

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Tuesday 28 March 2000**

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following bills:

Alice Springs to Darwin Railway (Financial Commitment) Amendment,
 Barley Marketing (Miscellaneous No. 2) Amendment,
 Building Work Contractors (GST) Amendment,
 Carriers Act Repeal, The,
 Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes Administration),
 Criminal Law Consolidation (Serious Criminal Trespass) Amendment,
 Criminal Law (Sentencing)(Sentencing Principles) Amendment,
 Guardianship and Administration (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Heritage (Delegation by Minister) Amendment,
 Highways (Road Closures) Amendment,
 Hindmarsh Island Bridge,
 Judicial Administration (Auxiliary Appointments and Powers)(Definition of Judicial Office) Amendment,
 Land Tax (Intensive Agistment) Amendment,
 Legal Practitioners (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Local Government (Implementation),
 Mining (Private Mines) Amendment,
 Motor Vehicles (Heavy Vehicles Speeding Control Scheme) Amendment,
 Office for the Ageing (Advisory Board) Amendment,
 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Southern States Superannuation (Salary) Amendment,
 Statutes Amendment (Electricity),
 Statutes Amendment (Magistrates Court Appeals),
 Statutes Amendment (Universities),
 Statutes Amendment (Visiting Medical Officers Superannuating),
 Whaling Act Repeal.

HIGHWAYS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

MITCHELL, DAME ROMA**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** I move:

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Dame Roma Mitchell, former Governor of South Australia, and places on record its appreciation of her long and distinguished service to the state of South Australia; and that as a mark of respect to her memory the sitting of the House be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

It is with a great sense of sadness that I rise in the chamber today to move a condolence motion for one of South Australia's most renowned and distinguished citizens, Dame Roma Mitchell, who passed away on 5 March at St Andrew's Hospital. I am sure that many government, opposition and other members of this House alike will rise to take the opportunity to pay tribute to Dame Roma and formally place on the record their appreciation for the life and achievements of this truly outstanding South Australian ambassador.

Born in 1913, Dame Roma was educated at St Aloysius College, where she was dux in both 1929 and 1930, an achievement that set the standard for her remarkable public and professional life. Awarded the David Murray scholarship as the most brilliant student of the year at the end of her law course at the University of Adelaide, Dame Roma was subsequently admitted to the Bar in 1934. In 1962 Dame Roma became the first female Queen's counsel in Australia. This significant achievement was followed in 1965 by her appointment to the Supreme Court of South Australia—another historic first for women in Australia.

Dame Roma had a generosity of spirit and she was never afraid to tackle entrenched views to make this world a better place. A tireless campaigner for social justice issues, Dame Roma was in 1981 appointed as the inaugural Chair of the Human Rights Commission, a position she held with distinction for some six years. In 1983 Dame Roma became the first female Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, having previously served for 11 years as Deputy Chancellor. After she resigned as Chancellor to become Governor, Dame Roma continued to maintain a deep interest in the university's affairs. She visited frequently for seminars and conferences, and in more recent years was a founding trustee of the university's Don Dunstan Foundation.

Dame Roma became the first female Governor in Australia in 1991. Her appointment as Governor of South Australia was supported by both sides of politics. Indeed, her appointment at that time was the perfect choice. She was an outstanding achiever in all facets of her professional and public life, and Dame Roma's achievements were recognised on numerous occasions: Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1982 and Companion of the Order of Australia in 1991; and, most recently in January of this year, Dame Roma was awarded the Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, the highest possible honour that can be bestowed on an Australian.

Despite her unparalleled list of accomplishments, it is worth reflecting on the fact that Dame Roma represented so much more than the sum of her professional achievements or of her position as one of the twentieth century's most successful and revered Australian women. Everyone whose life she touched recognised that Dame Roma was a very special person—indeed, a person who, we are honoured to be able to say, entered our lives and, as a result, made such a significant contribution to this state.

Dame Roma possessed a rare pioneering spirit, an inherent self belief and a determination that allowed her to rise to the

pinnacle of a traditionally male dominated profession. A staunch advocate of equality by performance, Dame Roma blazed a trail upon which generations of women have followed. She was and will remain a strong role model for women across Australia and internationally. Dame Roma will be remembered as a woman of great dignity and compassion, held in the highest esteem and affection by all South Australians. Hers was an extraordinary life, and one to be celebrated. It was one of challenging the conventions and, through sheer force of will and commitment to her sense of duty, she pioneered a new status quo.

I count myself as extremely privileged to have been able to spend a short time with Dame Roma when she was ill in hospital. I visited her so that we might be able to impart to her that South Australians really cared about her position and that we wanted to express to her on behalf of South Australians the affection in which she was held.

On behalf of the government I would like to formally place on record our sincere appreciation and thanks for Dame Roma's outstanding contribution to the South Australian community—a true ambassador for South Australia. Her passing leaves a gap that will be extraordinarily hard to fill. On behalf of all South Australians I would also like to offer my sincerest condolences to Dame Roma's family and her friends. In summation, the state of South Australia and all South Australians have been privileged to be a beneficiary of the life of Dame Roma Mitchell, a truly great South Australian.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): It is a sad honour to follow the Premier's remarks, which were made in the most eloquent way, about, I think, South Australia's finest citizen. The Premier is right in saying that Dame Roma Mitchell has been a role model and an inspiration to countless South Australians, particularly to young women. She exemplified what is best and most decent in South Australian life. During her time as Governor she graced not only the office of Governor but also her entire life by the way that she conducted herself with great dignity and compassion and graced our lives here in South Australia.

The Premier has mentioned that in so many areas she was a pioneer: first woman Queen's Counsel in Australia, first woman Supreme Court judge, first woman chancellor in an Australian university, first chair of the Australian Human Rights Commission and, of course, first woman Governor in Australia. I remember the debates in cabinet leading up to the approach to Dame Roma to be our Governor. At that time, some people were perhaps concerned that at her age it might have been too taxing on her in the physical sense. Well, we certainly should have had no worries about that. In terms of her role as Governor, Dame Roma's energy in visiting all areas of the state and making a point of visiting each country town, visiting the Aboriginal lands and visiting schools and hospitals was more tiring to those who served her than to Dame Roma.

Dame Roma was actually contacted by Premier John Bannon whilst she was on an overseas holiday, on one of her regular visits to Europe to listen to opera, which was her great love. I understand that the message was sent to her that when she came back from the theatre she may expect a call from the Premier that night. She told me that she sat up for some hours, that eventually the call came through, that she was asked whether she would consider the appointment, whether she would feel that it would be too taxing, and she said, 'I'd be delighted.' I think we were delighted as a state that she

accepted the appointment and conducted herself with compassion and great dignity.

I remember an Executive Council meeting that was held in the Pitjantjatjara lands over several days. The army had gone to the Aboriginal lands the day before to set up tents and a camp with canteens, and Dame Roma was delighted to be camping out; but more importantly than that was the way that she was able to connect with Aboriginal people, with elders who told her dreaming stories, with elderly Aboriginal women who took her away to tell her their secrets and also with young children who showed her how well they could play footy. On all of those occasions, particularly in Aboriginal lands—and I say this as a former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs—Dame Roma had a unique ability to make contact, to build bridges between cultures, to build bridges between generations.

I remember in my own electorate in Salisbury on one occasion where she met with young children from different schools who were decorating the Salisbury railway station interchange. Again, some of them were asking whether she was the Queen and questions like this, but at each stage she was able to connect and draw the best out of people. As someone once said to me, she was one of the few people we would meet in public life where we could always say we felt better having met her.

In Executive Council on Thursday mornings, as the Premier stated, Dame Roma was no cipher. She would come along to preside over Executive Council and sign the bills of the day and would always ask the right question, or what might have been considered by a minister the wrong question. She was always interested. There was a sharpness of wit but always a kind undercurrent to it.

Whilst one is not supposed to give away the secrets of Executive Council, I remember one particular day when Dame Roma referred to a bill about the keeping of bees and pointed out that there was an error on page 46, paragraph 4, clause 8, and when the Attorney-General, together with the Minister for Agriculture or Minister for Local Government, hurriedly turned to the page in question it was found that she was exactly right. She was simply indicating that she actually read things before she signed them and had an interest in what she was doing.

I also believe that it was important that Dame Roma Mitchell was the Governor who essentially opened up Government House and its beautiful gardens to the people. She was very much the people's Governor and as such she made it their house, and that was a superb innovation and one that has continued.

At one stage as Deputy Leader of the Opposition I was invited to travel on a US Navy aircraft out to the *USS Constellation* and Dame Roma, as Governor of the state, was one of the guests. We flew across the Southern Ocean to this 100 000 tonne aircraft carrier. Dame Roma was put into a flying suit with a helmet, was strapped in and was delighted that the pilot was a young US Navy woman pilot, and we landed with arrester belts on board the *USS Constellation*. She had dinner with the Admiral, who then said that unfortunately the display by US fighters and bombers that was supposed to be the feature of the afternoon had been cancelled owing to bad weather and that this may in fact delay our return to Adelaide. There was a little bit of joshing that we may have to stay on board and keep steaming with the battle group towards Tasmania. Dame Roma spoke to the Admiral kindly but firmly and said, 'That just won't do, Admiral, because this afternoon I am welcoming the Duchess

of Kent to Adelaide; there is an official reception for the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition at Government House and I have to be back in time.' She was duly strapped into the plane and catapulted off the deck of the *USS Constellation*.

Without going into any detail, some of the passengers were somewhat distressed by the affair because the aircraft reached 200 miles an hour in 1.6 seconds, but Dame Roma loved it and asked whether she could do it again. That was a demonstration of her spirit and interest in doing the job, at that stage well into her eighties. Dame Roma died as she lived: strong in faith and with integrity and great dignity, and she has honoured us with her presence. Last year, following Anzac Day and an article I had written about Anzac Day, I received a note from Dame Roma, who said, 'You may know that my father was killed in World War I and I always find Anzac Day a somewhat harrowing time, mainly because I know how much suffering—

The SPEAKER: Order!

There being a disturbance in the Chamber:

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you, Sir. Dame Roma noted how much suffering her father's death had caused her mother during her life. Dame Roma Mitchell will be remembered as the greatest South Australian since the Second World War in terms of her commitment to our state with selfless non-partisan devotion. I regard it as an honour to second the Premier's motion.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): It is with great respect that I support this condolence motion. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have highlighted Dame Roma Mitchell's brilliant career and, like other members, I feel fortunate to have had the honour of knowing such a special person. There is no doubt that she was held in enormous respect not only for what she achieved but also for the way in which she maintained a great practical balance and was even-handed in issues even where she had a passionate interest. There was certainly a special way in which she dealt with people. Dame Roma had an enormous ability to make people feel at ease. I know that at quite a few dinners, if she knew members of parliament were present, she would often ask that they join her at the table for a while. Dame Roma was always a great host at Government House where many of us enjoyed her hospitality. She had a terrific presence, despite her physique, wherever she went.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned trips to the country, and I well remember Dame Roma spending a couple of days in what was the old Frome electorate. On a trip to Peterborough we visited an aged persons' accommodation block which had not been long been constructed. It was amazing to see the way in which she was able to make all the locals feel at ease.

One of the things that really got to me occurred when Dame Roma was visiting one lady's house and looking at some of the handiwork. She happened to notice from the family photographs that one of the lady's grand daughters was one of the aides who had worked at the complex. The fact that she was showing that sort of attention to detail was very much appreciated.

In her modesty Dame Roma commanded enormous respect not only in South Australia but indeed throughout Australia and internationally. Her funeral was a very fitting tribute to a great lady, and I certainly congratulate those who

were responsible for and participated in that ceremony. It was certainly a fitting ceremony, particularly given Dame Roma's deep faith and her great attachment to St Francis Xavier's Cathedral.

As I said, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have highlighted Dame Roma's career and contributions to South Australia. I support their thoughts and feel that it was a great honour to have had so many opportunities to spend time with and talk to such a great South Australian and a great human being. I certainly pass on my condolences to her family, her many friends and all South Australians who feel a great sense of loss.

Mr SNELLING (Playford): I note the passing of Dame Roma Mitchell. I do not need to go over her many achievements, with which we are all very familiar. I often saw Dame Roma at weekday mass at the Cathedral of St Francis Xavier. She was strongly driven by her Christian faith. Her strong stand on issues of social justice, particularly justice towards Australia's indigenous people, was thoroughly grounded in Christian principles of social justice. It was very heartening to hear Father Maurice Shinnick—the administrator of the cathedral and Dame Roma's parish priest—say that in Dame Roma's last days she drew great comfort from that most ancient of Christian prayers, the Gloria Patri. My condolences go out to her friends and family. May her soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): This afternoon we have heard about the many firsts that Dame Roma achieved for women and for South Australia, but behind that there was a brilliant mind, a very dedicated and determined woman, someone who was absolutely committed to women and to South Australia and someone who was dedicated to equality and justice for all people.

For 2½ years I had the opportunity—and I regard it as a great privilege—to work very closely with her as Premier. I found her someone with whom I could discuss a whole range of issues in which people would be astounded that she had a particular interest. However, throughout all that there became a number of key characteristics on which I would like to touch today. The first is her absolute love, commitment and enjoyment of people. I can picture her again today: on so many occasions there she was with a range of different people. I can recall one occasion on the Bremer Plains at Langhorne Creek. Langhorne Creek had not had a visit from a Governor since 1938 so this day was a very special day for the people of Langhorne Creek. Virtually the entire township or village turned out to meet her. She went to the school; she sat down with vigneron and had lunch; then she met with the entire community for afternoon tea after an extensive visit of the district. She was due to stay for half an hour yet she stayed for 1½ hours. She went from person to person talking with each about their family's history with Langhorne Creek, their involvement in the wine industry and a range of other activities.

I contrast that with the visit by Dr Habibi, the former President of Indonesia. He loved South Australia when he was here, and two things absolutely enchanted him. The second, and the most important, was Dame Roma Mitchell. As a result of that visit, and his enchantment with this magnificent woman who had achieved so many firsts for the whole of Australia, he invited her to visit Indonesia on a very extensive tour. Dame Roma Mitchell was the first woman to

chair the Human Rights Commission within Australia, and I think he thought she might be somewhat subdued in her remarks when she went to Indonesia. Well, Dame Roma stood up for her views. She expressed her views. She met the President. She told the President exactly what she thought in terms of human rights within Indonesia.

I can recall on an occasion at Carols by Candlelight where she sat down with the children. Incidentally, every time my then young four or five year old daughter Katharine went to Government House, Dame Roma made her feel so welcome that it was like home; she would take off with the other children to explore various parts of the home. I can recall on one occasion her sitting down with someone who was slightly drunk and who was in a blue singlet at Carols by Candlelight. He was making an absolute nuisance of himself immediately where she was due to be sitting. She sat down and enchanted this couple and about half way through the carols the couple respected that woman. I have not seen anyone else recognise such an older person within our community. I think that showed not only the tolerance of Dame Roma but also her ability to cope with any circumstance whatsoever.

She also had boundless energy. I mentioned the trip to Indonesia. She went to Indonesia for seven days, flying all over the islands. She then came back here and immediately had a house guest, Prince Edward, and the next day was the final grand prix race. She was scheduled to come to the grand prix for the official lunch and to stay for about half an hour into the race. Well, she was there right to the very end enjoying the entire race, despite the noise and the record crowd of 200 000 on that particular occasion (the biggest crowd to a grand prix), and she absolutely loved it. It highlights not only the very diverse nature of Dame Roma but also her absolute love and commitment to people.

I know she has the respect, admiration and appreciation of all South Australians. It is only appropriate that we should acknowledge that today. She was a great legal practitioner and a great human rights advocate yet she delivered Meals on Wheels for the people of Unley. She was a person of the people who cared and loved for the people. I am sure all members of the House join in acknowledging that Dame Roma has been a great South Australian and Australian.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Dame Roma Mitchell was a wonderful person of immense intellect, wisdom and vision. She was a distinguished jurist and legal practitioner before she became a judge, and this exceptional career was honoured by her colleagues when the Mitchell Chambers were named after her. Her life's work and example are her legacy.

In the time between her death and state funeral, I attended a function at Nunkuwarrin Yunti at which Dame Roma Mitchell had happily agreed to officiate but could not. As she had always had a lifelong and passionate interest in Aboriginal people and their plight and welfare, she was particularly glad to be invited to the launch of the report because it highlighted the disadvantage of Aboriginal women and children within the criminal legal justice system. Later that week as I saw the participation of so many prominent Aboriginal people in her funeral service, I began to wonder how we might best honour Dame Roma's life and work. It became apparent to me that the most fitting tribute we could pay would be to champion the recommendations in the report, which was called 'Taken In', and other reports which lay around Australia to address the plight of Aboriginal people. I extend my condolences to Dame Roma's family and her many friends from all walks of life.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): If a characteristic of life is to live respected and die regretted, I think everyone in this House would agree that Dame Roma Mitchell fulfilled that requirement, which is obviously why she is receiving so many tributes today. She is, after all, the only contemporary person whose image, or representation of her, appears in this chamber. Like all members, when I show children around this house, I point to the tapestry on the wall behind me, which has quite clearly the image of a Supreme Court judge. As, at the time of the tapestry design, there had been only one female Supreme Court judge in the history of this state, I told the children that that was a representation of Dame Roma Mitchell. That, I think, is a singular honour which had already been accorded to her by this parliament.

