferences on testing procedures, as the honourable member would appreciate. The service has a staff of committed people and they are to be applauded and publicly acknowledged for the work they do and the service they provide around Australia. I urge that the House support the legislation.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** Earlier today I spoke on the situation in Whyalla regarding BHP. Since then I have decided that I need to speak further today on this issue, because it is really the future of Whyalla we are talking about, and to a large extent it will have a major influence on this state if we were to disappear. I want to read from an article that appeared in the *Australian* on 16 September this year prior to the announcement that BHP would sell BHP Long Products. It states:

'You know we're up for sale, don't you?' says one BHP Steel executive in a far flung company outpost. 'But only to the highest bidder, so don't hold your breath.'

The article further states:

'The maximum they will own at the end of this process is Port Kembla. The minimum they will own is nothing,' one BHP analyst says. 'It's probably unlikely to be the latter but if British Steel walked up tomorrow and said, "Get rid of all your other rubbish and we'll take Port Kembla," I think Anderson would do a deal.'

Later, the article states:

Steel works in Auckland, Whyalla and Rooty Hill and rolling mills in Newcastle complete the suite of assets Dr Every describes as a 'pretty complex beast'.

Paul Anderson, the new American CEO of BHP, prepared the new BHP charter by which the company is operating. It is a statement of who he is and the kind of company he wants to lead. One of the first things he did when taking up the job last year was to establish this charter, which states:

To survive and prosper we must. . . create a high performance organisation in which every individual accepts responsibility and is rewarded for results.

My question is: what about the individuals in BHP Long Products in Whyalla? Over the past 10 years in Whyalla BHP workers have undergone massive increases in their productivity. This has been achieved through sheer hard work and union and management cooperation, and it has certainly been to the betterment of BHP Long Products and BHP overall. I give credit to the management and those workers who were able to achieve this and I pay tribute to those people.

But what do they get as their reward, as provided for in the BHP charter? They get a kick in the guts. They have been told they are not core business to BHP any more; they are not what it wants; they do not make a good enough return for shareholders and they are not wanted any more. It is some reward for the hard work they have put in! I wonder whether BHP understands how workers feel in Whyalla and in those other places that are up for sale. Does BHP understand how unions feel, the effect on the communities and how the communities feel? Again, it is some reward for their hard work! Maybe BHP will be sold, and we should try to be positive about this. Certainly, Whyalla has tried to put a positive face on all this, and I certainly hope it will be sold. Community confidence needs to be maintained, but I believe we also need to be very cautious about it. We have an obligation to our community to deal with the situation realistically.

I want to make a number of points in relation to BHP and Whyalla regarding this sale. Whyalla is now linked very strongly with Newcastle, and we need to work closely with Newcastle. It is important to involve federal MPs in a bipartisan arrangement to pressure the federal government into giving assistance to the steel industry. BHP Long Products Division is of extreme strategic importance to this state and also this country. I am fighting not just for Whyalla's existence; I believe it has major implications for this state. We must have a steel industry in this country. It is strategic to defence and also to the balance of payments in terms of employment. It is relied upon by so many other industry sectors, including the construction industry. The Whyalla plant is run down. There are some new implementations. The billet caster and the continuous caster were major investments by BHP. The sale could bring in a new company that is interested in new technologies, and it may be able to value add to the products.

Steel is not just steel. People think steel is something you produce; you shove iron and other products in at one end and get steel from the other, but there is an art to making steel, and different types of steel are produced. On a recent trip to Newcastle I was interested to see what was happening there and to be told that, because of the closure over there and the transfer of a lot of their business to Whyalla, Whyalla had to look at a new process for producing a particular type of steel that was required by the car industry. BHP Newcastle used to produce that; now BHP in Whyalla had to learn how to do it and make steel in that way. So, they do not just produce one lump of steel: many types of steel are produced.

