

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 25 May 2000

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PROSTITUTION) BILL

Mr ATKINSON (Spence) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, the Development Act 1993, the Industrial and Employee Relations Act 1994, the Summary Offences Act 1935, the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 and the Wrongs Act 1936. Read a first time.

Mr ATKINSON: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Our law against brothels should be changed to make the law take account of the way prostitution is now provided. My bill recognises that prostitution will always be with us. To try to eradicate it would necessitate repressive and cruel measures. As Professor Marcia Neave says:

Laws punishing prostitution-related activities do not eradicate the sale and purchase of sex; but determine the manner in which prostitution services are provided and the shape and nature of the industry.

Our law does not ban and never has banned prostitution. Our law bans brothels, leaving escort agencies free to secure three-quarters of the market for prostitution in South Australia. If you thought that prostitution was unlawful or suppressed in South Australia, I suggest you turn to page 750 of the Telstra *Yellow Pages* or page 59 of Tuesday's *Advertiser*, under the classified ad heading 'Adult relaxation services'.

I believe parliament should seek to contain prostitution by discouraging the marketing and growth of the sex trade, the treatment of women as commodities and public nuisance. I think the relationship of client and prostitute is inherently exploitative, but much worse is the employment by brothel and escort agency managers of women, girls and boys as prostitutes. This employment can be akin to slavery. Relationships between prostitutes and those who organise them resemble the master/servant relationship much more than the modern employer/employee relationship. The Millhouse, Pickles, Gilfillan and Brindal bills did not seek to change that.

It is a credit to the ministerial committee that the three prostitution bills that are now Orders of the Day: Government Business are better in that respect. Should my bill or any of the three prostitution bills become law, there will be a rush by brothel and escort agency managers to deny that their prostitutes are employees and to fiddle arrangements to characterise them as independent contractors. The managers will contrive to avoid anything that resembles a contract of employment. This should be anticipated in any reform, and prostitutes ought to be deemed to be employees. If this results in a fall in the number of prostitutes employed in escort agencies and a rise in the number of prostitutes working in partnership with each other or in cooperative arrangements, so much the better.

I served on the Social Development Committee's inquiry into prostitution, which ran from February 1995 to August 1996. Together with the member for Hartley, I issued a minority report and subsequently had a bill drafted by

Parliamentary Counsel to reflect our minority report. The bill to which I am now speaking is similar to that 1996 draft. My remarks on this bill will be drawn mainly from the minority report. I circulated the bill and the minority report to all members last week. It is easy for members canvassing the votes of social conservatives to oppose any change to the 19th century brothel laws. In doing so, these members are winking at escort services. The alternative approach of full-on prohibition of prostitution, as outlined in the Summary Offences (Prostitution) Amendment Bill, and once championed by my former parliamentary colleague Mr Stuart Leggett, does not have enough public support to sustain its enforcement, and its enactment would lead to disrespect for the rule of law.

It is easy for left-Liberals to salve their consciences by setting up a registry or licensing bureaucracy with the intention of sanitising prostitution. I do not believe the prostitution trade can be civilised or sanitised by an act of parliament, nor can its long association with other crimes such as drugs, stolen goods and intimidation be swiftly broken this way. It is wise to avoid trying to regulate the prostitution trade too closely. Attempts at close regulation or social engineering may have unintended outcomes. I think the right approach to prostitution law reform is a light legal discouragement of the trade, keeping the police involved, and serious punishment of procuring, child prostitution, undue influence, thugs and the supply of prohibited substances. It would be naive, indeed, to remove police from regulating the prostitution trade and replace them with novices such as local government officials and state public servants who do not have the official discipline and formal accountability of the police.

The main points of my bill are: abolishing the offences of keeping and managing a brothel, leasing out premises knowing that they are to be used as a brothel, receiving money in a brothel, living on the earnings of prostitution, and being on premises frequented by reputed prostitutes without lawful excuse. These offences are contained in the Summary Offences Act. Section 21 of that act provides for an offence of being on premises frequented by reputed thieves and prostitutes. More than 70 per cent of charges brought by the police against people in the prostitution trade are under section 21. I note that the member for Stuart seems to regard section 21 with some mirth, but the fact is that it is used in 70 per cent of prosecutions. In my opinion, section 21 is objectionable because it provides for a status offence which punishes people not for what they do but for who or where they are.

Another feature is the abolishment of the old offence of keeping a common bawdy house or ill-governed and disorderly house. That offence is contained in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. The bill also deletes the demeaning reference to prostitutes in section 64 of the act, although members may recall that we dealt with this matter last night in the Criminal Law Consolidation (Sexual Servitude) Amendment Bill.

Another feature of the bill is that it retains the offence of procuring a person to be a prostitute with a reasonable maximum penalty of two years imprisonment, thus graduating the penalty to fit in with child prostitution, compulsion and undue influence offences that have been reformulated in the sexual servitude amendment bill of recent and blessed memory.

This Bill introduces a simple catch-all offence of carrying on a sex business or being involved in a sex business,

punishable by a small expiable fine (not imprisonment) and applying to organisers and clients (not prostitutes). Reasonable suspicion that this offence was occurring could trigger a police search of premises for more serious offences such as child prostitution, illegal immigrants coerced into providing sexual services, drugs and stolen goods. Under my bill, a person is 'involved in a sex business' if he or she is the manager of the business or has a reasonable expectation of participating in the income or profits derived from the business or is in a position to influence or control the business.

Another feature of the bill is that it introduces a client offence with a maximum penalty of a \$750 fine expiable upon the payment of \$150. This will apply to clients who solicit in a public place or who engage in prostitution in a brothel or via an escort agency. I expect this offence to be used sparingly, but its existence should have the salutary effect of depressing the demand for commercial sexual services. Members should note that my bill repeals all offences with which prostitutes could be charged. Of all the five bills, mine is the most liberating for prostitutes themselves.

Another feature of the bill involves the banning of advertising. This ban is contained in proposed sections 30 and 31 of the Summary Offences Act. Another feature of the bill is the introduction of a provision which enables persons authorised by the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions to apply on stated grounds to a court for an order barring a person from carrying on or being involved in a sex business. One ground for a barring order would be that the person has been convicted of a criminal offence of the kind listed in clause 11 of the bill (page 6). I note that the government's bills have picked up this suggestion from the minority report.

Another feature of the bill is that it introduces into the Industrial and Employee Relations Act and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act a provision which expressly provides that an otherwise illegal contract between a brothel owner or an escort agency manager on one side and a prostitute on the other would be valid and enforceable for the purposes of these acts. I note that the government's bills have picked up these suggestions from the minority report despite their being mocked in 1996.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: By whom?

Mr ATKINSON: You, dear boy, amongst others. I'm sorry that you weren't here when I mentioned that the Brindal bills contained absolutely no provision for protecting the occupational health and safety, WorkCover or industrial relations rights of sex workers.

Another feature is introducing a nuisance provision into the Wrongs Act that would allow a neighbour to apply to the magistrates court for an injunction against a brothel or escort agency. Householders who need to take a public nuisance action to court with a view to obtaining an injunction must now approach the Supreme Court.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The costs of doing this are too heavy for most householders. If the minister listened closely, he would know that it was a change to allow householders to get an injunction at no cost or a very low cost in the magistrates court. This proposal is in the government's bill and has been lifted from the minority report. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for writing me a letter acknowledging this.

The final feature of the bill is banning bodies corporate from the trade. Incorporation is a legal privilege and companies should not be allowed to take advantage of the liberalisation of our prostitution law. Moreover, if I may invoke an idea of the German economist, Mr Karl Marx, prostitution is a trade in which it is important that the workers are not alienated from the product of their labour. Allowing companies to be involved in sex businesses accentuates such alienation—and I will illustrate this later by reference to the legalised trade in Melbourne.

I disagree with the three prostitution bills—regulation, registration and licensing—because they drag bits of law out of other acts in order to make a stew whose only unity is that each clause has something to do with prostitution. My bill deals with crimes under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act; summary offences under the Summary Offences Act; working conditions under the Industrial and Employee Relations Act; WorkCover under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act; and nuisance under the Wrongs Act. If parliament votes for the registration or the licensing bill there can be no turning back. These bills will create their own bureaucracies and constituencies that will never allow repeal or fundamental reconstruction.

As with all repeals of taboos in the postwar period, starting with pornography, the left-Liberal camp tells us that the registration or licensing bills are the last steps we need to take for freedom and social justice. In fact, for some who made representations to the Social Development Committee, the proposed bills will just be way stations on the road to prostitution as a heavily marketed form of entertainment, a conventional night out for the blokes, and a vocation for the school leaver. These people would rejoice in the shift of public values that would be achieved by the passage of the registration bill or the licensing bill rather than its immediate practical results. These bills will suit investors in big brothels, take market share away from escort agencies and force prostitutes, who want some control over their working lives, to set up shop outside the system. A Victorian writer summarising the response of the Prostitutes Collective to a year of licensed brothels in Victoria wrote (and I ask the member for Unley to listen to this):

To appreciate the nature of these changes, they can be contrasted with the old [illegal] massage parlours where management took a 'hands off' approach to illegal services and women were able to use a wide discretion in determining both services and prices. Under the new menu system all services are negotiated directly with the management before the client inspects or meets [as it is euphemistically called] the worker. All women must provide all available services to all clients who are prepared to pay the price. Needless to say, good old missionary position sex is but a memory for many workers.

After more than 10 years of legalised, licensed and zoned brothels in Victoria, more than two-thirds of prostitutes in Melbourne continue to work unlawfully.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Well, the Festival of Light says that it is the worst bill of all. So much—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: —for decriminalisation or legalisation. I agree with Professor Neave when she writes:

Many of the difficulties of the present [Victorian] law seem to spring from the view that prostitution is inevitable but that the industry must be tightly controlled and all those who sell sexual services must be segregated from the rest of the community. This approach institutionalises prostitution, reinforces male dominance and diminishes the power of people who work as prostitutes [usually

women] without affecting those who can afford to purchase land with a brothel permit and invest in large-scale prostitution.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Unley is very kind to say that there is a lot of commonsense in my proposals, interspersed with rubbish. I would be strongly opposed to any bill that swept prostitution into the industrial and commercial areas of Adelaide. If the demand for commercial sex arises in Burnside and North Adelaide, it ought to be fulfilled there, not by a trip to the poorer areas of metropolitan Adelaide.

I have no fundamental objection to a woman working alone from a home or other premises, perhaps with the help of a bloke doubling as a receptionist and bouncer. My purpose in keeping a catch-all offence of carrying on or being involved in a sex business, punishable by a maximum fine of \$750 expiable on payment of \$150, is to deny prostitution the title of a legitimate business. It will also keep the police—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Hartley asks: why do I recognise prostitution for the purposes of WorkCover? Justice: because if someone is working as a prostitute they are working and they deserve the protection of WorkCover and the Industrial and Employee Relations Act. If members vote for the licensing and registration bills, what they will be doing is giving that protection to the one-third or so of sex workers who work within the legal system but the two-thirds who work outside the legal system will be denied basic justice. That is why I support WorkCover and the Industrial and Employee Relations Act being applied to the sex industry.

Members interjecting:

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

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you for saying that it is the biggest conversion you have seen in 10 years: it is very kind of the member for Unley to say that, and I hope that he will consider supporting my bill. But I do not think so. This provision will also keep the police involved in checking the trade, which is necessary if we are to have genuine enforcement of the laws against child prostitution, undue influence and procuring by drugs and illegal immigration. If police are not given a peg on which to hang visits to brothels or escort agencies, they will leave the field altogether and leave the well meaning criminal offences unenforced.

The incentive that police need to check for the most serious offences, about which we all agree, is the prospect of a result, and that is what the catch-all offence will give them. When I visited the Touch of Class brothel in the industrial Canberra suburb of Fyshwick—with fellow Social Development Committee members—the madam was bemoaning the absence of official police visits to the premises now that registered brothels were legal. She said that all kinds of criminal activities were occurring in and around the brothel, including the fencing of goods, but the police were no longer interested.

My opposition to the prostitution bills is sharpest on the question of procuring a person to be a prostitute. These three prostitution bills, having decided that prostitution should be a legitimate business, would put few if any obstacles in the way of recruitment. I think it is undesirable that people be recruited to the trade and I propose the retention of the procuring offence.

It does not punish the prostitutes themselves. It should carry, as it does now, a heavy maximum fine and the

possibility of imprisonment. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that under the current prostitution laws only one person has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment in South Australia in the past 10 years, and possibly much longer.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: Entrapment is also—

Mr ATKINSON: Entrapment is not illegal because the minister will recall that a few years ago there was a government bill to overcome the effect of the High Court decision in Ridgeway to allow entrapment in controlled circumstances, and indeed the Attorney-General is required to report to this House annually on how many and what kind of entrapment operations he authorised. The member for Unley is just wrong again.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the Minister for Water Resources!

Mr ATKINSON: I would much prefer the member for Unley to be right. I would like him to be right a few times, but I just had to pull him up on that one. In answer to a question I asked the minister representing the Attorney-General in 1994, parliament was told few prostitution related fines were over \$200 and the average for that year was around \$50.

Although the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others has been the subject of local debate on whether it requires the current laws we have, there can be no doubt that United Nations' policy both then and now is that procuring a person to be a prostitute ought to be a criminal offence.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: And I thank the member for Hartley for his support, although he voted differently last night. I ask members to consider my bill. Like the three prostitution bills, it deals with banning thugs from the trade, advertising, public nuisance, employment and WorkCover. Unlike those bills, it retains a light legal discouragement of prostitution, as much as anything to keep the police involved in regulating a trade that needs policing. The bill keeps the offence of procuring a person to be a prostitute, which the three bills effectively abolish. I commend the Statutes Amendment (Prostitution) Bill to the House as the best bill on which to work in committee because it keeps open the most possibilities.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH secured the adjournment of the debate.

WOODEND SHOPPING CENTRE

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I move:

That the purchase of the Woodend shopping centre be referred to the Public Works Committee for investigation.

I understand that the government wants to block this motion on technical grounds and I expect that would be because the government does not want the expenditure of \$3.8 million on the Woodend shopping centre site to be scrutinised by the Public Works Committee. That is an indictment of the government and its desire to run away from accountability. Because of the government's position, I must therefore begin by establishing, in a technical sense, that the Public Works Committee is entirely the appropriate committee to investigate this matter.

The Public Works Committee has the function and power to investigate public works. Public works (as defined in the Parliamentary Committees Act) include the whole or a part

of the cost of construction of the work where that cost is to be met from money provided, or to be provided by parliament or a state instrumentality, or where the work is to be constructed by or on behalf of the Crown or a state instrumentality and so on. There is also a definition in the Parliamentary Committees Act of construction and it includes the making of improvements or other physical changes to any building or structure.

Quite clearly, with the government's proposed expenditure on the Woodend shopping centre site, the proposed refurbishment of those premises becomes, according to the definitions in the Parliamentary Committees Act, construction and therefore the proposed purchase of the refurbished premises becomes a public work. As the Premier has stated in his press release, and as was discussed in this chamber yesterday, public money is to be expended on the building and there are refurbishments to be made to that building. Quite clearly, this House of Assembly has the power under part 6 of the Parliamentary Committees Act to refer a matter such as this to the Public Works Committee for investigation.

Having covered that technical argument, I refer to the substance of the matter. A couple of weeks ago, the Premier announced that the government would be spending \$3.8 million to purchase the Woodend shopping centre site from the Hickinbotham group for use by the Woodend Primary School. It is important to note that the Woodend shopping centre site literally shares a car park with the Woodend Primary School at present. It is also relevant that the Woodend Primary School site is leased by the education department from a company with a view to the education department's eventually quitting the site and the land being returned to the private sector for housing development, a retirement village or whatever might be appropriate.

The education department enjoys a 10-year lease with options for five-year renewals times two, and that will be an important aspect when the Public Works Committee scrutinises this matter. The government has committed itself to purchasing a building which will be a small part of a primary school site that is otherwise leased. It makes nonsense in commercial terms. So, when the time comes to quit the school—and I point out that further down the track, once the current cohort of young children has grown up, it is very likely that it would be desirable to go no further with the leasing arrangement of those premises—it means that the government potentially will be left with a white elephant, a building which the government owns but which will have no practical purpose because it will not be required as part of a primary school. So, the government has offered the Hickinbotham group \$3.8 million for the site.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HANNA: The Hickinbotham group had proposed to the government that it pays \$3.95 million. There are two points in this whole deal that should particularly concern the people, the members of the House of Assembly and the Public Works Committee. I refer to the two ways in which the government has craftily tried to evade public works scrutiny.

First, it has agreed with Hickinbotham a purchase price just under the \$4 million threshold which is relevant for reference to the Public Works Committee. If any public work is to be carried out which exceeds \$4 million in value, it must be scrutinised by the Public Works Committee. Because we have a deal which falls just under that threshold, I have to move this motion in parliament for the matter to be referred

to the Public Works Committee for appropriate investigation. But there is another means by which the government has tried to deflect this whole issue from the Public Works Committee's jurisdiction. It has done that by asking Hickinbotham to complete the refurbishment and to deliver the whole package to the Education Department for the use of the Woodend Primary School. That just does not wash because the government is paying money for work to be done on a property owned by the Crown (through the Department of Education) that will be used for public purposes. It is a public work that is being carried out. In any case, the value—once you add in not only the purchase price of the land and the building but also the refurbishment and the ancillary work that is required to move the school into the building—is very likely to be verging on the \$4 million threshold.

The opposition has in its possession a valuation of the site—carried out earlier this year by an independent professional valuer—to the tune of \$1.3 million. When dealing with the Hickinbotham Group, the government blithely accepted a condition put forward by the Hickinbotham Group that it would carry out the necessary refurbishment to restore this disused shopping centre to a condition in accordance with the standards of the Education Department for use by the primary school.

It is apparent from the government's own documents that there was no adequate analysis of this \$1.5 million figure. It was accepted at face value; it was accepted blithely. Even at face value, it should have been discounted, because Hickinbotham's, in a letter to the government, stated clearly that the \$1.5 million figure was 'a realistic figure in the current inflationary pre GST period'.

Given that the government concluded this deal only in the past few weeks, it is quite obvious that the work will not be done until after 30 June this year; that means that the work will not be done in the current inflationary pre-GST period. Many people in the building industry suspect that prices and the cost of refurbishment for significant buildings like this will decline after 30 June because there has been a boom time with developers, residents, the government and others wanting to have projects completed before the GST affects prices.

Clearly the figure of \$1.5 million, blithely accepted by the government, rests entirely on a false assumption: that the work will be completed before 30 June. That will not happen and there is no way that it can happen. So you have a \$1.3 million building, the Hickinbotham group using its own figures and incorporating its own profit to add \$1.5 million to that and, even allowing for the padding in those figures, you come to \$2.8 million. That is still \$1 million short of the amount that the government is going to pay it—leaving aside the fact that the refurbishment figure is possibly double what it really should be. These are the matters that need to be investigated by the Public Works Committee.

In my discussion of the matter yesterday, when it was first raised, I said that the government has essentially given a hand-out to one of its mates, one of the major and regular donors to the Liberal Party, and that raises its own suspicions. I do not need to elaborate, because the questions that arise from that are really quite obvious. If the government has a valuation for that property which exceeds \$3.8 million, let it produce it: let it show that valuation.

In respect of the commercial value of the property, it must also be borne in mind that the only significant commercial value that the property had, apart from any benefits that Hickinbotham currently receives from the fact that there is a

child-care centre which occupies a part of the premises, is the potential it had for developing a pokies tavern on the site. It was not feasible as a shopping centre, according to Hickinbotham. The community wants a shopping centre, and it deserves one. But Hickinbotham has described the shopping centre site as a major problem—and that means a major commercial problem. That is on the Hickinbotham group's own admission. The only hope that it had of receiving any sort of decent commercial return was to allow a hotel licensee to come in and develop that place as a pokies tavern—until, of course, the government came along with its sweetheart deal.

However, there were two problems with Hickinbotham's goal to have the place developed as a pokies tavern. First, the Marion council, quite properly, rejected a planning application for that particular use. That matter was appealed by Hickinbothams, and I will not comment particularly on the chances—

Time expired.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH secured the adjournment of the debate.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: It has been drawn to the chair's attention that Notices of Motion: Other Motions No. 4 is, in fact, due to a clerical error, in the wrong position in the *Notice Paper*, being a disallowance motion, and that it should appear as Notices of Motion: Private Members Bills/ Committees/Regulations No. 20. In those circumstances, it is the chair's intention to call on that motion now.

NORTHERN ADELAIDE AND BAROSSA CATCHMENT WATER LEVY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I move:

That the levy proposal forming part of the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board initial catchment water management plan annual review 1999-2000, laid on the table of this House on 24 May 2000, be disallowed.

This is a procedural motion which is designed to bring about a debate in this place so that the government and the opposition can clarify their positions and so that the matter can be resolved here.

To cope with the complexities of the management of the state's water resources, in the face of competing demands, the Liberal government created catchment water management boards some time ago. These boards were formed to emphasise comprehensive long-range planning and coordination between local government, community groups, academic entities, state government agencies and individual catchment citizens on a regional or local level. The Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board was established in December 1998, and completed its initial catchment water management plan under the Water Resources Act 1997 in March 1998. In doing so, the board's actions were in keeping with the spirit of the act in preparing an initial plan that was limited in scope and conservative in its expenditure. The board's comprehensive catchment water management plan is nearing completion and the draft plan is undergoing its final round of public consultation. The plan reflects the community's expectations for water resource management in the catchment and seeks to ensure sustainable use of water in the catchment area.

The catchment's water resources support a \$100 million per annum horticulture industry in the northern Adelaide Plains and a \$350 million per annum viticulture industry in the Barossa Valley. The catchment is diverse in regard to its water resources, communities and issues. The board proposed a modest increase in the quantum of the land-based levy of \$272 000 from \$1.7 million to \$1.972 million. That represents for the average property an increase of less than \$2.

The Economic and Finance Committee, of which I am a member, has a responsibility to approve the levy proposal and, at its meeting yesterday, it elected not to approve the proposal. The reason for its rejection was that the committee formed the view that the increase in levy to be placed on constituents was excessive. In rejecting the levy proposal, the Economic and Finance Committee has brought about a situation in which the matter must now be resolved in this place and that is why, on a procedural basis, I have moved this motion to disallow the plan.

I expect a debate on the issue and for it to be resolved. I will, of course, vote with the government against the motion so that the plan can be allowed. I now look forward to the debate, noting that the government seeks to ensure as a matter of priority that the needs of the people in the Barossa catchment are met, that water is well managed and that a responsible outcome ensues.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I support the motion that has been moved by the member for Waite. I do so on behalf of my electors who are faced with what is an outrageous and unjustified increase in their levy when one considers how the board has allocated the money, what it has spent it on, and what it plans to spend the money on in future.

This is the third consecutive year that the Economic and Finance Committee has found it necessary to put this proposal before the parliament for debate because it has rejected it. The first occurred on 28 May 1998, the second occurred on 27 May 1999 and the third motion has been moved today, 25 May 2000. On the first two occasions the minister said that the House must approve the plan or the world would collapse and that the plan could not be implemented and no environmental works could be done. The former minister claimed that, and no doubt this minister will as well. False claims have been made that, if this levy proposal is not approved today, councils cannot put out notices and they cannot collect revenue. That is rot.

This proposal came before the Economic and Finance Committee yesterday and it is before the parliament today. If it is rejected today, a new budget will be put to the committee next Wednesday and the matter can all be resolved. We are doing it now because the minister, like the previous minister, is playing games.

I want to tell members of the House what my constituents face in terms of this increase. Unlike the other two plans that have come before the Economic and Finance Committee, this plan involves a substantial increase in the levy to northern Adelaide residents—an overall 10.6 per cent average land-based levy increase in their payments. For residential users it is a 12.4 per cent increase in the levy and for rural users it is a 14.5 per cent increase in the levy. On top of the emergency services tax and the effects of the GST this increase is outrageous if it cannot be justified. From a budget of only twice the amount, the board has an approximate \$1.6 million carry-over from last financial year. This plan will result in increased levies of well over 10 per cent to my constituents.

My constituents should not have to face those increases unless it can be justified.

My concern is that, in this last financial year, roughly only half the \$4 million committed expenditure in 1999-2000 was spent on catchment works. Within that rough 'half' there is an admission that salaries, expenses and other overheads are included in that budgetary figure. The remainder will be spent on administration, planning and community education involvement. They are all necessary expenses, but surely they should not amount to half the overall budget. That to me seems outrageous.

My greater concern this year is that, in the proposed budget for the three next financial years, the proportion being spent on catchment works reduces to roughly a third of the overall budget. Some extremely worthwhile environmental work is being done in my electorate and the catchment area and certainly I encourage that; however, my concern is that so much money is being spent on what I consider to be overheads. Some are necessary but they cover roughly two-thirds of the budget. A requirement for my constituents to contribute a 13 per cent and 14.5 per cent increase in their levy comes at a very difficult time for my constituency.

It is not the case that if this proposal is rejected by the parliament that environmental works cannot proceed. It is not the case that the board disintegrates and cannot operate. As I said, a substantial cash amount is sitting in the bank and next week is not that far away in terms of approval for a revised budget. The budget cannot be justified in the context of the proportions of work that I have outlined.

I am also concerned about what seems to be happening with catchment boards generally. My local catchment board is doing work in the schools and the community and I give it credit for that. I know that other catchment boards are also doing that sort of work but a lot of money is being expended by each of these boards which, I believe, could be more efficiently spent centrally to implement even better programs that have greater impact. If you totalled all the money that the individual boards are spending on just the schools program you would have several hundred thousand dollars. In the education budget that money can go a hell of a long way to assist curriculum subjects in schools. Individual boards are undertaking work such as education of industry on the use of chemicals, and the like, which are certainly worthwhile and necessary activities. I am sure that that amounts to a lot of money that overall could be better coordinated. At the end of the day, the taxpayer is having to fork out for this.

I am disturbed at a situation where effectively we have public servants or ex-public servants working for these boards, whose salaries will be funded by this catchment water levy and who previously had responsibility for these works in the Public Service. Many of the boards are set up as separate businesses and see their role as such. They buy services from each other, and for accounting that all makes very good sense. However, the bottom line is that a lot of money is being expended and we are not getting the same amount of catchment works we should be getting for that overall budget. I ask the Parliament to reject the budget of this board because it means an unreasonable increase—10.6 per cent overall—to residents of my area and the other electorates affected, 14.5 per cent for rural residents and 12.4 per cent for residential residents. That will mean a lot of pain when you put it together with the emergency services tax impost that this government has implemented and the GST implemented by the Liberal Party. It all adds up to extra costs for residents. We have to see good value for our money.