The member for Playford has alluded to Dame Roma's faith, which I want to touch on simply by saying that I remember her similarly, not because of her church attendance (and I know the member for Playford did not say this) but because of the works Dame Roma did. Well after she was Governor, I and I think many other members in this House would continually bump into Dame Roma at extraordinary places, including the Asthma Foundation, things to do with St Vincent de Paul, and St John's in Halifax Street. Generally, if there was a characteristic, they were functions where Dame Roma could help people she saw as being more disadvantaged than herself. I saw Dame Roma's Christianity not only in terms of her very quiet but very devoted practice of it but also in the way she lived her life. She was a model for us all.

When Dame Roma retired, I made her a cake, and every year after that I used to make her a Christmas cake and take it around to her. She liked those cakes. We know how courteous she was, and she used to say, 'Mr Brindal, it isn't the cake, it's the juice', because I used to put lots of rum and brandy into the cake. Because of ministerial duties, this last year was the first year I have not done that, and I will regret that.

I last saw Dame Roma two weeks before she was hospitalised. She attended the Festival Centre for the launch of the arts foundation. Afterwards I asked her if I could give her a lift home, to which she replied, 'Yes', and when we arrived home, I said, 'Could I show you to the door, Dame Roma?' and, in her normal courteous manner, she said, 'No.' I can still remember watching her, as others would have seen her, getting out of the car, walking in an almost regal fashion to her house and opening the door. I will never forget that, because within two weeks she was hospitalised and a very few short weeks later she died. But can I say this, and I mean it: if there is a God as Dame Roma believed there was, when she finally closed her eyes, it was not only the people of South Australia who were saying, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I would like to add my support also to this condolence motion for Dame Roma Mitchell, a person who certainly was very well loved and respected. Like the minister, I last saw Dame Roma at the same Festival Centre Foundation launch, and it was a very hot day. I had spoken to her on a couple of occasions before that. Because it had been a long, hot summer I had not always worn my safety helmet when riding my bike, and Dame Roma had commented to me on my transgression. She said to me that day that she hoped I would obey the law in future and set a good example.

I would also like to express my condolences on behalf of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the students of Mary Mackillop College. In the past year we launched a foundation to raise \$1 million for a new performing arts and gymnasium centre at Mary Mackillop College, and we chose Dame Roma as one of our patrons because she always had a strong link with the Sisters of Saint Joseph, even though she attended Aloysius College. I hope that she is now upstairs with Mary Mackillop working out how we can possibly raise that million dollars and inspire a few people to donate some money to the foundation!

I would like to share one little anecdote about Dame Roma. When I was mayor of Norwood we had a conference for women of a non-English speaking background, which the Minister for Human Services also attended. Dame Roma recounted to me that many years ago her grandmother, who was very much inspired by Mary Mackillop and the Sisters of Saint Joseph, had run away from home down to Penola, where she wanted to join the sisters and become a nun herself, but her father went down there and dragged her back to Adelaide.

Of course, she married and Dame Roma was a result (many years later) of that marriage. So, we have only the one occasion on which I might say parental disapproval proved to be good, because if the father had not brought Dame Roma's grandmother back we would not have had Dame Roma and that wonderful example for young people here in South Australia. I send my condolences to her family and friends.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): I support the motion, although I do not intend to reiterate the events of Dame Roma's glittering career; we all know those. People in the House at the moment are lucky enough to have shared and lived through some of the last of those achievements. However, I did wish to highlight, as the Minister for Human Services has done, that after retiring from the bench Dame Roma volunteered to deliver meals for Meals on Wheels, which I am sure was yet another first for a retired judge. It is typical of her delight in people in general.

Immediately prior to Christmas—in other words, not very long before she died—I was lucky enough to be at a social event with Dame Roma when the issue of smoking arose. In the discussion we were comparing Australian rates with those of the rest of the world and, absolutely incisively cutting to the chase, Dame Roma began questioning me and others involved in the conversation. At the end of this conversation she set me a number of tasks to inquire about statistics from around the world, much as if I had been given homework from a rather stern teacher.

Of course, I found those statistics, which began a series of letters between Dame Roma and me and others taking part in the conversation which, frankly, would have done someone half her age proud. I say that only because it is an example of Dame Roma's towering intellect and her desire always to question things. It is trite to say it—and about Dame Roma nothing trite should be said—but she was a great intellect, and South Australia has suffered a great loss. As other members have done, I offer my personal condolences to her family and friends.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): It has been a privilege today to hear some of the insights that we have been able to share with members of this chamber who have worked much more

closely with Dame Roma than I was ever able to. For me she was a figure in the distance: a figure who was always present but who represented something good and noble in South Australia of which we could all feel proud.

I did have several opportunities to meet her and on those occasions was able to see that everything I had ever heard about her came right down to the individual contact. I simply want to add my appreciation for her life and for the opportunity to celebrate that life at the state funeral. I want to add a word of thanks to those who so efficiently organised that wonderful celebration of a great life, and extend my sympathies to her family and friends.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Local Government): I rise to offer my condolences and to pay tribute to the late Dame Roma Mitchell. I think we all recognise that Dame Roma was a champion of this state. Her achievements and accolades are certainly well documented, and her effervescence and her contribution to South Australia will be sorely missed. Dame Roma was an inspirational woman, who broke through so many barriers to achieve a number of firsts, as we have all recognised, in the legal, educational and government sectors, not only in this state but also nationwide. However, today I pay tribute to Dame Roma for her dedication and the commitment she showed to the Aboriginal people of this state. Dame Roma's sense of humanity and equity and her keen interest in the affairs of indigenous people was acknowledged when in 1991 she was appointed the founding Chairman of the Australian Human Rights Commission. I understand that Dame Roma viewed the commission as the most important body she served on, and this was evidenced by her service to the Australian community in her role as leader of the commission.

From 1991 to 1996, while Governor of South Australia, Dame Roma had the honour of serving as the patron of the Ngaanatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council. The NPY Council was formed in 1980 and it still operates as a strong Anangu women's group reaching across three state borders. That covers an area of some 350 000 square miles. The meeting provides a forum for the practice, renewal, learning and sharing of women's cultural traditions, and I have no doubt that Dame Roma would have been particularly proud to see that today. The council plays an important role in forming policies for Aboriginal people throughout this state.

Dame Roma's visible influence on this state was highlighted again only last week, when two Aboriginal high school students, Tahlia Wanganeen from Le Fevre High School and Stewart Vitler from Kaurana Plains School, were awarded the Dame Roma Mitchell scholarship. Since 1993, two scholarships have been given each year in Dame Roma's name: one to an Aboriginal girl and one to an Aboriginal boy, each of whom has completed year 10 and shows exceptional promise. The scholarship provides financial support to enable the students to complete years 11 and 12. I am aware that the majority of Dame Roma Mitchell scholars have not only gone on to successfully complete their secondary education but have also undertaken tertiary studies. I have no doubt that Dame Roma would be particularly proud of Tahlia, who aims to study medicine, and Stewart, who is a budding sports journalist.

In her speech to the Australian Reconciliation Convention in 1997 Dame Roma told how Australia urgently needed more Aboriginal doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, health workers, social workers and legal workers, saying that

those who had been successful in those occupations were of sterling worth but that there were far too few. I have no doubt that Dame Roma would have been delighted to present the scholarships to Tahlia and Stewart, who are obviously leading role models in their communities.

Still on education, in November 1993 Dame Roma attended the opening of the Murputja Delivery Centre on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands. Dame Roma reported that she was delighted to witness the children being taught in schools in their own homelands for three days in the week and attending the centre for the remaining two days of each week. The teaching was in Anangu language and placed emphasis upon traditional Aboriginal learning. This absolutely delighted Dame Roma, who recognised the importance of incorporating traditional Aboriginal learning with curriculum to meet the state requirements.

Dame Roma was a tremendous campaigner for reconciliation, and this was highlighted by her participation in the Australian Reconciliation Convention. It was at that convention that Dame Roma delivered an inspiring speech urging the broader community to assist indigenous people in their moves for self-determination. Dame Roma said:

Self-determination for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders should not imply that non-Aborigines can properly stand aside where help is needed. There is a delicate balance to be maintained. Interference in the lifestyle adopted by indigenous people must be a thing of the past, but assistance should be readily available to ensure that right to life, which is a basic human right, is the right of all indigenes.

Dame Roma wholeheartedly believed in reconciliation based on complete equality. She canvassed her beliefs and ideals throughout the community, and throughout her lifetime was a strong campaigner to ensure that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had equal rights to suffrage with other Australians. At the heart of that reconciliation process was, according to Dame Roma, the understanding of the differing cultures and customs with which we here in Australia are so blessed. In this light Dame Roma was pleased to present the Visy Board art prize, the third most valuable prize for the visual arts to be awarded in Australia, to Aboriginal artist Kathleen Petgarre in 1997. Again, I would like to quote Dame Roma's words when she presented this award. She said:

Recognition of the worth of a people's art leads to greater recognition of the worth of the people themselves, and when we accept the value of our respective culture and customs reconciliation is surely nearer.

Dame Roma also presided over a Ministerial Advisory Board for the Ageing in the late 1990s. The board, while generally concerned with maintaining the health and welfare of the ageing population, also aimed to assist the Aboriginal population of our state to attain old age. Under Dame Roma's guidance the board gave concentrated attention to issues of health in Aboriginal people from birth onwards. The board concerned itself with issues such as alcoholism and the problems associated with the management of diabetes. Dame Roma visited the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands during her time at the helm of the board and reported that she was impressed by the success of the Aboriginal women in persuading the members of their tribes to cut down on the consumption of sugar and flour, with the consequent reduction in the incidence of diabetes.

Dame Roma travelled with me to participate in the Aboriginal Elders Conference held in Coober Pedy in October 1998. Members will well recall that this conference saw the beginning of the Council of Elders of South Aust-

ralia, which is now playing an important role in shaping the future of Aboriginal affairs throughout this state. Even in her last days with us, Dame Roma, as always, continued to lead a campaign to urge members of various parliaments across the country to reinforce attention to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, enabling them to enjoy equal citizens' rights with all other Australians. Indeed, Dame Roma will always be remembered for her pursuit to bring about equality for Aboriginal people, with reconciliation at the core of her drive. Again, in Dame Roma's words:

Reconciliation implies forgiveness of past wrongs and a firm intention to go forward as one undivided nation.

I am sure we can all take heart from Dame Roma Mitchell's dedication to the cause of our indigenous people, and I sincerely hope that her achievements can be an inspiration to us all as we continue to work towards reconciliation and equality for all. I extend my sincere condolences to Dame Roma Mitchell's family and to her friends.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): Dame Roma was a giant among giants. She was a South Australian icon of whom we can all be very proud. Today, there have been a lot of accolades to Dame Roma's many virtues, and I would certainly like to support all of those, but it would be foolish of me to go back over them. I will relate briefly one story from 1964. At the time, Roma Mitchell was a QC, and a group of Australian Workers Union officials had been controversially dismissed. They were all from the shearing sheds and included Don Cameron, Jack Wright, Mick Young, Jim Dunford and Reg Groth. They had very little experience of the legal system and, when dismissed, they parried around and inquired who best they could get to represent them. They went to Don Dunstan. Without hesitation he recommended Roma Mitchell. I was very young at the time, but I can still remember the reaction of those five. Do not take it against them, but they were just a wee bit surprised that a female had been recommended. Once they met her and became accustomed to that idea, they quickly gathered a very strong rapport.

The decision that was brought down in 1965 reinstated all these people. At the time Dame Roma had gone on to the bench. It was a unique judgment back in 1965. It was something that very much changed the course of history with respect to the Australian Workers Union, and all those five men went on to enter either federal or state parliament.

Back in November last year I approached Dame Roma and asked whether I could have a discussion with her as I wanted to fill in a few pieces of history about my father. Without hesitation she agreed—there was no equivocation. When I arrived at her unit tea and coffee, biscuits and cake were all supplied. One would have thought, as one of the Ministers said earlier, that one was dealing with someone half her age. Dame Roma was very generous with her time and her spirit.

To share one section of the interview, which Dame Roma said I was at liberty to do at any time in future, I said to her, in respect of those five individuals going on to reach Parliament:

That would have been a unique piece of legal history, for a group of five, and to have a win like that and for all five to go into the parliament. I think that would have been very long odds.

Dame Roma replied:

Yes, I can remember being in Canberra when I chaired the Human Rights Commission when Evans was Attorney-General and you remember Young had this problem. This came up and I moaned and said, 'Oh, that's terrible—one of my boys.' He asked me, 'What do you mean—one of your boys?' So, I told him—you know, I

mentioned the case—and he said, ‘They went on and made you famous.’ I said, ‘Now you listen here, I made them famous.’

Dame Roma left us all with something very special. I also pass on my condolences to her family and friends and acknowledge the great work that was done with respect to the state funeral. It was a sad day for us, but we will all remember her very fondly.

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): I rise to support the condolence motion and to pay a tribute to this very special and unique former South Australian, Dame Roma Mitchell. A former journalist, I had a different perspective of Dame Roma some 15 to 20 years ago. I was able to see her from a different perspective from some of the members who have spoken today during the debate. She was certainly someone who always encouraged people to look at issues and at other people from a different perspective, and to see them in a full and fair light; and she often reiterated that. Even with her death I again saw the life and impact of Dame Roma from a different perspective, namely, a global perspective.

Sadly, I was unable to attend her funeral, but it was only two days after her death that I arrived in London to find *The Times* carrying an obituary of Dame Roma Mitchell. It was a great demonstration to me of the extent of her reputation and the impact she has had as an individual. I believe that she was not only a great Australian but also an extraordinarily unique and special South Australian. She was widely acknowledged internationally both in life and in death, and her remarkable, noteworthy achievements are still being written about.

The obituary itself referred to her as ‘Roma the First’. It then went on to talk about the first Australian woman to be a State Governor, a Queen’s Counsel, a Supreme Court judge and Chancellor of a University. Any one of these firsts alone would be cause enough for a grand tribute to a life well spent and a life well served. Certainly from any perspective, Dame Roma Mitchell lived a very full and a very distinguished life of service, accentuated by characteristics of fairness and great compassion. The many tributes that she has received from all sides of politics, the law, the women’s movement and particularly Aboriginal Australians, to name but a few, I believe is a testament to her greatness.

Here at home the media often used to refer to Dame Roma as South Australia’s first lady, but from her statements over the years we do know that that is a title that I believe would not have sat comfortably with her. It probably showed how slowly the wheels of equality were turning, and in her perspective much too slowly, and maybe that is why she became such an advocate of equal opportunity for women’s rights. Not that Dame Roma herself ever sought notoriety for she was blessed with an incredible humility which generally saw her admired by all who met her as we have heard this afternoon. Some of the stories that I guess all of us could tell would demonstrate absolutely the extraordinary humility she had.

She was a great and compassionate humanitarian and therefore an ideal and very appropriate appointment as the inaugural Chair of the Human Rights Commission in 1981. Dame Roma even had time for the media, as I well recall, because in one of my other lives as a journalist I was covering the Salisbury royal commission into the sacking and dismissal of Harold Salisbury, and as we know Dame Roma was the commissioner. During those many hours and many days spent listening to the very detailed evidence and

eventually to her judgment, it provided me with an extraordinary insight into her amazing professionalism and the considered jurist she clearly was.

Aside from her official judicial roles when obviously she was bound by normal confidentiality, I always found her to be extremely generous with her time, her comments and her explanations, and she went to great lengths to ensure that media covering any particular event understood the most complex of issues. While it has been stated in some places that she was shy of the media, despite this I can assure members she was utterly scathing of magistrates and judges—and to use her own words—‘who went out of their way to attract the attention of the press’.

Newspaper clippings over the years would reveal Dame Roma’s strongly feminist views on issues such as refresher courses for women graduates wanting to return to work after rearing children, the need for housework to be shared (which she strongly supported) and the need for changed attitudes toward working wives and mothers, although she did often describe herself as a conservative feminist—I guess we could all debate that. The fact that Dame Roma made her mark in public life during an era when women had to leave the work force with the prospect of a pending marriage or impending motherhood is doubling amazing because it was 1965 when, as a QC, she became the first woman judge of a superior court in Australia and she made this comment:

As far as being a woman is concerned, I am hopeful that in my lifetime appointments such as this will not excite comment.

Some 35 years later, Dame Roma Mitchell, as one of Australia’s and South Australia’s most distinguished women, could relax in the knowledge that she had led by very dignified example to the very end.

Dame Roma’s love of the law has been referred to by many members, as has her commitment to her very strong faith in the Roman Catholic Church. She cared passionately about injustice and has against her name a list of honours and firsts that identifies her, in my view, as one of the truly great Australians. Dame Roma also had an extraordinary memory. When she retired from the position of Governor of South Australia, I recall sending her a note wishing her well on her next adventure and I made several particular references. Some months later, at another function, we met, and she remembered absolutely exactly the words I had written and then went on to discuss with me some of her ‘recent adventures and activities’ and they ranged from her beloved surf and sand down south to her role as being Chairman of the Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing.

Dame Roma, as we know, was possessed of a great mind, a profound wisdom, the most wicked sense of humour and just a wonderful personality. You have only to ask the proprietors of Roma’s Cafe on Hutt Street to get some amazing stories. The kind of respect that she generated—and about which we have all heard this afternoon—I believe shows that, without doubt, she is one of our great Australians, and particularly we should be very proud that she was a South Australian.

Apart from the statues and public buildings that have been erected or named after her so befittingly, quite simply Dame Roma Flinders Mitchell will always retain a special place in the heart and history of our state. She was, without doubt, a great role model for young South Australians, particularly young women, and I extend my sympathy to her friends and family.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I am saddened at the passing of Dame Roma Mitchell. I am grateful for the Premier's having placed on the record details of her many milestones in terms of her career and her public service, and I wholly endorse the remarks made by a number of members about her qualities and talents. Of course, the electorate of Mitchell is named after an academic who preceded Dame Roma. I think that is unfortunate in that it does not leave an opening in the foreseeable future for a seat to be named after Dame Roma, something that would be so fitting for such a great South Australian.