In Whyalla we still have large reserves of very cheap ore nearby. Their expected life at present is 10 or 11 years but we believe that, with advances in technology, in 10 years' time there will be new procedures and methods for obtaining that ore and that it will still be there for many years to come. In Whyalla we have an industry mentality and a very skilled work force, so Whyalla copes very well with many of those issues that communities face with new industries. There is a possibility of further industry in our city. I want to go back to the state of the plant. With all the increases in productivity

and new technology, Whyalla is not producing at world's best practice. It is unlikely to find an Australian buyer, so the 'Big Australian' will no longer be Australian. Whatever happens, we believe there will be further downsizing in the work force, not only with the plant and the BHP workers but also with contractors. Already, firms such as METSERV, which has been operating there for many years, are looking at significant job cuts. We want to know whether, if BHP does not sell and something breaks down, they will just get up and walk away from our company.

What will the uncertainty mean to our city? At present a school review is happening in Whyalla. What will happen as a result of that? A number of schools really fear for their future, and certainly after the BHP announcement they have even more concerns with the expected loss of population in the city. If those schools are closed, once again that will have an effect on the community who will see it as another sign that people are just walking away from us. We wonder what impact it will have on our hospital. How many further services will be pulled out of our hospital? How many will be pulled out and sent to Adelaide or Port Augusta, which is the nearest regional hospital?

There is concern in the city about what will happen with development in our city. The city has been very excited recently with the prospect of Harvey Norman, a major retail firm, coming into the city. The prospects of this firm's coming in would create approximately 80 jobs, and bring people outside our communities from places such as Roxby Downs, Ceduna, etc., into our city. We are wondering now what will happen with Harvey Norman. Will it be prepared to invest in the city? Investors are uncertain, and I believe they are not likely to put money into the city until we are more certain about what will happen with our future.

So, now we must rely on state and federal government to provide assistance to ensure that we do have a future. The steel industry plan of the 1980s provided significant resources to ensure that BHP remained in steel making because of its strategic importance to Australia. I would ask that this plan be revisited and perhaps a further plan be continued. I want to finish with some excerpts of an ABC PM program interview from 6 October, when Lance Hockridge, President of BHP Long Products, said when asked, 'What happens if you don't find a buyer?':

I think for all the reasons that I've said, we will find a buyer. All the hard work has been done. We will find a buyer.

When asked again, 'What if you don't find a buyer?' he said:

That is hypothetical as to not finding a buyer. But the business is a good business.

The interviewer then said, 'So BHP guarantees if there's not a buyer that these operations will continue to run as they are in Newcastle?' to which Lance Hockridge replied:

We will be successful in finding a buyer.

I do not believe that there is any sort of assurance that BHP will remain in Whyalla if a buyer is not found, and I have major concerns for our city that BHP will walk away from Whyalla and walk away from this state.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** Recently I was in Korea, having been honoured by the Premier to lead a trade delegation to an organisations' trade expo known as ASPAT. It was not only a trade expo but also a conference and series of seminars which had been organised throughout the period from 12 to 17 October. Whilst in Korea, and prior to the ASPAT conference and expo, I was also honoured by the

Government of the province of Chungchongnam-do, which is the southern province of Chungchong, to address its public servants. It was at that time the Premier arrived and signed the arrangement which we now have as a sister state with the province of Chungchongnam-do to advance trade and cultural understanding between the people of South Australia and the people of Chungchongnam-do.

During the time I was in the province, it was possible for the other members of the delegation to visit businesses that were either complementary and similar to those in which they were engaged or, alternatively, were prospective customers. I spoke to a training seminar of the most outstanding young public servants, the best public servants in that province, about the reason for a public service: why and how that is so. I was invited to do that by Governor Sim, and I believe he did so because of his inquiries into the sorts of things that I had been doing before I became a member of parliament, or at least that is how he put it to me.

He said that because I previously had extensive contacts with and knowledge of the need for public service in any society and the role in which it would function in that society, he asked me to make these remarks, and state why a public service was necessary and how it should be obtained and secured. So I addressed that group of over 200 young public servants between the ages of 25 and 40, some of whom had come to South Australia last year. At the time they were here, they provided us with a demonstration of some of the talents they had in music, as well as being here studying our public service. If members recall, we had in our balcony room a demonstration of the percussion instruments associated with the ceremony *samulnori*.