An increase is proposed in this next financial year for all my residents, but an increase in the levy is proposed for the next two years after that as well. I am told that it is not as substantial as this one, but it is an increase nevertheless. A lot of money is being generated and we could be getting better value for that money. I want to see for my constituents better value for the money, and until I do I cannot and will not support this budget.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): It is important for a minute to visit the Water Resources Act 1997 to understand why we find ourselves having this debate this morning. Section 95(9) of that act provides:

The Economic and Finance Committee must, after receipt of a plan—

a plan it receives from the minister—

- (a) resolve that it does not object to the levy proposal; or
- (b) resolve to suggest amendments to the levy proposal; or
- (c) resolve to object to the levy proposal.

After debate in the Economic and Finance Committee this week, in a majority vote the committee resolved to object to the levy proposal. We need to go to section 95(12), which provides:

If the Economic and Finance Committee resolves to object to the levy proposal, a copy of the plan must be laid before the House of Assembly.

That is happening right now. Subclause (13) states:

If the House of Assembly passes a resolution disallowing the levy proposal of a plan before it under section (12) the proposal ceases to have effect.

The question I pose to the minister is: what happens if the plan ceases to have effect? That is an important issue, because some misinformation has been circulated about the impact of the plan and its ceasing to have some effect, and I understand that the member for Schubert, from a quick discussion he had with me yesterday, is somewhat confused about that matter. It is important that this be resolved.

That notwithstanding, I do not support disallowing the plan, and that is because of the quantum rather than the percentage increases. The member for Taylor is quite correct in pointing out that in this water catchment plan for this year there are increases ranging from 3 per cent in some categories up to 22 per cent, the most important one being residential, where there is an increase of 12.4 per cent. However, the real issue is: an increase on what? This 12.4 per cent increase for residential properties means that the annual payment for these properties increases from \$11.82 to \$13.29, so this debate is actually about \$1.47 a year.

At the end of the day, what we are talking about is \$1.47 a year. I accept that there is a principle here and that they are increasing their collection and expenditure well above the CPI. But, in fairness to this board, I believe it came from an unrealistically low base and as a once-off I would be prepared to accept these increases, but I would put the board on notice that from now on it had better not try this stunt again. I seek leave to have a table inserted in *Hansard* setting out the levies for the three boards we dealt with yesterday: the Patawalonga, Torrens, and North Adelaide and Barossa boards.

The SPEAKER: Can you assure the House that the table is statistical?

Mr McEWEN: I give you that assurance, Mr Speaker. Leave granted.

Average land-based levy payments across land-use categories North Adelaide and Barossa				
	1999-2000	2000-2001	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$11.82	\$13.29	\$1.47	+12.4

Rural	\$24.45	\$28.00	\$3.55	+14.5
Commercial	\$45.11	\$46.51	\$1.40	+3.1
Industrial	\$81.95	\$89.49	\$7.54	+9.2
Other	\$13.00	\$15.92	\$2.92	+22.5
All Categories	\$13.72	\$15.17	\$1.45	+10.6
Average levy payments across land-use categories				
Torrens				
	1999-2000	2000-2001		
	Average	Average	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$17.62	\$18.23	\$0.51	2.9
Rural	\$25.89	\$25.98	\$0.09	0.3
Commercial	\$38.82	\$36.72	-\$2.10	-5.4
Industrial	\$68.91	\$67.08	-\$1.83	-2.7
Other	\$18.10	\$17.56	-\$0.54	-3.0
All Categories	\$19.94	\$20.12	\$0.18	0.9
Average levy payments across land-use categories				
Patawalonga				
	1999-2000	2000-2001		
	Average	Average	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$15.82	\$16.18	\$0.36	2.3
Rural	\$26.49	\$25.98	-\$0.51	-0.19
Commercial	\$30.26	\$29.45	-\$0.81	-2.7
Industrial	\$41.11	\$39.06	-\$2.05	-5.0
Other	\$10.33	\$9.38	-\$0.95	-9.2
All Categories	\$16.53	\$16.67	\$0.14	0.8

Mr McEWEN: I wish this to be incorporated in *Hansard* because it sets out that, even with these increases, the North Adelaide and Barossa board is actually still paying less in the two key categories, particularly residential, than both the Torrens and Patawalonga boards. The average payment in all categories in North Adelaide and Barossa is \$15.17 a year. The average payment in Torrens is \$20.12 a year; we approved that plan yesterday. The average payment in the Patawalonga board is \$16.67 a year, and we approved that plan yesterday.

At the end of the day, local members need to be accountable to the communities in their board areas for these increases, and that is why I understand the member for Taylor's taking exception to the increases on a percentage basis. However, I reiterate that, although as a matter of principle these increases are on the high side in the overall scheme of things, we are not dealing with significant amounts of money, and we are still dealing with a rate that is below the other two rates we approved yesterday. So, on that basis I indicate to the House that I will not support the motion to disallow the plan.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I strongly oppose any increase by the catchment board in this instance. The member for Gordon has pointed out that the total cost still payable by residents of the northern area is about the same as or in fact a bit less than that of most other suburbs, but that is as it should be. Our property values out in the northern suburbs are generally less than those in the Torrens and Patawalonga area. Some of the northern suburbs are among the poorest in Adelaide. This involves not only the principle of the increase above the cost of living increases but also the principle outlined by the member for Taylor of where that money is going and whether it is really needed. I say that, on the basis of the plan delivered by the catchment board, it is not delivering. Its catchment works are a reducing amount of its budget. It appears from its plan that too much is being spent on administration and producing brochures and pamphlets. It is not good enough that we have that sort of arrangement.

Many catchment works need to be undertaken in the northern suburbs. The Gawler River is crying out for urgent remedial work, and the Adelaide Plains, where work has

started, is starting to make some slow progress. There are some severe problems around the One Tree Hill area which need to be addressed very soon if there is not to be significant long term damage there, and then there are the creeks feeding into the Para River. A lot of work is being done there, and I support it; however, I do not support residents in my electorate of Napier or in the electorate of Light, where I intend to be a candidate at the next election, paying an increase of 12.4 per cent for residents and 14.4 per cent for rural areas.

The member for Gordon points out that it is a small monetary amount. But under this government we have had small monetary amounts added on at every turn. We have had a dollar here and a dollar there, and a few percentage increases here and there and now we have the GST on top of that, through which it now turns out we will pay much more than the federal government had said we would. I have to tell the member for Gordon that perhaps the people in his electorate are doing much better than the people in my electorate. The budgets of the people whom I speak to in the Gawler and Smithfield areas are very tight, particularly for families with children going to school. Every single dollar counts in those budgets. Okay, they might be able to find another dollar or two to pay it, but is that dollar or two worth it?

Is this plan of the catchment board reasonable and progressive? If it is spending only a third of its budget on catchment works, that should be investigated. We should see whether it can rejig its budget so that it spends less on pamphlets to be circulated to schools and industries and more on work to save the Gawler River and the Adelaide Plains. I hope that members in the Barossa and the northern suburbs—particularly the member for Light—will support the opposition's position in respect of this motion. Given the nature of the plan put forward by the catchment board, it is an outrageous increase.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate, because I cast the vote that enabled it to come to this House. I was most concerned that this board has failed to accede to the warnings it has received on previous occasions. The increases may be only small in monetary terms, but in percentage terms they are excessive, and that sets a very bad example for this and other boards in the future. It is a role of the Economic and Finance Committee to examine the board's operations and question its members—and that has taken place—and, where it thinks appropriate, refer the matter to this House for further debate.

After this exercise, the board should be fully aware that the parliament is taking a considerable interest in its activities. The process itself is flawed, and the committee should have more time to consider these matters. It is exceptionally important that the boards recognise that the committee will pay attention to their operations. My constituents certainly are not getting a 14 per cent increase in their income; in fact, a large percentage of them are on negative incomes.

I do not accept that these people have the right to continually jack up charges. It is the boards that set the fees, not the government. There is a lesson for this parliament. When we set up these organisations and statutory authorities, we just have to be very careful that they are properly scrutinised and that the reasons for their establishment and their methods of operation are continually placed under scrutiny by this parliament to ensure that they are fulfilling the objectives that were set out when they were established. Like the deputy leader, I am concerned that at this stage only a third of the

money will be invested in capital projects. We are aware that there was controversy early in the year about some of the activities that the board was proposing in relation to fencing dams and other activities. It seemed to me to be right over the top. I was looking forward to this report coming before the committee, and I read it very carefully.

I am somewhat disappointed that this is the third occasion that the activities of this group have been referred to the parliament. If the board does not take note of that, I would suggest that its future is not too bright. I am firmly of the view that the parliament and the committee should not have to continually refer these matters to the House for a decision. It is not the minister's fault. I say to him that, if we let this group get away with 14.6 per cent and, as the member for Gordon said, 22 per cent on houses, they will all do it around the state. There is nothing surer. They will think, 'Here's a willing cow to milk,' and they will be in it. I will certainly not support that. Long-suffering householders, rural producers and others are battling to survive without any further imposts. It may be \$2, \$3 or \$4 today, but next year it will be \$10 or \$20. That is not what this parliament is here for.

I make no apologies for casting my vote with the opposition yesterday on this matter, because I believe that the role of this parliament is to examine. I intend to support the government's line. I told the committee yesterday that I would do that. I believe this action that we have taken sends a clear message to this committee and others that they should be very cautious in the way they are spending taxpayers' money and, further, that, although the existing process is good, it needs to be improved, but that it is its role to put in place capital projects. I suggest to the committee that it ought to look at the hourly rate that some of these people are being paid, because that would be rather interesting.

I think this debate today has been a worthwhile exercise, because I have been most concerned for the rural producers represented by the member for Schubert, and I have given them the chance to have their concerns expressed in the House today.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I am pleased to follow the member for Stuart because, although I do not always agree with him, on this occasion I substantially agree with his comments. I believe that not only this board but all the water catchment boards should take this as a wake-up call from this parliament, because I think there is a considerable amount of unrest amongst members of parliament and the community generally about the activities of the boards. This has been highlighted most acutely in the case of the Northern Adelaide Plains board. The member for Taylor referred to the increase in the levy by 10 or 12 per cent, and in some cases by 15 per cent. This is a huge increase, even though in dollar terms it is relatively low.

I refer to some other issues which relate to this board and also to the other boards. The boards need to get some messages from this parliament about the way in which they have been behaving. The point has been made by other members that a relatively small percentage of the money that the boards have collected has actually been spent on field-work: doing things to protect the water catchment. Rather, a large sum of the money appears to be going to administration, public relations or consultants. I will go through those issues.

I think it is important that the boards educate the community about better water practices and behaviour, but the process they are adopting appears to be highly wasteful. We now have seven catchment boards, each of which spends up to

25 per cent of its budget on education. Across the whole of the state, that is a large amount of money that is being spent on education. If we gave only a fraction of that to the Minister for Education and said, 'Get together a unit which will help to develop materials and educational practices in schools so that kids can learn about catchment health,' he would be able to do a much better job than seven individual authorities each producing a whole series of kits, pamphlets and processes to try to get local schoolchildren involved in the process.

When I worked in education, if a particular curriculum area had two or three staff and a small budget to work with, it was doing very well. Yet, the catchment authority that covers my electorate and the Onkaparinga area receives that sort of money just for that one catchment area. This is a huge resource which I believe is not being used properly.

If we want to get across a simple message to the community at large about how to behave in relation to water catchment, the appropriate way to do that is to pool the resources and do some television advertising, rather than producing tonnes of pamphlets—

Mr Conlon: Make some audits; tell them what to do.

Mr HILL: Make some audits; tell them what to do, as my colleague says. A much more appropriate way of doing this would be through television advertising. Recently, when I visited Sydney, some messages about water catchment health were put out by the EPA through television. In this way, the attention of the whole community was focused on some very simple messages. Through those sorts of processes, I believe we would have a much better chance of bringing about some change in behaviour. But to allow seven authorities to spend up to 25 per cent or 30 per cent of their budget on producing local education programs seems to me to be highly wasteful.

The second issue is to do with consultants. I do not know the percentage of funds that the catchment authorities are currently using on consultants—and I give notice to the minister that during the Estimates Committees I will be seeking some of this information—but it appears, as the member for Elder says, that hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent each year on paying consultants. The fact is that they are the same consultants in each case. There is a relatively small pool of consultants who deliver their services to each of the seven catchment authorities. In many cases they are providing similar advice to each catchment authority. As one officer told me the other day, the way in which a consultant works is as follows: they are given a brief by the catchment authority; they then go to the department, either DEHAA or SA Water; they ask a whole lot of questions of the professional officers in the department, tying up their time for hours and hours; they get the papers from the department; they then put the information into a computer; they turn it around and make a few recommendations; and then they give it back to the authority.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr HILL: That is the definition of 'consultant', as the member for Fisher says. They give it back to the authority and say, 'This is our advice. That will cost you a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Thank you very much.' They then do the same thing with the next authority. This is a scam and a scandal, and all the boards, I hope, will read the words of members here today and take notice. They are on notice: if they do not fix this problem, they will disappear as boards.

The third thing I say about the catchment boards is that part of the problem is that they are appointed bodies. They are not accountable to their local communities in any way at all.

When the member for Stuart, other members and I were on the select committee on water in the South-East, one of the strong recommendations which we made but which was not accepted by the government was that there should be elected representation on the boards in that area. That should be the case in relation to these boards as well. If you have on boards local representatives who are accountable to the local community, there is a fair chance that they will take more notice of what people are thinking. At the moment, the members of the boards do not have much appreciation of what locals are thinking.

The final point I make in relation to the Northern Adelaide Plains Board is to do with consultation. I note that in the transcript of the Economic and Finance Committee meeting the officer who gave evidence under questioning said that they had been through a consultation process with the local community about the change in the rates. I have in my hand page 12 of the local *News Review Messenger*; it shows an ad which takes up just less than a quarter of the page and which goes through a number of tables outlining the proposed budgets for the next three years, detailing the programming. At the bottom it states that the public are invited to make written submissions in relation to the proposed amendments. The closing date for written submissions was 10 April 2000, some five weeks later. I understand that no member of the public responded to this ad. Having looked at the visual impact of the ad and the fact that nowhere did the ad state what the individual rates would be or the percentage increase that would occur, I am not surprised that no-one responded to it.

I also note from the evidence that the officer, once again, said that consultation with the local community would be happening and that they were in the process of printing a lot of brochures to send out to the local community. I would have thought that was a bit late after the matter has been through the Economic and Finance Committee and, theoretically, had gone to parliament. It is far too late after the horse has bolted. On that basis, there is serious objection to the way in which the local community has gone about its business.

In conclusion, let all the boards that operate in this area be aware of the concerns of this parliament; let them in their next deliberations come forward with more concrete plans so that the money is spent on the ground trying to improve the environment; let the minister review the act and make alterations to the way in which the education and public relations money is used; and let them tell the consultants, 'We have had enough advice from you. Go away; we will get on with the job ourselves.'

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I will not support the disallowance, but not because I do not have sympathy with the member for Taylor as do, I suspect, the members for Schubert and Light. The increase does seem large, but mathematically it is coming off a small base. Nevertheless, it is a significant increase. I agree with many of the remarks made by other members here today. I hope that this will send a message not only to the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board but to all the boards.

In fairness to the boards, I should say that it is a pity that all government agencies are not put through the hoop in the same way, because I am sure that the government would save millions of dollars. Many of the catchment boards that have been operating for several years have come to understand that the Economic and Finance Committee will make them jump through the hoop and will look very closely at the proportion

of their funds spent on administration. We had one board a year or two ago that was funding local arts activities, and I do not believe that that is appropriate. I have nothing against the arts, but I do not believe that that should be the funding source.

It is appropriate for the minister to consider reviewing some aspects of the way in which the boards operate. One is, of course, the composition of board members. My local board (the Onkaparinga one) is operating well in terms of the ratio of on-ground works to administration costs. But we do not have a local representative on that board: the bulk of the people who pay the bulk of the money do not have any representation on the board at all, and the whole issue of the composition needs to be looked at.

The other important aspect is that the board, in drawing up its plans, should at least consult with the local member. The Onkaparinga board did that, and I thank it for its courtesy. I was able to give it some useful, friendly advice. I believe that all boards and all plans relating to members' areas should as a matter of courtesy be submitted to them in good time so that they can make a detailed analysis.

As the member for Stuart pointed out, the Economic and Finance Committee is put in a very difficult position, because we receive these plans at the midnight hour. If we refer them to parliament and parliament decides to disallow, we run the risk that the notices relating to the catchment levy will not go out with the normal council rate notice; therefore you incur an extra administration cost of a separate notice being issued at great cost. The Economic and Finance Committee is put in a very invidious position whereby we are under pressure to approve plans and proposals, even though deep down, as in this case, we have considerable reservations.

I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House, but I want to refer to one issue, albeit not the main issue today. It relates to the boards and to the whole question of the appropriate use of water. In my observation, the cost of water is far too low in terms of how it is being used and, until we get a realistic pricing of water, we will not encourage users to be efficient. We have the technology now: there is no need for people to be putting on vineyards the amount of water with which you could grow rice.

There is a small number of cowboys still in the industry, and it is a very small number. But people in the market respond to price. At the moment, water is available at too low a rate, and it is not something that an individual board can address, because it would not be too popular. It will not happen overnight, because it is a contentious political issue. I realise that: I am not that naive. If we are going to look after our precious resource of water, we have to price it accordingly. Today the issue is disallowance, and I believe that what we are doing today is giving a gentle kick up the backside to this Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Board.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Some members opposite would engage in a frontal lobotomy, I think. From my point of view, it should be a kick in the backside and a gentle reminder to other boards that this will happen to them if they go down this path. Nevertheless, as I indicated at the start, I do not support disallowance. Let us send a message, and let us hope that the boards and others heed that message.

Mr CONLON (Elder): I am not quite as gentle as the member for Fisher: I would like to give them a kick in the behind that they actually feel, and that is why I think we should disallow this levy. The member for Taylor has made

it very plain why it should be disallowed. I will comment on that briefly and I will also comment on the difficulties I have as a member of the Economic and Finance Committee concerning the operation and the scrutiny of the boards and, above all, their accountability. It is quite plain why we have difficulties with this levy. It is a rate of increase that goes beyond anything that is sustainable by any argument about CPI or the community. It is an increase that ranges between 10 and 22 per cent. It is unsustainable and argued for only because it comes from a low base—and I will address that in a minute—in comparison with others.

The other problem we have is that the board—and I stress this—is spending less than a third on what you might say is actually doing something that contributes to the water catchment areas. That is why I worry about the accountability of these boards. If it were a government department—for example, if we were silly enough to build the minister's tunnel—imagine if the budget were structured so that one-third was spent on the member for Unley's tunnel and the other two-thirds of the money was spent on telling everyone what a good tunnel it was. That is what we are faced with, in my view, with the reports and the plans of the water management authority. I hasten to point out that no-one should spend any money on the minister's tunnel, and we will not spend a lot of money telling people what a good tunnel it is: we will leave that to the member for Unley.

The problem with these things has been the scrutiny and the accountability. As the member for Fisher mentioned, each year the reports come to the Economic and Finance Committee for consideration about a week before they are supposed to go out and before bills are supposed to go out. Year after year we raise difficulties, and year after year we say, 'There are difficulties; they will improve, but you can't hold it up this year or the water boards won't have any money at all.' I have had enough of that; I have had a gutful of it. If you do not want scrutiny, abolish it: if you do want scrutiny, make it real. We believe that there are real difficulties with the accountabilities of these boards, but we are blackmailed every time we raise a problem with it in this place by being told that the work will be stopped altogether. That is exactly what the minister has been saying behind the scenes again today.

I must say that I do not hold this minister accountable. Many of the difficulties with the behaviour of these boards have come about over the past few years as a consequence of the behaviour, the arrogance and the lack of any attention by the former minister (the member for Newland), who has treated with arrogance and disdain every concern raised in the past by the Economic and Finance Committee. So, we find ourselves in the position where not only have the boards not had proper scrutiny but the minister has not been concerned with it. I am confident that the new minister, with all his shortcomings, which are manifest and varied, will do a better job than—

Mr Scalzi: Are you picking on short people?

Mr CONLON: No, Joe, I would not do that. I assume that is you, Joe; I can barely see you from here.

Mr Lewis: It depends on what they are short of!

Mr CONLON: I thank the member for Hammond for that interjection. All I have to say is that he has the market cornered in shortness all round. I want to answer the arguments of the member for Gordon, who says that this is all right because it is only bringing it up to the level in other water catchment authorities. Again, they have suffered, in my view, from a lack of scrutiny in the past and a lack of an ability to do anything realistic about their shortcomings,

because, as I said, this is the third year that I have been in this place, hearing the same argument. We have had arguments about those boards before, and the member for Gordon knows that. We had complaints about them, but we were told that we could not do anything about it. I think it is about time that we did do something about it. The people in the northern suburbs cannot sustain an increase of this magnitude and it should not be sustained.

I will close by saying this: I look forward to the contributions of the Liberal members for that area, the member for Schubert and the member for Light. I predict that what we will hear from them will be the great political 'but': 'I am opposed to this, but. . . I think the increase is too much, but. . . I would not be voting for it, but. . .' So, I look forward to hearing the great political 'but' from those members. I look forward to telling their electorates about the great political 'but'.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): This has been an interesting debate. Most of the things that I would have liked to have contributed to this debate have already been said. I would like to make the point—and several members have suggested it—that this should be a wake-up call to these catchment boards that are still proliferating around the state under the Water Resources Act 1997. I have expressed my opinion of that act and these boards plenty of times in this place. I think that the feeling has been general from both sides of the House. I sincerely wish that this is not just a wake-up call to boards and the way they conduct their activities, but that it is also a wake-up call to the minister.

The previous speaker, the member for Elder, said that the problems cannot be sheeted home to this particular minister, and I agree. In the short time the current minister has been handling this portfolio, I believe that he has shown considerable leadership in a wide range of areas within his portfolio, and I congratulate him for that. I certainly hope that he takes the contributions from across the broad spectrum of members here today as a wake-up call to the minister that there are serious problems, not just with the catchment boards but also with the act that sets them up and sets out their powers and what they are required to do in their community. I hope that he has a good hard look at the whole of the act and with particular reference to the catchment boards.

I agree with what the member for Kaurna said about the wastage of money on education. He made a good point. If we applied some strategies to the way we spend those moneys, we would get a lot bigger bang for the buck. I totally agree with his comments about consultants. I understand that one catchment board which is very close to my area in fact spent \$6 000 having a consultant travelling around asking the local community what they thought of the way the catchment board was performing. I would have thought that, if the catchment board was performing half as well as the community expected it to, that would have been \$6 000 well saved.

Having made these comments, the most important part of my contribution is that it is time that the minister took a long hard look at the Water Resources Act and I hope in the not too distant future bring that act back into this parliament for a serious review. I will conclude my comments there.

The SPEAKER: I call on the member for Schubert.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING (Schubert): They have all been waiting, Sir. As members would know, as the member for Schubert, which area includes the Barossa Valley, I share this board

area with the member for Taylor. This is a very serious issue for me. It was only brought to my attention 24 hours ago. I have had 24 very intense hours of discussions. I believe that the act could be said to be flawed because it does not allow us to amend the amount of the levy during this debate, and if the decision is to support the proposed increase, then the board continues to be funded. If it is not, the board will not be funded and will not be able to continue. I do not agree with my colleague, the member for Taylor—and we have had discussions—who shares this board with me. I have sought advice from the current and the previous ministers and I can only take heed of that advice. I have also noted the comments of the members for Gordon and Stuart. However, it is difficult for me to support the increase in the levy rate, particularly at this time.

Mr Koutsantonis: But!

Mr VENNING: Not but—so, I have a problem. If I cross the floor, the board will cease to operate. That is the decision that I have to make. I am assured that, even with the increase, it will be—as other members have said—the second lowest level for a catchment area in the state, bettered only by the board in the Lower South-East. However, that does not make it right. Apparently, the levy is the lowest charged by any board in any metropolitan seat in Adelaide. I note again the comments of the member for Gordon on that matter. It could be said that this board set its levy too low in the first place. I refer to a document from the minister's office, which states:

I note that the North Adelaide and Barossa Water Catchment Board was established in December 1998 and completed its initial catchment water management plan under the Water Resources Act 1997 in March 1998.

I presume that was when these levies were set. I have been advised that the biggest increase in the electorate would be \$28 in a total estate worth \$3.7 million. So, we are not talking about large amounts of money, but I agree that the principle is still there. That is the largest increase, and I put this on the record: the largest increase will be \$28 for a \$3.7 million asset. The lowest is \$1, with an average increase of \$2 per property. This is going on the record, and I will be watching with great interest to see what happens after this. These are not huge amounts but it is the principle with which I am concerned. People are paying enough in charges and levies now, and increases are most unwelcome, particularly after the good news this week relating to the emergency services levy. People in my area are rapt with the good news.

However, this is a step in the other direction. I shall again read from the document (which came from the department), and I put it on the record to show that this is the information I am using to make my decision:

The Board has proposed a modest increase in the quantum of the land-based levy of \$272 000, from \$1 700 000 to \$1 972 000. This represents, for the average property, an increase of less than \$2. To reject the levy proposal will effectively end the board.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Members say, 'You don't believe it.' However, in this place one must take advice, and I understand that this advice has come from Parliamentary Counsel. So, I will take this advice here: if it wrong it is on the record. I will not support any future increases above CPI, as other members have said—

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: I did say it last year. I remind the member for Taylor that both she and I have to work with this board and that I choose to be constructive. If there is any doubt, I wish to give them the benefit of that doubt. I have

had discussions with Minister Brindal, and that has been of assistance in reaching my decision with respect to this matter—because there are other issues in addition to this one. Minister Brindal and I both know what they are, and probably so does the member for Taylor. If we can kill three or four birds with the one stone, it would be very advantageous to do it now. Those discussions that I have had with Minister Brindal have assisted me in reaching my decision on this matter, and I look forward to his support in the future, as the local member, to address some of our concerns. As I said, Minister Brindal knows what they are and he will remember what we have discussed: I certainly will. The board at the moment—

An honourable member: Put it on the record—

Mr VENNING: That information shall remain private, because it would be of no value to place it on the record here now. I am sure that, when members of the board read this transcript, they will know what we are talking about. The board at the moment—

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: No, I want to be as charitable as I can.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr VENNING: The board at the moment does not fully enjoy the confidence of the electorate, and I feel that it is pretty poor timing to have released its water allocation plan (to which there was a pretty stormy reaction from the community), the management plan and now this—and none of those issues has been resolved. So, it is of considerable concern that the board has done that. I think we need to get out there and mend a few bridges, and this could be the start of the way back. I certainly offer the board my support and will do all I can. I do not intend to knock and to destroy.