I particularly want to refer to Dame Roma's legal career, the highlights of which have already been provided by other speakers. I am President of the Australian Society of Labor Lawyers, and I can say that among Labor lawyers Dame Roma was held in especially high esteem—and that is not to diminish the reputation she had among the rest of the legal profession. It is not because of any political affiliation Dame Roma had that I say that: it is because of her unceasing commitment to social justice and to fairness on the bench, and her eloquent defence of citizens' rights and workers' rights as a barrister before she went to the bench. Of course, in her public statements and her behaviour after leaving the bench, Dame Roma showed her commitment to tolerance, reconciliation and the cause of women and others disadvantaged in our society.

I particularly want to refer to Dame Roma's work in the early 1970s in relation to the Criminal Law and Penal Law Reform Committee which gave her an occasion to investigate the state's criminal laws. She came out with a series of recommendations which were a cornerstone for many progressive reforms in that area in the Dunstan era and beyond. She astutely and scrupulously avoided political partisanship throughout her career and her public life. Frankly, she was beyond that and, in the same way, although she contributed much to the cause of women in South Australia simply by setting an example and by being a leader and speaking out graciously when the occasion arose, she was not dogmatic about that. She was simply able by her talent and intellect to graciously assert her right as a counsel, as a judge and as a woman against the prejudice which would have been much more prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s. Once again, I say that I am sad to see her passing and share the feeling of other members that condolences are due to her family and friends. Dame Roma was indeed a great South Australian.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): It is a privilege to have the opportunity to be part of this condolence motion. I remember two very special things about Dame Roma; first, her energy and, secondly, her graciousness. As a young minister I remember Dame Roma arriving at Executive Council on many occasions when she would stride through the door and we would be sitting around the table. She always had a story to tell us. The stories were always about people, including people she had met, and about the things she had been doing over the previous week but never about herself. She was always telling us where she had been, the things she had done and about the people with whom she had been relating. She always wanted to tell us some sort of story and some of those stories were very funny. Sometimes we tried to tell her a story, and often she thought they were not very funny at all. I remember Dame Roma's goodwill and her keenness to be part not just of the administrative part of

Executive Council but also of the actual involvement in the running of the state.

Dame Roma had a wonderful memory for facts. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a third party minister. I can offer a direct experience. The very first bill I introduced in this House contained significant amendments to the Industrial Relations Act, and I remember receiving a telephone call from the Governor. We had a short conversation about a couple of particular sections of the bill which she believed were not quite correctly drafted. They were not drafting issues in this case: they were principle issues, and that was quite significantly different from a drafting point of view. Some months later, when the bill actually went through the House, I met her again, on this occasion socially, and she said (and I remember this well), 'I notice that the Parliament found me to be correct.' It was a very interesting and telling point for me as a young minister—and I was quite young then—and it was a point that I will never forget.

Last evening Judy and I were sitting down talking about today, and she made a very important point that many others have put forward today, and that is that it did not matter who you were: if you ever met Dame Roma, you never felt uncomfortable. She had this wonderful ability to communicate with all people at all levels and be able to be part of their conversation and life, and to add something to them and to give them something so that they could walk away and say, 'What a wonderful experience it has been to meet Dame Roma.'

I met her on many occasions at the races. Those of you who have had a lot of involvement in the racing industry would know that Dame Roma took a significant interest in punting. She was never very good at it, because, she would say, she used to get a lot of poor advice, and I was always accused of being one of her poor advisers. As most members know, she was always meticulous in taking the advice of her minister, and usually on the day I gave some fairly poor advice. She loved racing, but more importantly she loved the fact that she was with people and that she could participate in that area.

This week, just by coincidence, I met a young woman who had been very closely affected by the role that Dame Roma had played in her life, and that was through the Goodwood Orphanage. That was another area where very few people knew she was involved. Her role there was one of giving advice, helping young women and being part of a reference group that enabled many of those young women to restart their life and develop into the people they are today.

It is a tremendous privilege for me to have known Roma Mitchell and to be part of this motion, and I pass on my and my wife's personal condolences to the family.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): One of the pleasing duties that I had to perform as a member during the last parliament was to have regular audiences with Dame Roma. They were very friendly but, of course, she did like formality and they were very formal. I well recall on occasions having to deliver bills to her. She did not just take them and put them on the desk, she started to turn them over page by page and ask a series of most difficult questions. I remember saying to her, 'I am only the messenger, not the architect of these opinions.'

But there was one famous occasion when I handed her a bill and she looked at it and said, 'I don't think much of this.' I said, 'Your Excellency, I share your views.' She said, 'Who's responsible for it?' I said that it was minister so and

so. 'I thought so,' she said, 'I shall speak to that minister.' I said, 'We are looking forward to your doing that.' It was a bill to do with skateboards along North Terrace, to which she took exception.

May I say that, as usual, she was right. Then, of course, there were the occasions when certain people had made comments about the appropriate attire for Presiding Officers to wear. I remember going to see her one morning and her saying to me, 'Under no circumstance should you fail to wear the traditional attire of Presiding Officers. It is most appropriate and don't let anyone talk you out of it.' So, I had at least one friend in that debate, and I thought that on that occasion her advice was the advice I should accept.

One occasion that I will never forget is the opening of a school in the Pitjantjatjara lands. It was a very hot afternoon and we had all flown a long way. We arrived at a dirt strip and were met by some fairly uncomfortable four wheel drives. Dame Roma never blinked an eyelid, although it was about 110 in the water bag. She had more energy than most of us and appeared to enjoy the occasion immensely. The thing that struck me and my then parliamentary colleague Peter Dunn was what enthusiasm she generated for the community there and how much they appreciated her attendance.

I would like to add my condolences to what have been expressed here today to Dame Roma's family. One of the pleasures of my parliamentary duties was to have been associated with Dame Roma, and I greatly appreciated her attendance at a celebration of my 25 years in this place.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): It is a privilege to participate briefly in this condolence motion. Very soon after I became Minister for the Ageing in 1993 I had the opportunity to sit next to Dame Roma at a dinner. She spent most of the time telling me what she expected of me as Minister for the Ageing. Some little time later we introduced the Act that brought with it an advisory board on ageing, and I was delighted to be able to ask Dame Roma whether she would be prepared to take on the role of the first chair of the first advisory board, bearing in mind the advice that she had given me earlier.

I clearly remember her response, which was, 'Since I have told you what to do, I have very little option but to accept this position.' She did so very graciously, and did a marvellous job as the chair of that board. The terms of reference of that board were to provide policy advice to the minister on matters relating to the wellbeing of older South Australians, and she certainly did that.

On many occasions I would receive a phone call from her in her role as chair to say that they had discussed various issues and she was keen for me to know what those issues were; and not only what they were but what action we intended to take as a result of that advice. One of the other terms of reference was to conduct consultations and hold forums on issues of importance to older people as required in various parts of the state. I was always amazed at the way in which she was prepared to travel throughout South Australia, the energy that she showed and the opportunities that came her way to consult with so many other older South Australians.

At that time we had just introduced the 10 year plan on ageing. Dame Roma had had a part in the preparation of that plan, supported it very strongly, and was always very keen to be able to talk to older South Australians about that plan and the policies within it. I want to put on record my gratitude

(and I am sure that I speak on behalf of all older South Australians) for the magnificent support she provided in so many different ways.

She was respected and loved by all who knew her and had the opportunity to work with her. A number of the members of that board have contacted me since Dame Roma's death to ensure that the opportunity provided to them in serving with her was recognised, and that if I had the opportunity in this place I should pass on their thanks for the support Dame Roma had provided to that board and on behalf of the older people of South Australia.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I join with others in this condolence motion and, without wanting to repeat anything that they have said, draw attention to my belief that Dame Roma, as an outstanding human being, knew how to distinguish between information and entertainment. Her conversations with people were nonetheless entertaining even though they were loaded with information, and that is a rare skill. It was the basis upon which she was able to relate to people regardless of their standard of education or their personal views about matters that might be contentious. It was the basis of her humour.

She was not just a role model for young women or for women: I would go further and say that she was an outstanding role model for anyone. I had first met this woman when, in 1956 as a young adolescent, I had to go to court with my lawyer and my mother. There was no trial: the matter, which related to injuries that I had sustained, was settled, and Roma Mitchell played a significant part in that settlement. It took only two minutes or so. I had no idea that she would ever remember me when she again met me in 1967 at dinner in the home of my former in-laws, the late Alan West and his wife Bonnie.

However, she remembered the occasion upon which for no more than two minutes she had met me in the Supreme Court more than 10 years before, and that amazed me. I would say of Dame Roma Mitchell, as has the Minister for Tourism and the member for Bragg, that for me the thing that made her so outstanding was her elephantine memory, along with that capacity to communicate with anyone. That was something that she cultivated in life because of her commitment to and belief in Christian values, and she just went out and lived it.

I knew her for a good many years after election to this place, not only through the social opportunities I had to enjoy her company on many occasions prior to being elected here, but also on the University Council, where she presided over many tense and terse meetings about the direction the university should take and the way in which the Waite Institute fitted into the structure of the university.

That was an enormous contribution she made to the resolution of those problems and to the ultimate, continuing and outstanding role of the Waite Institute in the University of Adelaide. As a parliament we might have done well to listen to her views about universities and the best ways for them to be governed, because during her time as Chancellor she was instrumental in getting a clearer understanding among people of the university about their role as councillors, staff, students and so on. That is not to reflect adversely on her predecessor, John Bray.

I admired Dame Roma also because she was willing to speak her mind in plain and simple terms, with good reason incorporated in any remark as she made it. I also admired her commitment to the unique federation which is Australia in the family of nations on this Earth, and her understanding of what

it meant to have a federation which was constructed from the bottom up rather than imposed from the top down, and how that helped Australia develop a better sense of fairness and a greater capacity for the more rapid assimilation of people from a vastly diverse range of cultures from around the world than almost any other nation in the history of humanity on this Earth. Conversations of that kind with Roma Mitchell were always informative and entertaining. That is the kind of memory I have of her. I conclude as I began: I think she is a role model for all of us.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I rise to speak in support of this condolence motion. Dame Roma Mitchell has left this state with an extraordinary legacy. Indeed, she was an extraordinary lady, having achieved so many firsts throughout her remarkable life. Dame Roma was by any measure a very gifted person; she had a magnificent career and, as that has been referred to here today by the Premier and all the speakers who followed, I will not repeat those remarks. Her extraordinary career was acknowledged in 1990 when she was made Australia's first female Governor, that of South Australia. Dame Roma was an achiever in every sense of the word. She carried out her professional and vice-regal duties with great aplomb and diligence.

Among her many attributes she had the ability to communicate with all levels of society. I and no doubt many other members have met Dame Roma walking along North Terrace and in Rundle Mall. She was a warm, compassionate and much loved person, who took an interest in those she met and with whom she was involved. She was a lady of dignity, yet she was easily approachable. So many people tell of their memorable meetings with Dame Roma, and I acknowledge the many speakers here today, all telling of their own personal memories of her.

I remember another special meeting that I had in 1995. My wife and I attended a vice-regal luncheon at Skillologallee winery in the Clare Valley, and I was the local member then. We sat at a table out on the front veranda of the winery, and it was a very cool, brisk day. There were the Governor-General and his wife, Sir William and Lady Deane; Dame Roma; the Hon. David Wotton, who was there as a minister; the local Mayor, Bob Phillips; and my wife and I. This meeting blew the itineraries clear apart, because they had allocated one hour for this luncheon and 2½ hours later they thought they had better go on their way. In my office here in Parliament House I have a large bottle of riesling given to us by the winery at the end of that memorable occasion, which I will long remember. Dame Roma was warm and personable, and a both interesting and entertaining lady. We enjoyed that occasion immensely, and I was honoured to be a guest at that luncheon. The member for Heysen says that he recalls it very clearly, given that it was over five years ago. Without question, that occasion has been one of the highlights of my political career, and I will long remember it.

There were many other occasions on which I had the good fortune to be in the company of Dame Roma, who made so many country visits, and all country people were very pleased that she did. I will always remember the time when I was invited over to Government House, where Dame Roma, the housekeeper and I would sample some of her special reds out in the kitchen, some of which I had sent over. Her memory was phenomenal, because I remember describing a special red to her at the start of her governorship and about four or five years later she remarked on the comments I had made about that red, which was from Auburn, and she said, 'How

does that compare with this one?' I thought that, with all the business to which she had to attend, her memory was incredible. These are memories I will treasure for the rest of my life. I also recall with great fondness Dame Roma arriving at the Clare Show on a very wet day, when she stepped out of the Rolls Royce spritely and resplendent in a pair of rubber boots. As with everything else, she was a very practical lady.

Dame Roma has been a true pioneer for women. I did not see her as a feminist. As one commentator put it, feminists felt uncomfortable with her, but she was their absolute exemplar. Dame Roma blazed new trails through the corridors that for years had been the domain of wealthy Adelaide men but, through all this, men did not deride or feel threatened by her. Indeed, they felt the exact opposite: they respected and admired her. There was nothing false about Roma Mitchell, who was a role model for both men and women. As the member for Bragg has said, she had abundant energy, extraordinary for her years; so let that be a lesson for us all. For me to have that sort of energy at that age I will have to change my lifestyle very shortly.

Notwithstanding her life's achievements, I believe Dame Roma's underlying goodness and graciousness came from her strong Christian faith, as the Minister for Water Resources has just said. As we know, she was a devout Roman Catholic who regularly attended worship. She often walked all the way from Government House up to the cathedral and back. Her parish priest, Fr Maurice Shinnick, said that her deep Christian faith reinforced both her life and death. She epitomised in many ways the deep compassion of Jesus. She did not preach her work: she went out and lived it—what an example to us all. Dame Roma was and will remain an icon, not only of South Australia, but also Australia. She has left an indelible mark on me and most members and many other people in our community. I join others in expressing our sincere condolences to her family and friends. Long live her memory.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I pay tribute to Dame Roma. When we think of Dame Roma we think of words such as dignity, great intellect, good sense of humour, care and compassion for others and a humility which is often not found in people holding high office. I wish to share some observations about Dame Roma. I chatted to her once about the fact that her father was killed in the First World War, along with 60 000 other young Australians. That event had on Dame Roma a tremendous impact which she carried throughout her life. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, Anzac Day had a special memory and recollection for her. Tribute has been paid to her vice-regal and legal achievements, which will be carried on through the years ahead in the form of legal decisions and the like. I will make reference to just one personal interaction with Dame Roma. She attended our wedding and reception back in 1996 and, whilst she had another engagement she was meant to attend, she kindly stayed on because she said she was having such a good time at the reception. I am sure that this will challenge the member for Schubert, because Dame Roma's gift was a dozen of the best wines from the cellar. So, it was a lasting gift, or in some ways a not so lasting gift, from Dame Roma.

Dame Roma was a great supporter of the arts and, in particular, the Helpmann Academy. I was delighted that the Premier and cabinet agreed recently to honour the commitment given in 1996 to name the centre for performing arts in Light Square after Dame Roma. I look forward to the day when that building is complete and bears her name as a

tribute in recognition of what she has achieved and done for South Australia. I extend condolences to her family and acknowledge that we will miss Dame Roma but remember her with love and affection as well as for her great legal and vice-regal achievements.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I, too, feel the need to rise to support this condolence motion on the passing of Dame Roma Mitchell for I, too, am touched not only by her greatness and her many firsts, as many have outlined here today, but also by her great humility and love of people. I certainly feel privileged to have been a member of parliament during her Governorship, and I am a proud South Australian, South Australia having produced such a human being.

There are many monuments to the life and achievements of Dame Roma Mitchell, but the greatest of these monuments is in the hearts of all South Australians.

The SPEAKER: I thank members for their contributions to this condolence motion relating to Dame Roma, a truly great South Australian.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 3.32 to 3.50 p.m.]

SA WATER LAND

A petition signed by 367 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House prevent the sale of SA Water land between Penfold Road and Edinburgh Avenue at Stonyfell, was presented by the Hon. M.H. Armitage.

Petition received.

PROSTITUTION

A petition signed by 14 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House not proceed with any legislation to decriminalise prostitution, was presented by Ms Bedford.

Petition received.

Petitions signed by 314 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House strengthen the law in relation to prostitution and ban prostitution related advertising, were presented by the Hon G.M. Gunn, Messrs Meier and Williams and Ms Bedford.

Petitions received.

SPEED LIMIT

A petition signed by 998 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House support legislation to increase the speed limit on sections of the Stuart, Eyre and Barrier Highways and Hawker to Lyndhurst Road to 130 kilometres per hour, was presented by the Hon. G.M. Gunn.

Petition received.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A petition signed by seven residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to extend the needle exchange program to users of prescribed intravenous medication, was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

POLICE, TEA TREE GULLY

A petition signed by seven residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to establish a Police Patrol Base to serve the Tea Tree Gully area, was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLANS

A petition signed by 37 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House amend the Draft Management Plans for the Southern Eyre Peninsula National Parks to take account of their heritage value, the continued existence of the Coffin Bay ponies and recreational amenity, was presented by Ms Penfold.

Petition received.