Whilst most mammals, indeed most primates, are social animals, it is not a universal characteristic of all species of higher animals. Humans are very social animals. Therefore, if we humans are to survive, a social structure of society is imperative. It always has been so, whether familial, tribal, national or at this time, the beginning of the 21st century, global for that matter. It is axiomatic that the existence of a society arises from the fact that there are separate living individuals who choose to congregate into organised groups to enhance their prospects of a better life for each of them.

It follows that the success of any society, and thus the degree to which that society can become civilised and remain civilised, will depend upon the extent to which there is a belief that rules are needed in that society which will provide for:

- unity of purpose;
- security of life against disease, violence, injury or exploitation;
- supply of sustenance (food, drink, shelter and clothing);
- rights of access to ownership of property, whether chattels or real estate and the like;
- provision of equal access for basic education in literacy, numeracy and the history of ideas, regardless of the status of the parents or the sex or wealth of the person;
- the freedom of expression to exchange ideas and information—that is, freedom to move about, meet together, and to get and give information to one another without penalty or risk;
- certainty with which any person or group of people can make decisions, whether commercial or social in type, and then carry through those decisions; and
- equal access to a system of justice for every person which is fair and identical for all, regardless of the sex, age, occupation, status or wealth of the individual member.

The foregoing provide most of the foundation for sustainable societal administrative practices—that is, in both the short and the long term. Note also that these are some of the basic practices which are now essential to ensure that life itself can survive in the same way as those practices can ensure that civilisation of society for the benefit of the individual is enhanced. Most of these observations are self-evident to people with some commonsense. However, Mr Acting Speaker, to reassure you and others, I make the point that I, too, am conscious of their universal relevance for the survival of civilisation—indeed, the very survival of humans and life itself on our planet in this next millennium. If we accept the truth of these statements, then a government of some form is imperative within the framework of the explicit as well as implicit goals of the civilising objectives. This makes a public service inevitable and essential in some form.

The job of the Public Service is or will be to give advice to the decision-making part of government about policy options open to it and then to implement the policy which the decision makers have chosen within the framework of the law. But, first, we must remember that within this framework government exists to serve the needs of the cooperating individuals of which the said society is comprised. The idea is that the more each individual is inspired, encouraged and rewarded for accomplishing, achieving and producing in their life's endeavours through the framework of law and administrative certainty, those things for which all individuals in society itself ask, then the greater will be the resulting prosperity and satisfaction for each of the people in that society.

Once a form of government is established which functions through such a framework of civilising practices, which includes the establishment of a public service, another such practice immediately becomes essential for the public service in addition to those that I have already mentioned if they are to be achieved and if they are to be collectively sustainable, and that is to give everyone equal access to all government programs and policies by providing but not necessarily limited to all information about those programs, the reasons for them, their cost and how the revenue is raised to pay for them, the audit checks made on the cost outlays, the audit checks made on the extent to which they achieve their stated goals, any restrictions there may be of access to them and the reasons for any such restrictions.

Equally the system of government we invoke must be capable of functioning in perpetuity within the framework of the stated objectives, regardless of who is doing each of the jobs and which adequately qualified and appropriately experienced individual fills each position. The organisational structure which is set up must be capable of continuing to function effectively, regardless of whether or not the individual leaves any position or role within it, and regardless or whether not they shift to any other position or role within it.

The organisational structure of government which I speak about includes the specific groups of task performers, that is, the law makers, law enforcers and regulators, service providers, judges and auditors. Let us turn then and look at the arm of government which sets up the public servant. It must be established in law through a system which provides as a matter of due process an identity and must state the tasks to be undertaken within the organisational structure, define each role in a separate job specification within the framework of the job to be done, the hours to be worked, for what specified reward and which other position holder will manage

and supervise the work. The positions thus created can then be publicly advertised, calling applications from those people believing themselves to be appropriately qualified, and if that is not done the faith and trust which the individual citizens in the society can have in it is lost.

Time expired.  
Motion carried.

At 5.53 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 27 October at 2 p.m.