I certainly look forward to the days ahead. No doubt, this debate today will be well read not only by members of the board but also by people in the electorate. I also sought advice last night from local government representatives, who did their work, and they were of the same opinion: this board cannot be allowed to fold, because all the work that it has done could be destroyed, and we do not want to start from square one; it would be very difficult. I want to work with the board in an open and constructive manner. As I have said, we have had three public meetings, and there will have to be a fair bit of fence mending out there in the community on the part of the board. I offer my assistance in that respect, as will, no doubt, Minister Brindal, because he has attended one of the public meetings—and we are to visit there in a couple of weeks' time.

I put the board on notice that I will be scrutinising its level of expenditure more closely in the future. It is not to become a black hole for extravagant consultancies, and so on. As has been mentioned by the member for Stuart, I was concerned to realise that only one-third of the board's expenditure is going into land projects. I would hope that it would be the other way around—two-thirds for land projects and one-third for administration. That is a concern. But I say again that I choose to be constructive and positive. The board has done some good work, and I will appreciate closer dialogue with it. As I said, I was not aware of this problem until yesterday, and a lot of this could have been averted. I am sure if we—

Mr McEwen interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VENNING: I have to say that it is in the management plan. If the member wishes to read that extensive document, he will find it in one of the central paragraphs, at page 90, '5.4 Source of Funds'. But it does not mention there the

increases as the table presented to the committee did. I did not see it there: it was not laid out in documentation such as the member for Gordon and others had during the sittings of the Economic and Finance Committee. I also would have liked to see that documentation earlier. I was not aware of it, and I have certainly had a pretty hairy 24 hours.

The board has come under some scrutiny, not only from the Economic and Finance Committee, and now from this parliament, but also from the community. No doubt, this will be picked up by local media. I would like the whole system to progress, and I ask the board to progress with caution, because I believe that it has tried to go too far too quickly. I think that it now needs to step back and regroup and take the community with it. People of the Barossa are generally conservative and careful. I suggest that the board be the same.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Most of the relevant points have been canvassed by my colleagues but I would like to make a couple of points, the first being that my constituents are sick of levies; they are sick of extra charges. They believe that they pay enough, that they struggle enough and that they do not receive value for money in relation to this levy. I understand that the increases proposed by the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board are in the vicinity of 10 per cent to 15 per cent. But what is of most concern, in my view, is that we do not really seem to see anything coming out of that money. One third of the money collected is spent on programs and the remainder seems to be spent on the board's infrastructure. I register the concerns of my electors who are sick of having to pay levies and increased charges in a range of different areas, of which this is just one, and people are hurting. They do not want extra charges, especially when they cannot see value for money.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): The problem has arisen in consequence of our own ineptitude in drawing the legislation that establishes boards. The first thing we all should have done is ask ourselves the question who owns the rain and why would we ascribe ownership of it to anyone in one form or another after it has fallen on land, one form or another meaning, if it lands on your roof, quite clearly in my judgment, you are entitled to take as much of it before it reaches the ground as you need or believe you will need. That is for the purposes of sustaining your own life and that of your family and/or anyone else in whom you have an interest.

If it falls on your land, it is my judgment that, before it reaches streams that are more permanent than not, it too can be regarded as a property to which you have a right but not ownership, and that to get that right you should have to compete with everybody else who might want access to it. Once it has fallen on the ground, depending on the rate at which it falls, much of it will infiltrate into the soil and go below the surface into the root zone. If the rainfall incident does not follow too quickly on the heels of an earlier rainfall incident or irrigation on some land, it may not go past the root zone because the plants growing in the soil on the land will use the water.

However, once it gets past the root zone into a body of water below the surface—call it what you like, surface aquifer or watertable, it does not really matter—it becomes a resource to which those people who need it for economic purposes other than the sustenance of life for themselves, their families and their livestock should have to pay an annual amount, not related to the value of the land or anything else

but rather related to the use to which they wish to put it, bidding against all others who may wish to get access to that scarce resource, because in that situation clearly it has gone beyond the reach of any property owner. It is no longer part of what they can legitimately claim.

If it has gone to a stream that is more often than not a running stream, or if it has gone below the root zone, people who want access to it should have to bid in competition to other interests and people who want access to it for purposes of production, just like buying a resource such as fertiliser or any other material that is used in the process of production. Most water will be used for primary industry of one form or another, commonly for irrigation though not exclusively so.

Indeed, it may be used for farming fish. It may be used for a wide range of other activities—in the process of mining, for instance. It may be seen as a nuisance to someone who wishes to extract minerals in the locality and may have to be dealt with accordingly. Once it has reached the water table below the root zone of any surface crops, including vegetation of forests and the like, or trees for the purpose of producing fruit or seeds, then it is in the public domain. I believe that catchment water management boards ought to have been given some measure of responsibility for the manner in which that water resource is allocated. It ought not to be seen by land-holders as their right.

They have bought the land but not the water beneath it. They do not own the minerals. They do not own the gold, coal, gas or oil. They do not own what is there: that remains the property of the Crown, and I believe that we ought to treat water in exactly the same way. If you want access to a mineral then, one way or another, you must bid against all comers to get it. You must prove that you are capable of using it by submitting plans to the mines department after you apply for an exploration licence.

You must then convert that exploration licence in part where you find a target to a mineral claim. If there is something that is viable and economic, an application is made for that mineral claim, accompanied by the appropriate plans setting out how it will be used and indicating why it will not cause damage to the surface land itself or that of any other adjacent land-holder. You are then granted a mining lease and you can begin mining according to that plan. To my mind, the use of water for irrigation purposes, or for any other part of production, ought to be treated in the same way. We are coming to that, but slowly. We are dragging our feet as legislators because we are not providing leadership: we tend to be following public opinion.

The ideas I have heard expressed in this chamber over recent years show me that people elected here are beginning to grapple with those notions I am addressing here today. The bottom line is, however, that I do not think that anyone ought to expect to own such water in perpetuity: they should pay on an annual basis for access to it. Whilst amortised annually, perhaps the term of the licence to withdraw the water could be a longer period in order to ensure that you can invest in the necessary trees, for instance, and the necessary irrigation equipment, in order to give you a production cycle that is realistic.

But if you have, say, an eight-year tenure you have fair security and, if you are efficient, you will be able to bid in competition with everyone else to get the water you need to replace what has just expired as your right. In doing so we, as a parliament, provide the wider community with the means by which this very scarce resource can then be allocated to the most valuable outcomes in terms of dollars it will

generate as income for the gross domestic product of the state (the total productivity of what we are doing) and the jobs that will be generated in consequence.

However, if we allow people to cling to the notion that water belongs to them forever and anyone they want to leave it to, so long as they own the land above it, we are mistaken, because it will never be used in the same way as it was when early pastoralists took large tracts of land and simply refused to allow other people access to it, or used it themselves in any way which at the time was considered sensible. In consequence of their holding such large tracts of land, other people were denied the opportunity to make a far better living from a smaller area by more effectively managing and farming that land.

Our understanding of the science of farming has developed over 100 years to the point where we probably lead the world. We did not know as much then as we know now, but most certainly what we knew then was that we could not allow large tracts of land to be tied up by a small number of land-holders who simply were happy to pay shepherds to look after sheep and wandering stock. No; more intensive development was appropriate, and the same logic applies to water. We need to send that signal to the public, and boards need to be given legislative power to do that. The relevance of these remarks to the motion before us is quite simply that it is our fault as legislators.

To argue now about whether to disallow or allow the regulation is really irrelevant. We ought to be examining again the structure of the philosophy behind the establishment of catchment water boards, which are essential in the public interest unless we are to end up with a hell of a mess that destroys the value of the land and destroys the confidence of the people who could otherwise be deriving something from it for themselves and for the broader community. They are essential. It is the structure of the legislation that is wrong. It is the philosophical background underlying that structure that we did not give enough consideration to before we brought in the legislation.

The board must be allowed to continue and it must be on its head if it has set the rate too high. I do not think now we can change that. It is a pity we did not set the rate in legislation. I do not support the motion, but do support the retention of the levy.

Time expired.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): I will not take up too much time of the House. Most of what I wanted to say has already been said more than adequately by members on this side of the House and, strangely enough, by members on the government side. As the member for Elder quite rightly points out, they always have a 'but' with respect to why they will not take any action. I rise today because I am the duty Labor member for the seat of Schubert. I was recently up there, in fact last week, attending one of the Telstra round robins that they are conducting as a community consultation, with my good colleague Senator Quirke.

While I was up there I also had the pleasure of meeting the National Party candidate for Schubert, Mr David Lykke. He is a member of the Barossa District Council and he seems a very imposing person. This National Party candidate said to me, though—and I stood up for the member for Schubert—that when the going gets tough the member for Schubert does not have the bottle to stand up for his region. I said, 'No, no, no, that's not what—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to tie up his comments with the substance of the motion.

Mr CLARKE: I am coming to that, sir. Very much at the forefront of the mind of the people at that meeting was the water levy and the water catchment board. These issues were discussed there. The National Party candidate suggested to me that, when push came to shove, the member for Schubert would put aside the interests of his district in the interests of his political party. I said 'No, that is not the man I know. The member for Schubert is known down here as "the lion of Schubert", that he could almost trace his ancestry to the Lion of Judah, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie.'

Mr Venning: What a lot of nonsense.

Mr CLARKE: I was sticking up for you, Ivan. I was trying to defend your interests as a local member against the incursions of the National Party in your own seat.

Here we have a classic example of where the member for Schubert only 12 months ago said the same thing he said today in beating his breast and saying that the report, the management plan and the levy rate being struck by the water catchment board were not up to scratch. He said, 'I give you fair warning that if you do this next year, I will roll over again,' and that is what he has done two or three years in succession. He has done it again today. He has given the water catchment board fair warning, while beating his breast, about what will happen when push comes to shove in 12 months time when they again present their plans with limited time for the Economic and Finance Committee to issue its due report and to be much more critical and try to get some changes to the board's eventual plans. They will say again, 'If we do not implement it straightaway you will have to cop what we have done because we have run out of time, we will not be able to get the rate notices out, and so on, and will not collect any money.'

They know that the member for Schubert will do what he has done in the past, which is roll over, as this government has done. The simple fact of the matter is that the member for Schubert can cry wolf once too often. He can stand up for his electorate and put a bit of punch, a bit of the steel hand inside the velvet glove he wears by voting against this proposal. The board will not collapse. The work will continue, because it will have to continue, and measures will have to be found to ensure that its work will continue; and he will be sending not only this catchment board but every other catchment board the clear message that this parliament is serious and is not a Sir Humphrey Appleby parliament where the bureaucrats run us by deliberately leaving everything to the last minute and presenting us with a fait accompli. The honourable member has put a great store of faith in the present Minister for Water Resources, but he also placed a great store of faith in his immediate predecessor.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: The member for Unley says 'No.' I am sure that the member for Newland would be only too happy to be informed that her successor had no faith in her role as Minister for Water Resources. The Minister for Water Resources (the member for Unley) will join the other 46 members of this House who were of the same opinion—sorry, 45, because the member for Newland had faith in herself. Obviously, the member for Schubert likewise had faith, because on past occasions, dealing with similar issues, the member for Schubert had his tummy tickled and was only too happy to roll over and accept whatever good grace the member for Newland dished out when she was the Minister for Water Resources.

We have also heard from the member for Schubert that he has some knowledge—a secret boys club deal or whatever—between himself and the Minister for Water Resources known only to those two which gives him faith in voting down this motion. Why does the Minister for Water Resources not share that same information with the whole House, as it is the whole House that is voting on this matter? Or, at the very least, if it is so confidential that it cannot be shared with all the elected representatives of this state, at least it should be shared with the member for Taylor, the person with whom the member for Schubert says they must work so closely together in a bipartisan fashion with respect to these issues. Why was that information not shared with the member for Taylor as well? Why was she not brought into the loop, rather than the boys club deal between the minister and the member for Schubert?

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: The minister says his door is open, and I suggest that there are a lot of spiders through that door. If the minister was so worried about this motion that he had to collar the lion of Schubert to make sure that he would not trip over, fall across the line and mistakenly vote with the opposition on this matter, equally he should also have informed the member for Taylor. In the interests of transparency he should tell this House—and I presume he will have the opportunity when he closes the debate—exactly what he has promised the member for Schubert in this matter so that we are all better informed when we come to vote on this issue.

I conclude with a simple appeal to the member for Schubert: do not disappoint me. I stood up for him against the National Party candidate. He was surrounded by a number of notables from Tanunda, locals and government officials, who all know him, and they were starting to nod some agreement with his National Party opponent, who was saying that the member for Schubert did not have the bottle to stand up for his district. But I was saying, 'No, no; that is not the man I know.' I hope that the member for Schubert does not disappoint me and make me a liar, and that he does not make me eat the words that I uttered only a week ago in his defence.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): I plead with members opposite to reconsider their position vis-a-vis the member for Ross Smith because, as a psychologist, he makes a very good member of Parliament.

I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. The House knows that I have not long been the Minister for Water Resources, and in the whole 10 years I have been a member of this place I have never underestimated the value of this institution or the committees of this parliament. I have listened, and will continue to listen, to the opinions of all people in this House, no matter how much I disagree with them.

I say from the outset that, although I do not doubt the sincerity of some of the contributions from members opposite, this House needs to be informed. I ask some of those members opposite who contribute to consider the following. The land based levy of the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Council Catchment Board 2000-2001 was tabled in this House yesterday. I will not embarrass anyone by asking how many copies of that report—which we have been debating for over an hour—were taken, because I do not believe the answer would be very many. I say to this House

in absolute honesty if people are going to come here and debate a matter let them be informed, with the documents laying on the table.

I know that the shadow minister and members of the Economic and Finance Committee can and will have a copy of that report and that they have read it. To some other members who contributed, in all honesty and probably believing what they said, I wonder whether they have examined the report.

Mr Hanna: You are sanctimonious.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Actually expecting this House to be informed in its deliberations on behalf of the people of South Australia is hardly sanctimonious! If we took notice of the sort of rubbish that he spread yesterday, then this House would be rather less informed than it should be. The member for Mitchell is an exact example of the sort of parliamentarian that perhaps this House could do well without. I once represented that seat, and it deserves better. As has been stated, the proposal—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:—appears to be, in percentage terms, a large increase; I acknowledge that. Members opposite have also admitted that, in dollar terms, it represents for the people in the electorates of the members for Taylor and Napier on average less than \$2 a week. I do not underestimate any increase. I know that some people in this state are doing it tough. I know that the members who contributed today are not those who might forget, because they live in their electorate. While we are privileged to get much more than some of our electors by dint of our service in this House, if you live in your electorate and you know they are doing it tough, they are doing it tough. However, they are not doing it any tougher than those in the electorate of the member for Kaurua, and that board charges considerably less.

I can honestly say to northern suburbs members that in the western and southern suburbs there are places where it is just a tough as it is in the north. Yet they have been asked to pay and are paying a levy per household that is considerably more in dollar terms than is paid in the Barossa. One of things I would put to this House is the quantum. At the end of this, after a 14 per cent increase, this remains the second lowest levy in the state of South Australia. The only lower one is in the South-East of the state, and that is after this.

Ms White: Is it value for money?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: That is a good question. The House acknowledges that I have not been here long as minister, and I cannot look at all things at once. I am sure that, if minister Kotz was standing here as the Minister for Water Resources, in the face of this House she would have the same open mind and be prepared to examine the issues.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As the member for Taylor knows, yesterday I listened to part of the deliberations of the Economic and Finance Committee. I regret that I could not listen to more, but I had other appointments. I am aware of some of her contributions to that debate, and I acknowledge that many of the points that she, the member for Schubert and others (including the shadow minister) have made are worth looking at—and we will look at them. I acknowledge that there are legitimate questions which need to be asked and answered.

This House passed the Water Resources Act. It now says that that act contains components, including this one, which

are before the Economic and Finance Committee, but that the committee's deliberations will have to be rushed because of a problem with time. I think that needs to be looked at, because it is not fair to the House, the Economic and Finance Committee or the boards themselves. I acknowledge that this matter needs to be examined and that we need a better system, but members and I are stuck with the system for which this House voted. This House gave me and every other member of this place this system. Therefore, it is this House, not I, that can change the system.

Mr Clarke: It's David Wotton's problem.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Ross Smith wants to apportion blame. The fact is—

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I'll get an extension.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The fact is that the House has the right to change the system, and, for the benefit of the member for Spence, I undertake to have this matter examined, because my colleagues, including members opposite, have said that the matter needs to be examined, and I happen to agree with them. So, it is the quantum on which we should concentrate here, not the quantity. I say to members—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I ask the member for Spence to consider this: while they are doing it tough and although \$2 is not easily asked for, will the same members rail if their local councils increase the rates by \$50, \$60—

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: That's good, as I will support them 100 per cent in that, because I say to members opposite—

Ms Stevens: Be consistent.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: No. I say to members opposite that the environment is important. I think all members of this House accept that there is no more important resource than water. The shadow minister has acknowledged that education is an absolutely vital part of the water debate.

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Taylor says that perhaps the mix is wrong, and the shadow minister says that perhaps the way we educate is wrong. I agree with both members, and I will look at those matters. I therefore ask members to disallow what you have before you so that you can vote the way I want. Regarding the so-called boys' club, the member for Schubert—and the member for Taylor is welcome to do the same thing—asked me about this, and I said that, if this goes through today, I will use such capacity as I have within the legislation to ensure that, next year, no levy is brought before this—

Ms White: Next year! That's what the minister said last year!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: No. I am sure that is not true, because you could have me for misleading the House. Listen. No levy that exceeds the CPI will be presented by this board before the House. In other words, no levy that exceeds the CPI will be brought by me before this House from this board.

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: If you can find where a previous minister said that, do so. That was my undertaking to the member for Schubert, who said that this was unreasonable. He also asked me—and, again, the member for Taylor and the member for Napier can contribute to this—to look at aspects of the catchment management plan and the education

system to see whether we can do it better and get it right, which I have promised the House to do. All I can say to the house is that I acknowledge the concerns about percentage, that the quantum is not insignificant and that we can and must address value for money. I ask the House to support the government and allow this levy.

The House divided on the motion:

AYES (20)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Breuer, L. R.	Clarke, R. D.
Conlon, P. F.	De Laine, M. R.
Foley, K. O.	Geraghty, R. K.
Hanna, K.	Hill, J. D.
Hurley, A. K. (teller)	Key, S. W.
Koutsantonis, T.	Rankine, J. M.
Rann, M. D.	Snelling, J. J.
Stevens, L.	Thompson, M. G.
White, P. L.	Wright, M. J.

NOES (25)

Armitage, M. H.	Brindal, M. K.
Brokenshire, R. L.	Brown, D. C.
Buckby, M. R.	Condous, S. G.
Evans, I. F.	Gunn, G. M.
Hall, J. L.	Hamilton-Smith, M. L.
Ingerson, G. A.	Kerin, R. G.
Kotz, D. C.	Lewis, I. P.
Matthew, W. A.	Maywald, K. A.
McEwen, R. J.	Meier, E. J. (teller)
Olsen, J. W.	Penfold, E. M.
Scalzi, G.	Such, R. B.
Venning, I. H.	Williams, M. R.
Wotton, D. C.	

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Motion thus negated.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON A HEROIN REHABILITATION TRIAL

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Hamilton-Smith:

That the report be noted.

(Continued from 4 May. Page 1080.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): It is high time that this report was considered by this parliament. It has been before us for a long time now, and I am well aware that the members of that committee would like it disposed of today. I hope that, in the short amount of time available, that can occur. I have some concerns with some of the recommendations put forward, in particular, recommendation 7, that the provision of supervised injecting rooms warrants further investigation by government. I have great problems with that proceeding further.

I recognise that the report is simply putting it forward as a recommendation that it be looked at further, and I hope that the government will reject any move in that direction. I say that not only because I am personally opposed to it but also because the commonwealth government has made very clear that it believes that, in terms of international conventions and international law, injecting rooms will not be part of the agenda in this country. I hope that it will stick to that.

However, many other recommendations are very positive, and I fully acknowledge that and compliment the members of the committee for many of their recommendations. It is obvious that a lot of work has been done on this issue, and I

believe that it is important for this to be further considered by the government, because drug abuse, drug misuse, is a great problem in our society and I am one who wants to see that decreased as much as possible.

It is a great shame that so many of our young and not so young people are destroying their lives at a very rapid rate through drug abuse. I would also like to comment briefly on the minority report put forward by the member for Playford, Jack Snelling, who noted a few salient points. He says:

However, the committee did not conclude that a trial should never happen, nor did it conclude that a trial be unethical. Rather, for practical reasons, the select committee was not prepared to recommend that a heroin rehabilitation trial occur at this time.

Mr Snelling goes on to say that he has concluded that a heroin trial is unethical and therefore should never happen in this state, and he also makes a few other very salient points about heroin experimentation.

This matter needs to be considered further with so many of the recommendations that have been made. I have some problems with a few of them. That does not mean, though, that I am expressing total opposition. Certainly, all we are doing today is noting the report so that it can proceed further, and in that respect I am pleased to have had the opportunity to make a few comments.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I thank members for their contribution to this most important debate on the report of the heroin trial select committee. I think the report that has been produced by this parliament on this occasion is something of which it can be proud. The report has added something to the nation's and to the world's body of knowledge on this vexed issue.

I would like to run over some of the main points made during the course of the debate. I remind the House that the report contains a number of world-first recommendations which, if implemented, would not only be world first but would also give us an opportunity to really look at some new approaches to the heroin problem. In particular, the proposal to look at other short-term acting opioids (drugs that have similar effects to heroin but are not heroin) as alternative treatment options and as an additional weapon in our arsenal to be used in treating addicts.

I refer to the other recommendation in respect of a trial of the pharmacokinetics of heroin on the body in order to answer the questions that we still do not understand and to help us to recognise what effect this drug has on the body. That scientific trial, were it to be conducted, would again be a world first.

The response to the select committee's report and the focus of the debate has been on the issue of whether or not we should conduct a heroin trial. As has been pointed out during the course of the debate, the select committee did not rush in and say, 'We should drop everything and conduct a heroin trial tomorrow.' Rather, the committee took a sensible and balanced view that far more needed to be done immediately to address the problem of heroin abuse. There were issues of education, policing and adequately funding other treatment programs so that we do not have, as we do at present, addicted people turning up looking for treatment in, for example, methadone or some other program and being turned away because we simply do not have the resources.

However, the committee did recognise that there was a place for heroin in the range of treatments offered and that eventually it may indeed need to be one of those things that we should look at. It did not rule out use of heroin in the

future. I think that is a very important point. The media and others in their coverage of this have focused on the issue of a heroin trial, recognised that the report did not immediately recommend one tomorrow, and have said, 'We will move on.' I would encourage the media and others to look at the detail because this is not a simple issue; it needs to be addressed with great care and great consideration. I think the report does that, and it is a foundation for us to build on in the years ahead.

Around \$33 million needs to be spent if we are to be serious about implementing some of the recommendations across all portfolios. I will be interested to see what the budget has to say about this and, on behalf of the committee, I also look forward to the government's response to the trial and hope that many of the recommendations we have made are picked up and implemented.

Finally, I again thank committee members for their effort in contributing to the report and for all members who made a contribution to the debate.

Motion carried.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

APPROPRIATION 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.

RECREATIONAL GREENWAYS 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.

BEACHPORT BOAT RAMP

A petition signed by 20 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the Wattle Range Council to consider the Glens Point site for the proposed Beachport boat ramp, was presented by Mr Williams.

Petition received.

COURTS, AGE OF MAJORITY

A petition signed by 29 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House lower the age at which a person is treated as an adult in criminal courts to 17 years, was presented by the Hon. R.B. Such.

Petition received.

MOSQUITOES

A petition signed by 9 498 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ensure that resources are provided to control mosquitoes breeding in the Port Pirie and regional council areas, was presented by the Hon. R.G. Kerin.

Petition received.

LIBRARY FUNDING

Petitions signed by 5 352 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ensure government funding of public libraries is maintained, were presented by the Hons.

M.H. Armitage and D.C. Kotz, Ms Maywald and Mr McEwen.

Petitions received.

SPEED ZONES

A petition signed by 679 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House support the retention of the 40 km/h speed zone in Westbourne Park and Hawthorn and its extension throughout the City of Mitcham, was presented by Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Petition received.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Supported Residential Facilities Advisory Committee—
Report 1998-99

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

Direction to General Lessor Corporation (GLC)—
Execution of Sale Agreements—Optima Energy Pty Ltd—
Ministerial Direction.

Direction to General Lessor Corporation (GLC)—
Execution of Sale Agreements—Synergen Pty Ltd—
Ministerial Direction.

ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Reconciliation Week begins this weekend. It is a time for all of us to reflect on our history as a state and a nation and to reinforce our commitment to greater levels of understanding and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The Premier will represent the government and the people of South Australia at the major national reconciliation event, Corroboree 2000, in Sydney on Saturday. Corroboree 2000 celebrates the achievements of reconciliation and the common ground of support for reconciliation which unites Australians. The theme for Reconciliation Week this year is Sharing our Future, which focuses on the importance of making commitments to ensure that the reconciliation process continues for the coming generations.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I will represent the government at a number of important ceremonies beginning this Friday with the Journey of Healing. On an individual level, the journey to reconciliation begins in our hearts and minds and, at the community level, it is through the decisions that we make as a society. In April this year, I restated in this House the importance of recognising the injustices of the past and the need to move forward to find measures that can begin to address the hurt and the disadvantage that Aboriginal people carry as a result of past policies. Reconciliation Week should also be seen as a week of learning, as we discover more about our past, both the good and the bad. What we learn may transform our attitudes and relationships with our fellow Australians as we gain a greater understanding about our past and how it relates to the present and impinges on the future.

The National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation has prepared four draft national strategies to advance reconciliation, focusing on the need to recognise the rights of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the need to advance their economic independence, the need to address disadvantage in their communities and the need to sustain the process towards greater understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

The state government is committed to reconciliation and has been active in supporting a number of initiatives in the areas identified by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. A key advisory group, convened by the Division of State Aboriginal Affairs, monitors progress on the recommendations of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. Some examples of the progress include a recent public meeting on the separation of children, held at the Adelaide Town Hall, which attracted some 1 000 participants. The Families project in Port Augusta has been successful, and the South Australian Link-up Service is providing family tracing and counselling support. In addition, an Oral History project has begun in South Australia which gives individuals and families the ability to record their perspectives and experiences in relation to being separated from their families.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Investment Fund has been established by the Department for Human Services to support students undertaking tertiary studies. In addition, an Aboriginal Work Force Development Strategy has been prepared, as well as an Aboriginal Emotional and Social Well Being strategy. The latter includes the development of a curriculum for specialist training for health workers in this area and the provision of funding for engaging traditional healers.