NATIVE VEGETATION

A petition signed by 2052 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House legislate to protect native vegetation and promote sustainable farming practice to ensure biodiversity and healthy waterways, was presented by the Hon. R.B. Such.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that written answers to questions as detailed in the schedule I now table be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 13, 16, 22, 39, 41, 43, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 62, 67, 68, 70-72, 74, 77 and 80-82; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

In reply to **Ms WHITE (Taylor)** 20 October.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The amounts shown on page 8.34 of this year's budget paper 4 and referred to in this question represent that portion of the Department of Education, Training and Employment's annual provisions categorised as 'Investment'.

In 1998-1999, the total of the annual provisions was \$59.94 million of which \$10.304 was categorised as investment and \$49.636 was categorised as operating.

In 1999-2000, the total of the annual provisions was \$63.639 million of which \$7.48 million was categorised as investment and \$56.159 million as operating.

Therefore, the reality is that the total of annual provisions, comparing last financial year to this, has been increased by \$3.699 million.

There has been no reduction in and transfer of minor works funding to Partnerships 21. In fact the minor works allocation has increased to \$20.819 million in 1999-2000.

POLICE, PAYMENTS

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by Police that the total payment from the Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts for 1998-99 is \$14.7 million and is applied to Police's Traffic Services Output Class, Traffic Police Output, but is not separately allocated to any specific activity within that Output.

FIREARMS

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by Police that as a result of the strict criteria for the ownership and possession of firearms which was implemented after agreements reached in

1996 and 1997, a model for compensation to be paid to firearms dealers whose business was affected or made unviable was approved by the Commonwealth Attorney-General.

Price Waterhouse Coopers were engaged by the Commonwealth to assess claims made under the national formulae for the Compensation of Licensed Firearms Dealers for the Loss of Business Valuation and advise local jurisdictions on the validity of the claims made.

As a result of the audit of these procedures recommendations were made by the Auditor-General that the process be reviewed. This was done, resulting in the Commonwealth Attorney-General scrutinising the established procedures and finding no reason to seek further verification of claims beyond those procedures which were in place.

Discussions were held in June 1998 between Price Waterhouse Coopers, Police and representatives from the Auditor-General to clarify the procedures and payments made to firearms dealers were in compliance with the approved national formulae. The alleged disagreement between Police and the Auditor-General did not and does not exist.

Other comments made by the Auditor-General regarding expired licences are consistent with his previous report. This problem is continuing to be addressed by Police with ongoing operations to reduce the number of expired firearms licences.

POLICE, CONSULTANTS

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by Police that the amount incurred for consultants in 1998-99 is \$206,000, whereas the figure in brackets of \$301,000 is expenditure incurred in 1997-98, which has been provided for comparative purposes.

Details of the 1998-99 expenditure is as follows:

| Consultant | Consultancy | \$000's |
|-----------------|---|-----------|
| John Moroney | Review of SAPOL's Occupational Health & Safety, rehabilitation and claims management systems. | 7,000 |
| KPMG | Review of Information Systems & Telecommunications plan. | 5,000 |
| Ryan Spargo | Review of Middle Management Development program for Equal Opportunity. | 14,000 |
| Arthur Andersen | Review of Output Budgeting system. | 38,000 |
| Compaq | Design and install modifications to Vehicle Identification Reporting System. | 47,000 |
| Ernst & Young | Business Case for Expiation Notice Branch accommodation and re-engineering. | 95,000 |
| | | \$206,000 |

RANDOM BREATH TESTING

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by police of the following response:

With the allocation of specific funding to facilitate extra random breath testing commencing in 1997, SAPOL identified to its members the circumstances under which it could be used.

Since introduction of the fund, direction has been provided to officers that the funds allocated are only to be used for matters associated with random breath testing. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that when involved in RBT against the fund, due consideration is given to ensuring that activities are linked to RBT if the fund is being relied upon.

From the outset it was realised that there was potential for members to become involved in other matters, whilst on RBT duty. This is recognised and there is no impediment to becoming involved in other matters where necessary. The issue of funding in such an instance is not important in that where a member was on RBT, using the fund, and became involved in another separate matter, it would simply require identification on the claim form and time sheet of the member, to apportion the expense against either the fund or general operating expenses of SAPOL.

SAPOL is conscious of the need to closely monitor and control expenditure against the fund to ensure that it is expended in line with the agreement under which it was provided. However, there have

been many circumstances where members involved with special RBT activities have been involved in and followed up other matters.

It is not possible to comment further on the specific incident raised by Mr Conlon, due to lack of information.

I am advised by police that a direction will be given to all areas to ensure that supervisors at special RBT's are aware of the policy which describes the procedures to be followed should members become involved in other matters.

POLICE, FEES

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by Police of the following response—

That the \$42.2 million includes payment of expiated fees for fines for speed cameras, red-light cameras, other traffic infringement, cannabis infringements, a small number of fees collected on behalf of other agencies, and reminder notice fees.

The breakdown is as follows:

| | \$000's |
|---|---------|
| Speed Cameras | 25.9 |
| Red-light Cameras | 1.5 |
| Other Traffic Infringements | 13.4 |
| Cannabis Infringements | 0.3 |
| Other Infringements | 0.1 |
| Reminder Notice Fees | 1.0 |
| | \$42.2 |
| Casualty and Death Crash Data Between 1 July 1998 and 30 June 1999 | |
| Fatalities | 157 |
| Casualty Crashes (preliminary) | 7201 |

DISABLED STUDENTS

In reply to **Ms WHITE (Taylor)** 9 November.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The target group of students for whom an index of educational disadvantage is being developed is not students with disabilities, as the member for Taylor has indicated, but in fact, for those students experiencing educational disadvantage due to their low socio-economic status.

SHIP PROGRAM

In reply to **Ms BEDFORD (Florey)** 17 November.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The review of The Heights School's Students with High Intellectual Potential (SHIP) Program, initiated by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, was conducted by the SHIP Special Interest Secondary Schools Reference Group. The focus of the review was on the implementation of the program, the use of funds and ability to sustain the program, as well as extend it to other schools. The review was completed by the end of August.

The Reference Group's recommendation for maintenance funding totalling \$85,000 for The Heights School's SHIP Program has been approved for 2000.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

In reply to **Ms KEY (Hanson)** 20 October.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: In regard to the outcomes of the Seeding Grant Program for 'Youth Development Officers - Ethnic Youth' as announced by the Premier earlier this year, I refer the Member to the Premier's answer to her question of 30 September 1999, that was recently tabled.

As the Premier stated, in early March 1999, information packages and application forms calling for applications were distributed to all South Australian councils. Three applications were received by the due date of 21 May, 1999, and assessed upon merit against specific selection criteria. None of the three applications complied with the requirements of the application process.

The offer for seeding grants was, therefore, withdrawn and a more effective means of utilising these funds was developed by the Office of Employment and Youth. Consequently, I am pleased to advise that I am now considering a new grants scheme entitled, Ethnic Youth Initiative Grants, and I expect to announce the availability of funding through this scheme in the near future.

POLICE, OVERTIME

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by the Deputy Commissioner of Police of the following response:

With the allocation of specific funding to facilitate extra random breath testing commencing in 1997, SAPOL identified to its members the circumstances under which it could be used, these were:

1. Overtime to provide personnel to random breath testing which was extra to that which could be conducted in normal policing hours.

2. Equipment to conduct random breath testing including: vehicles, evidentiary random breath testing apparatus, alcometers, traffic safety cones and safety vests.

3. Communications equipment and computer technology to provide for RBT in response to intelligence.

4. Travel and accommodation costs for country operations.

Random breath testing against the fund is tailored to:

- increase testing numbers by operating in locations with high volumes of traffic, increasing public awareness through high exposure
- target operations using RBT in locations where there is a known incidence of offending

Since introduction of the fund, direction has been provided to officers that the funds allocated are only to be used for matters associated with random breath testing. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that when involved in RBT against the fund, due consideration is given to ensuring that activities are linked to RBT if the fund is being relied upon.

From the outset it was realised that there was potential for members to become involved in other matters, whilst on RBT duty. This is recognised and there is no impediment to becoming involved in other matters where necessary.

Police officers engaged in such RBT duties are additional to those rostered for general duties. As such they are regarded as an emergency reserve group should the need arise. Supervisors and managers of these special operations such as New Year's Eve rely on this flexibility when planning and executing particular operations.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 27 October.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am advised that Mr Cambridge did not declare to the Board of Education Adelaide any personal interests in any of the companies of which he was a director.

The Board of Education Adelaide discussed the former tax office building at 65 King William Street being purchased and redeveloped for student accommodation on 30 November 1998. Mr Cambridge was not a director of the Zhong Huan Group (Australia), at that time.

CHINESE DEVELOPERS

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 27 October.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am advised that the Board of Education Adelaide did discuss the redevelopment of the former tax office in King William Street for overseas student accommodation, and while supportive in principle, did not endorse individual projects.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE SERVICE

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 21 October.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I have been advised by the SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) that this comment related to a small number of National Australia Bank Mastercards which were issued to staff without ensuring the signed conditions of issue were returned. There is no suggestion that the cards were issued or used without authorisation. Further, it is noted that the length of time to collect docketts from card holders in the country was protracted.

This problem has been reviewed and remedied when SAAS changed its banker to the Commonwealth Bank, and cards were reissued.

SAAS responded to the Auditor General's stating, "Agreement and Acknowledgment forms have been forwarded to each cardholder that has not completed the documentation. These will be followed up to ensure that each cardholder has completed the appropriate

documentation. Cardholders will be reminded that documentation of the credit card expenditure must be attached to the back of the monthly statement.

Further, the Finance and Audit Committee of the Ambulance Board as part of their corporate governance role, receives a monthly summary of relevant control measures, of which credit card expenditure is one.

SAAS is confident that there are now appropriate controls in place.

CLIPSAL POWER HOUSE

In reply to **Mr WRIGHT (Lee)** 20 October.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have been advised as follows:

1. The loan repayments are up to date. It should be noted, however, that with the Treasurer's approval a payment due in July 1998 and part of a payment due in July 1999 were deferred until the restructure of the loan took place in October 1999. A small amount was outstanding from the January 1998 payment due to a Government administrative error and this too was included in the restructured loan.

2. The loan repayments are on time.

CAMBRIDGE, Mr J.

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 11 November.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am advised that at the November 30, 1998 meeting of the Education Industry Development Council Board (now Education Adelaide), Mr John Cambridge made a presentation regarding the possible redevelopment of the former taxation office in King William Street by the Shanghai Qingyu Enterprise Development Corporation.

The board decided that as it was not in a position to provide guarantees on occupancy to any developer, it would not endorse this specific project. However, the Board did decide that it would indicate to any developer of student accommodation that it was supportive of such a development.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay)** 20 October.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has provided the following information:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Shareholdings | |
| (1) Emmarie Pty Ltd | 9,025 shares |
| (2) David Garry Holdings Ltd | 2,400 shares |
| (3) Morning Star Holdings (Aust) Ltd | 500 shares |
| (4) Media Asia Pacific Ltd (in liquidation) | 3,750 shares |
| (5) Qantas | 1,276 shares |
| (6) Laserex Ltd | 2,000 shares |

Emmarie Pty Ltd is an investment vehicle controlled by Mr Brian Jones and myself. Its principal investment is equity in a US based limited partnership. The company is managed by Mr Jones.

Notes: (a) (2), (3), (4) and (6) are the unmarketable residue of investments made before 1995.

(b) (2) and (5) are held jointly with my wife.

(c) (6) are held in my name and 2,000 are held by my wife.

(d) (1), (2), (3), (4) and (6) predate my current employment in Government.

2. Directorships

As previously approved, I am a Director of:

- (1) Emmarie Pty Ltd
- (2) ScanOptics Pty Ltd

I do not receive any remuneration from either directorship.

In the case of ScanOptics, I do not hold any equity or other beneficial interest.

ScanOptics is an Adelaide based company that manufactures surgical equipment used by Ophthalmic surgeons in third world countries. I was approached to be a Director because of past involvement in the development of similar medical equipment companies.

Neither of the companies of which I am a Director have any business relationships that would constitute a conflict of interest.

3. Other Beneficial Interests

My wife and I have a private superannuation fund which is managed by Perpetual Trustees. I do not control its investment decisions.

In regard to work as a private consultant during the period of my current employment with the SA Government, with the approval of the Premier, I took two days leave without pay to undertake a consulting assignment with CRA on an aboriginal community relations issue in Western Australia. This was to finalise a project I had undertaken prior to my current employment by the Government.

No other work was undertaken as a consultant. I have on at least three occasions helped SA consultants (in a minor way) to prepare proposals for contracts with former clients located outside SA. I have not received any remuneration for this and I believe that assisting the generation of such employment in SA is not a conflict of interest.

HINDMARSH STADIUM

In reply to **Mr FOLEY (Hart)** 27 October.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have been advised as follows:

It can be confirmed that the South Australian Soccer Federation recently engaged the firm Thompson Tregear to provide it with management advice relating to Hindmarsh Stadium.

ADELAIDE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

In reply to **Mr WRIGHT (Lee)** 28 October.

The Hon. J. HALL: Ms Puels received payment of \$75,000 (less tax) plus other standard entitlements at the conclusion of her employment on 31 December 1999. This is in line with her entitlement.

Ms Puels departure was the result of an agreement between herself and the Board of Adelaide Entertainments Corporation.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the following reports of the Public Works Committee, which have been received and published pursuant to section 17(7) and (8) of the Parliamentary Committees Act:

The 109th report on the Flinders Medical Centre Critical Care Medicine Unit Redevelopment;

the 110th report on the South Coast Water Supply Augmentation Program—Stage 1;

the 111th report on the Netley Police Complex;

the 112th report on the Willunga Basin Pipeline (Recycled Water Reuse Scheme);

the 113th report on the Strathmont Centre Redevelopment—Aged Care Facilities;

the 114th report on the Upper South-East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Plan—Tilley Swamp, Ballater East and Wongawilli Drainage Works;

the 115th report on the Adelaide Festival Centre Upgrade—Stage 2, Phase 2—Building Audit Works and Back of House Technical Equipment;

the 116th report on the Regency Hotel School—Stages 2 and 3, Regency Campus Redevelopment;

the 117th report on the Pelican Point Power Station Transmission Connection Corridor;

the 118th report on the Forensic Science Centre Refurbishment;

the 119th report on the Christies Beach Magistrates Court;

the 120th report on the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery; and

the 121st report on the Northern Power Station Interim Report.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Public Sector Management Act—Ministerial Staff—
Report, March 2000

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

Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia—Report,
1998-99

Regulations under the following Acts—

Fisheries—General—Cooper and Diamantina Creeks
Gas Pipelines Access (South Australia)—Principal

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

Architects Act—By Laws—Variation

Development Act—

Development Plan—

Report on Interim Operation—Barossa Council—
Barossa (DC) and Mount Pleasant (DC)

Report on Interim Operation—Southern Mallee
District Council—Consolidation and General
Review Plan Amendment Report

Crown Development Report—Report on Interim
Operation—City of Onkaparinga—Willunga (DC)
(Metropolitan)—Rural Lands Plan Amendment
Report

Construction of a Training Centre for Juvenile
Males and Females at Cavan

South Australian Health Commission Act—By Laws—

Kingston Soldiers' Memorial Hospital Incorporated
Naracoorte Health Service Incorporated

Road Traffic (Road Events) Amendment Act—Review,
2000

South Australian Housing Trust—Code of Practice

Regulations under the following Acts—

City of Adelaide—

Elections and Polls—Variation

Members Allowances and Benefits—Variation

Development—

Aboriginal Land

Electricity Businesses

Public Notices

Harbors and Navigation—

Port Vincent

Variations

Local Government—

Financial Management

General

Members Allowances and Benefits

Local Government (Elections)—Elections

Local Government (Implementation)—Principal

Motor Vehicles—

Demerit Points

Exemption from S41(2)

Physiotherapists Act 1991—Variation—Qualifications

Road Traffic Act—

Application of Regulations

Declarations of Hospitals

Mass and Loading Requirements

Miscellaneous Provisions

Miscellaneous Variation

Oversize or Overmass Vehicle Exemption

Recurrent Offenders

Vehicle Standards Rules

South Australian Co-operative and Community

Housing—

General Variation

Housing Associations Variation

South Australian Housing Trust—Conditions of Tenancy

State Emergency Service—2000

Tobacco Products Regulation—Sale to Children

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

Remuneration Tribunal—

Determinations 1 and 2—Industrial Relations Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission

Determination 4—Ministers, Officers and Members of Parliament

Determination 5—Senior Warden, Wardens Court

Determinations 6 and 7—Judges, Statutory and Court Officers—Travel Allowances and Salary

Determination 8—Judges, Statutory and Court Officers—Conveyance Allowances

Determination 9—Judiciary—Salary

WorkCover Corporation—Report 1998-99

Regulations under the following Acts—

Freedom of Information—Exempt Agency—Independent Industry Regulator

Shop Trading Hours—Hardware

State Records—Electricity Business Exclusions

Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation—

Claims and Registration

Claims and Registration—Crown Agencies

Claims and Registration—Variations

Costs of Proceedings

Disclosure of Information

General

Reviews and Appeals

Scale of Changes Private Hospitals

Substituting Disclosure of Information for General

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

Adelaide Casino Pty Ltd—

Casino Duty Agreement

Approved Licensing Agreement

Department of Education, Training and Employment and Children's Services—

Report, 1998-99

Distribution Lessor Corporation—Ministerial Directions—Sale and Lease of Electricity Distribution Business

Electricity Supply Industry Planning Council—Charter

ETSA Contributory and Non-Contributory Superannuation Schemes—Report, 1998-99

ETSA Corporation—Ministerial Directions—Probity Rules

Flinders University of South Australia—Report, 1998

Flinders University of South Australia—Statute Amendments—

Awards

Student Conduct

Inquiry into the Cost of Record Keeping to Comply with the Petroleum Subsidy Scheme—Report, 2000

RESI Corporation—Ministerial Directions—Property Leases

SA Generation Corporation—Ministerial Directions—Probity Rules

Regulations under the following Acts—

Commonwealth Places (Mirror Tax Administration)—Modification of State Taxing Laws

Electricity—

Erection of Buildings

Undergrounding of Powerlines

Local Government Finance Authority—Variation of Schedule

Petroleum Products Regulation—Variation of Prescribed Rate

Public Corporations—

ETSA Energy Corporation

Land Management Corporation Variation

RESI Power Corporation

Transmission Lessor Corporation

Southern State Superannuation—Prescription of Enterprise Agreement

Superannuation—Commutation

By the Minister for Environment and Heritage (Hon. I.F. Evans)—

Corporate Affairs Commission—Report, 1998-99

Justice Portfolio—Report, 1998-99—Erratum

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee—Report, 1998-99

National Crime Authority—Report, 1998-99

National Environment Protection Council—Report, 1998-99

South Australian Office of Financial Supervision—Report, 1999

Summary Offences Act—

Dangerous Area Declarations 1 July 1999 to 30 September 1999

Road Block Establishment Authorisations 1 July 1999 to 30 September 1999

Dangerous Area Declarations 1 October 1999 to 31 December 1999

Road Block Establishment Authorisations 1 October 1999 to 31 December 1999

Liquor Licensing Act—Review of 'Responsible Persons' Exemption Provisions S.97—Report, December 1999

Regulations under the following Acts—

Criminal Law (Sentencing)—Sentencing

Expiation of Offences—Form Variation

Land Agents—Sales Representative

Legal Practitioners—Records

Liquor Licensing Act 1997—Dry Areas—

Aberfoyle Park

Adelaide

Normanville

Oaklands Park

Port Pirie

Native Vegetation—Exemptions

Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Electricians—State Employees Exemptions

Police—Transfer to Higher Rank

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—

Fees/Codes of Practice

General

Residential Tenancies—

Rooming Houses

Schedules Variations

Retail and Commercial Leases—Exclusions from Act

Rules of Court—

District Court Act—District Court Rules—Consequential Amendment

Magistrates Court Act—Magistrates Court Rules—Amendment No 16

Supreme Court Act—Supreme Court Rules—Form 44A Notice of Appeal

Corporation Law

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

SA Greyhound Racing Authority—Report, 1998-99

Rules of Racing—

Racing Act—

Body protector

On Course Betting

By the Minister for Tourism (Hon. Joan Hall)—

Adelaide Entertainment Centre—Report, 1998-99

By the Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier (Hon. W.A. Matthew)—

Year 2000, Progress in Detection, Prevention and Remedy of Problems—Third Report

By the Minister for Local Government (Hon. D.C. Kotz)—

Local Government Act 1934—Superannuation Scheme Rules.

PRISONER ESCAPES

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I wish to advise the House of the action I have taken to address the unacceptable circumstances which preceded the Mobilong and Adelaide Airport escapes. I also wish to advise the House of the outcomes of the reports into these escapes and put in perspective the current state of the correctional services system in South Australia.

I am extremely concerned about the manner in which these three escapes occurred, particularly given the expensive security upgrade program the government has set in place at Mobilong, Yatala, Adelaide Remand Centre and Port Augusta. The current debate about the correctional services system needs to be put in perspective. There have been 10 escapes from correctional services custody this year. This is the second lowest number of escapes to have occurred since 1989. Notwithstanding these statistics, the fact is that the recent escapes at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, Mobilong and Adelaide Airport will not be tolerated.

The Chief Executive of the Department for—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: The Chief Executive of the Department for Correctional Services, in consultation with me, has taken the following action:

- carried out thorough investigations into all incidents, implemented immediate reforms to practices or procedures which were exposed by the investigations, including the Chief Executive's personal approval of all leave from prison;
- brought forward the department's planned review of mentoring which directly affects the ongoing training and development of new correctional staff; and
- issued a directive that all prisoners sentenced or charged with murder or sexual offences or who may be notorious will be double cuffed when he or she may be outside a prison.

These measures are among the toughest in Australia.

The investigations into the Mobilong and Adelaide Airport have now been completed and in both cases negligence has

been alleged against the officers involved. Thus all the indications are that human error has allowed the escapes. With respect to the Adelaide Airport escape on 23 February, the officer has been served with a Notice of Inquiry under the Public Sector Management Act which alleges he was negligent and failed to comply with instructions in relation to the escort of the prisoner from Port Lincoln to an address in Adelaide and back to Adelaide Airport.

Information contained in the report will form the basis of evidence to be put to the inquiry to be held in April, and therefore it is not possible at this stage to release any further details in order to avoid the risk of prejudicing that inquiry. This is the same process that was followed with the Mobilong escape. With respect to the escape of a prisoner from the Royal Adelaide Hospital on 20 March, investigations have found that Group 4 escorting officers failed to observe company procedures while at the hospital. Group 4 has suspended the officers, who now face disciplinary action for failing to follow procedures.

As with the other escapes, I am concerned about the circumstances which preceded the escape. However, it is important to acknowledge that Group 4 has conducted almost 200 000 escorts since the contract began in 1996, and in that time it has recorded only three effective escapes.

Finally, I feel that it is important to address the case of the prisoner who failed to return to the Adelaide Pre Release Centre from work to which he was assigned in the Belair National Park. Every day about 20 selected prisoners work outside prison fences carrying out environmental protection work in the community. Most of the work occurs in national parks, including the Coorong, where they have advanced the environmental plan for the Coorong by up to 10 years. Mobile work camps alone have contributed approximately \$900 000 in the past three years to the communities in which they operate. Similar work is being done in the Belair and Black Hill National Parks by selected low security prisoners, who are in the last few months of their sentences, in anticipation of their transfer to either home detention or parole.

It remains this government's view that selected low security prisoners should be required to work for the benefit of the community. Whilst I do not condone the manner in which the Adelaide Airport and the Mobilong escapes occurred, I do believe that the government and the Department for Correctional Services deserve some credit for reducing the number of prisoner escapes so significantly whilst running programs which are valuable to the South Australian community.

QUESTION TIME

MURRAY RIVER

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Has the Premier read the 1996 resource assessment report on the Murray River mouth estuary; has the report been publicly released; and can the Premier tell the House which, if any, of the 36 recommendations have been implemented?

A biological resource assessment of the Murray Mouth estuary prepared in 1996 by the South Australian Research and Development Institute and funded by the commonwealth government made 36 recommendations to the South Australian government. These recommendations dealt with the urgent need to monitor water quality in the Lower Murray

and lakes; the need to assess all sources of pollution, including grazing and pasture activities; the need to reduce wetland grazing; and a requirement for new planning management processes.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): There are some 50 reports, or near 50 reports, which relate to the Murray Basin and a series of recommendations which relate to the management of the whole Murray-Darling Basin Commission. I noted that the Leader of the Opposition indicated in a notice of motion today that he wanted the issue of the Murray-Darling basin placed on the agenda of COAG.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that that was agreed to by the Prime Minister following representations I made on three occasions last year and in January this year. In February I received advice from the Prime Minister that it would be listed as a key item of debate between leaders of the states and the commonwealth at the next COAG meeting. I welcome the fact that the Leader is prepared to move a motion in the parliament endorsing what we have put in place, and I look forward to continuing support from the Leader of the Opposition on what is a most important issue, that is, the environmental base of the whole Murray-Darling basin system and, attached to that, the economic future of the Murray-Darling basin system and, attached to that, the economic fortunes of regional parts of Australia, dovetailing into our trade, our exports and, of course, jobs related to that throughout the regional areas of the state.

If the suggestion from the Leader is that we have not matched rhetoric with action, let me run through some initiatives of this government since 1993 which put paid to the suggestion that we are not prepared to put in place measures which indicate that upstream they have shown a total disregard for South Australia and our position over the course of the next century.

A proposal was put forward to the Keating government. That was not picked up. This related to a five year strategy to look after the Murray-Darling basin. My advice is that it was not picked up, but the subsequent Howard government put in place the Natural Heritage Trust. Some \$163 million has been put in place in the past few years, and a significant amount of that has come into South Australia for a range of rehabilitation programs for our part of this river system. That \$163 million is a substantial and tangible way of moving forward for the rejuvenation of the Murray-Darling basin system—delivered by a federal Liberal Government and a state Liberal Government.

We can draw comparisons with the past. Let me go on to say that we have committed funds to the Loxton irrigation system. This is a system that, with others in the Riverland, was previously known as war settlement irrigation trusts. As a result of a 40 per cent contribution from the commonwealth, a 40 per cent contribution from South Australia and a 20 per cent contribution from the growers, we have put in place changes to the open channel irrigation system as well as the appropriate drip irrigation systems.

That drip irrigation has allowed us to free up water for further plantings in the Riverland. For example, Almond Co. is internationally successful, with its product going onto the export market. It is the result of irrigation practices that have been put in place using the same amount of water that has

expanded the range of plantings—and that goes into export products.

Is there any reason to question the fact that in the Riverland we have seen about a 30 per cent economic growth each year for the past three years? It is the result of the investment that has been put in place for the horticultural, viticulture and other industry growth in the Riverland. In addition, South Australia is the only state—and I emphasise ‘the only state’—with a statutory based state water plan that provides a contemporary assessment of the condition of the state’s water resources and sets out the government’s strategic policy directions for development and management of those resources.

The member for Heysen, who is a key architect of that legislation and its introduction into this parliament, can take some credit for putting in place a base that puts us ahead of every other state in Australia in terms of management of our water resource to ensure the sustainability and longevity of that water resource to underpin commercial industrial growth in South Australia, not to mention household consumption.

South Australia was also the first state in Australia to require formal community involvement in water resources management and the establishment of the South Australian Water Resources Council. So, if there is a suggestion—a faint suggestion—from the Leader of the Opposition that we have not put in place a strategic plan, that we have not invested tens of millions of taxpayers’ dollars to rejuvenate the Murray River and play our part to ensure that the whole Murray-Darling basin system is rehabilitated for future generations, then he is wrong. I welcome any support from the opposition on this measure, which is most crucial to South Australia’s future. Management of that sustainable resource, its rehabilitation, will be essential for us and our future as a state. I would welcome any support the Leader of the Opposition might want to give us on that.

I put the other point clearly on the record. For the first time we have a commonwealth national government being prepared to take South Australia’s concerns to heart and, as such, registering them. We have had the commonwealth government agree to an environmental impact assessment of the Snowy’s corporatisation scheme. When Jeff Kennett was in government in Victoria, he gave an unconditional commitment to me that he would not sign off on the Snowy’s corporatisation scheme until and unless South Australia was satisfied and our interests were protected.

What happened with the change of government to the Bracks government—and selling out to the one Independent who wanted a 28 per cent increase in flow down the Snowy? There was no consideration of South Australia’s interests. It was at that point, when the Bracks government fell over the line and incorporated that Independent’s demands, that we took up the issue at a Federal level because it was clear that Victoria then was not necessarily going to act in our long-term interests.

As a result of that, now we have not only the environmental impact assessment, but also the capacity as it relates to a sign off, with the support of Victoria, New South Wales and the commonwealth government to sign off on the Snowy Mountains corporatisation scheme, so that our set of circumstances can be taken into account. The environmental impact statement will enable us to argue the case. We have already made a submission to Senator Minchin and the commonwealth government on the environmental impact statement,

and we will be following that up over the course of the next month to six weeks.

In addition to that, when COAG meets in July/August, we will again be championing the cause for South Australia. But let me put it in its proper context. For seven years we have had a strategy, a plan, legislative action and a commitment of financial resources as it relates to the River Murray in South Australia. We have taken up the issue consistently at a federal level, and the simple fact that we have NHT funding into South Australia which has been matched by South Australian funds is testament to our commitment over the last seven years to the rehabilitation of the River Murray.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Can the Premier advise the House about the progress of the state government's investment attraction strategy?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): The state government, through its industry and trade department, has had major success in this area in recent years. Adelaide—indeed, South Australia—is well and truly now backed by business, and you only have to look at the headline in the *Melbourne Age* today that demonstrates that we are back on the radar screen for investment from the eastern seaboard of Australia. In taking a conservative view, the benefits for the period 1 July—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Hart might be interested in these figures: he tries to debunk them all the time. I would like to present some facts to him. From 1 July 1998 through to March 2000, investment commitments negotiated involved 94 companies. Let me put the lie to the Leader of the Opposition's claim, as I think I read in the last week, that this was all going to interstate companies. Of the 94 companies, 75 are located in South Australia. That is 81 per cent of support to South Australian companies saving jobs, expanding jobs, consolidating jobs, and growth within those bases that they have currently in South Australia. Some 6 800 jobs will be created or saved as a result of that investment attraction, and a further 8 100 jobs will be created indirectly. That will have a significant impact of some 15 000 jobs direct and indirect, with a capital investment of some \$400 million.

That will also contribute to gross state product of \$3.7 billion, as I understand, in present value terms, and something in the order of \$212 million in net present value terms. The figures speak for themselves. Having had four months to come up with a plan, all Labor wants to do is stop all this. It wants to abolish the Department of Industry and Trade. The only policy of note of the Leader of the Opposition—and it has taken us a couple of years to get one—is that he will abolish the department that has actually delivered that sort of outcome for South Australians. That is what he wants to do.

As well as the thousands of jobs directly and indirectly that are being created by these 200 or so public servants, we have attracted Optus, Westpac, Banker's Trust and, of course, BHP's new shared business service centre. Let me also correct the Leader of the Opposition. I heard him on radio saying that this is another call centre. The BHP shared services centre is much more than that. Similar to the one in Huston, it will be the base that will look after Australia and the Asia Pacific area. It will look after financial contracts—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Minerals and Energy will come to order, too.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In regard to the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition, there is one thing he has to understand, and that is this: the company that is actually doing the investment will at the end of the day make the decision where it will go. Whilst we raised a regional focus, as we do with these companies, it will be the company at the end of the day that will make the decision, as BHP did on this occasion. The reason it picked the CBD is the status, the professional qualifications required, the interstate and overseas travel that will be required of these companies, and the links involved, because they will be dealing with a range of other companies based in a city CBD location. That is why BHP made the decision it did.

For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition who seems to be absolutely ignorant of this fact, it will be the negotiation of contracts for BHP purchasing, the financial reporting for BHP, the payroll operations of BHP nationally and in Asia, and the human resource aspects of BHP nationally and in Asia. The fact that it has selected South Australia demonstrates that we are now back as a location for investment from other areas. That BHP shared services centre will create some 508 jobs; it will start operating from 1 November this year and be up to full strength by December next year. It is an icon company selecting South Australia in which to locate, and I would have thought that even the Leader of the Opposition would welcome the fact that a major national company, recognised internationally, the 'big Australian', has selected us.

I am proud of that fact, and I would have thought that even the Leader of the Opposition might be a smidgin proud that we had secured that instead of, as we saw in the 1980s, about 80 per cent of our head offices on the Stock Exchange shift out of South Australia to the eastern seaboard. If members want to compare and contrast, when the Labor Party was in government, we saw a flight to the eastern seaboard. What we are seeing at last is a reconfiguration, a new deal for South Australia, with investment coming back into this state.

This builds on the very significant policy direction we have had now for some five years. It is a call centre, back office financial services sector and building a new industry. We have had in excess of 150 companies select and base in Adelaide. That has created employment for some 7 000 South Australians—more than General Motors. Just think about that for a moment. A new industry sector has started in the last five years creating some 7 000 jobs. That is a significant outcome for this state. A new industry sector has been created.

I want to comment on the Leader's new economic strategy. I think it was a strategy, a plan or whatever it was that the leader released over the last few days. The leader wants to go back to a system of centralised economic planning, back to the old days of union domination, control and direction of economic planning. The leader is yet to understand that we actually must go out and market South Australia: it will not automatically come to us. We have to reposition and we have to undo the damage done so effectively by Labor during its last term in government. In its last term

of government, the Labor Party destroyed this state and destroyed jobs.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It will not work. I remind the House once again that when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Employment he left unemployment at 12.7 per cent, or something like that. That is a great record.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. I know that this is the first day: we have started off reasonably well, but let us keep it that way.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The leader's industry policy is a recipe from the 1970s. We saw this sort of policy direction in the 1970s: vague notions of centralised planning and discredited industry policy. The leader's plan (if you can call it a plan) released in the past few days is the hallmark of 1970s thinking, not the hallmark of the twenty-first century.

MURRAY RIVER

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): We will ignore the Premier's insults to the people of Whyalla. Will the Minister for Water Resources tell the House how many millions of litres of grossly polluted irrigation water are being pumped each year by the South Australian Government from government-reclaimed irrigation areas into the River Murray between Mannum and Wellington? The opposition has been informed by SA Water that on behalf of the government it operates more than 20 pumps on government-reclaimed irrigation areas. These pump a cocktail of cow manure and chemical fertilisers from dairy herds back into the river, which I understand the minister on ABC radio—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is now debating. The member will resume his seat. The Minister for Water Resources.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): I thank the leader of the Opposition for his question and for his new-found interest in water. I also thank him for his undoubted commitment to bipartisan support, which I know about only because he managed to broadcast it all over South Australia although he has not yet telephoned me or any of my ministerial colleagues about it. I thank him also for going to the media today with an alleged sample of water. No-one knows where it was taken or what is in it, apart from the fact that it is muddy water.