The government continues to provide positive leadership in relation to economic development and independence for Aboriginal people, and over the past two years the state government has sponsored business skills programs for high school Aboriginal children. Recognising the importance of education to the reconciliation process, it is pleasing to see the results of this year's basic skills test, which showed positive signs of improvement in the numeracy and literacy skills of Aboriginal students across South Australia. These are the practical ways in which we as a community—through the democratically elected government of the state—are addressing the inequalities and results of past injustice suffered by Aboriginal people.

I invite all South Australians who share the government's commitment in this endeavour to make a particular effort during Reconciliation Week to support and promote reconciliation in their communities, workplaces and organisations. The South Australian government remains strongly committed to the promotion of reconciliation, respecting the richness of Aboriginal culture and the continuance of the journey of healing.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I bring up the 127th report of the committee, on the State Library redevelopment, and move:

That the report be received.

This is a final report of the committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the report be published.
Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

ETHNIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Ms KEY (Hanson): My question is directed to the Minister for Youth. Why has the minister and the Premier ignored the recommendations of the assessment panel established to examine applications from councils for ethnic youth development officers? On 28 March this year, I received a written answer to my question to the Premier from October 1999 on ethnic youth development officers. In brief, the Minister for Education and Children's Services and the Minister for Youth said:

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.

My understanding is that the panel recommended offering funding to the City of Salisbury as it was the only applicant to address adequately all the selection criteria.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Youth): It is a while ago, as the shadow minister acknowledges, and I will provide her with full detail of her question. Suffice to say that my ministry, and I am sure all the other ministries in this government, just do not give away money. As the House has been informed previously (and as the shadow minister, I think, has been informed), we had some problems with the quality of the applications. There has therefore been a delay, which I do not normally find acceptable. But I say to this House: better to delay than to give out money inappropriately for programs that just simply do not reap the benefit that the government wants. As to the specific detail, I will provide the shadow minister with a considered reply.

SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Will the Premier outline to the House, and particularly for the benefit of the absent member for Hart, the difference between surpluses and deficits?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I would be delighted to respond to this question, and I really am disappointed that the member for Hart is not in the chamber at the moment. It is reported to me that the honourable member had a pretty rough time on the ABC this morning. The member for Hart got a little rattled during that interview. I can understand the member for Hart's consternation because he has been backgrounding the journalists now for a number of weeks, saying that the government was in tight financial circumstances and would be bringing in this very significant deficit at the end of the next financial year. This is from a guy who has not even seen the budget papers yet, but he is out there predicting what the result will be. I guess he choked on his weetbix this morning when he heard the Treasurer on radio saying it will be a balanced budget next year and in the three out years it will be a balanced budget. Having been caught, the member for Hart cast his mind around for what he could say and he said, 'Yes, but there will be a structural deficit in South Australia.' For the benefit of the member for Hart, we

do not account for structural deficits in state budgets. Most of them have come down, and to my knowledge none of them have referred to any structural deficits. That term is used in relation to the commonwealth outlays, not to the state outlays; and there is quite a difference between the two.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Senator Quirke? They would have been exchanging numbers in another way, I would guess.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It clearly demonstrates that the member for Hart and the Labor Party have done no homework and have no understanding of the budget strategy. I guess, in part, that is why when we came to government we had a recurrent deficit in this state of some \$301 million, annually spending more than we were earning. Through prudent financial management we have been able to eliminate that. When a question is put to the member of the Hart about the track record of the previous administration, his catch cry is, 'Well, I wasn't around then,' and he washes his hands of ALP ideology. But, in fact, he was a key adviser to no less than the Premier, so the member for Hart had his hands right in there on some levers from which he is now wanting to distance himself at a great rate.

Through prudent financial management we have gone from a position of a \$300 million recurrent deficit under Labor to one where we are bringing in balanced budgets for the forward. We are not mortgaging our kids' futures, as Labor did so well. Members opposite should hang their head in shame over their track record of financial mismanagement in this state. It is clear from the shadow Treasurer that they have learnt nothing and, more importantly they do nothing on the other side to equip themselves with budget strategies, alternative policy and new ideas. Time and again the Labor Party and its spokespeople contradict one another. One wants to spend, one wants to curtail; one wants to balance, the other does not. The total level of inconsistency in the Labor Party is extraordinary.

The member for Hart has also been off the starting blocks saying, 'This is a high taxing government.' Well, let us go back.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Peake, this Johnny-come-lately, chimes in. He has been here for about five minutes and wants to demonstrate that he is a font of knowledge on everything. I can also understand the member for Peake's agitation, because I understand that there is a very good Liberal candidate for the new seat, and this new candidate is starting to worry the member for Peake—and he should be worried. To come back to the member for Hart's claims, if we look at the six years to the year 1999-2000, we see that there has been an increase in the revenues of government of approximately 47 per cent, but that includes gambling revenues, introduced by the former government and of which this government has been the recipient. I acknowledge that, but that measure was introduced by the former government. If you want to compare like with like, you must take that out. If you take that out, the revenue increases other than from gaming machines have been of the order of 35 per cent. What do you reckon was the increase over the last six years of the Labor administration to 1992-93? That administration increased revenue by 91 per cent. That clearly indicates—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: That clearly indicates that our track record—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Something like that; three times better. The figures clearly demonstrate that the high taxing party in this state is the Labor Party. Not only is it high taxing but also it has shown total economic mismanagement in its own performance and track record. Performance speaks a thousand words, and the Labor Party has no credibility and track record on economic management.

CRESTVIEW RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Will the Minister for Human Services inform the House what action is being taken by the Department of Human Services against Australian Retirement Homes Ltd for not attending to structural damage caused by leaking pipes in a resident's unit? My constituent, who is a resident of the Crestview Retirement Village, has had to endure severe cracking of internal and external walls to her unit for over three years. Having first complained in writing to Australian Retirement Homes in September 1999, she was told that, as a result of the leaking pipes (which have now been fixed), the soil at her unit had to dry out before additional repairs could be done in January 2000. After no action by April 2000, my constituent approached the Department of Human Services, which wrote to Australian Retirement Homes stating that legal action would be taken by the department if repairs had not commenced by 12 May 2000. As yet, no construction work has commenced on her unit, and she has heard nothing back from the department.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: It is a very serious matter to an elderly person.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is now commenting.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): If the honourable member can give me the details I will certainly take up the matter with my colleague the Minister for the Ageing, who administers this act, and I will make sure that action is taken. I can imagine the distress experienced by the people involved, particularly as in this case the honourable member's constituent is older. If there has been cracking and structural damage to the house, it is time that it was fixed by the people responsible.

ABORIGINES, YOUTH

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Further to the welcome statement made by the minister earlier this afternoon, will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs outline to the House the measures undertaken by this government in particular to further the opportunities of young Aboriginal people within our education system?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I welcome the question from the member for Heysen, because it is an exceptionally important one. As I outlined in the ministerial statement, the educational needs of young Aboriginal people in this state are a key priority for this government. Members would be aware that the government continues to monitor the educational needs of Aboriginal students and recognises the need for appropriate school curricula for them and an emphasis on providing skills for gaining future employment. The government is also expanding the role of Aboriginal people in the management and support of education in their own communities, and it

continues to work with the commonwealth government and Aboriginal communities in assisting in the improvement of employment prospects for Aboriginal people.

The success of this state's Aboriginal students was highlighted last weekend. Representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services, I had the pleasure of presenting Aboriginal students with certificates acknowledging their success in undertaking the South Australian Certificate of Education 1999. A record number of Aboriginal students successfully gained their SACE, and that in itself is an amazing achievement and one of which we are thoroughly proud. It is a fantastic achievement for the students themselves, and it is certainly a good indication that the policies of government are working and continuing to improve. Some 46 Aboriginal students from 37 schools across the state successfully completed the SACE certificate last year, including a group of students who undertook external study. A significant number of those who achieved certificates are now continuing their studies at universities and TAFE institutes, while others are undertaking traineeships.

It is important that we recognise these achievements of Aboriginal students and also give credit to their families and communities who have supported them in numerous ways and helped them to achieve these positive results. I also congratulate the South Australian Aboriginal Education Training Advisory Committee (SAAETAC), which continues to show tremendous leadership on issues relating to Aboriginal education. Obviously, the government acknowledges that we still need to work towards overcoming barriers that may exist for Aboriginal students, and the government's recently implemented Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling—1999-2003, which focuses on numeracy and literacy, is one of the ways in which we are doing that.

I am sure that the members of this House are aware of Evelyn Scott, the Chairperson of the national Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Evelyn and I share a considerable passion for improving the literacy skills of Aboriginal students as we believe that this is the means to improve equity for Aboriginal students to become—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, sharing a passion for literacy—that's exactly what I said. This is one of those important areas where we believe that equity can be provided through literacy and other aspects of education to give Aboriginal students a truly positive future.

This year's basic skills test, to which I referred earlier, showed obvious signs of the improvement in numeracy and literacy skills of Aboriginal students across South Australia. From the moment the government began to take an interest in improving literacy in schools, I do not think that one member on this side of the House has stood up and apologised for introducing basic skills, because it is now showing just how important this program is proving to be.

In the light of the success of Aboriginal students and with Reconciliation Week commencing on Saturday, it is imperative that we highlight the important and significant achievements that are currently being attained by our indigenous students across the state. Mr Speaker, if you could have seen the faces of the students who received these certificates, you would understand that this type of support enables our young Aboriginal people to self-determine their own priorities and gain greater confidence and recognition, which is an important ingredient in the whole reconciliation process.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What measures are being taken to ensure that there is a real commitment to provide and promote indigenous language programs in schools, especially in regional areas such as Port Augusta and Ernabella?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): A number of programs are being undertaken in terms of indigenous language. I received a letter only the other day asking why indigenous language is not the preferred language being taught in these schools. The council elders decided that they wanted English to be the dominant language taught in these schools so that young Aboriginal people could compete for jobs and continue their education and also that the indigenous language and history of their tribes could be brought into these schools to enable young Aboriginal people to understand their history.

This is part of the five year Aboriginal education program on which the government and Aboriginal elders signed off last year. Under this program, Aboriginal parents will work more closely with teachers and students to ensure that the education that parents want for their children is delivered. When this program was released at the Wayville Showgrounds last year, the elders were extremely happy with the direction that the department is taking, particularly the inclusion of parents in these schools so that they can have a say in what the students learn.

This five year program will benefit all Aboriginal students. As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said earlier, one of the pleasing things to come out of the basic skills test this year is that Aboriginal students have shown a significant improvement over last year's test. In fact, from memory, they have gained an additional nine months of learning during the 12 month period: they have picked up an additional nine months worth of learning for their age—and that is a great outcome. It shows that the money that is being put into the early years strategy and targeting those young people through the basic skills test money—and the government has now put in some \$32 million—is having results. The indigenous language program is alive and well in our schools. It is working extremely well with the approval of the Aboriginal elders and I certainly look forward to the results.

PACIFIC SCHOOL GAMES

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise the House of the success of South Australian school students who recently competed in the Pacific school games?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Waite for his question and also for the encouragement that he gives to young sportsmen and sportswomen, particularly those South Australians who competed at the Pacific school games.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am not aware of his own sporting ability but he certainly encourages young people within his electorate, so that is good to see. This prominent sporting event, the Pacific school games, was held in Sydney earlier this year and it meant that people from South Australia—and some 300 young primary and secondary school students from all areas of the state competed in athletics, diving and gymnastics—were able to use the top

facilities in Sydney, some of which were at the Homebush Stadium, and were able to compete against all states. It is great to see because it is one area on which this government has particularly concentrated; that is, bringing back competition for schools and for our school students.

Members will recall that, when the Labor government was in power during the mid 1980s, it took away competition for our school students in sports. No students were allowed to compete in competitions interstate and I think that was a very sad thing. This government has brought it back and it enables young people to compete at the very top level in Australia. The large contingency from South Australia competed against students from some 50 other countries at the Homebush facilities and they acquitted themselves extremely well. In fact, they brought home some 20 medals in athletics, 18 in swimming and diving, and four in gymnastics. In addition, five students with disabilities also took part, which was good to see, and are to be congratulated on winning medals in swimming and athletics.

The financial support for the South Australian team was provided by our primary schools and secondary schools amateur sports associations, my department and also Westpac as a South Australian team sponsor and the major sponsor of the Pacific school games. Westpac contributed some \$20 000 to reduce the costs for those young people to compete. The event is an ideal introduction to the Olympic games for these students and our schools are also doing a good deal to focus the students' attention on the upcoming Olympics. Some of those activities include schools nominating students for consideration as Olympic torch escort runners, students preparing banners for displaying near the Hindmarsh Stadium as part of the Olympic football project, and students interacting with overseas teams coming to Adelaide to train prior to the Olympic games as part of the linking the world program.

The young students gain many benefits from this. As members know, as young people we all had—and probably still do have—idols in our sporting areas. When we are able to compete on the same surface as Olympic athletes not only is it a great psychological benefit and kick up to your self-esteem but so is the fact of being able to look back and say, 'I actually ran on the same track on which Olympic athletes competed.' I think it is a fantastic outcome for our young people. It is good to see them competing, and I congratulate them on the successes that they had at the Pacific school games.

HOUSING, EMERGENCY

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. What progress has been made in increasing the supply of emergency housing in the southern suburbs? Last year, as a result of varied and repeated representations about the crisis in emergency and priority housing in the south, the minister provided resources to allow the most appropriate response to be identified. Since that time people in urgent need of housing have continued to come to my office, with the trend for whole families to be homeless becoming more acute as the private sector fails to meet their needs.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): Of course, I am aware of this issue, which involves the lack of availability of crisis accommodation in the southern suburbs. I, together with several other members of this House, am a member of the southern partnership, which has been set up by the Onkaparinga council and which

has established a working party, included on which, at my request, is a key member of my personal staff whose task is to examine options. I will need to find out exactly what has been done thus far in that regard. I know that they were looking at a range of different facilities with the possibility of purchasing some of those facilities. I will get a report and bring it back to the honourable member.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Minister for Tourism outline to the House how the government's \$1 million tourism development fund has been committed to support minor infrastructure projects throughout the state?

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): I thank the member for Flinders for her question, bearing in mind that the region she represents is one of the important recipients of a number of the minor infrastructure projects that we have been able to support. Members may recall that when the budget was handed down last year money was set aside for the industry development fund. Given the growth in the tourism industry that has been developing over the past few years, it seemed to us that a great deal of catch-up was necessary, and the focus on and importance of supporting infrastructure development projects became very real and a top priority of this government.

More than \$1 million has been allocated now to what is called a minor infrastructure fund, and some quite exciting projects have resulted. In total, since this time last year, we have actually supported 37 minor infrastructure projects, and these have been managed, I think most effectively, by officers of the SATC. The general principle is that, when applications for support from this fund are received, money is usually provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis, normally in conjunction with a local government organisation or a developer. We try to work on the principle that the local communities, as well as the visitors, are indeed the beneficiaries.

In fact, just this week I have announced another four projects in which I think the House may be interested, one in particular being of great interest to the member for Flinders. That is a feasibility study into improving the supply of bore water for Venus Bay on Eyre Peninsula. That is one project where the local residents will also be a beneficiary, hopefully, when we get some good results from this project.

Another project that has been announced this week involves \$42 000 towards a new sewerage pump-out station near Mannum on the Murray River. Again, this is one of the projects that I believe will have enormous benefits for the entire community. We have also contributed \$20 000 towards the construction of a viewing platform at Cape Northumberland in the South-East, and this will be part of Mount Gambier's upcoming bicentennial celebrations, again another important project that has been able to be supported by this fund. Also, an additional \$15 000 has been spent to improve the very important railway precinct at Victor Harbor.

Projects such as this are extremely important for the general development of infrastructure projects across the state, but it is particularly important to areas of regional South Australia because, as we know, tourism is one of the fastest growing industry sectors in the world and, fortunately, it employs more people than any other industry sector in the world. I think it is great that the beneficiaries of so much of this infrastructure spending live in regional South Australia.

I will illustrate the sorts of projects that this fund has supported over the past 12 months—and many of them would

be of interest to members on the other side. For example, \$1 400 has been spent on a tourism signage program to assist at Coober Pedy. As we know, Coober Pedy is one of our very important tourism destinations in this state. It has a very significant international profile, and it is a place on which we should be encouraging a great focus. In addition, \$50 000 has been spent on the Bookmark Biosphere Interpretive Centre, again another internationally important—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think there is a point of order.

Ms HURLEY: Sir, this is a travesty of question time. Ministerial statements are available if ministers wish to go into this kind of detail. We have had four government questions in half an hour of question time.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order because of the way in which the standing orders are written. However, I remind the minister of the availability of ministerial statements. I call the minister.

The Hon. J. HALL: Thank you, sir. I am surprised—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J. HALL: —by the point of order, because I should have thought that some of these projects would be of great interest to members in the House, because they have such enormous ramifications. I have a list of major and minor infrastructure programs that have been supported. I would be very happy to supply it to any members opposite who would be interested, because some of these projects have enormous implications for future employment growth and economic development in the regions of our state.

I think it is important that we acknowledge the importance of programs and development funds such as this, because it enables local communities and local stakeholders to become involved in economic growth. The member for Flinders (as have other members) has been incredibly vigilant in her area in supporting tourism programs and tourism projects that will have great employment and economic benefits in the future.

JOINT SPIRIT

Mr De LAINE (Price): Has the Minister for Environment and Heritage been informed of claims that an overseas ship now at Port Adelaide's berth 27 discharged oil from its bilge at the anchorage and, if so, what action have the minister and the EPA taken? The opposition has been informed by the Maritime Union of Australia that it has evidence that a vessel called the *Joint Spirit* discharged oil and other waste directly into Gulf St Vincent while waiting at anchorage.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I am aware that the Australian Democrats have raised an issue in relation to allegations that a Chinese freighter has polluted the marine environment within South Australian waters. As the member for Price said, members of the MUA have raised that matter not only with the opposition but also with the EPA and, obviously, members of the Australian Democrats. I understand that that matter was raised yesterday afternoon. The EPA officer then contacted the federal authorities that deal with these incidents if they happen to occur in international or commonwealth waters. My officers, through the EPA, and the federal officers have been discussing this issue since then. My understanding, before attending question time, was that the EPA was waiting for the federal authorities to finish their investigations and was awaiting their advice.

YOUTH INITIATIVE

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Will the Minister for Youth outline a new initiative by which the South Australian government is contributing to a new—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: —youth—

The SPEAKER: Order! The chair is having difficulty hearing the member for Fisher.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Third time lucky, Sir—initiative out of Canberra?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Youth): I thank the member for Fisher for his question and his ongoing interest in this matter because—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I regret that there is only 27 minutes left.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: However, an announcement—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the member for Ross Smith.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: —made last week by the federal Minister for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs was, indeed, very good news for South Australia and was a very good example of this government's practising what it preaches: working with the community and community organisations to produce good outcomes, not only for government but for the community in this state. In essence, it was a huge feather in the cap of this state. The Office of Employment and Youth and the South Australian Division of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award have been jointly awarded a \$600 000 contract to coordinate and assist youth development activities on behalf of the nation.

The submission from South Australia for a new contract drew on the experience of both organisations and on the practical experience gained in developing the Premier's Youth Challenge, about which I hope this House will hear more very shortly. The South Australian Department of Training and Employment, together with the local Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will establish a unit called Aus Youth to deliver the service. Aus Youth's services will include the development of best practice documentation, a series of national and state forums to exchange information, and the establishment of a program of corporate sponsorship for community-based youth development programs and activities.

South Australia has looked at the experience of other states in developing a youth development program and South Australia will begin its own youth development program in schools as early as 24 July this year. These youth development programs also operate in Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria, with a proposal being developed for the approval of the Northern Territory government. In South Australia the program will be aimed at all students in government, catholic and independent schools from year nine upwards; and, apart from defence-style youth development activities and those involving police, emergency services, scouts and surf-lifesaving, negotiations will also take place with conservation and arts groups regarding their involvement with youth.

Under the commonwealth contract, a small team from the Office of Employment and Youth will work with government and community organisations in each state and territory to identify the most effective youth development practices. In conclusion, can I say how pleased I am that we scored this coup with the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We are not the first state to do this; we will be the fourth. But in establishing this scheme in South Australia, as a result of our being so thorough, well-prepared and so much in concert with our local community organisations (such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme), the commonwealth has acknowledged that, while we are yet to get started, we are in fact leading the rest of the nation.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Will the Minister for Human Services agree to undertake an audit of the building structure of the Modbury Hospital? Many constituents have expressed their concerns to me that the outside brickwork around the windows of the hospital proper on the southern side has severe cracking on most floors and appears to be in danger of falling away. They are concerned for the safety of people.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): Certainly I will have the claims investigated. No-one has brought to my attention anything that suggests that the building is unsafe. Some work is underway at the Modbury Hospital at present but I will look at the claims. They do appear to me to be rather extreme if the honourable member is trying to imply that the building is unsafe. I will have those claims investigated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Local Government provide the House with an assessment of the operation of the recent local government elections under the new legislative framework?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Local Government): I appreciate the question from the member for Colton, knowing the many years of experience and continued interest that the honourable member has in that area. I have some preliminary comments from the Electoral Commission, although at this stage the full content of the review is still another 10 days or a fortnight away. To improve services, accountability and outcomes for the people of South Australia, this government undertook one of the most extensive reforms of local government ever undertaken in South Australia. I acknowledge the efforts of my colleague the Hon. Mark Brindal for his tremendous efforts in carrying through the parliament the second phase of the reform program—although, based on his comments this morning, which I understand were a slip of the tongue, I may have to reassess that accolade. In endorsing the results of the recent election, the Local Government Association stated:

Enormously successful local government elections have topped off a decade of dramatic changes for local government in South Australia.

Preliminary indications are that the conduct of the elections ran relatively smoothly, and all results were provisionally declared on 19 May. Obviously, the review that is part of the legislative framework will now be undertaken on the operation of the elections to ascertain whether any points of clarification or streamlining are required. This will be the first

review to be conducted under the new legislation. At the present time the terms of reference for that review are being drafted by the Office of Local Government and will be formed in conjunction with the Local Government Association and the Electoral Commissioner.

Members will also be aware that one of the reasons for moving to universal postal voting in local government elections was to attempt to encourage greater participation by voters. The State Electoral Commission has advised that the early estimates indicate that a statewide average of 40 per cent of eligible voters took part in the voting process.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, it is very good. This figure is up from 34 per cent in 1997, and this will be verified by the Commissioner following his detailed analysis of the elections. About 25 councils have achieved turnouts greater than 50 per cent, and this in itself is a very good result. In particular, I am sure that the member for MacKillop will be very pleased to know that the District Council of Lacedepe captured the highest turnout of voters, with some 67.7 per cent, which is excellent, and obviously shows the interest in local government elections in the district of Lacedepe.

It is particularly interesting to note that 27 per cent of council positions across the state have been taken by women, and that is without the need for a quota. I had the pleasure of attending the swearing-in of the Mayor and elected councillors of Salisbury just recently.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I do know the answers to all those questions, but in the first instance I will say that I was most impressed by the fact that 50 per cent of the elected councillors in the district of Salisbury are women, so we have an even gender base across the board, and that is excellent. It was an extremely good night, with Tony Zappia being the re-elected Mayor. I found Mayor Zappia extremely courteous; however, I am not surprised that he did not exactly send on best wishes to the member for Spence. The evening was certainly very worth while.

Provisions in the act allow for action to be taken should there be allegations of improper conflict during these elections. On the advice of the Crown Solicitor, a complaint regarding certain alleged activities involving the Adelaide City Council elections which has been received by the Electoral Commissioner has been referred on to the police. Of course, the police are now investigating this allegation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all those newly elected members and to pay a tribute publicly to those many long-serving, dedicated mayors and councillors who are not continuing their services. As we are all aware, local councils continue to play a vital part in governance across this state. We have been fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers and committed members of our community serving on our local councils.

Special thanks must also be extended to the state Electoral Commissioner (Mr Steve Tully) and his staff and, of course, the many council staff across the state who worked fairly tirelessly to ensure that these elections ran smoothly. The Local Government Association also needs to be congratulated for its efforts in improving and increasing public awareness of and participation in the local government area. The government will now work with local government to implement what is the third phase of the reform agenda, that is, a functional reform. We look forward to a continued partnership between state and local government sectors as we

move to improve services and in particular reduce costs for all South Australians.

ABORIGINAL LANDS

Ms BREUER (Giles): Given that this week is Reconciliation Week, will the Premier direct the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to convene a meeting of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Parliamentary Committee and provide reports to the Parliament as required by the legislation? The committee has not been convened by the minister since November 1996, and a report has been tabled in the parliament since 1996, and that is a statutory requirement. The minister is breaking the law by not fulfilling her statutory requirements. Section 20B of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1996 refers to the parliamentary committee and states that it must:

... provide, on or before 31 December in each year, an annual report to parliament on the work of the committee during the preceding financial year.

There was a motion in this House on Thursday 25 March 1999 condemning the minister, yet still no action has been taken.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I thank the honourable member for her question, as I recognise her interest in matters of Aboriginal concern. The parliament has already asked the questions that the member for Giles has asked and received an answer which at this time is still a quite suitable one, that is, that in the moves towards reconciliation, which I know the Labor opposition supports very strongly, today in this world we will not look at the paternalistic messages of the past.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith will contain himself.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: To that end, the Aboriginal Lands Trust implies quite a degree of paternalism. On several occasions I have advised the Labor opposition that the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act is under revision—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! It is up to the chair to make sure that the member for Ross Smith upholds the standing orders of this House. I ask that the member remain silent.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am quite sure that the member for Ross Smith also understands that it is extremely important that Aboriginal communities which have expressed their opinions along the lines of paternalism of the past have also given me instructions and directions on where they want to see this act undertaken. At present, the act is under review. I am quite happy to give the House and the member opposite who is complaining details of the developing proposal that we are looking at to amend the Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation.