Luckily, I also had a bottle of water. A bottle that was bottled in 1995 from the River Murray went from Swan Reach to the Barossa Valley, and television tonight, hopefully, will show the quality of the water that the Labor Party found acceptable to pump into the homes of every South Australian. It is absolute hypocrisy.

This House deserves to know unequivocally whether the Leader of the Opposition is a member of the loyal opposition in this place or some sort of factor for the Labor Premiers of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, because his little stunt today did very little to alleviate the plight of the River Murray and to assist South Australia's just cause. Is there a measure to go in flood irrigation in the Lower Murray? The answer is yes. Have we established a management plan? The answer is yes.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The Leader of the Opposition interjects, 'Let's do it.' My answer to him is: we are doing it, and we would do it a lot better without his stunts and cheap tricks. We call instead for a little more cooperation and a little more loyalty to the people of this state and a little less to his interstate counterparts.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the leader for interrupting.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Hart for interjecting while the Speaker is on his feet. The member for Schubert.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Mr VENNING (Schubert): My question is directed to the Minister for Water Resources. What did the recent Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in Canberra achieve in terms of improved management of the River Murray in South Australia?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): Last week's meeting was historic in that we decided for the first time to set targets for salinity levels for 19 out of 21 of the catchment areas. We also decided that the cap on water diversions and environmental flows should be in place by the time of a meeting we have called for 25 August this year, which means a big step forward for South Australia. Council has directed all jurisdictions to develop the proposed draft salinity management strategy, and that in itself is a significant step forward.

Ministers agreed to finalise the schedule for the Murray-Darling Basin agreement to the water cap at the next meeting, as I have just stated, whilst the Queensland minister conceded that his state will find it difficult to meet this deadline but agreed to support the finalisation of the cap at this time. Even if the Queensland component is not there, we will have the relevant information at least to start implementing the cap: again, a good step forward.

In view of the Leader of the Opposition's recent concern about environmental damage caused by animal faeces, I wonder what we will do about the Darling Downs; whether Queensland will now have to ban all sheep and cattle from the Darling Downs because as the water pours across there it might come into contact with some sort of natural substance.

The overall meeting was a significant step forward in the process of improving the management of the River Murray. No one action will result in this resource finally being improved: we are embarked upon a progressive and incremental journey. The Premier has shown great leadership in this at a national level. While there are those who might doubt that, it is certainly not the view of my ministerial counterparts interstate. Their comments about our Premier were not always complimentary, but they absolutely convinced me and my ministerial colleagues that the Premier has certainly hit the mark, not only in his own state but all around Australia, because some of them were ducking for cover.

South Australia will not be compromised on the River Murray. This river is about more than this parliament or, indeed, the next two or three parliaments: it is about the future of this state. There is no more important resource for

South Australia than the River Murray: it is our source of drinking water and the source of profitability for many of our horticultural and viticultural industries. We will not trivialise this debate and will not throw personal banter across the chamber.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I will swim in the river a thousand times if that highlights the plight of the river, and I am sure that the Premier will ski on it the same number of times and more. We will get out there and do the work and put some results on the board, because we do not care just about this parliament—we actually care about this state.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I direct my question to the Minister for Water Resources. What effect does the deliberate discharge by SA Water into the Murray of millions of litres of polluted irrigation water have on water quality between Mannum and Wellington; by how much are nutrient levels at Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend elevated by this pollution; and is polluted water then pumped to Adelaide and the South-East for domestic consumption?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): The shadow minister opposite asked a number of detailed and very scientific questions. If he can he can tell me the basis of his allegation regarding 'millions of litres', where those millions of litres are pumped in and the rest of the facts he alleged, I will have somebody look at the matter and give him a detailed and considered answer. I go back to my original point: we have in place a management plan in respect to flood irrigation in the lower Murray. More specifically, one of those 36 recommendations was that the run-off from the dairies should be ponded and should under no circumstances get back into the river. That has been done—finished—and is currently in place. That is one of the recommendations. On other recommendations, such as flood irrigation, we are making progress—and good progress.

I would remind members opposite that in 1993 the *Advertiser* published a report of the state of the environment, after 10 years of Labor government. That report showed that at that time it would cost \$1 billion to correct the mess. In the past three years we have spent \$200 million trying to go down the path that was advocated for you in 1993. So, do not point the finger too quickly, and do not be too carping, because it might come back to haunt you.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Will the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services inform the House of the support from the volunteers in emergency services for the emergency services levy?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Emergency Services): I thank the member for Hartley for his question. Well may the opposition laugh; I will go into a little revision in answering this question. The opposition laughs when members ask questions about what support there has been from the volunteers. There has been very good support from the volunteers, and let us remember why. I will tell you why: because, when the Labor Party was in government, do you know what it did for the volunteers in the emergency services? For 11 long years it totally underfunded the

emergency services and its thank you gift to the emergency services was a \$13 million debt to the CFS. That is what it did for volunteers, and that is what will be remembered right through the next election and beyond by the volunteers, because they support the direction we are taking.

I know that for the past 15 months the Leader of the Opposition has tried to cast a shadow of doubt on whether the emergency services would be better off under the new system. It is very sad that the Leader of the Opposition can support this bill in the parliament—and he is on the *Hansard* and public record as supporting it—and can then spend the next 15 months trying to destroy the best possible opportunity for the protection of life and property. It has been an absolutely blatant misrepresentation of the facts by the Leader of the Opposition for 15 months. During this session I look forward very much to reminding the community of how blatant the Leader of the Opposition has been in trying to destroy the best possible opportunity. The government has shown fortitude. You had many opportunities when in office to listen to the reports and you sat on your hands and did absolutely nothing for emergency services. Let us have a look at a few endorsements for this new fund. I will quote from the—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat; I am sorry to interrupt him. The chair will not sit here for the year 2000 and once again put up with the scattergun interjecting that is going on. The honourable member has asked a question. It is up to the House to hear the reply in silence and observe the standing orders. I will have no hesitation in warning members that in this session if members persist in interjecting they can expect the chair to take some action.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: In answer to the question asked by the member for Hartley, I will give the House some of the many examples I have from volunteers and their representative organisations. I quote one, as follows:

This association fought for central funding [namely, the new levy] to provide a sound basis for volunteer service provision in the future. The critics of the levy are leading the public into an even more expensive [paid service] future, because volunteers will not continue to have their volunteer ethic and public commitment exploited.

That is particularly put to the Leader of the Opposition. You may not be worried about it now, but we will expose you over the next two years for everything you should be exposed for, because you should not even be sitting in the parliament, let alone sitting where you are as Leader of the Opposition. I know that the member behind is working hard to roll you over, and that is why they have all been so quiet for the last four months: they are desperately trying to count the numbers. He sits there smiling. You have been working hard.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will come back to the substance of the question that was asked of him.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I will give another quote from a member of the CFS in one of the opposition seats. This captain congratulated the state government on beating the bullet and meeting the cost of emergency services. Here are a couple of other quotes from volunteers:

I am glad that the VFBA has spoken out about the critics of the levy. I agree wholeheartedly with the media release [put out by the association] and hopefully the politicians and other so-called whingers will fade into the background or focus on other matters that they can provide positive comments about.

Another message for the Leader of the Opposition! Here is another one:

I heartily concur with this release. Is this a case of the media beating things up or the very vocal minority [who seem to knock everything as usual]. I would rather be cast in the lion's den than go back to council funding!

They are the sorts of messages we are getting from the volunteers in the emergency services. Here is another one that has been put on the web site:

Hands off the emergency services levy! CFS volunteers will not tolerate the inadequate funding arrangements of the past. Those politicians who advocate the scrapping of the levy do so at their peril. . . .The emergency services levy must stay.

Here is another:

I reiterate: please do not reduce the emergency services levy. . .

Those are just a few examples of the sort of support we are getting from the emergency services and emergency services agencies.

In conclusion, it is clear that, after many years of inadequate funding, made worse by the \$13 million that Labor left the CFS as a legacy of debt, our government is helping to ensure that our volunteers have the support they need to protect the lives and property of the South Australian community. Let us never forget that the core of the emergency services are the 30 000 volunteers. It is time we got behind them and supported them in doing their job, and that is what we are doing with this new system.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I direct my question—

An honourable member interjecting:

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

Mr HILL: I direct my question to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development. How many dairy farms in the lower Murray swamps and lakes region dispose of polluted irrigation water by pumping it back into the Murray; and, given the statement by the Minister for Water Resources that this is a disastrous practice, what plans does the government have to stop it?

On 27 March the Minister for Water Resources said, 'Now, there was a day when farmers thought they could just flood irrigate and what they didn't use would flow back to the river. That is a disastrous practice.' The 1998-99 annual report of the dairy authority states that there are 169 dairy farms in the lower Murray swamps and lakes, and 31 000 cows.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I thank the honourable member for the question and his interest in the matter. As he would know, it was announced in this parliament previously that a management plan is in place down there; and the consultation with the dairy farmers has well and truly progressed. Over the past few years we have put in a lot of time and effort. The Premier mentioned the rehabilitation up at Loxton. This government has a plan to rehabilitate all those areas.

Ms Stevens: How many farmers?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I do not know the numbers, but I can ascertain how many there are for the honourable member. The point is that we are acting on it. We know that

the focus will always be on us. We are leading the other states in relation to rehabilitation. I ask members to look at our record with the highland irrigation systems and at the commitment we were able to draw after a long battle with Canberra for the Loxton rehabilitation, something which this state fought and fought for and for which it was successful in gaining commonwealth support. What we now ask is that the other states start catching up. But, as far as the swamps at Murray Bridge and the dairy farmers in that area are concerned, the consultation has been done. For all irrigators a lot of these changes are a culture shock, but I can assure the honourable member that South Australian dairy farmers understand what their responsibilities are a lot more than their colleagues interstate.

One big difference is that, with some of the people practising this in New South Wales and Victoria, everyone wears it after them. At least at Murray Bridge it is towards the end of the system, but we have a responsibility in that if we expect the other states to do the right thing we must do the right thing, and the dairy farmers certainly understand that.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: And you want to get rid of it.

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

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Could the Minister for Education and Children's Services outline to the House his response to the call by the Australian Democrats for a parliamentary inquiry into attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, commonly known as ADHD?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I would have thought that as a former school teacher and with all his education contacts the Hon. Mike Elliott in another place would be only too well aware that schools on a daily basis deal with a range of disorders, and ADHD is but one of those issues that they deal with. I have no doubt that, while the honourable member seeks to politicise this issue, he also has a genuine concern about those who are involved in this particular issue. It is one fact to say that ADHD children are prescribed an excess of medication by the medical fraternity, but it is yet another to allege that the government shrugs its shoulders and does nothing to address this.

There are two clear issues here. The Democrats' allegation of excessive drug prescription for ADHD children is not a matter for schools to determine: that is a matter that is determined by the medical fraternity. It is interesting to note the number of young people (0 to 18 years) suffering ADHD: 155 in 1991, rising to some 4 639 currently. That is quite an increase; there is no doubt about that. But it is not a matter for schools to determine: it is one which is being controlled by the medical fraternity.

The second issue, of course, is that ADHD is but one of a range of issues that the education system and teachers have to deal with on a daily basis within schools. Our school population includes a number of children with disabilities; for instance, some have autism, some have hearing impairments, some have severe and multiple disabilities and some have blindness as a disability. There are others within our education system who are purely slow learners and whom our

teachers have to deal with on a daily basis. It might be interesting for the House to note that currently there are about 10 000 students with disabilities of some kind of dementia, the vast majority of whom, over 80 per cent, are enrolled in mainstream classes. The amount of money spent by both the state and commonwealth governments is not small. Some \$77 million is spent annually in this particular area.

Last year, the department published a handbook for teachers and care workers on managing ADHD, together with views of a broad range of health and education professionals. In developing that handbook they consulted with teachers, paediatricians, child psychiatrists, GPs, psychologists and also parents in drafting up a guide book for teachers for their classrooms. Our school communities are left to pick up the pieces of poor behaviours and social skills, abuse and ill health, and they do a marvellous job of managing that on a day-to-day basis; but they are not responsible for the medication that is prescribed to those students. ADHD certainly is a major challenge for our teachers, for the child concerned and for the parents of that child; but the classmates of that child are also affected, and this is where we and teachers have to manage that within the classroom because of the disruption sometimes to the classroom and the effect on those other classmates.

If the honourable member in another place wants to promote a parliamentary inquiry which examines the ways of assisting all students with disabilities—because it is not just ADHD—instead of just one particular group, I am sure that this House might consider his call.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr HILL (Kaurua): Given the Deputy Premier's statement last Friday that irrigators in the eastern states should pay market value for water, does he support metering all irrigators in South Australia, and what action is he taking to ensure that irrigators are not taking more water than allowed under their licences? The opposition has been given video footage of unmetered gates on irrigation areas on the Murray and told that there is no control over the amounts of water being taken by some irrigators.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I think it is time for a little lesson in how we value water. One of the big issues is the lack of metering right across the basin. If we are to have a cap and to put a real value on water, obviously metering has to be improved. The first part of the honourable member's question about putting a value on water totally misrepresented where we are coming from. The important thing in terms of driving efficiency within irrigation is to put a value on the allocation, whereby you buy or lease the allocation for the amount of money which will cause real efficiencies to occur. That will happen in a couple of ways. An example would be someone who wants to grow grapes, which is high value. I will go back a step. This is why we want to get the cap signed off, because once the cap is signed off every state knows what their diversions are.

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: He'll help us. Once the cap is signed off by the states we would like to see water trading, as far as allocations are concerned, right across the basin. That is the one thing which will really drive some real efficiencies, because what will start to happen is that the high value irrigators will go farther upstream, see rice growers and cotton growers and offer them the sort of money for their

allocations which will move them out of their inefficient practices. There is a lot of cotton which is flood irrigated. There is a lot better technology available. That requires quite a bit of capital input. What we would like to see with water trading is a situation whereby some of those cotton growers would sell some of their allocation and pour the money back into better infrastructure. They could sell half their allocation, put in better irrigation efficiency and still have capital left over. So, it is a good decision for them, they are using a lot more friendly irrigation technique and it helps downstream.

I am sure members on the other side can help us to get New South Wales and Queensland to understand that, if we are to have water trading, we would love to see a dividend for the river whereby from every trade some water is returned to the river. That is what we need to take the Murray into the next generation. Some members opposite say that that will impede trade, that that will stop trade; it will not. If you drive proper efficiencies—and with the irrigation techniques nowadays—the technology available really makes it worth while for them to go up there. What the market will do that governments up there have not had the fortitude to do is take people out of inefficient irrigation. The market will do that by getting a value on allocations.

Our proposal, which we will continue to try to sell to the other states, is a win/win situation. There is a real fear over there that it will only move water down the river but that will help the river, anyway, for the people who are there. However, if they understand how efficiency will drive better environmental outcomes and more efficient and environmentally friendly irrigation and will mean more water left in the river, it is a win/win situation.

RECREATION TRAILS

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): My question is directed to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. Will the minister advise the House what initiatives the government is taking to encourage healthy recreational pursuits, particularly in regard to recreational trails?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I was in the honourable member's electorate in the past few weeks launching the next initiative of the government's recreational trails strategy in relation to doing a trail audit and sign upgrade for the trail network throughout the state. With the trail audit, we are actually using global positioning systems technology through Fujitsu to do two things: first, to have GPS coordinate maps throughout the Heysen Trail so that if people are lost or injured they can use the coordinates to identify quickly where they are so that emergency service crews or rescue teams can find them more readily. That will be a big advantage for the people who use the trails, particularly tourists.

I am sure the Minister for Tourism is aware of the huge interest in the international tourist market in relation to recreational trails, whether they be the marine trails or the walking and riding trails. Certainly it involves a huge number of tourists: something like about 39 per cent of tourists to South Australia are actively engaged in the use of recreational trails as well as the 350 000 South Australians involved on a regular basis. With about 3 000 kilometres of recreational trails throughout the state, the government announced a \$6.2 million five to six year strategy to upgrade and improve the trails. There will be series of announcements in relation to the trails, particularly the Heysen Trail, developing loop

trails so that people can start and finish in a similar area. There will be a number of announcements in that regard in the coming months.

There has been some progress in relation to the trail development down in the Newland Head-Kings Head area, in which I am sure the member for Finnis would be interested. There has been a difficult issue there involving the Heysen Trail with walkers not having access to some world-class cliffs. We have through negotiations been able to purchase two blocks of land there, which will give South Australians permanent access to that cliffs area. I am sure that those who have taken the opportunity to walk that area will appreciate that it is a world-class asset that should be available for the public to visit and enjoy. At the same time we will take the opportunity to develop proper coastal reserves that were not established at the time the blocks were established, so there is a double benefit to us there.

We have also launched a new signage scheme called 'Aus Trails', a name we chose simply because overseas tourist, when looking on the Internet or at brochures, will look up the word 'Australia' first. The name 'Aus Trails' therefore will be brought quickly to their attention and we will get more of the tourism market for those involved in the recreational eco-tourism area, which to me makes sense.