We are looking forward to achieving greater autonomy for the trust itself, including the release of the trust's obligation to gain ministerial approval for many of the decisions that it makes, and the appointment of an independent auditor for financial reporting to the Corporate Affairs Commission. We are looking at increasing the focus on economic development and land management functions of the trust, more in line with a corporate style structure, following discussion and consultation with Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

Since the establishment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust in 1966, there have been a number of structural and environmental changes in the community relating to land ownership

and management. Aboriginal enterprise management and government administration have also changed, and that has had an impact on the objectives and functions of the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

As this legislation was enacted in 1966, I would be surprised if any member of the opposition who continued to proclaim support for Aboriginal communities would contest the fact that a great deal of paternalism was alive and well from 1966 onwards. We intend to change that. I assure this House that as soon as these proposals have been accepted by the Aboriginal Lands Trust we will bring an amending bill into the House.

I hope that, at that time, all members on the other side of the House will not continue to protest but support these moves which I assure them are appropriate in the light of Reconciliation Week and the many attempts we intend to make to support reconciliation in this country.

FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Minister for Employment and Training detail to the House what the government is doing to support the growing food industry in South Australia?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Employment and Training): I will answer the honourable member's question in part only, because an analysis of the question will show that to go through all that this government is doing in terms of training in the food industry would require a ministerial statement. However, I will highlight a few matters.

The priority training areas for funding include: quality assurance and hygiene, exporting skills, environmental health, food business management, and occupational health and safety. There has been an increase in traineeships over the 1997-98 financial year of over 581 per cent. In 1996-97, there were 174 trainees and 144 apprentices in the food industry (a total of 318). In 1997-98, there were 2 060 trainees and 106 apprentices (a total of 2 166 or an increase of 581 per cent).

On many occasions, the Premier has informed the House of the government's encouragement of the food industry because it is vital not only for export but for the future of this state. The Premier has often told this House—indeed, I think he did so recently, and I am sure he will correct me if I am wrong—that we now lead the nation in aquaculture export. That is not bad when we consider that Tasmania had a decade's start on us. The aquaculture industry is forging ahead, and we all know about the viticulture industry, but there are other success stories.

Most notably, my colleague the Minister for Education and Children Services is to be commended for the \$31 million upgrade of the Regency Institute of TAFE, which we believe will be ready to commence programs in February 2002. That has often been referred to in this House as a leading facility, but I think the minister will join with me in acknowledging that the same sort of work done at the Adelaide Institute is on a par with and, in fact, pushes the Regency Institute. These two institutions are proud of their courses and vie for supremacy in this sector. This goes to the credit of both these institutions, because it pushes up the standard of our food and beverage industry workers. This is good news for South Australia. I note the disinterest of members opposite, but that is typical. Whenever there is good news for this state they seem—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I apologise; it is the only time this session that the member for Peake has ever managed to listen, so I acknowledge that he was listening for once.

TREASURER, DEFAMATION CASE

Mr SNELLING (Playford): My question is directed to the minister representing the Attorney-General. What has been the cost to the taxpayer of the legal defence of the Treasurer against defamation actions brought against him by the Hon. Nick Xenophon; was there any extra cost incurred in defending the member for Bragg; and from which budget line was the expenditure incurred?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I will seek a reply for the honourable member from the Attorney in another place.

PRISONS, DRUGS

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. Are you aware, Mr Speaker, it is the minister's 43rd birthday today? I am sure he will delight in celebrating the occasion by answering this important question. Will he advise the House of strategies in place to assist with drug rehabilitation in prisons?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I thank the honourable member for his question, knowing of his genuine commitment and concerns about illicit drugs and about all the social issues on which the illicit drug trade has a major impact. Of course, in the prison system there are significant opportunities enabling us to work hard on rehabilitation of people involved in drug issues. Members should recognise that approximately 70 per cent of all prisoners in the prison system have a drug or alcohol dependency—sadly, it is even higher in the women's prison, I understand—and therefore we are serious about doing what we can to address the matter of rehabilitation.

A therapeutic drug unit at the Cadell prison farm is achieving some fantastic results working with prisoners who have a drug addiction. I had the privilege of going there a couple of months ago and having a close look at the therapeutic drug unit. I saw the work being done with prisoners by the social workers and others involved in health issues related to drugs and, as I have said, some fantastic results are being achieved. There also is another initiative whereby prisoners enter into contracts in drug free cottages. They have to work hard to go through a range of rehabilitation programs before they have the opportunity of going into those drug free cottages. In addition to working with those people on rehabilitation issues and getting them away from drugs, they are also assisted when it comes to hygiene, basic living standards, nutrition and budgeting.

Often there are four of them in a cottage and they have to do all their planning, cooking, caring and sharing of the entire workload. For many of them, sadly because of the situation many of them have encountered as a young person which has taken them down the road of illicit drug use, this is the first time that they have had the opportunity of learning those real life skills. Another area on which we are working hard is Operation Challenge where first-time offenders, and obviously many of them are young, come into the prison system and undergo a strict program of being educated on a range of

fronts, including not only literacy and numeracy but also issues of harm minimisation and the impact of illicit drug use.

Of course, another positive side is the benefits that this work brings to the community. Obviously, we are very serious about ensuring that people pay for the penalty they have inflicted on the community. The people concerned have been doing a lot of work in places such as Troubridge Island and the like, and therefore, in a sense, putting money back into the community through the restoration of many government facilities.

Other issues are still being developed, and it should be recognised that we are looking strategically and holistically at how we approach the drug strategy. For instance, diversion teams are being set up by police. We have the drug action teams and, of course, we are all aware of the Premier's announcement of the establishment of the drug courts, which the Attorney is in the process of developing. These are other very important initiatives that will actually assist in getting people off drugs and stop them from becoming involved in crime. Obviously the desire of the government and the community is to see these people come back into the mainstream community and therefore being a net contributor rather than being involved in drugs.

A couple of things of major concern are the growth around Australia and the world in illicit drug use. When one considers that the illicit drug industry is actually a larger industry in dollar terms than the whole of the world's tourism industry, one can see the problems faced by governments right across the world when they try to combat drug trafficking. We all know the difficulties that we have around Australia with many ports and a large coastline.

To return to the question specifically, we also do quite a lot of work on short-term prisoners. Some prisoners come in for only a short time because of an offence they have committed, often as a result of a desperate attempt to get money in order to buy more drugs. Often we do not have the ability to work on them to the same extent as we do with those in the therapeutic drug unit who are in prison for a significant amount of time.

We could always do more, and we will always try to do more. The bottom line is that, when you look at the correctional services portfolio and the commitment of the officers, the policy direction that the Department of Correctional Services is taking is clearly integrated into the Premier's drug strategy direction. Other initiatives include the booklet that was distributed right across South Australia to educate young people and make them aware of the harms and dangers of drugs. I suggest that what we in the department are doing as our part is very good assistance.

BUDGET PAPERS

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I lay on the table the following budget papers: Budget Paper No. 1, Budget Speech 2000-2001; Budget at a Glance, 2000-2001; Budget Guide, 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 3, Estimates Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 1, Portfolio Statements 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 2, Portfolio Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 5, Capital Investment Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 6, Employment Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 7,

Regional Statement 2000-2001; Uniform Financial Information South Australia 2000-2001; and I move:

That papers Nos 2, 3 4 and 5 be published.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act for the appropriation of money from the Consolidated Account for the year ending on 30 June 2001 and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The SPEAKER: Does the Premier wish to have leave to continue his remarks?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Yes, sir.

Leave granted.

The SPEAKER: Admit the honourable Treasurer.

The Treasurer (Hon. R.I. Lucas) was admitted to the Chamber.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, two years ago, on behalf of the Government, I stood in this place and presented Members with a plan, a plan for the future. Today, I am pleased to be able to say that the plan is working.

We are buying back the future. The future of South Australia, which the previous Government did so much to throw away. Our children's future, which was being eaten up by the cost of the actions of the past, is being reclaimed.

Without decisive action we were destined to continue robbing the future to pay for the past.

That 1998 Budget outlined some very tough decisions for our State. That Budget made it clear our State could not hope to grow and prosper as long as it was weighed down by the State Bank debt and its crippling interest costs.

That Budget made it clear if we wanted to pay reasonable wage increases to police and nurses we had to raise the revenue to do so.

That Budget made it clear we could not afford the risks of operating government-owned electricity businesses in the cut throat National Electricity Market.

South Australians were asked to accept the challenge and make sacrifices to help clear up the mess of debt and crippling interest costs.

At the half way mark of this Parliamentary term, South Australians should be rightly proud of their achievements.

This Government has successfully completed the bulk of the lease of the State's electricity assets, and in keeping with the plan has used the proceeds to almost halve the State's net debt. Further lease proceeds will see further reductions in the State's debt.

Mr Speaker, the rewards of this prudent and responsible financial management have already started to flow to the State through reduced interest payments.

This Budget is a budget of cautious optimism for the future. It is a budget where gain comes from the pain and where benefits will start to flow as a result of those sacrifices.

South Australians have a right to expect to reap the rewards of their hard work and this budget is their first down payment with further benefits to be achieved in next year's budget and future budgets.

Mr Speaker, the responsibility of this Government is not limited to repairing the damage done in the past, repaying debts and funding black holes. This Government is proud of

its record in balancing the budget against the backdrop of a high standard of service delivery and a record of low taxes.

An essential condition of this balancing act is a recognition that we must live within our means and that we cannot rob the future to pay for the past.

I will now turn to a key feature of the Government's plan for the future, one which begins to buy back our future.

Lease of Electricity Assets

On the 28th of January this year, the Government received \$3.4 billion from the lease of ETSA Power and ETSA Utilities and a further \$331 million will be received in June 2000 from the disposal of Synergen and Optima. In addition, more than \$100 million of our superannuation liabilities have been accepted by the new operators.

Mr Speaker, through its asset sales program, the Government has used the net proceeds of almost \$3.7 billion to reduce net debt, reduced the annual interest burden, and reduced the exposure of the budget to fluctuating interest rates and the risks of the national electricity market.

With four increases in interest rates in the last seven months, the importance of reducing the size of the State's debt should be apparent to everyone. For example, a two per cent increase in interest rates with our previous debt would eventually mean increased interest costs of about \$150 million every year. The question for the opponents of the Government's plan is what taxes would they raise or expenditure would they cut to raise this extra \$150 million every year.

Recent events in the National Electricity Market in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia have clearly demonstrated the multi-million dollar risks of competition. In South Australia, as a result of the industrial action at Yallourn Power Station, an electricity business lost millions of dollars and possibly more than \$10 million in just two days of trading in February this year.

One of the first benefits of the ETSA lease was felt in December when Standard and Poors upgraded the State's credit rating to AA+ from AA. This was a significant achievement and a further indicator of the support for our plan from financial commentators.

Another major benefit of the ETSA lease was the ongoing net benefit to the budget as a result of the difference between interest savings and the loss of dividends from the electricity businesses. Since 1998, the Government has estimated the net benefit to be about \$100 million per year, and the Auditor-General in his 1998 report confirmed that the Government's forward estimates for the budget included this estimate.

Members will recall that critics of the Government's plan accused the Government of making false claims and in fact they claimed there would instead be a net loss to the budget.

Mr Speaker, this Budget includes an estimate by Treasury that the net benefit to the budget next year will, in fact, be \$109 million.

In each future budget, an estimate of the net benefit will be calculated. This will require an annual estimate of interest costs and the extent of dividends that a government owned business in a competitive electricity market might have been expected to earn. It is self evident that the longer the businesses are under private operation the more difficult this estimate will become.

With all the positives that the successful electricity asset lease has provided, those people who spent so much energy standing in its way should now be feeling a little embarrassed.

In case they aren't, I must add that estimates suggest that delays in progressing the lease of ETSA and the fact that it was a lease and not a sale are considered to have cost the State hundreds of millions of dollars. I ask the Members opposite to consider the impact of those delays.

For example, a further 500 million dollar reduction in state debt carries with it approximately \$35 million of savings each year in interest costs. How many more police, hospital beds, teachers or jobs could have been provided using that money?

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Mr Speaker, the South Australian economy is continuing to show solid growth, with growth estimated to be 3¾ per cent during 1999-2000 up from the 2.1 per cent for the previous year. In fact, Access Economics has estimated that our growth rate this year was the second highest of all the States.

This solid growth continues to be underpinned by household consumption expenditure, private dwelling expenditure and overseas merchandise exports.

Decreased agricultural production resulting from drought conditions in the northern Eyre Peninsula, and low world prices for traditionally exported commodities have been more than offset by strong export growth in the fish and crustaceans, road vehicles, parts and accessories, metal and metal manufactures and wine industries.

Private business investment in South Australia remains relatively high when the record for the last decade is considered, despite falling moderately in 1999-2000. Major investment projects including the Adelaide-Darwin Rail link, the Adelaide Central Plaza in Rundle Mall, Riverbank precinct redevelopment and continued development at Mawson Lakes and the Port Adelaide Waterfront are expected to maintain business investment around the levels achieved in previous years.

Employment growth in South Australia increased strongly to 2½ per cent in 1999-2000. The number of people in employment reached a record level, and the number of unemployed has fallen since mid 1998. In addition, the percentage of the population participating in the labour force has risen compared with the same time last year.

In April of this year the youth unemployment to population ratio was 7.2 per cent and this figure compares favourably to peaks of around 11 per cent under the previous Government. However, South Australia continues to have persistently higher youth unemployment than the national average.

Mr Speaker, despite the positive signs in relation to unemployment and employment levels, job creation remains a high priority for this Government.

Whilst we have seen some improvement as a result of our focus in this area, such high rates of youth unemployment remain unacceptable to this Government. This budget includes new measures to tackle youth unemployment.

South Australia continued the modest population growth experienced over recent years, with interstate migration figures again showing that the dramatic losses of five years ago have been slowed. Interstate migration losses for the year to September 1999 totalled 3000, 5000 less than that experienced in 1995 reflecting the benefits of industry attraction and continued economic growth.

The effects of interstate migration continue to be offset by overseas immigration and this budget continues the Government's commitment to the attraction and settlement of skilled migrants through the Immigration SA initiative.

Mr Speaker, the budget assumes reasonably conservative estimates of future growth in GSP and employment, estimates that are below those for the national economy.

Creating the economic environment in which those estimates can be exceeded, as occurred this year, remains the challenge for government.

COMMONWEALTH-STATE RELATIONS

Mr Speaker, the last twelve months have seen the passage of legislation through the Commonwealth Parliament for the introduction of A New Tax System. With these fundamental changes to federal taxation arrangements come significant changes to the way the States will be funded by the Commonwealth in future years.

In last year's budget I outlined proposed arrangements under the "Inter-governmental Agreement on Commonwealth-State Financial Relations." Under the agreement 1999-2000 is the last year for which the States receive financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth. From this Budget the entire proceeds of the GST will go to the States.

Changes to the GST legislation by the minor parties have forced significant amendments to the Inter-governmental Agreement since the last Budget. These changes, particularly in relation to the exemption of certain food items significantly reduced the pool of funds available to the States.

The agreement guarantees that no State will be worse off under the new arrangements by providing for supplementary funding over and above the funds received from the GST. The Commonwealth has confirmed that all States will require this additional funding in 2000-01, with South Australia expected to require funding assistance through to 2005-06. This means South Australia will not receive a positive cash benefit until 2006-07.

In addition, the timetable for abolition of a number of State taxes has been changed as a result of this reduction in the pool of funds available for distribution. Financial Institutions Duties and stamp duties on listed marketable securities will be abolished from 1 July 2001 with Debit Taxes being abolished on 1 July 2005. In the case of business stamp duties the abolition has been put on hold with possible abolition to be reviewed in 2005.

The new taxation arrangements include a requirement by the Commonwealth Government that grants to the States are reduced by Commonwealth estimates of likely savings by departments as a result of cost reductions in purchases of goods and services. In 2000-01 these savings amount to \$36 million.

This factor will mean that in most cases, relevant government fees and charges will rise by the full 10 per cent of the GST from 1 July 2000.

The total implementation costs of the GST in the non-commercial sector will be in the range of \$40-50 million. These costs must be borne by the State Government.

The new funding arrangements are predicted to eventually make the States better off, with the revenue benefits flowing from economic growth flowing directly to the States. In addition, the Commonwealth has confirmed its commitment to continuing the use of horizontal fiscal equalisation as the method of distributing the revenue pool to the States.

Whilst all this is potentially good for the State it is important to note that the new arrangements must not be allowed to dilute the significant responsibility that the Commonwealth has in ensuring that the States are adequately funded to provide services.

States will need to continue to be vigilant that the Commonwealth does not, over time, reduce the level of specific purpose payments to the States.

It will also be critical to South Australia's future that there is not a roll-back of the GST by a future Commonwealth Government. If that was to be a possible option, it would be a critical test of political will and leadership in South Australia to ensure there was strong, bipartisan opposition to such a plan which could cost South Australia tens of millions of dollars in future budgets.

BUDGET FEATURES

Whilst significant progress in reducing debt has been achieved, the Government will push forward with already announced asset sales. It will continue to make the hard decisions, like the competitive tendering of public transport routes.

The Government's commitment to funding the unfunded superannuation liability remains. Payments in the next financial year will mean that a total of \$1.25 billion will have been paid from the unfunded superannuation liability since 1994-95. Through responsible financial management we are progressively reducing the burden of superannuation that had been left for future generations.

One of the important features of the Government's budget strategy has been that the forward estimates continue to provide a structured avenue for meeting unexpected cost pressures and new policy initiatives approved by Cabinet. This budget continues that sensible planning parameter.

Mr Speaker, salaries and wages are the largest single outlay for the Government and are expected to be around \$3.1 billion next year.

As outlined in last year's budget, Treasury has estimated that moderate and reasonable wage increases for teachers, police, nurses and public servants will add an extra \$450 million to the total wages bill in 2002-03 when compared to 1998-99.

The Government's current budget strategy continues to allow for modest wage increases without altering the level or quality of services provided, unlike the budget strategy adopted in the Government's first term.

Any significant unbudgeted movement in these costs will have major impacts on service delivery or funding requirements.

The Government's new policy was strongly attacked by some critics over the last two years with claims that it would lead to a wages blow-out.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to report that all wage settlements so far have been settled within the budgeted allocations and the current strategy.

This responsible and prudent management of wage outcomes in the public sector has resulted in wage outcomes that are on average one percentage point lower than the Australian average over the first two years of this four year plan.

In case the importance of such an achievement is lost on some Members, I stress that the annual impact of such a saving is around \$30 million.

I can also report that over the last two years, public sector wage increases in South Australia have actually been lower than the level of wage increases in the private sector.

The Government's commitment to an efficient public sector requires a willingness to review continually all management controls and processes relating to public expenditure.

The Government acknowledges there are always areas for improvement in terms of reducing the possibility of duplication, over-expenditure or waste.

Taxpayers rightly have high expectations and so too does the Government.

The Government is therefore intent on a series of major reforms in this important area.

The Government has already commenced implementation of a major new process for managing capital works programs. A number of changes have been approved including more detailed cost estimates of major projects before final approval by Government.

The second major reform involves a program to reduce expenditure on consultants across the public sector.

Over the next two years, the Government has set a target of reducing total public sector expenditure on consultants by at least \$40 million compared to 1999-2000 expenditure.

Non-commercial sector agencies will have a target of a 20 per cent reduction over two years which together with reduced costs for asset sales should see the aggregate target of \$40 million being achieved.

The Government will monitor and report publicly at the end of each financial year on the total cost of consultants and progress towards this objective.

This process will ensure that at the end of the two years, there will be little realistic prospect of further significant savings in consulting costs.

Savings from consulting costs will be used by agencies to help fund any new initiatives in this budget and next year's budget.

Mr Speaker, I would like to encourage Members to reflect on the significant turnaround in budget results over the last six years. When this Government came to power not only was the State languishing under a crippling debt burden, but it was living beyond its means, spending far more than it received in revenues. The result of this being that the debt was growing at an alarming rate. This Government has transformed the budget result from a \$301 million deficit in 1993-94 to ongoing balances from 2000-01.

As announced in June last year, when the Government decided not to proceed with the \$100 million power bill increase, a small deficit is anticipated for 1999-2000, primarily because of the implementation costs of the Goods and Services Tax. The Government is projecting balanced budgets for the next three years.

REVENUE

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that the lease of the State's electricity assets has immediate rewards for the community through reductions in State charges.

In addition to the promised abolition of the proposed power bill increase, which was to recover an additional \$100 million from South Australian homes and businesses, this budget includes further significant reductions in the emergency services levy.

The contribution required from households and businesses towards the levy has been further reduced by nearly a quarter.

For example the levy payable for a car will drop from \$32 to \$24, and there will be no levy payable on trailers, caravans and recreational boats.

In addition eligibility for concessions will be extended for self funded retirees where both partners are self funded retirees, even if one partner does not meet the 60 year age criterion. Charities will also see a very significant reduction in their charges.

Many of these amendments to the levy reflect changes recommended by the Reference Panel constituted to examine unintended impacts of the levy.

When you take into account the remissions and concessions granted last year, which continue in this budget the total amount of relief provided in this budget is around \$52 million. Relief from the levy has been accommodated without impacting on service levels.

The Government has noted the policy of the Australian Democrats that collections from the community should be set at \$82 million and the policy of the Labor Party that it should be set somewhere between \$60 million and \$80 million.

Given the Government has set the new level at \$76 million and that both the Labor Party and the Australian Democrats supported the original legislation, the Government will watch both parties' responses with interest.

Consistent with the policy used over the last two years, the Government has announced today a 2.8 per cent increase in a range of government fees and charges. The established policy reflects the cost of delivering the services to the community.

I have already identified a number of State taxes that are to be abolished as a result of National Tax Reform. In addition to these, the implementation of the GST will require amendment to gambling tax arrangements and fuel tax subsidies.

From 1 July 2000, the Commonwealth will provide a 100 per cent rebate of excise on most forms of off-road diesel use. The availability of a full excise rebate removes the need for State subsidies for off-road diesel. These subsidies will cease from 1 July 2000. State zonal subsidies for leaded and unleaded petrol and for on-road diesel will continue.

It is important to recognise that of all the States South Australia remains third lowest in relation to state taxation revenue per capita. In fact, South Australia's per capita tax levels are 31 per cent below those for New South Wales.

EXPENDITURE

Mr Speaker, when addressing the expenditure side of the budget, I am reminded of the wonderful joys of being in opposition. I recall after last year's budget when the Government announced a 5.2 per cent real increase in spending the Government was attacked by one part of the Opposition for too large an increase in spending whilst the rest of the Opposition attacked the Government for not spending enough.

Given that this year's budget predicts total real spending staying at approximately the same level, the Government will watch the response with interest.

Whilst total spending remains the same, the fact that the lease of ETSA has reduced interest costs means that the budget includes a number of new initiatives. In particular, there is a predicted real growth of 9.3 per cent in capital outlays.

This budget allocates initial funding for a process to facilitate the building of a second gas pipeline into South Australia by the private sector. The Government believes this project is potentially one of the most significant projects we have ever seen, for the future development of the State. There is no doubt that a more competitive gas industry with more competitive gas prices is critical for the development of a more competitive electricity industry in South Australia and also for assisting the possibility of major new industries such as SAMAG's proposal to build a magnesium plant at Port Pirie.

The Government is aware of a number of significant companies interested in bidding to build or operate the pipeline.

The Premier will announce details of the process in the near future.

The Riverbank Precinct project is potentially the most exciting development project seen in South Australia for many years.

There must be few cities with a riverfront that turn their backs to that riverfront, as Adelaide does, rather than embracing it and encouraging maximum usage and enjoyment of the precinct.

Adelaide's planning over the years for this area has used trees, embankments, walls, roads and urban design to discourage movement through the precinct and enjoyment of the precinct.

The Master Plan envisages walkways, pathways and landscaping to encourage movement north/south and east/west through the precinct. It will also provide for new cafés, restaurants and commercial spaces to encourage more South Australians and visitors to use the precinct at all times but particularly during lunch times, evenings and on weekends.

This project is designated as our State's Centenary of Federation project and further funding is provided in this year's budget. Whilst the Government has already committed \$85 million to the extensions to the Adelaide Convention Centre and \$19 million to upgrade the Adelaide Festival Centre, a further allocation of \$13 million has been provided to undertake the initial stage of the precinct works. Over the coming months, the Government will consider whether it will be possible over the next two years, to undertake further stages of development of the Master Plan.

This project is an icon development for South Australia and warrants the support of all Members and the community.

This budget provides the funds to allow for work to proceed on a five year \$200 million Hospitals Plan of major redevelopments for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Lyell McEwin Health Service and the Royal Adelaide Hospital. After years of neglect under Labor Governments, this Government has taken the decision to fund these critical redevelopments. In addition, funding of \$11 million has been made available in 2000-01 to commence implementation of a new Clinical Information System linking patient records across all metropolitan public hospitals.

In addition, further funds have been allocated to:

- Provide a 12 per cent increase in payments for foster carers;
- Extra \$12 million over two years to provide community accommodation for people with disabilities and new respite programs for families;
- Extra \$4 million over two years under the HACC program to provide services to support older people residing in the community;
- Extra \$7.5 million over three years to support and extend community based services to improve mental health services;
- Additional funding of \$2 million per annum for the Illicit Drugs Strategy;
- Extra \$3 million over three years for a new blood test to assist in screening for Hepatitis C and HIV;
- Extra \$1.5 million over three years for the needle exchange program;
- Extra \$500 000 per annum to provide increased help for people with gambling problems to be allocated

from revenue already collected by the State from other gambling providers in South Australia.

Whilst the total budget for the South Australian Health Commission remains tight for next year, with an increase in spending of about 1.7 per cent it is worthwhile noting that there will be a \$143 million or 7.7 per cent increase in spending in health in the two years to 2000-01.

The Government has today announced its intention to build the Australian Science and Maths School for senior secondary students at Flinders University. This \$10.8 million project for 450 students will become a national focal point for teaching and research aimed at fostering innovation in maths and science and encouraging more students to take up careers in science.

The Government has committed \$3.8 million for the Woodend School in response to strong community demand and need for the project.

An extra \$4 million over three years will be spent to improve literacy and numeracy by including trialing assessments for year 7 students.

Funding for vocational education and training for apprentices and trainees will increase by up to \$45 million over three years.

Due to the continuing high level of youth unemployment in South Australia compared to other States, the Government has decided to restructure the payroll tax rebate scheme to target the relief at young trainees.

From the 25th of May this year, to attract the rebate, new trainees must have commenced their traineeship before their 25th birthday. In addition, the rate of the rebate will reduce from 98 per cent to 80 per cent for new trainee employment.

The Government hopes that this targeting will lead to more young people being offered jobs as trainees or apprentices.

The Government will also provide \$4.4 million over four years for the Premier's Youth Challenge which will target the development of leadership skills for young people across the State.

As a result of a Task Force established in 1999 by the Premier, needs of the Police in order to provide better service, particularly at local level, have been addressed. Among other initiatives, extra funding for Police will see an additional 113 officers trained and working by June 2001.

Provision has also been made for an additional 27 support staff within SAPOL to assist in the administration of policing activities maximising the time available for community policing. In addition, the Government has allocated \$35 million to relocate all functions occupying the Adelaide Police Station.

The Government will also spend \$44 million to finalise the Southern Expressway by the middle of next year.

In this budget, the Government commences a \$36 million program to improve country water quality and there will be further funding for the Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Plan. In addition, there will be continued work on the \$40 million Loxton Irrigation District Rehabilitation Scheme.

Mr Speaker, in all other portfolio areas there are a range of new initiatives with the following funding levels for three year programs:

- \$15 million to assist local industry restructure;
- \$3.6 million to boost the local film industry;
- \$2.1 million to increase overseas visitor numbers;
- \$6 million to tackle locust and grasshopper plagues;

- extra \$3 million for Regional Infrastructure Development Fund giving a total of \$16.5 million;
- \$3 million to improve maintenance in national parks;
- \$2.7 million for legal aid;
- \$17 million for a series of IT initiatives to bring the benefits of the Internet revolution to all South Australians;
- \$1.6 million to deliver essential services such as water and power to Aboriginal communities;
- \$6 million for sport and recreation programs including Active Club Grant Scheme;
- \$6.6 million to stimulate the minerals and energy industries;
- \$24 million to seal rural arterial roads;
- \$1.5 million to construct further overtaking lanes in regional areas.

REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr Speaker, today this Government has released its first regional statement. This statement outlines the Government's commitment to regional development by identifying its spending on regional services—a commitment which exceeds \$1 billion per annum.

The statement includes specific initiatives totalling \$40 million in the coming year. The value of these initiatives is not measured in their cost alone, but in the contribution they make to the economic prosperity of regions and the quality of life of their communities.

SUMMARY

Mr Speaker, this section of the budget speech this year has been longer than in previous years due to the number of new initiatives being implemented by Ministers.

In part, this is due to the increased flexibility in the budget brought about by the decision to lease ETSA and slash debt. Members need to remember that without that decision some of these new initiatives would not have occurred.

Two years ago the Government mapped out a bold vision for the financial and economic recovery of the State.

Tough decisions had to be taken—and they were.

South Australians were asked to make a sacrifice—and they did.

South Australian families now want to reap the rewards for their sacrifice—and they will.

This Budget is another important step in delivering the vision for the financial and economic recovery of the State.

I commend the Budget to the House.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I seek leave to have the remainder of the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of clauses

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2 provides for the bill to operate retrospectively to 1 July 2000. Until the bill is passed, expenditure is financed from appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

Clause 3 provides relevant definitions.

Clause 4 provides for the issue and application of the sums shown in the schedule to the bill. Subsection (2) makes it clear that this bill supersedes the appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

Clause 5 is designed to ensure that where Parliament has appropriated funds to an agency to enable it to carry out particular functions or duties and those functions or duties become the responsibility of another agency, the funds may be used by the responsible agency in accordance with parliament's original intentions without further appropriation.

Clause 6 provides authority for the Treasurer to issue and apply money from the Hospitals Fund for the provision of facilities in public hospitals.

Clause 7 makes it clear that appropriation authority provided by this bill is additional to authority provided in other Acts of Parliament, except, of course, in the *Supply Act*.

Clause 8 sets a limit of \$50 million on the amount which the government may borrow by way of overdraft.

Mr FOLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): In my contribution this afternoon I will dwell on the fact that this government ignores its lawful obligations of its ministers. This afternoon, we had the example of the members for Giles and for Lee, who are the Labor party representatives on the Aboriginal Lands Trust committee of the House of Assembly. Today the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs told us that she does not care about her oath of office to uphold the laws of South Australia and, in particular, the statutes under her immediate control as the minister responsible.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to clear the centre of the Chamber and retire to their seats or leave the Chamber.

Mr CLARKE: I did not realise that my speech would have such a powerful effect that ministers would want to flee from the bolts of lightning I was about to hurl at them. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs epitomises the absolute arrogance of this government. The law of this state requires not only that these annual reports be made but also that the Aboriginal Lands Trust Committee meet on a regular basis during each year. The minister's stock standard answer is that we are being paternalistic. She says that she does not intend to call the committee together because the act is under review and she is forecasting that some amendments will be made. That is all very well for the minister. However, until this parliament changes the law, she has an obligation to comply with the law. In particular, I would have thought it is important for the Premier to insist that his ministers comply with the laws that bind everyone in this state, particularly the relevant minister.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is intent on defying the laws of this parliament. The Premier has done nothing about it. This House passed a resolution unanimously condemning the minister for her failure to carry out her statutory responsibilities, yet still nothing is done—not by the minister nor by the Premier. The situation is untenable. It is untenable that a minister deliberately flouts their legal obligations and the will of this House. It is a sackable offence. The fact that this Premier thinks so lightly of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act—that it is an act not worth enforcing—brings more discredit upon him and his administration than anything else.

I want to also draw the House's attention to other examples of ministers' refusing to answer questions. For a long time, I have had a question on notice of the Minister for Tourism. Question 59 deals with the invitations extended to state members of Parliament to frequent the government's corporate facility at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre since 1 January 1994. I have had that question on notice in one form or another for over 18 months and still there has been no answer. In the Estimates Committee last year I asked the Minister for Tourism when she was going to supply an answer. She said, 'My department is too busy.' That is not good enough. I had to put another question on notice asking

the minister when I will get an answer to question 59, and I still do not have an answer as to when I might even get an answer from the minister. If in the Estimates Committee I was to ask the Minister for Tourism this year, I will no doubt get the same reply.

I readily admit that I was once invited to the corporate box at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. I got the invitation just after I asked my second question on notice about who was issued invitations and how frequently. I thought, 'That's amazing. I have done 5½ years in this place—deputy leader for three years and never been invited, then I ask a question about who has been turning up and who has the invitations—'

Mr Atkinson: Did you go?

Mr CLARKE: I certainly did.

Mr Atkinson: Who was there?

Mr CLARKE: Our esteemed leader in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Carolyn Pickles, together with other people. She told me it was the first time she had received an invitation. I said, 'You can thank me, because I put the question on notice.' What I am interested in is this: I know from times I and others have been at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, when we have paid as general members of the public, you cast your eye up to the box, and who do you see up there from time to time at all the good shows: a bevy of Liberal Party state MPs.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Not me, mate. You never see me.

Mr CLARKE: Even they draw a line; even they have standards in the cabal. I have noted there has been almost the Minister for Tourism's factional cabal on regular invitation lists at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. That is all I can put it down to, because it is anecdotal; there are people I have seen there from time to time. I do not have statistics, but I am seeking those statistics. However, the Minister for Tourism is too overworked to get this information. This is the only Minister for Tourism in Australia who has only tourism in her portfolio. In every other state a minister for tourism has other ministerial responsibilities, including the federal Minister for Tourism. After the minister gets to the office on a Monday morning—

Mr Atkinson: Reads the paper!

Mr CLARKE: —reads the paper, plots a little more amongst the Liberal party, what would she do after lunchtime? As the sole Minister for Tourism in South Australia, what would you do after lunchtime on Monday, except go to Le Mans or go to France and wave the chequered flag or try to discover the secrets of Adelaide and try to reinvent them. You could find out where the Adelaide Hills is so that you can put it in your Secrets campaign document. I would have thought that if her department was too busy, the minister herself would have ample time on her hands. In Queensland, the state for tourism, that minister has other significant responsibilities as well. It is just a joke that this minister has so little to do or is so little trusted by her colleagues that she is not given any additional responsibility. However, a question that has been on notice for over 18 months cannot be answered. If no details are available, that is slipshod administration by the department or the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. I do not believe they are slipshod; they are very successful.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: No doubt! I would suggest, as the member for Spence has suggested, that if we checked there might be a significant number of Liberal party members form the Morialta sub-branch, but that would depend on the cut off date. If they joined after a certain date, they probably would

not have got a invitation. However, provided they joined before a cut off date and were eligible to vote in the preselection ballot, they were entitled to go there, and no doubt they enjoyed it. I am glad somebody is enjoying it. I just want to know who. I am limiting it just to state members of Parliament. I do not know whether the member for Hammond has ever been invited there. I do not know whether he has ever been there. I do not know whether he is in that factional cabal. The Premier himself is not better, because I have had a question on notice, too. I have been waiting 18 months for an answer to question 61.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate and to see that considerable resources are being utilised to deal with what is going to be an extensive problem throughout the northern areas of South Australia. Because there is a fair possibility that the locust plague will enter the city of Adelaide, I think we will see considerable interest taken by all members. I do not know whether members of this House are aware that locusts have been coming into this state from Queensland and New South Wales, but they have gone as far as the Upper Eyre Peninsula, down to the Cowell area, up from Hawker, through the Mid North, through Booleroo Centre and Ororoo and across to Yunta, and obviously they will move south.

Action has already been taken in an attempt to control them. It is a difficult task and will require the cooperation of a large section of the community including landholders as well as considerable resources of government. I believe that \$6 million has been set aside, but I am afraid that it will take considerably more than that. There will be a great need for sufficient aircraft, including helicopters, and land based sprays and chemicals. It will be necessary to get permission from property owners so that there are no delays, otherwise we will face a potential disaster if crops are badly damaged or wiped out in the spring.

So, members of this House should be aware that, when people talk about this problem, they are not talking about some isolated problem to be scoffed or laughed at. We are not dealing with grasshoppers. Last year, we had grasshoppers; this year, it is locusts. I did not realise until a couple of years ago that, unfortunately, there is a considerable difference between those insects. The Plague Locust Commission has been operating out of Broken Hill and other parts of Australia with an extensive spraying program. I was told this morning that locusts are laying and hatching eggs in the pastoral country behind Burra. So, it looks as though the Riverland could also get some attention from these insects.

Another matter that I want to raise is that recently the Deputy Premier and I visited a number of areas of South Australia. That was very useful for the Deputy Premier, because he could see at first hand the number of difficulties that people are facing. The pastoral industry in the northern parts of the state is very pleased with the government's decision to transfer the Pastoral Board from the department of environment to the department of primary industries. That decision was long overdue. It has been government policy for a number of years, and I am pleased that that has now taken place. I am aware that certain sections of the bureaucracy are not particularly impressed, but so be it; they shall do as they are directed.

I look forward to the completion of that transfer because it was evident when the Premier visited the north that there was some concern about the assessment process. One of the great difficulties faced by people in a democracy—and I think

this is probably a world-wide phenomenon—is that bureaucracies take it upon themselves to make policy, and they sometimes believe that members of parliament are a jolly nuisance and get in their way, that—

Mr Clarke: You would probably have to say that bureaucrats are right on 90 per cent of occasions.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No. I disagree with the honourable member. They are fortunate in that they can stay away from the scene and do not have to account for themselves, but members of parliament do.

Mr Atkinson: They pulled your strings last night.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I don't know about that. We will debate that issue later. One section of the bureaucracy was taught a pretty good lesson in this House today about the power of the parliament over bureaucracy, and I look forward to a few more of those situations occurring. There is an urgent need—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will allow the honourable member to deal with that subject in his own time, because I am sure he is quite capable of doing that. I look forward to the contributions of the member for Ross Smith over the next 18 months to two years.

Mr Atkinson: He's been very good this week.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, it's a wonder that you didn't support his preselection if he's doing so well. I am sure that his constituents will remember that and take into account the contributions he has made, because they will be made aware of them. I look forward with great interest to this challenge and to the Liberal Party being able to play some role in this matter. Perhaps then we may be able to repay a few debts of the past. One of the signs of a democracy is that what goes around comes around. So, the power brokers may find that they have a small problem on their hands to deal with. In conclusion—

Mr Clarke: No, speak on!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have been very charitable to the honourable member. I have four minutes remaining. I think that Saturday is the anniversary of my entry into this place. I will have been here for approximately 30 years during which I have had the privilege of serving the constituents of my electorate. On most occasions, it has been an enjoyable experience, but I will own up: I have not always endeared myself to my colleagues. However, I make no apology for that, because I came to this parliament with one function in mind: to represent the constituents of my electorate. I refer to the people in the isolated parts of South Australia who are a long way from government decision-making.

I did not come here to appease the bureaucracy or my parliamentary colleagues but to work with them wherever

possible. However, at the end of the day, I was determined to stand up and be acknowledged, and I have done that. It might not have done my own self-promotion a great deal of good in this place, but I am not worried about that. I can make a living outside of here. One thing that I will not do is go cap in hand to people.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, go out and ask the electorate. You won't serve 30 years. I do not think that in the future many people will have that opportunity, because under the new electoral system which changes the boundaries every year it will be far more difficult.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think the electorate will deal with you anyway. It will be far more difficult to be able to stay here because with redistributions it will be that much more difficult to continue to build a power base. Some members have asked me about my plans. I am looking forward to making the member for Spence unhappy, because I see no reason why I should not come back here for an 11th parliament. I am fit and well and I put my trust in my constituents. I look forward to the challenges of the future.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Ask the Leader of the Opposition where he currently resides. I am happy to spread that around if he wants me to. It is Unley Park, is it not? That is a good working class area of South Australia.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, financed by the shop distributors union, the biggest contributor to the Labor Party. That's how you attempt to buy yourself a seat in parliament. We have the whole story. I look forward to the budget estimates. I have had a challenging 30 years, and I look forward to the next six years with a great deal of confidence, as I want to see this government re-elected in the best interests of all South Australians.

Motion carried.

LIQUOR LICENSING (REGULATED PREMISES) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.10 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 30 May at 2 p.m.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 23 May 2000

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

FRIENDS OF THE PARKS

21. **Mr HILL:** Will the Minister accede to the Friends of the Parks 1999 Conference request not to insist on the inclusion of her photo and message on the brochures produced for individual parks?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Following the change in ministerial portfolio responsibility on February 9, 2000, the matter is not relevant.

PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME

45. **Ms RANKINE:** What funding has been allocated in 1999-2000 to address the specialist accommodation needs of Prader-Willi Syndrome sufferers?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: People diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome are commonly eligible for services from the Intellectual Disability Services Council (IDSC), which may include accommodation services. I am advised that IDSC does currently provide some services to individuals with Prader-Willi Syndrome. In addition, the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital has a Prader Willi Syndrome Clinic as part of its outpatient services.

Although funding has not been specifically allocated for the establishment of a specialist accommodation service for people with Prader-Willi Syndrome, a proposal for such a service has been received and it remains a priority for future development funding.

METROPOLITAN/COUNTRY AREAS BOUNDARY

83-92. **Mr HILL** asked the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister representing The Treasurer, the Minister representing the Attorney-General, the Minister for Human Services, the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Urban Development, the Minister for Government Enterprises, the Minister for Education and Children's Services, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Water Resources: for each department, agency and instrumentality in the minister's portfolio, is there a boundary for administrative, service delivery or other purposes separating the metropolitan area from country areas and if so, where is that

boundary, how, when and why was the boundary established and is there a difference between the services provided and charges raised for citizens living on different sides of the boundary and, if so, what are the details?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Premier has provided the following information in response to Questions On Notice 83-92:

Late last year the government commissioned SACES to undertake a broad review of issues concerning boundaries. The report will be considered by cabinet and will be available in due course.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

93. **Ms THOMPSON:** How many times were ambulances advised to divert from the Flinders Medical Centre during October and November 1999, what was the duration of each diversion advice and how many ambulances had to transport passengers to other hospitals?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The South Australian Ambulance Service was advised that Flinders Medical Centre had activated diversion three times in October and November 1999. SA Ambulance Service records do not directly identify the cases affected by the diversion.

On 14 October 1999, ambulances were diverted for a five hour period from 9 a.m. to p.m. During this period SA Ambulance Service recorded a number of cases which continued to be transported and accepted by Flinders Medical Centre.

On 8 November 1999, ambulances were diverted for three hours and twenty minutes from 10.40 a.m. to 2 p.m. SA Ambulance also recorded a number of cases which were transported to, and accepted by Flinders Medical Centre.

On 16 November 1999, ambulances were diverted for 13 hours from 9 p.m. to 10 a.m. the next morning. SA Ambulance identified five cases which may have been diverted to RAH from the southern suburbs. They further indicate these cases were not life threatening.

ONKAPARINGA WATER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

104. **Mr HILL:** Why did not the former Minister for Environment and Heritage appoint a community representative to the Onkaparinga Water Catchment Management Board, and what business interests do board members, other than local and state government representatives, have in water allocation?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As you would be aware, members of catchment water management boards are selected on a combination of skills, knowledge and experience, which they bring singularly and collectively to a Board.

In the case of the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, the current membership has been identified as possessing the following skills:

Current Members	Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Mr Roger Goldsworthy	· Managerial skills and experience.
Mr Jeff Tate	· Knowledge and experience in Local Government within the area covered by the Board.
Ms Anita Aspinall	· Knowledge and experience in Local Government within the area covered by the Board. · Actively participates in community affairs within the area covered by the Board. · Knowledge of water resource issues in area of the Board, particularly in her position on the Environment Protection Authority.
Mr David Paschke	· Knowledge and experience in the use of water in the upper catchment. · Experience in Local Government · Actively participates in community affairs in the area of the Board.
Mr Bob McLennan	· Knowledge and experience in the management and development of water resources. · Knowledge and experience in the conservation of ecosystems. · Knowledge and experience in water quality management.
Mr Joch Bosworth	· Knowledge and experience in the management or development of water resources or other natural resources in the Board's area with particular reference to the groundwater in the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area
Mr Michael Stafford	· Knowledge and experience in the management or development of water resources or other natural resources in the Board's area · Active involvement in community affairs in the area of the Board
Ms Lynn Chamberlain	· Knowledge and experience in public and business administration. · Knowledge and experience in Local Government in the area of the Board. · Knowledge and experience of regional economic development.

In addition to the above, all of the board members, except Mr Goldsworthy, live in the board's area, and as such can be said to have knowledge of the communities in which they live.

Clearly, the board's membership does include members who are active participants in the community and as such the membership satisfies the requirements of s59(1)(a) of the Water Resources Act 1997.

It is almost inevitable that some board members will have business interests in matters related to water allocation. Statutory requirements are in place to ensure members declare any interest and also abstain from any discussion where there is any potential conflict of interest.

In the case of the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, one of the board members is a vigneron and owns a property on which grapes are grown in the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area. As such, he has extensive knowledge of the issues affecting this important industry and, through his professional association with grape growing groups, provides valuable input into water allocation planning for that area.

Two other board members have business interests that could be affected by issues relating to water allocation. One has a viticulture enterprise in the Adelaide Hills and would be affected by any move to prescribe the water resources of that area and the other has an interest in a horticulture business also in the Adelaide Hills and could be likewise affected. Both of these board members make valuable contributions to the board, not only as a result of their general input to the board's business, but as a direct result of their skills and knowledge of the communities within which they live and the businesses that they operate.

QUESTION ON NOTICE No. 61

107. **Mr CLARKE:** When will the Premier respond to Question on Notice No. 61?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The following answer was provided to the member by letter dated April 18, 2000.

. . . I wish to advise that officers within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet are currently coordinating a response to your question, and that an answer will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 25 May 2000

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PROSTITUTION) BILL

Mr ATKINSON (Spence) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, the Development Act 1993, the Industrial and Employee Relations Act 1994, the Summary Offences Act 1935, the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 and the Wrongs Act 1936. Read a first time.

Mr ATKINSON: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Our law against brothels should be changed to make the law take account of the way prostitution is now provided. My bill recognises that prostitution will always be with us. To try to eradicate it would necessitate repressive and cruel measures. As Professor Marcia Neave says:

Laws punishing prostitution-related activities do not eradicate the sale and purchase of sex; but determine the manner in which prostitution services are provided and the shape and nature of the industry.

Our law does not ban and never has banned prostitution. Our law bans brothels, leaving escort agencies free to secure three-quarters of the market for prostitution in South Australia. If you thought that prostitution was unlawful or suppressed in South Australia, I suggest you turn to page 750 of the Telstra *Yellow Pages* or page 59 of Tuesday's *Advertiser*, under the classified ad heading 'Adult relaxation services'.

I believe parliament should seek to contain prostitution by discouraging the marketing and growth of the sex trade, the treatment of women as commodities and public nuisance. I think the relationship of client and prostitute is inherently exploitative, but much worse is the employment by brothel and escort agency managers of women, girls and boys as prostitutes. This employment can be akin to slavery. Relationships between prostitutes and those who organise them resemble the master/servant relationship much more than the modern employer/employee relationship. The Millhouse, Pickles, Gilfillan and Brindal bills did not seek to change that.

It is a credit to the ministerial committee that the three prostitution bills that are now Orders of the Day: Government Business are better in that respect. Should my bill or any of the three prostitution bills become law, there will be a rush by brothel and escort agency managers to deny that their prostitutes are employees and to fiddle arrangements to characterise them as independent contractors. The managers will contrive to avoid anything that resembles a contract of employment. This should be anticipated in any reform, and prostitutes ought to be deemed to be employees. If this results in a fall in the number of prostitutes employed in escort agencies and a rise in the number of prostitutes working in partnership with each other or in cooperative arrangements, so much the better.

I served on the Social Development Committee's inquiry into prostitution, which ran from February 1995 to August 1996. Together with the member for Hartley, I issued a minority report and subsequently had a bill drafted by

Parliamentary Counsel to reflect our minority report. The bill to which I am now speaking is similar to that 1996 draft. My remarks on this bill will be drawn mainly from the minority report. I circulated the bill and the minority report to all members last week. It is easy for members canvassing the votes of social conservatives to oppose any change to the 19th century brothel laws. In doing so, these members are winking at escort services. The alternative approach of full-on prohibition of prostitution, as outlined in the Summary Offences (Prostitution) Amendment Bill, and once championed by my former parliamentary colleague Mr Stuart Leggett, does not have enough public support to sustain its enforcement, and its enactment would lead to disrespect for the rule of law.

It is easy for left-Liberals to salve their consciences by setting up a registry or licensing bureaucracy with the intention of sanitising prostitution. I do not believe the prostitution trade can be civilised or sanitised by an act of parliament, nor can its long association with other crimes such as drugs, stolen goods and intimidation be swiftly broken this way. It is wise to avoid trying to regulate the prostitution trade too closely. Attempts at close regulation or social engineering may have unintended outcomes. I think the right approach to prostitution law reform is a light legal discouragement of the trade, keeping the police involved, and serious punishment of procuring, child prostitution, undue influence, thugs and the supply of prohibited substances. It would be naive, indeed, to remove police from regulating the prostitution trade and replace them with novices such as local government officials and state public servants who do not have the official discipline and formal accountability of the police.

The main points of my bill are: abolishing the offences of keeping and managing a brothel, leasing out premises knowing that they are to be used as a brothel, receiving money in a brothel, living on the earnings of prostitution, and being on premises frequented by reputed prostitutes without lawful excuse. These offences are contained in the Summary Offences Act. Section 21 of that act provides for an offence of being on premises frequented by reputed thieves and prostitutes. More than 70 per cent of charges brought by the police against people in the prostitution trade are under section 21. I note that the member for Stuart seems to regard section 21 with some mirth, but the fact is that it is used in 70 per cent of prosecutions. In my opinion, section 21 is objectionable because it provides for a status offence which punishes people not for what they do but for who or where they are.

Another feature is the abolishment of the old offence of keeping a common bawdy house or ill-governed and disorderly house. That offence is contained in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. The bill also deletes the demeaning reference to prostitutes in section 64 of the act, although members may recall that we dealt with this matter last night in the Criminal Law Consolidation (Sexual Servitude) Amendment Bill.

Another feature of the bill is that it retains the offence of procuring a person to be a prostitute with a reasonable maximum penalty of two years imprisonment, thus graduating the penalty to fit in with child prostitution, compulsion and undue influence offences that have been reformulated in the sexual servitude amendment bill of recent and blessed memory.

This Bill introduces a simple catch-all offence of carrying on a sex business or being involved in a sex business,

punishable by a small expiable fine (not imprisonment) and applying to organisers and clients (not prostitutes). Reasonable suspicion that this offence was occurring could trigger a police search of premises for more serious offences such as child prostitution, illegal immigrants coerced into providing sexual services, drugs and stolen goods. Under my bill, a person is 'involved in a sex business' if he or she is the manager of the business or has a reasonable expectation of participating in the income or profits derived from the business or is in a position to influence or control the business.

Another feature of the bill is that it introduces a client offence with a maximum penalty of a \$750 fine expiable upon the payment of \$150. This will apply to clients who solicit in a public place or who engage in prostitution in a brothel or via an escort agency. I expect this offence to be used sparingly, but its existence should have the salutary effect of depressing the demand for commercial sexual services. Members should note that my bill repeals all offences with which prostitutes could be charged. Of all the five bills, mine is the most liberating for prostitutes themselves.

Another feature of the bill involves the banning of advertising. This ban is contained in proposed sections 30 and 31 of the Summary Offences Act. Another feature of the bill is the introduction of a provision which enables persons authorised by the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions to apply on stated grounds to a court for an order barring a person from carrying on or being involved in a sex business. One ground for a barring order would be that the person has been convicted of a criminal offence of the kind listed in clause 11 of the bill (page 6). I note that the government's bills have picked up this suggestion from the minority report.

Another feature of the bill is that it introduces into the Industrial and Employee Relations Act and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act a provision which expressly provides that an otherwise illegal contract between a brothel owner or an escort agency manager on one side and a prostitute on the other would be valid and enforceable for the purposes of these acts. I note that the government's bills have picked up these suggestions from the minority report despite their being mocked in 1996.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: By whom?

Mr ATKINSON: You, dear boy, amongst others. I'm sorry that you weren't here when I mentioned that the Brindal bills contained absolutely no provision for protecting the occupational health and safety, WorkCover or industrial relations rights of sex workers.

Another feature is introducing a nuisance provision into the Wrongs Act that would allow a neighbour to apply to the magistrates court for an injunction against a brothel or escort agency. Householders who need to take a public nuisance action to court with a view to obtaining an injunction must now approach the Supreme Court.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The costs of doing this are too heavy for most householders. If the minister listened closely, he would know that it was a change to allow householders to get an injunction at no cost or a very low cost in the magistrates court. This proposal is in the government's bill and has been lifted from the minority report. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for writing me a letter acknowledging this.