We are also out there publicly negotiating a consultation process in relation to our recreational greenways bill, which is a method of trying to bring the community closer together on the way we manage our trails and to provide more certainty to the trails network. The government has a good strategy in relation to developing a recreational trails network. We are developing things such as a horse strategy for the horse community and we intend to look at doing that in other recreational areas. In response to the member for Heysen's question, certainly a lot of work is going on, and I thank him for his support in the area.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr HILL (Kaurna): My question is directed to the Minister for Water Resources. Following receipt of \$3.5 billion from the sale of ETSA, will the government honour its statements to this House by the former Minister for the Environment and ensure the provision of water meters to control water being taken by irrigators on the River Murray and undertake other environmental works? On 24 February 1998 the Minister for the Environment told the House that following the sale of ETSA funding would be available for installing water meters for every irrigator on the Murray and for salinity mitigation schemes.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): I do not know whether the member opposite listened to the Deputy Leader but the Deputy Leader clearly expounded, the Premier has said and I have said that we are trying incrementally and as quickly as we can to implement sound water policies in this state. In the South-East, as a condition of the pro rata roll out, all water from the confined and unconfined aquifers will be metered. We have established that precedent and we will expand that precedent. Had we sold ETSA when the Premier said we should sell ETSA, and had we got for it what we should have got, I could give him an answer—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: We were delayed by a year with the sale. The market changed in a year and we were

delayed by a year. That is on the public record. All I am saying in relation to the honourable member's question is that, had we been able to do it at that time, we would know how much we could have spent already. We have lost 12 months in the process. We will continue on the path we are continuing on, but we have lost 12 months. That was not any fault of the Premier or anyone on this side of the House: it was the fault of one group and one group alone, namely, the Opposition. However, we will get on with the job and progressively roll this out, because we agree with the sentiments expressed by the member opposite.

SHACK FREEHOLDING

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): My question is directed to the minister for government outfits. How are we going with the freeholding of shacks and what is the median price being paid for the shack sites?

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Government Enterprises, I think.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): I think I thank the honourable member for the question. I am pleased to be able to provide a progress report to the House about this important matter, stimulated by the honourable member's question. The shack freeholding project provides great foundations for investment by the shackholders by providing them with ownership security and, importantly, a bonus or financial incentive to freehold, which has been extended to 31 May. That incentive is a discount of 5 per cent taken from the purchase price and it has been extended to 31 May this year. We had the incentive payment up to 31 December 1999, but it was so very popular that people were actually unable to access plumbers to do the relevant work on the effluent disposal because of the huge volume of work. Our strategy was so popular, as was our discount. So we have decided to extend that discount.

It is important to note that the investment by the shackholders will benefit not only themselves but also very much the aesthetics of the area, particularly the environment. Obviously with shack owners in South Australia much of the environment that will be improved is the River Murray, which was ignored under the previous arrangements from the ALP. The environmental improvement under our freehold shack policy is that the owners, in order to freehold their land, must use either a common effluent scheme or a holding tank.

Previously, under the Labor Government system, the human effluent would have been discharged through poorly designed and poorly maintained septic systems, through inground sand filters or even directly to the Murray. That was the situation under the previous Labor Government, and the answer to the rhetorical question, 'Did they have a single plan in mind to fix the problem?' is 'No, categorically not'. I am advised that, having got around to fixing that problem under our strategy, to date the freehold project has redirected approximately 26 million litres of human effluent per annum. In one of those wonderful statistics I am able to say that that is the equivalent of 18 Olympic-size swimming pools. Under our strategy, 18 Olympic-size swimming pools of human effluent per annum is no longer going into the Murray River, whereas, under the previous Labor government's could not care less, shrug the shoulders and maybe someone else will fix the problem strategy, that was all going straight into the Murray River. The effluent that used to go into Murray River contained sediments, nutrient and bacteria, which in high

concentration, as it obviously is in that circumstance, can have potentially devastating effects on the ecology of the Murray and obviously can raise public health concerns.

Under this government's strategy, 536 shacks along the Murray River have gained development approval to freehold; 472 will be connected to common effluent schemes; and 64 will install holding tanks. Across South Australia 1 226 shacks have gained development approval to freehold, and currently another 151 development applications are currently being processed by the Land Management Corporation—and I give them full credit for really putting their foot to the floor in getting this project up and running.

For each one of those shack sites that freeholds, the environment benefits. For every single one of those shack freeholds that actually puts the human effluent into a holding tank for a common effluent system under this government, the environment benefits, whereas previously under the Labor government the effluent would have been discharged willy-nilly into the environment—and I reiterate that that government had no strategy to do anything different.

This shack freeholding project is a prime example of the Liberal Party empowering individuals to invest in our community to the benefit of everyone, and that includes everyone who is not a shack holder: it includes every South Australian who clearly will benefit from the Murray River being a great deal purer and from all of the environmental bonuses which will flow from that human effluent not flowing into the environment. So, this shack freeholding policy is a major win for all South Australians.

RIVERLINK

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

SECURITY MEASURES

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): Mr Speaker, I wish to raise a matter in relation to standing order 75 dealing with strangers in the House. Following an episode earlier today, I would appreciate your informing members whether there is any potential change to the security measures that might be taken in the House. For a long time I have had concerns about potentially dangerous situations in which people in high profile positions such as members of parliament might find themselves—and I think we had an example of that earlier today—where it might be worthwhile your looking into it in your position, perhaps even with the President of another place. I would appreciate getting a report back, and, recognising the opportunity for this to be in the public domain, the possibility of copycat exercises, and so on, I do not mind if that report is circulated individually to members. However, I think it is an important issue for all of us.

The SPEAKER: The chair takes on board exactly what the honourable member is referring to, and I can assure the

House that measures have already been put in place over the course of the afternoon as a result of what happened this afternoon, and the police have already been charged with the responsibility of providing reports to both me and my officers. I will certainly be very happy to report back to the House, but members must bear in mind that any matter dealing with the security of the House is hardly something on which I would want to report publicly to the chamber, but it is something about which I am very happy to talk privately with any member. However, if I am asked to give a verbal presentation to the House, say, tomorrow, it may be restricted by the fact that whatever I say is for members' ears only and not for the general public as far as security is concerned.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I particularly made reference to that in my request to you, Sir, and I am completely happy, as I am sure all members of this House and another place would be, to receive a confidential briefing on potential changes.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Today in question time the Minister for Emergency Services talked about the response that he has had to the emergency services levy. I also, over this long, long parliamentary break, have received comments from a number of my constituents about the emergency services tax, but none of their comments has been quite so complimentary as the minister's responses.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sorry to interrupt the member, but I draw the cameraman's attention to the fact that he can only film members on their feet.

Ms HURLEY: My electorate office has been inundated with complaints about the emergency services tax, and none of those comments has been complimentary about the minister or this government in relation to the emergency services tax. I would like to detail one case in particular which again I passed on to the minister. An elderly gentleman in my electorate, a full pensioner, saved up towards the end of his working life and bought a small shack at Port Parham, which is not far from my electorate. That elderly pensioner must pay the full emergency services tax on his shack because it is regarded as a second house—he gets no pensioner discount for that shack.

Not only does he have to pay that but also, in order to get to this shack, he must possess a car and in order to fish from the shack he must possess a small tinny, a boat, plus a trailer. He pays emergency services tax on each of the car, trailer and boat. My constituent says that he is now unable to afford this shack, this recreation, for which he had saved up all his working life. He pointed out that he had saved hard during his working life. He was only an ordinary wage earner and did not spend any of his money on alcohol, gambling or smoking. Rather, he saved up and bought this shack for his retirement. He is unable now to take advantage of that hard work because of the emergency services tax and he is unable to afford the additional impost.

I have also received representations from volunteer emergency services personnel in my electorate. They are indeed not very happy about the emergency services tax. The CFS people are concerned that they are not receiving a good enough share of the emergency services tax and they wonder where the money is being spent. They are critical of the government radio network contract as well as the cost and the ongoing expense of that contract, and they do not believe that the government has been fair and equitable in its imposition of the emergency services tax or in its distribution to the various emergency services. They say it is now impossible for the CFS to fundraise because people tell them that they have already paid in the form of the emergency services tax.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation on the right. Will the members restrain themselves?

Ms HURLEY: They are therefore unable to do any fundraising. They are also extremely critical of the emergency services administration unit. They say that the people in that unit are dismissive of them, that they do not understand the emergency services operation and that the personnel in the emergency services administration unit have never been involved in emergency services and do not understand the operation of the emergency services or the volunteer nature of it. They have been unable to get their bills paid on time. They have been getting final notices on their telephone bills and power bills. They are extremely unhappy with the operations of the emergency services administration unit and they are very unhappy with the minister, as they have told him at various meetings that he has attended. I can tell members that the people out there do not blame the opposition for the imposition of this tax: they blame the government, fairly and squarely. They understand that this tax is raising more than the previous insurance levy.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): I would like to take the opportunity to talk a little about planning and some of the issues that are sweeping through the eastern suburbs and, as I understand it, sweeping through the western suburbs as well. It is basically about the demolition of traditional homes that have been in the eastern block for some time and the total razing of those blocks, including the vegetation. There is said to be no planning control at all by local council and the local communities, in essence, are getting quite concerned about this excessive infill.

One of the interesting by-products of all this community concern is that there are, as with most issues, two sides to the coin. There is no doubt that urban consolidation or infill has significant advantages for a range of people. Many people who have lived in the eastern suburbs for many years have benefited by having smaller blocks, cheaper accommodation, and putting some funds into their own bank through the sale of their property. There is no question that there are significant benefits for that group. However, there is no doubt at all that a significant number of redevelopments are far in excess of what any community would accept. I agree very strongly with that position. The majority of projects built by developers in all suburbs, whether on the eastern or western side of the city, are seen to be exceptionally good. I do not think there is any question that, by far, the majority, probably in excess of 80 per cent of developments, are first-class. But, as with developers and all people looking to make a living from their profession, there are those who push it to the extreme.

One of the things I have noted in discussion with councils and the community is that the councils argue that they have insufficient authority to control the clearing of these blocks.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Yes, it is actually, and he stuck his neck out and got it cut off. Clearly, this authority needs to be given to councils at local level and I, along with other members in the eastern suburbs, have arranged to meet the minister to consider how we can use the current flexible position enabled by the act to ensure that the local situation and the views of the local community are more closely reflected in any planning proposals. Another issue of importance is the cutting down of very significant trees, whether in our area on the eastern side or in any suburb. I note with interest that a report by Dr Such offers very significant support from a range of people and I look forward to seeing the proposed legislation. Excessive development, excessive infill, and the cutting down of trees are of major concern.

The minister attended a very heated meeting in the eastern suburbs on Sunday. In my view she did a fantastic job of putting down the planning position. The issue for us all is to move to solutions as they relate to the majority of the community. Clearly, there will be some compromises. There is a need to recognise that infill of some size needs to occur but also the views of a large number of people in the community need to be taken into account in relation to planning. It is a glitch in the system. The government must recognise that some change to the act will need to occur but in the end the local council must be given final control.

Time expired.

Ms BREUER (Giles): It is good to be back here today. I have had great concerns about the delay in resuming. It is nice to see the member for Hammond again. It has been far too long since we were here and many of those burning issues, which were very important, have probably now gone quiet and lost their impact because of the delay. However, the break gave me an opportunity to travel far and wide in my electorate and to talk to rural people about issues which concern them. A lot has been said recently about regional Australia and governments are starting to take notice of it. We see it as a window of opportunity to have some of our concerns heard and we are trying to make the best of that window while we can. I was amazed recently when the *Advertiser* published a series of articles about country South Australia and all the great things that are happening. There are many great happenings out there, but I felt as though I was perhaps living in a different country and certainly travelling through a different country from that which the *Advertiser* was talking about.

In my part of the state people are hurting and we must take notice of what they are saying. Jobs, health and income are the biggest issues. I was interested to hear the Premier's announcement yesterday about BHP Business Service Centre in South Australia—and I am very pleased about that. This is great for South Australia. I know that Whyalla was one of the sites considered for this centre. The Premier will not say what incentives were offered to open up in Adelaide, but I want to know whether any incentives were offered for Whyalla. One of the factors he talked about was interstate travel and that the centre needed to be accessible for interstate travel. That is ridiculous: Whyalla is only 35 minutes away

by air. We are not stupid. We know that it is very difficult to attract something like this to Whyalla, but we would have liked the opportunity to be considered.

A call service is attached to this new business centre. We would like the opportunity to be considered for the call centre, but we have had no opportunity and no dealings on this issue. Whyalla is going through its biggest transition in history and jobs will be lost in the process of the BHP sale—although I do believe that ultimately it will be better for Whyalla. But the government has not consulted with my community about changes to the indenture act. I have been very busy. We have had to negotiate with BHP. The council, the union movement in Whyalla and I have had to show BHP what we as a community see as the best outcomes for our community. BHP was very careful to consult on this, but not the government or the Premier. Similarly, we were not given any opportunity as a community to try to negotiate to have the service centre in Whyalla and, indeed, we read about it in a eastern states newspaper. This makes me very angry for my community and for all communities in South Australia that get similar treatment from this government. How dare you treat us this way! Do you think we are too dumb, too stupid, too much country hicks? I know Whyalla does not have a good reputation, particularly in the media. I listened to Collette Mann recently on radio talking about Whyalla. She made a point of saying that she did not want to talk about Whyalla yet spent the rest of the interview slinging off at us and making snide remarks—it was pathetic.

This is fairly typical of the attitude of people to country South Australia and, particularly, to the people in Whyalla. We get passed over; we get patronised; we get victimised; and we get conned, particularly by this government. My electorate covers half the state yet the population is only 22 000 or 23 000 people—and this is disappearing rapidly. We must be given opportunities to keep our people in our communities. We cannot be ignored for whatever reasons. I believe that the government made some genuine attempts to consult with country people recently, but it stopped acting and paid only lip service to those consultations—except for those select areas which are the jewel in the crown for it.

My country is looking beautiful at the moment as a result of the recent rains and when I drive through it I remember the words of Dorothea Mackellar:

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains. . .

And you are probably sick of hearing country people whinge about what is happening in their part of the state. But we want to be able to afford to stay in our communities and to bring up our children in those communities. Lots of things need attention in our communities; for example, in Coober Pedy there is no dental service.

The minister spoke today about ADHD and a parliamentary inquiry. In country South Australia there is one resident psychiatrist. I have a friend who has a son with ADD and he saw his psychiatrist six months ago. This boy is violent and he is creating havoc yet there are no services available for him in the country. People in the country are worried about the GST.

Time expired.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Initially I would like to raise some issues affecting country people, and I do so because we are one state and one nation. Recently I had the

privilege of travelling to the South-East, the Riverland, Eyre Peninsula and Yorke Peninsula, and I highlight the deficiency in relation to the mobile telephone network. I know that Telstra is saying it will be greatly improved by the end of the year through the CDMA system, but at the moment what exists in our country areas in terms of a mobile telephone network is in my view laughable. Leaving Whyalla and heading down to Port Lincoln, you literally go into a black hole in terms of digital telephone communication.

This is a problem in other areas of the state. Doctors have told me that lives will be lost because of the current inadequacy of that system. I know that it is a federal responsibility and a responsibility of Telstra and other providers, but I urge them to get moving very quickly so that there can be a proper mobile telephone network for country people.

The member for Giles touched on the other issue I wish to raise. In rural South Australia there is a gross deficiency in respect of mental health services. I have spoken with the minister directly, and I trust that in the forthcoming budget there can be an increased allocation because, as correctly pointed out by the member for Giles, there are over 200 psychiatrists in Adelaide but only one in the country, at Port Lincoln. In addition, there is a grave shortage of mental health nurses in country areas, with a lack of secure facility. Often the police are called upon to transport someone suffering with a mental illness, which is an inappropriate use of police resources and an inappropriate way of dealing with someone with a mental illness. It is an issue that requires urgent and preferably immediate attention, and I hope that that can be addressed in the forthcoming budget.

In terms of dental services, I agree with the member for Giles. In many country areas, particularly in the remote areas, there is virtually no dental service available whatsoever. In all fairness and equity, those issues need to be urgently addressed. I appreciate that the Commonwealth backed out of funding dental services, and I think it is long overdue that they come back in and constructively support the provision of dental services for all South Australians, particularly those living in some of our rural and remote areas.

Another issue of concern to me is the quality of some of the traineeships being offered throughout the state. Members would know that we have what are called new apprenticeships, which is a fancy name for traineeships, as well as the more traditional apprenticeships. I would like to see a thorough audit conducted of these traineeships, because I am aware of some abuses (only by a minority of employers, I would point out), where people are being paid a reduced wage on the basis that they will receive proper accredited training, and I do not believe that that is happening in many cases. If you are a trainee, you are entitled to get proper accredited training, and there is an obligation on the person employing you to make sure that that happens. I would ask the minister to look at that issue and implement what is being done in some other states, conducting relevant audits.

Another issue very close to my heart, and one that is appropriate in the context of what is happening in the Murray, is that in Australia and South Australia we need to be putting more effort into desalination of water. I was pleased to see that on Kangaroo Island, using the pressurised reverse osmosis process, the South African company that installed that new system has brought a new level of technology to this land. If we can generate fresh water by desalinating, members should think of the huge benefit it would bring not only for the Murray but for the total nation.

I would like to see the commonwealth government—because realistically it is the only one with the resources—to more generously fund research into desalination. It has been said that desalination is equivalent to trying to put a scrambled egg back together. It is not an easy task, but as we have seen in the case of the Kangaroo Island development, new technologies are emerging, and we in this country should be leading in terms of research. I make a plea, to the state government as well as the commonwealth government, to make this part of the total water agenda.

Time expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Like the member for Napier, I would like to respond to some of the comments made by the Minister for Emergency Services. I have had a lot of constituents contact me, as no doubt many other members have. Some of the interesting points raised with me are that these people have been incorrectly identified and addressed for land tax and also the emergency services levy tax. Barry and others known to him are aged pensioners. They received a claim from the government for land tax, yet the only property they owned was the house in which they lived. Apart from being incorrectly billed, Barry's concern as he expressed it to me was that some elderly people who receive such a bill may actually pay the account and not question whether a legitimate account was sent to them.