The final feature of the bill is banning bodies corporate from the trade. Incorporation is a legal privilege and companies should not be allowed to take advantage of the liberalisation of our prostitution law. Moreover, if I may invoke an idea of the German economist, Mr Karl Marx, prostitution is a trade in which it is important that the workers are not alienated from the product of their labour. Allowing companies to be involved in sex businesses accentuates such alienation—and I will illustrate this later by reference to the legalised trade in Melbourne.

I disagree with the three prostitution bills—regulation, registration and licensing—because they drag bits of law out of other acts in order to make a stew whose only unity is that each clause has something to do with prostitution. My bill deals with crimes under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act; summary offences under the Summary Offences Act; working conditions under the Industrial and Employee Relations Act; WorkCover under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act; and nuisance under the Wrongs Act. If parliament votes for the registration or the licensing bill there can be no turning back. These bills will create their own bureaucracies and constituencies that will never allow repeal or fundamental reconstruction.

As with all repeals of taboos in the postwar period, starting with pornography, the left-Liberal camp tells us that the registration or licensing bills are the last steps we need to take for freedom and social justice. In fact, for some who made representations to the Social Development Committee, the proposed bills will just be way stations on the road to prostitution as a heavily marketed form of entertainment, a conventional night out for the blokes, and a vocation for the school leaver. These people would rejoice in the shift of public values that would be achieved by the passage of the registration bill or the licensing bill rather than its immediate practical results. These bills will suit investors in big brothels, take market share away from escort agencies and force prostitutes, who want some control over their working lives, to set up shop outside the system. A Victorian writer summarising the response of the Prostitutes Collective to a year of licensed brothels in Victoria wrote (and I ask the member for Unley to listen to this):

To appreciate the nature of these changes, they can be contrasted with the old [illegal] massage parlours where management took a 'hands off' approach to illegal services and women were able to use a wide discretion in determining both services and prices. Under the new menu system all services are negotiated directly with the management before the client inspects or meets [as it is euphemistically called] the worker. All women must provide all available services to all clients who are prepared to pay the price. Needless to say, good old missionary position sex is but a memory for many workers.

After more than 10 years of legalised, licensed and zoned brothels in Victoria, more than two-thirds of prostitutes in Melbourne continue to work unlawfully.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Well, the Festival of Light says that it is the worst bill of all. So much—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: —for decriminalisation or legalisation. I agree with Professor Neave when she writes:

Many of the difficulties of the present [Victorian] law seem to spring from the view that prostitution is inevitable but that the industry must be tightly controlled and all those who sell sexual services must be segregated from the rest of the community. This approach institutionalises prostitution, reinforces male dominance and diminishes the power of people who work as prostitutes [usually

women] without affecting those who can afford to purchase land with a brothel permit and invest in large-scale prostitution.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Unley is very kind to say that there is a lot of commonsense in my proposals, interspersed with rubbish. I would be strongly opposed to any bill that swept prostitution into the industrial and commercial areas of Adelaide. If the demand for commercial sex arises in Burnside and North Adelaide, it ought to be fulfilled there, not by a trip to the poorer areas of metropolitan Adelaide.

I have no fundamental objection to a woman working alone from a home or other premises, perhaps with the help of a bloke doubling as a receptionist and bouncer. My purpose in keeping a catch-all offence of carrying on or being involved in a sex business, punishable by a maximum fine of \$750 expiable on payment of \$150, is to deny prostitution the title of a legitimate business. It will also keep the police—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Hartley asks: why do I recognise prostitution for the purposes of WorkCover? Justice: because if someone is working as a prostitute they are working and they deserve the protection of WorkCover and the Industrial and Employee Relations Act. If members vote for the licensing and registration bills, what they will be doing is giving that protection to the one-third or so of sex workers who work within the legal system but the two-thirds who work outside the legal system will be denied basic justice. That is why I support WorkCover and the Industrial and Employee Relations Act being applied to the sex industry.

Members interjecting:

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

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you for saying that it is the biggest conversion you have seen in 10 years: it is very kind of the member for Unley to say that, and I hope that he will consider supporting my bill. But I do not think so. This provision will also keep the police involved in checking the trade, which is necessary if we are to have genuine enforcement of the laws against child prostitution, undue influence and procuring by drugs and illegal immigration. If police are not given a peg on which to hang visits to brothels or escort agencies, they will leave the field altogether and leave the well meaning criminal offences unenforced.

The incentive that police need to check for the most serious offences, about which we all agree, is the prospect of a result, and that is what the catch-all offence will give them. When I visited the Touch of Class brothel in the industrial Canberra suburb of Fyshwick—with fellow Social Development Committee members—the madam was bemoaning the absence of official police visits to the premises now that registered brothels were legal. She said that all kinds of criminal activities were occurring in and around the brothel, including the fencing of goods, but the police were no longer interested.

My opposition to the prostitution bills is sharpest on the question of procuring a person to be a prostitute. These three prostitution bills, having decided that prostitution should be a legitimate business, would put few if any obstacles in the way of recruitment. I think it is undesirable that people be recruited to the trade and I propose the retention of the procuring offence.

It does not punish the prostitutes themselves. It should carry, as it does now, a heavy maximum fine and the

possibility of imprisonment. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that under the current prostitution laws only one person has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment in South Australia in the past 10 years, and possibly much longer.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal: Entrapment is also—

Mr ATKINSON: Entrapment is not illegal because the minister will recall that a few years ago there was a government bill to overcome the effect of the High Court decision in Ridgeway to allow entrapment in controlled circumstances, and indeed the Attorney-General is required to report to this House annually on how many and what kind of entrapment operations he authorised. The member for Unley is just wrong again.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the Minister for Water Resources!

Mr ATKINSON: I would much prefer the member for Unley to be right. I would like him to be right a few times, but I just had to pull him up on that one. In answer to a question I asked the minister representing the Attorney-General in 1994, parliament was told few prostitution related fines were over \$200 and the average for that year was around \$50.

Although the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others has been the subject of local debate on whether it requires the current laws we have, there can be no doubt that United Nations' policy both then and now is that procuring a person to be a prostitute ought to be a criminal offence.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: And I thank the member for Hartley for his support, although he voted differently last night. I ask members to consider my bill. Like the three prostitution bills, it deals with banning thugs from the trade, advertising, public nuisance, employment and WorkCover. Unlike those bills, it retains a light legal discouragement of prostitution, as much as anything to keep the police involved in regulating a trade that needs policing. The bill keeps the offence of procuring a person to be a prostitute, which the three bills effectively abolish. I commend the Statutes Amendment (Prostitution) Bill to the House as the best bill on which to work in committee because it keeps open the most possibilities.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH secured the adjournment of the debate.

WOODEND SHOPPING CENTRE

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I move:

That the purchase of the Woodend shopping centre be referred to the Public Works Committee for investigation.

I understand that the government wants to block this motion on technical grounds and I expect that would be because the government does not want the expenditure of \$3.8 million on the Woodend shopping centre site to be scrutinised by the Public Works Committee. That is an indictment of the government and its desire to run away from accountability. Because of the government's position, I must therefore begin by establishing, in a technical sense, that the Public Works Committee is entirely the appropriate committee to investigate this matter.

The Public Works Committee has the function and power to investigate public works. Public works (as defined in the Parliamentary Committees Act) include the whole or a part

of the cost of construction of the work where that cost is to be met from money provided, or to be provided by parliament or a state instrumentality, or where the work is to be constructed by or on behalf of the Crown or a state instrumentality and so on. There is also a definition in the Parliamentary Committees Act of construction and it includes the making of improvements or other physical changes to any building or structure.

Quite clearly, with the government's proposed expenditure on the Woodend shopping centre site, the proposed refurbishment of those premises becomes, according to the definitions in the Parliamentary Committees Act, construction and therefore the proposed purchase of the refurbished premises becomes a public work. As the Premier has stated in his press release, and as was discussed in this chamber yesterday, public money is to be expended on the building and there are refurbishments to be made to that building. Quite clearly, this House of Assembly has the power under part 6 of the Parliamentary Committees Act to refer a matter such as this to the Public Works Committee for investigation.

Having covered that technical argument, I refer to the substance of the matter. A couple of weeks ago, the Premier announced that the government would be spending \$3.8 million to purchase the Woodend shopping centre site from the Hickinbotham group for use by the Woodend Primary School. It is important to note that the Woodend shopping centre site literally shares a car park with the Woodend Primary School at present. It is also relevant that the Woodend Primary School site is leased by the education department from a company with a view to the education department's eventually quitting the site and the land being returned to the private sector for housing development, a retirement village or whatever might be appropriate.

The education department enjoys a 10-year lease with options for five-year renewals times two, and that will be an important aspect when the Public Works Committee scrutinises this matter. The government has committed itself to purchasing a building which will be a small part of a primary school site that is otherwise leased. It makes nonsense in commercial terms. So, when the time comes to quit the school—and I point out that further down the track, once the current cohort of young children has grown up, it is very likely that it would be desirable to go no further with the leasing arrangement of those premises—it means that the government potentially will be left with a white elephant, a building which the government owns but which will have no practical purpose because it will not be required as part of a primary school. So, the government has offered the Hickinbotham group \$3.8 million for the site.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HANNA: The Hickinbotham group had proposed to the government that it pays \$3.95 million. There are two points in this whole deal that should particularly concern the people, the members of the House of Assembly and the Public Works Committee. I refer to the two ways in which the government has craftily tried to evade public works scrutiny.

First, it has agreed with Hickinbotham a purchase price just under the \$4 million threshold which is relevant for reference to the Public Works Committee. If any public work is to be carried out which exceeds \$4 million in value, it must be scrutinised by the Public Works Committee. Because we have a deal which falls just under that threshold, I have to move this motion in parliament for the matter to be referred

to the Public Works Committee for appropriate investigation. But there is another means by which the government has tried to deflect this whole issue from the Public Works Committee's jurisdiction. It has done that by asking Hickinbotham to complete the refurbishment and to deliver the whole package to the Education Department for the use of the Woodend Primary School. That just does not wash because the government is paying money for work to be done on a property owned by the Crown (through the Department of Education) that will be used for public purposes. It is a public work that is being carried out. In any case, the value—once you add in not only the purchase price of the land and the building but also the refurbishment and the ancillary work that is required to move the school into the building—is very likely to be verging on the \$4 million threshold.

The opposition has in its possession a valuation of the site—carried out earlier this year by an independent professional valuer—to the tune of \$1.3 million. When dealing with the Hickinbotham Group, the government blithely accepted a condition put forward by the Hickinbotham Group that it would carry out the necessary refurbishment to restore this disused shopping centre to a condition in accordance with the standards of the Education Department for use by the primary school.

It is apparent from the government's own documents that there was no adequate analysis of this \$1.5 million figure. It was accepted at face value; it was accepted blithely. Even at face value, it should have been discounted, because Hickinbotham's, in a letter to the government, stated clearly that the \$1.5 million figure was 'a realistic figure in the current inflationary pre GST period'.

Given that the government concluded this deal only in the past few weeks, it is quite obvious that the work will not be done until after 30 June this year; that means that the work will not be done in the current inflationary pre-GST period. Many people in the building industry suspect that prices and the cost of refurbishment for significant buildings like this will decline after 30 June because there has been a boom time with developers, residents, the government and others wanting to have projects completed before the GST affects prices.

Clearly the figure of \$1.5 million, blithely accepted by the government, rests entirely on a false assumption: that the work will be completed before 30 June. That will not happen and there is no way that it can happen. So you have a \$1.3 million building, the Hickinbotham group using its own figures and incorporating its own profit to add \$1.5 million to that and, even allowing for the padding in those figures, you come to \$2.8 million. That is still \$1 million short of the amount that the government is going to pay it—leaving aside the fact that the refurbishment figure is possibly double what it really should be. These are the matters that need to be investigated by the Public Works Committee.

In my discussion of the matter yesterday, when it was first raised, I said that the government has essentially given a hand-out to one of its mates, one of the major and regular donors to the Liberal Party, and that raises its own suspicions. I do not need to elaborate, because the questions that arise from that are really quite obvious. If the government has a valuation for that property which exceeds \$3.8 million, let it produce it: let it show that valuation.

In respect of the commercial value of the property, it must also be borne in mind that the only significant commercial value that the property had, apart from any benefits that Hickinbotham currently receives from the fact that there is a

child-care centre which occupies a part of the premises, is the potential it had for developing a pokies tavern on the site. It was not feasible as a shopping centre, according to Hickinbotham. The community wants a shopping centre, and it deserves one. But Hickinbotham has described the shopping centre site as a major problem—and that means a major commercial problem. That is on the Hickinbotham group's own admission. The only hope that it had of receiving any sort of decent commercial return was to allow a hotel licensee to come in and develop that place as a pokies tavern—until, of course, the government came along with its sweetheart deal.

However, there were two problems with Hickinbotham's goal to have the place developed as a pokies tavern. First, the Marion council, quite properly, rejected a planning application for that particular use. That matter was appealed by Hickinbothams, and I will not comment particularly on the chances—

Time expired.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH secured the adjournment of the debate.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: It has been drawn to the chair's attention that Notices of Motion: Other Motions No. 4 is, in fact, due to a clerical error, in the wrong position in the *Notice Paper*, being a disallowance motion, and that it should appear as Notices of Motion: Private Members Bills/ Committees/Regulations No. 20. In those circumstances, it is the chair's intention to call on that motion now.

NORTHERN ADELAIDE AND BAROSSA CATCHMENT WATER LEVY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I move:

That the levy proposal forming part of the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board initial catchment water management plan annual review 1999-2000, laid on the table of this House on 24 May 2000, be disallowed.

This is a procedural motion which is designed to bring about a debate in this place so that the government and the opposition can clarify their positions and so that the matter can be resolved here.

To cope with the complexities of the management of the state's water resources, in the face of competing demands, the Liberal government created catchment water management boards some time ago. These boards were formed to emphasise comprehensive long-range planning and coordination between local government, community groups, academic entities, state government agencies and individual catchment citizens on a regional or local level. The Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board was established in December 1998, and completed its initial catchment water management plan under the Water Resources Act 1997 in March 1998. In doing so, the board's actions were in keeping with the spirit of the act in preparing an initial plan that was limited in scope and conservative in its expenditure. The board's comprehensive catchment water management plan is nearing completion and the draft plan is undergoing its final round of public consultation. The plan reflects the community's expectations for water resource management in the catchment and seeks to ensure sustainable use of water in the catchment area.

The catchment's water resources support a \$100 million per annum horticulture industry in the northern Adelaide Plains and a \$350 million per annum viticulture industry in the Barossa Valley. The catchment is diverse in regard to its water resources, communities and issues. The board proposed a modest increase in the quantum of the land-based levy of \$272 000 from \$1.7 million to \$1.972 million. That represents for the average property an increase of less than \$2.

The Economic and Finance Committee, of which I am a member, has a responsibility to approve the levy proposal and, at its meeting yesterday, it elected not to approve the proposal. The reason for its rejection was that the committee formed the view that the increase in levy to be placed on constituents was excessive. In rejecting the levy proposal, the Economic and Finance Committee has brought about a situation in which the matter must now be resolved in this place and that is why, on a procedural basis, I have moved this motion to disallow the plan.

I expect a debate on the issue and for it to be resolved. I will, of course, vote with the government against the motion so that the plan can be allowed. I now look forward to the debate, noting that the government seeks to ensure as a matter of priority that the needs of the people in the Barossa catchment are met, that water is well managed and that a responsible outcome ensues.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I support the motion that has been moved by the member for Waite. I do so on behalf of my electors who are faced with what is an outrageous and unjustified increase in their levy when one considers how the board has allocated the money, what it has spent it on, and what it plans to spend the money on in future.

This is the third consecutive year that the Economic and Finance Committee has found it necessary to put this proposal before the parliament for debate because it has rejected it. The first occurred on 28 May 1998, the second occurred on 27 May 1999 and the third motion has been moved today, 25 May 2000. On the first two occasions the minister said that the House must approve the plan or the world would collapse and that the plan could not be implemented and no environmental works could be done. The former minister claimed that, and no doubt this minister will as well. False claims have been made that, if this levy proposal is not approved today, councils cannot put out notices and they cannot collect revenue. That is not.

This proposal came before the Economic and Finance Committee yesterday and it is before the parliament today. If it is rejected today, a new budget will be put to the committee next Wednesday and the matter can all be resolved. We are doing it now because the minister, like the previous minister, is playing games.

I want to tell members of the House what my constituents face in terms of this increase. Unlike the other two plans that have come before the Economic and Finance Committee, this plan involves a substantial increase in the levy to northern Adelaide residents—an overall 10.6 per cent average land-based levy increase in their payments. For residential users it is a 12.4 per cent increase in the levy and for rural users it is a 14.5 per cent increase in the levy. On top of the emergency services tax and the effects of the GST this increase is outrageous if it cannot be justified. From a budget of only twice the amount, the board has an approximate \$1.6 million carry-over from last financial year. This plan will result in increased levies of well over 10 per cent to my constituents.

My constituents should not have to face those increases unless it can be justified.

My concern is that, in this last financial year, roughly only half the \$4 million committed expenditure in 1999-2000 was spent on catchment works. Within that rough 'half' there is an admission that salaries, expenses and other overheads are included in that budgetary figure. The remainder will be spent on administration, planning and community education involvement. They are all necessary expenses, but surely they should not amount to half the overall budget. That to me seems outrageous.

My greater concern this year is that, in the proposed budget for the three next financial years, the proportion being spent on catchment works reduces to roughly a third of the overall budget. Some extremely worthwhile environmental work is being done in my electorate and the catchment area and certainly I encourage that; however, my concern is that so much money is being spent on what I consider to be overheads. Some are necessary but they cover roughly two-thirds of the budget. A requirement for my constituents to contribute a 13 per cent and 14.5 per cent increase in their levy comes at a very difficult time for my constituency.

It is not the case that if this proposal is rejected by the parliament that environmental works cannot proceed. It is not the case that the board disintegrates and cannot operate. As I said, a substantial cash amount is sitting in the bank and next week is not that far away in terms of approval for a revised budget. The budget cannot be justified in the context of the proportions of work that I have outlined.

I am also concerned about what seems to be happening with catchment boards generally. My local catchment board is doing work in the schools and the community and I give it credit for that. I know that other catchment boards are also doing that sort of work but a lot of money is being expended by each of these boards which, I believe, could be more efficiently spent centrally to implement even better programs that have greater impact. If you totalled all the money that the individual boards are spending on just the schools program you would have several hundred thousand dollars. In the education budget that money can go a hell of a long way to assist curriculum subjects in schools. Individual boards are undertaking work such as education of industry on the use of chemicals, and the like, which are certainly worthwhile and necessary activities. I am sure that that amounts to a lot of money that overall could be better coordinated. At the end of the day, the taxpayer is having to fork out for this.

I am disturbed at a situation where effectively we have public servants or ex-public servants working for these boards, whose salaries will be funded by this catchment water levy and who previously had responsibility for these works in the Public Service. Many of the boards are set up as separate businesses and see their role as such. They buy services from each other, and for accounting that all makes very good sense. However, the bottom line is that a lot of money is being expended and we are not getting the same amount of catchment works we should be getting for that overall budget. I ask the Parliament to reject the budget of this board because it means an unreasonable increase—10.6 per cent overall—to residents of my area and the other electorates affected, 14.5 per cent for rural residents and 12.4 per cent for residential residents. That will mean a lot of pain when you put it together with the emergency services tax impost that this government has implemented and the GST implemented by the Liberal Party. It all adds up to extra costs for residents. We have to see good value for our money.

An increase is proposed in this next financial year for all my residents, but an increase in the levy is proposed for the next two years after that as well. I am told that it is not as substantial as this one, but it is an increase nevertheless. A lot of money is being generated and we could be getting better value for that money. I want to see for my constituents better value for the money, and until I do I cannot and will not support this budget.

Mr McEWEN (Gordon): It is important for a minute to visit the Water Resources Act 1997 to understand why we find ourselves having this debate this morning. Section 95(9) of that act provides:

The Economic and Finance Committee must, after receipt of a plan—

a plan it receives from the minister—

- (a) resolve that it does not object to the levy proposal; or
- (b) resolve to suggest amendments to the levy proposal; or
- (c) resolve to object to the levy proposal.

After debate in the Economic and Finance Committee this week, in a majority vote the committee resolved to object to the levy proposal. We need to go to section 95(12), which provides:

If the Economic and Finance Committee resolves to object to the levy proposal, a copy of the plan must be laid before the House of Assembly.

That is happening right now. Subclause (13) states:

If the House of Assembly passes a resolution disallowing the levy proposal of a plan before it under section (12) the proposal ceases to have effect.

The question I pose to the minister is: what happens if the plan ceases to have effect? That is an important issue, because some misinformation has been circulated about the impact of the plan and its ceasing to have some effect, and I understand that the member for Schubert, from a quick discussion he had with me yesterday, is somewhat confused about that matter. It is important that this be resolved.

That notwithstanding, I do not support disallowing the plan, and that is because of the quantum rather than the percentage increases. The member for Taylor is quite correct in pointing out that in this water catchment plan for this year there are increases ranging from 3 per cent in some categories up to 22 per cent, the most important one being residential, where there is an increase of 12.4 per cent. However, the real issue is: an increase on what? This 12.4 per cent increase for residential properties means that the annual payment for these properties increases from \$11.82 to \$13.29, so this debate is actually about \$1.47 a year.

At the end of the day, what we are talking about is \$1.47 a year. I accept that there is a principle here and that they are increasing their collection and expenditure well above the CPI. But, in fairness to this board, I believe it came from an unrealistically low base and as a once-off I would be prepared to accept these increases, but I would put the board on notice that from now on it had better not try this stunt again. I seek leave to have a table inserted in *Hansard* setting out the levies for the three boards we dealt with yesterday: the Patawalonga, Torrens, and North Adelaide and Barossa boards.

The SPEAKER: Can you assure the House that the table is statistical?

Mr McEWEN: I give you that assurance, Mr Speaker. Leave granted.

Average land-based levy payments across land-use categories North Adelaide and Barossa				
	1999-2000	2000-2001	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$11.82	\$13.29	\$1.47	+12.4

Rural	\$24.45	\$28.00	\$3.55	+14.5
Commercial	\$45.11	\$46.51	\$1.40	+3.1
Industrial	\$81.95	\$89.49	\$7.54	+9.2
Other	\$13.00	\$15.92	\$2.92	+22.5
All Categories	\$13.72	\$15.17	\$1.45	+10.6
Average levy payments across land-use categories				
Torrens				
	1999-2000	2000-2001		
	Average	Average	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$17.62	\$18.23	\$0.51	2.9
Rural	\$25.89	\$25.98	\$0.09	0.3
Commercial	\$38.82	\$36.72	-\$2.10	-5.4
Industrial	\$68.91	\$67.08	-\$1.83	-2.7
Other	\$18.10	\$17.56	-\$0.54	-3.0
All Categories	\$19.94	\$20.12	\$0.18	0.9
Average levy payments across land-use categories				
Patawalonga				
	1999-2000	2000-2001		
	Average	Average	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$15.82	\$16.18	\$0.36	2.3
Rural	\$26.49	\$25.98	-\$0.51	-0.19
Commercial	\$30.26	\$29.45	-\$0.81	-2.7
Industrial	\$41.11	\$39.06	-\$2.05	-5.0
Other	\$10.33	\$9.38	-\$0.95	-9.2
All Categories	\$16.53	\$16.67	\$0.14	0.8

Mr McEWEN: I wish this to be incorporated in *Hansard* because it sets out that, even with these increases, the North Adelaide and Barossa board is actually still paying less in the two key categories, particularly residential, than both the Torrens and Patawalonga boards. The average payment in all categories in North Adelaide and Barossa is \$15.17 a year. The average payment in Torrens is \$20.12 a year; we approved that plan yesterday. The average payment in the Patawalonga board is \$16.67 a year, and we approved that plan yesterday.

At the end of the day, local members need to be accountable to the communities in their board areas for these increases, and that is why I understand the member for Taylor's taking exception to the increases on a percentage basis. However, I reiterate that, although as a matter of principle these increases are on the high side in the overall scheme of things, we are not dealing with significant amounts of money, and we are still dealing with a rate that is below the other two rates we approved yesterday. So, on that basis I indicate to the House that I will not support the motion to disallow the plan.

Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I strongly oppose any increase by the catchment board in this instance. The member for Gordon has pointed out that the total cost still payable by residents of the northern area is about the same as or in fact a bit less than that of most other suburbs, but that is as it should be. Our property values out in the northern suburbs are generally less than those in the Torrens and Patawalonga area. Some of the northern suburbs are among the poorest in Adelaide. This involves not only the principle of the increase above the cost of living increases but also the principle outlined by the member for Taylor of where that money is going and whether it is really needed. I say that, on the basis of the plan delivered by the catchment board, it is not delivering. Its catchment works are a reducing amount of its budget. It appears from its plan that too much is being spent on administration and producing brochures and pamphlets. It is not good enough that we have that sort of arrangement.

Many catchment works need to be undertaken in the northern suburbs. The Gawler River is crying out for urgent remedial work, and the Adelaide Plains, where work has

started, is starting to make some slow progress. There are some severe problems around the One Tree Hill area which need to be addressed very soon if there is not to be significant long term damage there, and then there are the creeks feeding into the Para River. A lot of work is being done there, and I support it; however, I do not support residents in my electorate of Napier or in the electorate of Light, where I intend to be a candidate at the next election, paying an increase of 12.4 per cent for residents and 14.4 per cent for rural areas.

The member for Gordon points out that it is a small monetary amount. But under this government we have had small monetary amounts added on at every turn. We have had a dollar here and a dollar there, and a few percentage increases here and there and now we have the GST on top of that, through which it now turns out we will pay much more than the federal government had said we would. I have to tell the member for Gordon that perhaps the people in his electorate are doing much better than the people in my electorate. The budgets of the people whom I speak to in the Gawler and Smithfield areas are very tight, particularly for families with children going to school. Every single dollar counts in those budgets. Okay, they might be able to find another dollar or two to pay it, but is that dollar or two worth it?

Is this plan of the catchment board reasonable and progressive? If it is spending only a third of its budget on catchment works, that should be investigated. We should see whether it can rejig its budget so that it spends less on pamphlets to be circulated to schools and industries and more on work to save the Gawler River and the Adelaide Plains. I hope that members in the Barossa and the northern suburbs—particularly the member for Light—will support the opposition's position in respect of this motion. Given the nature of the plan put forward by the catchment board, it is an outrageous increase.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate, because I cast the vote that enabled it to come to this House. I was most concerned that this board has failed to accede to the warnings it has received on previous occasions. The increases may be only small in monetary terms, but in percentage terms they are excessive, and that sets a very bad example for this and other boards in the future. It is a role of the Economic and Finance Committee to examine the board's operations and question its members—and that has taken place—and, where it thinks appropriate, refer the matter to this House for further debate.