Given that the government has significantly increased fees and charges in numerous areas, it is logical that some people may be confused and end up paying the account. This is particularly the case for our elderly citizens. As an example, up until February this year, Miroslav (one of my constituents) had not received his emergency services tax notice. Upon inquiring with RevSA, we were told that an account had been forwarded to him late last year. The problem was that the account had been sent to a residence in Queenstown which he had previously rented. He had not owned it, but rented it when he was married in 1971. Miroslav moved from the Queenstown house 20 years ago to a residence he purchased in Holden Hill. Along with his son, he subsequently purchased an additional investment property in Highbury. His son had received his emergency services levy, but at that time Miroslav had not, and that is what made him wonder what had happened to his notice.

Let me tell the minister about the case of Ken and Beth. They wondered where their notice had gone and also made inquiries. They were told that their notice had gone to the house they first purchased almost 50 years ago. They have been living at their present address for some 30 years. They have been told that the confusion will be rectified, but what would have happened if they had not made that inquiry and were confronted with two accounts at the same time because the first tax notice had not been paid? These constituents quite rightly ask the question: how can the government get its billing data so wrong? I am simply at a loss to explain it to them, given that we have such a computerised system. We live in a state supposedly known for its technology, and look what happens! We are asking: how can the government be using a database that is some 20 years or more out of date on residential addresses? We want to know what it has done to correct that problem.

We also want to know how the government can identify constituents who rented properties to be charged for the emergency services tax payment. We know that the government has become quite nervous about the outrage that this tax

has produced within our communities. People are paying so much more under this system than they were paying under the old system. While we understand that emergency services need to be funded, we do not accept that the Olsen government has a right to dip its hands into the pockets of people, particularly people on low and fixed incomes, as and when it suits them. Pensioners and our low income families are already struggling. They now no longer register the boat they have had for many years which was probably their only real leisure activity. They no longer register the trailer, and some in fact are not registering their cars, and that is a point we need to be quite mindful of, because I am sure we will find a lot more unregistered vehicles being driven on our roads.

It has just become far too expensive these days, coupled with the appalling price of petrol. I know it is costing me some \$6 more to fill my petrol tank. It is just another blow to people on limited budgets. I would like to tell the minister that the people of South Australia are saying that they have had enough of having their meagre dollars plundered by this government. They do not believe that the government can actually manage the state's affairs, and they are actually only too eager to let John Olsen and the government know how they feel about this. People are saying to me, 'The sooner the better,' because they have simply had enough. They have lost confidence in the government and, as I said before, members on both sides of this House are constantly receiving telephone calls from people expressing their outrage.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I would like to speak about recent unwanted mail, especially a pamphlet I received in my letter box at West Beach. I do not want to speak about a member who is not in the House—I am speaking of the member for Peake. I mentioned to him earlier in the corridor today that I would be making this speech but he chooses not to be here, so I will do so, anyway.

This pamphlet was put out by the member for Peake, or 'Tom Koutsantonis, MP, Labor for West Torrens', which is quite interesting in itself, with the glaring headline, 'How you are being hit by the emergency services tax'. It also says that it is 'just a tax grab by the Liberal government'. The member for Peake is not only misrepresenting the truth of this matter but he is also a blatant hypocrite. He does not say in this pamphlet that he supported the levy in the House: he does not even say that he voted for it.

It is not only what this pamphlet says but what it does not say that is totally and grossly misleading. 'Hypocrite' is a kind word: the man could almost be called untruthful and, some would say, deceiving. It is blatant sensationalism at its worst and base politics at best. I would like to know, if the honourable member does oppose the emergency services levy and, if so, what he puts forward as an alternative.

We all know that Labor is keeping very quiet—critical, yes, but very quiet—about its policies. Does the Labor Party wish to change the levy, reduce it, abolish it, or even increase it? The Labor Party does not say: its silence is totally deafening. I welcome the member for Peake, who has walked into the Chamber. I can therefore face him front on.

Mr Koutsantonis: Say it outside.

Mr VENNING: I don't have to: I've already said it in here. What would a future Labor government do with this levy? Let him come on the record right now and say what he will do with this.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Tell us now: here is the opportunity.

An honourable member: Dead silence!

Mr VENNING: All we have is dead silence. How hypocritical you are. Come on, member for Peake, get your tongue out of your cheek and put it on the record for all to see. There was an article in the *Advertiser* today about this very matter. 'What's your plan for levy, Labor asked,' was the headline. The member for Hart (Mr Foley) said that Labor would not release its levy plans. Surprise, surprise!

The member for Peake fits well and truly into the mould of his party's front bench: cheap politics and criticism without any alternatives or advice. Does he want it scrapped? No such comment. Does he want it altered? No comment.

An honourable member: He's gone out. He can't—

Mr VENNING: Does he want it reduced? No comment. In fact, he has just left the chamber again! It is a very cynical, mischievous, political game he is playing. This government, represented by Minister Brokenshire, knows that Labor members do not have any plans and do not know what they will do if they cut the levy. How will they support the services if they cut the money? They know how inadequate the old funding system was. After 11 years of government, the Labor Party left it with a \$13 million debt. Labor left it in a real mess and it left a system that was blatantly unfair. And it still does not have any answers. It was too hard for Labor members then: they had no courage. Today, they still have no courage and no public position. They just knock and are extremely weak on this matter. The emergency services personnel support the levy. These are the people who risk their lives when they go out on that CFS truck or with the SES unit. These people support it and the Labor Party cannot do so—or does it?

I challenge members opposite to get up in their place, or state even by interjection, to say what the position is. All we have is deadly silence. Again, there is no courage and no conviction. The Premier has forecast that further fine tuning of the levy is in the pipeline, and I welcome that. He is to be commended for this, and we must continue to remember that most of the money raised from the levy will go to the services.

Time expired.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT SAFETY

The Legislative Council informed the House that it had appointed the Hon. A.J. Redford to be one of its representatives on the committee in place of the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning (Hon. Diana Laidlaw), resigned.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MURRAY RIVER

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I move:

That the Minister for Water Resources be appointed to the committee in place of the Minister for Local Government.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): February this year saw the running of the Interdominion in Melbourne. The Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority—who also happens to be Chairman of Victorian harness racing—publicly stated after the Interdominion that South Australia should no longer host an Interdominion. I have his quote here, and I will return to it shortly.

In January 1999 (just over 12 months ago), the government chose to appoint Mr Ian McEwen as Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority. This was the first time in South Australian harness history that a non-South Australian—in Mr McEwen's case a Victorian—was appointed to head up our authority. To the best of my knowledge (and I stand to be corrected on this), no other state has appointed a person from another state to head up its authority. We have a situation here of the government's making whereby 12 months ago it chose to appoint a Victorian as Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority.

At that time the opposition was very outspoken in its criticism of the appointment, not directly against Mr McEwen as an individual but rather against the principle of appointing a non-South Australian to a position that should clearly be held by a South Australian. We said at the time that we were totally astounded that we could not find within our own borders a person able to be chairman of the authority. We also pointed out at the time that this was a clear conflict of interest; that not only did we have the potential for conflict of interest but also we had conflict of interest; and that, in a very short time, this would be demonstrated.

If we ever needed a stronger example of a conflict of interest, we had it in February this year with the Chairman of Harness Victoria, who is also the Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority, stating that South Australia should no longer host the Interdominion. Mr McEwen stated:

Harness Racing Victorian Chairman Ian McEwen believes that the codes' administrators must bite the bullet and dump those venues which cannot lift to the new standard. Mr McEwen said the Interdominion should be restricted to Melbourne, Sydney Brisbane and Christchurch. 'We have the right formula, but we are not able to exhibit it while others will drag the Interdominion back to the dark old days. It should not be run in Hobart, South Australia (even though I am the Chairman there) or Perth.'

Here we have a direct conflict of interest. The exact principle which over 12 months ago we highlighted to this chamber would take place has clearly taken place, where we have the Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority, who is also Chairman of Victorian Harness, coming out and saying that South Australia is not good enough and should not be put on the calendar. What an absolute indictment that is! It is an untenable situation for Mr McEwen to hold these views and remain as South Australian harness racing Chairman.

I immediately called for his resignation, and the minister said he would have to check what he said. It was fair enough that the minister would have to check those comments. One would suspect that, the minister having checked the com-

ments, if they fitted what had been reported, some action would be taken. A couple of days later, after the minister had learnt that Ian McEwen stood by his comments and had gone on radio here in South Australia saying that what he had been quoted as saying was exactly correct, the minister said that this was simply a wake-up call. What a squib! What a weak way out that is; what an atrocious way of handling a situation where the Chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority, who is also the Chairman of Victorian Harness and is living in Victoria, is talking down South Australia and saying we are not good or competent enough to have the premier harness racing event which rotates from state to state and New Zealand on an annual basis.

This is an absolute disgrace. If ever it was proved beyond any doubt whatsoever that Minister Evans had made an inappropriate appointment that would not service the South Australian harness industry, and had made an appointment involving a clear conflict of interest, it was there for all to see, and Minister Evans failed to act upon it. Once Ian McEwen had confirmed what he had said, there was no choice left; the minister should have sacked him immediately. He should never have appointed him in the first place but, once that confirmation was given by Ian McEwen, the minister had no choice but to sack him immediately. Here we are in South Australia rightly promoting how well we do major events, and we have Ian McEwen from Victoria, the Chairman of our authority, saying we are not good enough to host the Interdominion. It is an absolute disgrace, and it has undermined the harness industry right throughout South Australia.

Let us do a quick analysis of Mr McEwen's record. He has now been the Chair for a little over 12 months, and an overview of his stewardship shows the following. He has used up all the reserves of the industry; some \$600 000 that was industry reserve money has now gone. Secondly, he has failed in his statutory duties with respect to bringing the harness authority annual report to this parliament within three months of the end of the financial year. That is section 40(l) on the Racing Act. The minister presented it today; it should have been presented in about October of last year. Thirdly, he has increased the costs of the authority, not just the costs of his flying in and out and his accommodation when he comes here but also the associated costs with respect to other staff members. I will go into more detail with respect to that later. He has divided the industry and has also undermined South Australia's role in the Australian harness industry. That is a brief overview of the stewardship that we have seen under Mr McEwen. He has a conflict of interest and is talking down the state, and we are now led into the situation where BOTRA and the Globe Derby committee have passed a no confidence motion, I understand unanimously.

We are in very difficult times when it comes to racing, whether it be thoroughbred, harness or greyhound racing. The minister has proposed that we adopt a corporatisation model. At one stage he was talking about bringing all the codes together. Fortunately, he has moved on from that and has realised the ills of his ways. But the plan he has now set in motion is for each of the codes to come up with some sort of structure. We look forward to the minister bringing in his bill so we can have a close analysis of it. What is taking place in harness racing at the moment—and this is no good for anybody—is that there is a complete division within the industry. We have a division between country delegates—country clubs—and also the city club, the Globe Derby club.

This will not move the industry forward in any way, shape or form. We have to do far better than that. If we are to go down a corporatisation model that will be successful for the industry in any way, what Mr McEwen and the minister have to be about is drawing the industry together.

They must bring the key players together to move the industry forward, not divide the industry and have conflicts of interest; not have the country arguing against the city; and not have the no-confidence motions which BOTRA and the Globe Derby committee have passed against its current Chairman. This could all have been avoided if the minister had thought through his appointment in January 1999. What the industry clearly wants now and will accept nothing less is that a South Australian be appointed as Chairman of our harness authority. This is an indictment on the minister and this government that they have gone across the border to appoint a Victorian to the chair of the South Australian Harness Racing Authority.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): As members are well aware, today is the first day of sitting for the year 2000. I was extremely disappointed to note in the *Advertiser* this morning that there were some negative comments about the break we have had. Particularly negative comments were from the No Pokies Legislative Councillor in another place, Mr Nick Xenophon. I find it incredible that any member could say that it is not appropriate to have an extended period of time when one can service the electorate. I would have thought that in Mr Xenophon's case the electorate was the whole of South Australia.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: He's a single issue man.

Mr MEIER: As my colleague interjects, he is a single issue man, and perhaps that is the real reason for his outburst. It is disappointing to me, because I do not believe I have had a busier January or February since I have been in parliament, some 17 years, than the last January and February. The reason is that, when parliament is not sitting, members of the House of Assembly at least, and particularly country members, have the chance to get out into their electorate. I find it incredible that there has been some veiled criticism of governments both state and federal about not placing enough emphasis on regional and rural areas. I would say without any fear of contradiction that this government has gone out of its way for the regional areas; and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, being a country member, would appreciate that, too. We have set up so many institutions and organisations to help in country regions and, thankfully, money is starting to be spent in our regions after we have battled for some years to try to turn around the massive state debt that South Australia has encountered.

I would say to any member who believes that they should be sitting longer, 'Think very carefully as to how well you are representing your constituents.' I find it extremely difficult—in fact, impossible—to get to all my functions and commitments when we are sitting. I simply have to give an apology. As government Whip I cannot excuse myself from the chamber when I deny that right to other people. I know that my counterpart, the opposition Whip, would not allow me to seek leave for a function in the electorate, because it does not meet the guidelines. Ministers are certainly able to seek such permission but on occasions even they cannot be given the leave. So, when we do have an extended break, I can get things done. Amongst getting things done and besides serving on committees such as the Wakefield Plains Road Safety

Committee, the Wakefield Palliative Care Committee in health and a multitude of other organisations that I try to show some interest in or visit, I have had some five ministers visit my electorate during this period of time.

They were: the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning (Hon. Diana Laidlaw), the Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. Michael Armitage), the Minister for Tourism (Hon. Joan Hall), the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. Iain Evans) and the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown).

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I've been over a fair bit, too.

Mr MEIER: It is rather interesting that the minister was not actually there during this last break, but I have noticed his photograph in the paper so often that I know he has been all over the state, including his own electorate, of course. I also have the Minister for Industry and Trade coming on Friday of this week. Unfortunately, it will be only a half day visit because he could not fit in the full day. I had hoped to have him there before this break expired, but one can see that once parliament sits ministers such as the Treasurer and the Minister for Industry and Trade have to divide their time among various electorates and therefore can spare only half a day. Whilst I am delighted that the Minister for Industry and Trade at least is spending some time in my area, I will have to arrange another appointment for him to come back in future.

Members may say, 'So, what's the big deal about having a minister in the electorate?' The big deal is that it helps get things done, and a lot of things are occurring in the electorate of Goyder. We have a long way to go, and I will certainly be asking for a variety of things in the coming months, as I have been asking over many years now. I am delighted that, for example, when the Minister for Transport came over she made announcements about some road improvements. In fact, quite a few of those road improvements are already under way. More work will occur during this year and the next financial year involving some millions of dollars. Of course, Yorke Peninsula has some roads that need an enormous amount of money spent on them.

The Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. Michael Armitage) chose Wallaroo in my electorate to launch the policy on recreational access to jetties in the event of the sale of Ports Corp. I was very appreciative of his choosing Wallaroo, because Wallaroo is a very significant port. At the same time, it has a great reputation for offering good fishing to recreational people, and we do not want to see people barred from fishing there. In fact, our policy is now very clear: that recreational fishers will have guaranteed access to the commercial ports in the event of their sale. That was a two-day venture and one that has established a new policy in the state as well.

The Minister for Tourism (Hon. Joan Hall) spent the better part of three days in my electorate, travelling from Port Broughton to Marion Bay to Stenhouse Bay. Certainly, the minister made quite a few announcements of great significance, one involving the spending of more than \$2 million in my electorate in the coming year or two. It takes a lot of work to get to that stage and I and my constituents are most appreciative of it. Likewise, the Hon. Iain Evans, visiting in his capacity as minister handling the portfolios of environment and heritage and recreation, sport and racing, was able to announce a couple of significant grants: one to Balaklava, involving a \$75 000 grant for a new sports centre, and another of \$120 000 to Kadina for recreation and sports facilities.

These situations have not occurred just overnight. In fact, I as the local member have been working on both those projects for three years, ever since the grants program started. At long last the committee that determines these matters agreed that the money could be allocated to the electorate of Goyder. They were the first grants of that type that we have had.

Also, the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown) visited hospitals from Balaklava to central and southern Yorke Peninsula. In quite a few of those cases issues were pointed out to the minister that normally would not have received the attention that they will receive now. Yet it appears that at least one of our members in another place is saying that we should not have such a long break. I would like to know how I am supposed to represent my electorate in a proper way. How am I supposed to get things done the way people in regional areas want things done? I am delighted with the way we are looking at regional areas, where at least some money is coming into them now, and it will help overall through extra tourism dollars that come into an area such as Yorke Peninsula. Without doubt, can I say that—

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire interjecting:

Mr MEIER: Yes. In fact, I have done an accurate count and I believe we are sitting for 53 days. Compare that to the ACT, which is sitting for 39 days this year, and Northern Territory, 33 days. Queensland sat 53 days last year but only 35 are scheduled for this year; Tasmania and New South Wales, both 55 days; and Western Australia, the one that does surpass us in sitting time, 59 days. So, we are better than the average. Why should we have this criticism? It seems to me that, if ever there was an argument as to why some members in the other House do not want members to sit there, that argument has been put. But a few of the Liberal upper house members have also worked hard during the parliamentary break, and I really appreciate the help they have given in rural and regional areas. I thank them for their involvement, because it will do the overall state of South Australia a lot of good in the long term.

Motion carried.

At 6.11 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 29 March at 2 p.m.