After this exercise, the board should be fully aware that the parliament is taking a considerable interest in its activities. The process itself is flawed, and the committee should have more time to consider these matters. It is exceptionally important that the boards recognise that the committee will pay attention to their operations. My constituents certainly are not getting a 14 per cent increase in their income; in fact, a large percentage of them are on negative incomes.

I do not accept that these people have the right to continually jack up charges. It is the boards that set the fees, not the government. There is a lesson for this parliament. When we set up these organisations and statutory authorities, we just have to be very careful that they are properly scrutinised and that the reasons for their establishment and their methods of operation are continually placed under scrutiny by this parliament to ensure that they are fulfilling the objectives that were set out when they were established. Like the deputy leader, I am concerned that at this stage only a third of the

money will be invested in capital projects. We are aware that there was controversy early in the year about some of the activities that the board was proposing in relation to fencing dams and other activities. It seemed to me to be right over the top. I was looking forward to this report coming before the committee, and I read it very carefully.

I am somewhat disappointed that this is the third occasion that the activities of this group have been referred to the parliament. If the board does not take note of that, I would suggest that its future is not too bright. I am firmly of the view that the parliament and the committee should not have to continually refer these matters to the House for a decision. It is not the minister's fault. I say to him that, if we let this group get away with 14.6 per cent and, as the member for Gordon said, 22 per cent on houses, they will all do it around the state. There is nothing surer. They will think, 'Here's a willing cow to milk,' and they will be in it. I will certainly not support that. Long-suffering householders, rural producers and others are battling to survive without any further imposts. It may be \$2, \$3 or \$4 today, but next year it will be \$10 or \$20. That is not what this parliament is here for.

I make no apologies for casting my vote with the opposition yesterday on this matter, because I believe that the role of this parliament is to examine. I intend to support the government's line. I told the committee yesterday that I would do that. I believe this action that we have taken sends a clear message to this committee and others that they should be very cautious in the way they are spending taxpayers' money and, further, that, although the existing process is good, it needs to be improved, but that it is its role to put in place capital projects. I suggest to the committee that it ought to look at the hourly rate that some of these people are being paid, because that would be rather interesting.

I think this debate today has been a worthwhile exercise, because I have been most concerned for the rural producers represented by the member for Schubert, and I have given them the chance to have their concerns expressed in the House today.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): I am pleased to follow the member for Stuart because, although I do not always agree with him, on this occasion I substantially agree with his comments. I believe that not only this board but all the water catchment boards should take this as a wake-up call from this parliament, because I think there is a considerable amount of unrest amongst members of parliament and the community generally about the activities of the boards. This has been highlighted most acutely in the case of the Northern Adelaide Plains board. The member for Taylor referred to the increase in the levy by 10 or 12 per cent, and in some cases by 15 per cent. This is a huge increase, even though in dollar terms it is relatively low.

I refer to some other issues which relate to this board and also to the other boards. The boards need to get some messages from this parliament about the way in which they have been behaving. The point has been made by other members that a relatively small percentage of the money that the boards have collected has actually been spent on field-work: doing things to protect the water catchment. Rather, a large sum of the money appears to be going to administration, public relations or consultants. I will go through those issues.

I think it is important that the boards educate the community about better water practices and behaviour, but the process they are adopting appears to be highly wasteful. We now have seven catchment boards, each of which spends up to

25 per cent of its budget on education. Across the whole of the state, that is a large amount of money that is being spent on education. If we gave only a fraction of that to the Minister for Education and said, 'Get together a unit which will help to develop materials and educational practices in schools so that kids can learn about catchment health,' he would be able to do a much better job than seven individual authorities each producing a whole series of kits, pamphlets and processes to try to get local schoolchildren involved in the process.

When I worked in education, if a particular curriculum area had two or three staff and a small budget to work with, it was doing very well. Yet, the catchment authority that covers my electorate and the Onkaparinga area receives that sort of money just for that one catchment area. This is a huge resource which I believe is not being used properly.

If we want to get across a simple message to the community at large about how to behave in relation to water catchment, the appropriate way to do that is to pool the resources and do some television advertising, rather than producing tonnes of pamphlets—

Mr Conlon: Make some audits; tell them what to do.

Mr HILL: Make some audits; tell them what to do, as my colleague says. A much more appropriate way of doing this would be through television advertising. Recently, when I visited Sydney, some messages about water catchment health were put out by the EPA through television. In this way, the attention of the whole community was focused on some very simple messages. Through those sorts of processes, I believe we would have a much better chance of bringing about some change in behaviour. But to allow seven authorities to spend up to 25 per cent or 30 per cent of their budget on producing local education programs seems to me to be highly wasteful.

The second issue is to do with consultants. I do not know the percentage of funds that the catchment authorities are currently using on consultants—and I give notice to the minister that during the Estimates Committees I will be seeking some of this information—but it appears, as the member for Elder says, that hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent each year on paying consultants. The fact is that they are the same consultants in each case. There is a relatively small pool of consultants who deliver their services to each of the seven catchment authorities. In many cases they are providing similar advice to each catchment authority. As one officer told me the other day, the way in which a consultant works is as follows: they are given a brief by the catchment authority; they then go to the department, either DEHAA or SA Water; they ask a whole lot of questions of the professional officers in the department, tying up their time for hours and hours; they get the papers from the department; they then put the information into a computer; they turn it around and make a few recommendations; and then they give it back to the authority.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr HILL: That is the definition of 'consultant', as the member for Fisher says. They give it back to the authority and say, 'This is our advice. That will cost you a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Thank you very much.' They then do the same thing with the next authority. This is a scam and a scandal, and all the boards, I hope, will read the words of members here today and take notice. They are on notice: if they do not fix this problem, they will disappear as boards.

The third thing I say about the catchment boards is that part of the problem is that they are appointed bodies. They are not accountable to their local communities in any way at all.

When the member for Stuart, other members and I were on the select committee on water in the South-East, one of the strong recommendations which we made but which was not accepted by the government was that there should be elected representation on the boards in that area. That should be the case in relation to these boards as well. If you have on boards local representatives who are accountable to the local community, there is a fair chance that they will take more notice of what people are thinking. At the moment, the members of the boards do not have much appreciation of what locals are thinking.

The final point I make in relation to the Northern Adelaide Plains Board is to do with consultation. I note that in the transcript of the Economic and Finance Committee meeting the officer who gave evidence under questioning said that they had been through a consultation process with the local community about the change in the rates. I have in my hand page 12 of the local *News Review Messenger*; it shows an ad which takes up just less than a quarter of the page and which goes through a number of tables outlining the proposed budgets for the next three years, detailing the programming. At the bottom it states that the public are invited to make written submissions in relation to the proposed amendments. The closing date for written submissions was 10 April 2000, some five weeks later. I understand that no member of the public responded to this ad. Having looked at the visual impact of the ad and the fact that nowhere did the ad state what the individual rates would be or the percentage increase that would occur, I am not surprised that no-one responded to it.

I also note from the evidence that the officer, once again, said that consultation with the local community would be happening and that they were in the process of printing a lot of brochures to send out to the local community. I would have thought that was a bit late after the matter has been through the Economic and Finance Committee and, theoretically, had gone to parliament. It is far too late after the horse has bolted. On that basis, there is serious objection to the way in which the local community has gone about its business.

In conclusion, let all the boards that operate in this area be aware of the concerns of this parliament; let them in their next deliberations come forward with more concrete plans so that the money is spent on the ground trying to improve the environment; let the minister review the act and make alterations to the way in which the education and public relations money is used; and let them tell the consultants, 'We have had enough advice from you. Go away; we will get on with the job ourselves.'

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I will not support the disallowance, but not because I do not have sympathy with the member for Taylor as do, I suspect, the members for Schubert and Light. The increase does seem large, but mathematically it is coming off a small base. Nevertheless, it is a significant increase. I agree with many of the remarks made by other members here today. I hope that this will send a message not only to the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board but to all the boards.

In fairness to the boards, I should say that it is a pity that all government agencies are not put through the hoop in the same way, because I am sure that the government would save millions of dollars. Many of the catchment boards that have been operating for several years have come to understand that the Economic and Finance Committee will make them jump through the hoop and will look very closely at the proportion

of their funds spent on administration. We had one board a year or two ago that was funding local arts activities, and I do not believe that that is appropriate. I have nothing against the arts, but I do not believe that that should be the funding source.

It is appropriate for the minister to consider reviewing some aspects of the way in which the boards operate. One is, of course, the composition of board members. My local board (the Onkaparinga one) is operating well in terms of the ratio of on-ground works to administration costs. But we do not have a local representative on that board: the bulk of the people who pay the bulk of the money do not have any representation on the board at all, and the whole issue of the composition needs to be looked at.

The other important aspect is that the board, in drawing up its plans, should at least consult with the local member. The Onkaparinga board did that, and I thank it for its courtesy. I was able to give it some useful, friendly advice. I believe that all boards and all plans relating to members' areas should as a matter of courtesy be submitted to them in good time so that they can make a detailed analysis.

As the member for Stuart pointed out, the Economic and Finance Committee is put in a very difficult position, because we receive these plans at the midnight hour. If we refer them to parliament and parliament decides to disallow, we run the risk that the notices relating to the catchment levy will not go out with the normal council rate notice; therefore you incur an extra administration cost of a separate notice being issued at great cost. The Economic and Finance Committee is put in a very invidious position whereby we are under pressure to approve plans and proposals, even though deep down, as in this case, we have considerable reservations.

I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House, but I want to refer to one issue, albeit not the main issue today. It relates to the boards and to the whole question of the appropriate use of water. In my observation, the cost of water is far too low in terms of how it is being used and, until we get a realistic pricing of water, we will not encourage users to be efficient. We have the technology now: there is no need for people to be putting on vineyards the amount of water with which you could grow rice.

There is a small number of cowboys still in the industry, and it is a very small number. But people in the market respond to price. At the moment, water is available at too low a rate, and it is not something that an individual board can address, because it would not be too popular. It will not happen overnight, because it is a contentious political issue. I realise that: I am not that naive. If we are going to look after our precious resource of water, we have to price it accordingly. Today the issue is disallowance, and I believe that what we are doing today is giving a gentle kick up the backside to this Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Board.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Some members opposite would engage in a frontal lobotomy, I think. From my point of view, it should be a kick in the backside and a gentle reminder to other boards that this will happen to them if they go down this path. Nevertheless, as I indicated at the start, I do not support disallowance. Let us send a message, and let us hope that the boards and others heed that message.

Mr CONLON (Elder): I am not quite as gentle as the member for Fisher: I would like to give them a kick in the behind that they actually feel, and that is why I think we should disallow this levy. The member for Taylor has made

it very plain why it should be disallowed. I will comment on that briefly and I will also comment on the difficulties I have as a member of the Economic and Finance Committee concerning the operation and the scrutiny of the boards and, above all, their accountability. It is quite plain why we have difficulties with this levy. It is a rate of increase that goes beyond anything that is sustainable by any argument about CPI or the community. It is an increase that ranges between 10 and 22 per cent. It is unsustainable and argued for only because it comes from a low base—and I will address that in a minute—in comparison with others.

The other problem we have is that the board—and I stress this—is spending less than a third on what you might say is actually doing something that contributes to the water catchment areas. That is why I worry about the accountability of these boards. If it were a government department—for example, if we were silly enough to build the minister's tunnel—imagine if the budget were structured so that one-third was spent on the member for Unley's tunnel and the other two-thirds of the money was spent on telling everyone what a good tunnel it was. That is what we are faced with, in my view, with the reports and the plans of the water management authority. I hasten to point out that no-one should spend any money on the minister's tunnel, and we will not spend a lot of money telling people what a good tunnel it is: we will leave that to the member for Unley.

The problem with these things has been the scrutiny and the accountability. As the member for Fisher mentioned, each year the reports come to the Economic and Finance Committee for consideration about a week before they are supposed to go out and before bills are supposed to go out. Year after year we raise difficulties, and year after year we say, 'There are difficulties; they will improve, but you can't hold it up this year or the water boards won't have any money at all.' I have had enough of that; I have had a gutful of it. If you do not want scrutiny, abolish it: if you do want scrutiny, make it real. We believe that there are real difficulties with the accountabilities of these boards, but we are blackmailed every time we raise a problem with it in this place by being told that the work will be stopped altogether. That is exactly what the minister has been saying behind the scenes again today.

I must say that I do not hold this minister accountable. Many of the difficulties with the behaviour of these boards have come about over the past few years as a consequence of the behaviour, the arrogance and the lack of any attention by the former minister (the member for Newland), who has treated with arrogance and disdain every concern raised in the past by the Economic and Finance Committee. So, we find ourselves in the position where not only have the boards not had proper scrutiny but the minister has not been concerned with it. I am confident that the new minister, with all his shortcomings, which are manifest and varied, will do a better job than—

Mr Scalzi: Are you picking on short people?

Mr CONLON: No, Joe, I would not do that. I assume that is you, Joe; I can barely see you from here.

Mr Lewis: It depends on what they are short of!

Mr CONLON: I thank the member for Hammond for that interjection. All I have to say is that he has the market cornered in shortness all round. I want to answer the arguments of the member for Gordon, who says that this is all right because it is only bringing it up to the level in other water catchment authorities. Again, they have suffered, in my view, from a lack of scrutiny in the past and a lack of an ability to do anything realistic about their shortcomings,

because, as I said, this is the third year that I have been in this place, hearing the same argument. We have had arguments about those boards before, and the member for Gordon knows that. We had complaints about them, but we were told that we could not do anything about it. I think it is about time that we did do something about it. The people in the northern suburbs cannot sustain an increase of this magnitude and it should not be sustained.

I will close by saying this: I look forward to the contributions of the Liberal members for that area, the member for Schubert and the member for Light. I predict that what we will hear from them will be the great political 'but': 'I am opposed to this, but. . . I think the increase is too much, but. . . I would not be voting for it, but. . .' So, I look forward to hearing the great political 'but' from those members. I look forward to telling their electorates about the great political 'but'.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): This has been an interesting debate. Most of the things that I would have liked to have contributed to this debate have already been said. I would like to make the point—and several members have suggested it—that this should be a wake-up call to these catchment boards that are still proliferating around the state under the Water Resources Act 1997. I have expressed my opinion of that act and these boards plenty of times in this place. I think that the feeling has been general from both sides of the House. I sincerely wish that this is not just a wake-up call to boards and the way they conduct their activities, but that it is also a wake-up call to the minister.

The previous speaker, the member for Elder, said that the problems cannot be sheeted home to this particular minister, and I agree. In the short time the current minister has been handling this portfolio, I believe that he has shown considerable leadership in a wide range of areas within his portfolio, and I congratulate him for that. I certainly hope that he takes the contributions from across the broad spectrum of members here today as a wake-up call to the minister that there are serious problems, not just with the catchment boards but also with the act that sets them up and sets out their powers and what they are required to do in their community. I hope that he has a good hard look at the whole of the act and with particular reference to the catchment boards.

I agree with what the member for Kaurna said about the wastage of money on education. He made a good point. If we applied some strategies to the way we spend those moneys, we would get a lot bigger bang for the buck. I totally agree with his comments about consultants. I understand that one catchment board which is very close to my area in fact spent \$6 000 having a consultant travelling around asking the local community what they thought of the way the catchment board was performing. I would have thought that, if the catchment board was performing half as well as the community expected it to, that would have been \$6 000 well saved.

Having made these comments, the most important part of my contribution is that it is time that the minister took a long hard look at the Water Resources Act and I hope in the not too distant future bring that act back into this parliament for a serious review. I will conclude my comments there.

The SPEAKER: I call on the member for Schubert.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING (Schubert): They have all been waiting, Sir. As members would know, as the member for Schubert, which area includes the Barossa Valley, I share this board

area with the member for Taylor. This is a very serious issue for me. It was only brought to my attention 24 hours ago. I have had 24 very intense hours of discussions. I believe that the act could be said to be flawed because it does not allow us to amend the amount of the levy during this debate, and if the decision is to support the proposed increase, then the board continues to be funded. If it is not, the board will not be funded and will not be able to continue. I do not agree with my colleague, the member for Taylor—and we have had discussions—who shares this board with me. I have sought advice from the current and the previous ministers and I can only take heed of that advice. I have also noted the comments of the members for Gordon and Stuart. However, it is difficult for me to support the increase in the levy rate, particularly at this time.

Mr Koutsantonis: But!

Mr VENNING: Not but—so, I have a problem. If I cross the floor, the board will cease to operate. That is the decision that I have to make. I am assured that, even with the increase, it will be—as other members have said—the second lowest level for a catchment area in the state, bettered only by the board in the Lower South-East. However, that does not make it right. Apparently, the levy is the lowest charged by any board in any metropolitan seat in Adelaide. I note again the comments of the member for Gordon on that matter. It could be said that this board set its levy too low in the first place. I refer to a document from the minister's office, which states:

I note that the North Adelaide and Barossa Water Catchment Board was established in December 1998 and completed its initial catchment water management plan under the Water Resources Act 1997 in March 1998.

I presume that was when these levies were set. I have been advised that the biggest increase in the electorate would be \$28 in a total estate worth \$3.7 million. So, we are not talking about large amounts of money, but I agree that the principle is still there. That is the largest increase, and I put this on the record: the largest increase will be \$28 for a \$3.7 million asset. The lowest is \$1, with an average increase of \$2 per property. This is going on the record, and I will be watching with great interest to see what happens after this. These are not huge amounts but it is the principle with which I am concerned. People are paying enough in charges and levies now, and increases are most unwelcome, particularly after the good news this week relating to the emergency services levy. People in my area are rapt with the good news.

However, this is a step in the other direction. I shall again read from the document (which came from the department), and I put it on the record to show that this is the information I am using to make my decision:

The Board has proposed a modest increase in the quantum of the land-based levy of \$272 000, from \$1 700 000 to \$1 972 000. This represents, for the average property, an increase of less than \$2. To reject the levy proposal will effectively end the board.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Members say, 'You don't believe it.' However, in this place one must take advice, and I understand that this advice has come from Parliamentary Counsel. So, I will take this advice here: if it wrong it is on the record. I will not support any future increases above CPI, as other members have said—

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: I did say it last year. I remind the member for Taylor that both she and I have to work with this board and that I choose to be constructive. If there is any doubt, I wish to give them the benefit of that doubt. I have

had discussions with Minister Brindal, and that has been of assistance in reaching my decision with respect to this matter—because there are other issues in addition to this one. Minister Brindal and I both know what they are, and probably so does the member for Taylor. If we can kill three or four birds with the one stone, it would be very advantageous to do it now. Those discussions that I have had with Minister Brindal have assisted me in reaching my decision on this matter, and I look forward to his support in the future, as the local member, to address some of our concerns. As I said, Minister Brindal knows what they are and he will remember what we have discussed: I certainly will. The board at the moment—

An honourable member: Put it on the record—

Mr VENNING: That information shall remain private, because it would be of no value to place it on the record here now. I am sure that, when members of the board read this transcript, they will know what we are talking about. The board at the moment—

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: No, I want to be as charitable as I can.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr VENNING: The board at the moment does not fully enjoy the confidence of the electorate, and I feel that it is pretty poor timing to have released its water allocation plan (to which there was a pretty stormy reaction from the community), the management plan and now this—and none of those issues has been resolved. So, it is of considerable concern that the board has done that. I think we need to get out there and mend a few bridges, and this could be the start of the way back. I certainly offer the board my support and will do all I can. I do not intend to knock and to destroy.

I certainly look forward to the days ahead. No doubt, this debate today will be well read not only by members of the board but also by people in the electorate. I also sought advice last night from local government representatives, who did their work, and they were of the same opinion: this board cannot be allowed to fold, because all the work that it has done could be destroyed, and we do not want to start from square one; it would be very difficult. I want to work with the board in an open and constructive manner. As I have said, we have had three public meetings, and there will have to be a fair bit of fence mending out there in the community on the part of the board. I offer my assistance in that respect, as will, no doubt, Minister Brindal, because he has attended one of the public meetings—and we are to visit there in a couple of weeks' time.

I put the board on notice that I will be scrutinising its level of expenditure more closely in the future. It is not to become a black hole for extravagant consultancies, and so on. As has been mentioned by the member for Stuart, I was concerned to realise that only one-third of the board's expenditure is going into land projects. I would hope that it would be the other way around—two-thirds for land projects and one-third for administration. That is a concern. But I say again that I choose to be constructive and positive. The board has done some good work, and I will appreciate closer dialogue with it. As I said, I was not aware of this problem until yesterday, and a lot of this could have been averted. I am sure if we—

Mr McEwen interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VENNING: I have to say that it is in the management plan. If the member wishes to read that extensive document, he will find it in one of the central paragraphs, at page 90, '5.4 Source of Funds'. But it does not mention there the

increases as the table presented to the committee did. I did not see it there: it was not laid out in documentation such as the member for Gordon and others had during the sittings of the Economic and Finance Committee. I also would have liked to see that documentation earlier. I was not aware of it, and I have certainly had a pretty hairy 24 hours.

The board has come under some scrutiny, not only from the Economic and Finance Committee, and now from this parliament, but also from the community. No doubt, this will be picked up by local media. I would like the whole system to progress, and I ask the board to progress with caution, because I believe that it has tried to go too far too quickly. I think that it now needs to step back and regroup and take the community with it. People of the Barossa are generally conservative and careful. I suggest that the board be the same.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Most of the relevant points have been canvassed by my colleagues but I would like to make a couple of points, the first being that my constituents are sick of levies; they are sick of extra charges. They believe that they pay enough, that they struggle enough and that they do not receive value for money in relation to this levy. I understand that the increases proposed by the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Catchment Water Management Board are in the vicinity of 10 per cent to 15 per cent. But what is of most concern, in my view, is that we do not really seem to see anything coming out of that money. One third of the money collected is spent on programs and the remainder seems to be spent on the board's infrastructure. I register the concerns of my electors who are sick of having to pay levies and increased charges in a range of different areas, of which this is just one, and people are hurting. They do not want extra charges, especially when they cannot see value for money.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): The problem has arisen in consequence of our own ineptitude in drawing the legislation that establishes boards. The first thing we all should have done is ask ourselves the question who owns the rain and why would we ascribe ownership of it to anyone in one form or another after it has fallen on land, one form or another meaning, if it lands on your roof, quite clearly in my judgment, you are entitled to take as much of it before it reaches the ground as you need or believe you will need. That is for the purposes of sustaining your own life and that of your family and/or anyone else in whom you have an interest.

If it falls on your land, it is my judgment that, before it reaches streams that are more permanent than not, it too can be regarded as a property to which you have a right but not ownership, and that to get that right you should have to compete with everybody else who might want access to it. Once it has fallen on the ground, depending on the rate at which it falls, much of it will infiltrate into the soil and go below the surface into the root zone. If the rainfall incident does not follow too quickly on the heels of an earlier rainfall incident or irrigation on some land, it may not go past the root zone because the plants growing in the soil on the land will use the water.

However, once it gets past the root zone into a body of water below the surface—call it what you like, surface aquifer or watertable, it does not really matter—it becomes a resource to which those people who need it for economic purposes other than the sustenance of life for themselves, their families and their livestock should have to pay an annual amount, not related to the value of the land or anything else

but rather related to the use to which they wish to put it, bidding against all others who may wish to get access to that scarce resource, because in that situation clearly it has gone beyond the reach of any property owner. It is no longer part of what they can legitimately claim.

If it has gone to a stream that is more often than not a running stream, or if it has gone below the root zone, people who want access to it should have to bid in competition to other interests and people who want access to it for purposes of production, just like buying a resource such as fertiliser or any other material that is used in the process of production. Most water will be used for primary industry of one form or another, commonly for irrigation though not exclusively so.

Indeed, it may be used for farming fish. It may be used for a wide range of other activities—in the process of mining, for instance. It may be seen as a nuisance to someone who wishes to extract minerals in the locality and may have to be dealt with accordingly. Once it has reached the water table below the root zone of any surface crops, including vegetation of forests and the like, or trees for the purpose of producing fruit or seeds, then it is in the public domain. I believe that catchment water management boards ought to have been given some measure of responsibility for the manner in which that water resource is allocated. It ought not to be seen by land-holders as their right.

They have bought the land but not the water beneath it. They do not own the minerals. They do not own the gold, coal, gas or oil. They do not own what is there: that remains the property of the Crown, and I believe that we ought to treat water in exactly the same way. If you want access to a mineral then, one way or another, you must bid against all comers to get it. You must prove that you are capable of using it by submitting plans to the mines department after you apply for an exploration licence.

You must then convert that exploration licence in part where you find a target to a mineral claim. If there is something that is viable and economic, an application is made for that mineral claim, accompanied by the appropriate plans setting out how it will be used and indicating why it will not cause damage to the surface land itself or that of any other adjacent land-holder. You are then granted a mining lease and you can begin mining according to that plan. To my mind, the use of water for irrigation purposes, or for any other part of production, ought to be treated in the same way. We are coming to that, but slowly. We are dragging our feet as legislators because we are not providing leadership: we tend to be following public opinion.

The ideas I have heard expressed in this chamber over recent years show me that people elected here are beginning to grapple with those notions I am addressing here today. The bottom line is, however, that I do not think that anyone ought to expect to own such water in perpetuity: they should pay on an annual basis for access to it. Whilst amortised annually, perhaps the term of the licence to withdraw the water could be a longer period in order to ensure that you can invest in the necessary trees, for instance, and the necessary irrigation equipment, in order to give you a production cycle that is realistic.

But if you have, say, an eight-year tenure you have fair security and, if you are efficient, you will be able to bid in competition with everyone else to get the water you need to replace what has just expired as your right. In doing so we, as a parliament, provide the wider community with the means by which this very scarce resource can then be allocated to the most valuable outcomes in terms of dollars it will

generate as income for the gross domestic product of the state (the total productivity of what we are doing) and the jobs that will be generated in consequence.

However, if we allow people to cling to the notion that water belongs to them forever and anyone they want to leave it to, so long as they own the land above it, we are mistaken, because it will never be used in the same way as it was when early pastoralists took large tracts of land and simply refused to allow other people access to it, or used it themselves in any way which at the time was considered sensible. In consequence of their holding such large tracts of land, other people were denied the opportunity to make a far better living from a smaller area by more effectively managing and farming that land.

Our understanding of the science of farming has developed over 100 years to the point where we probably lead the world. We did not know as much then as we know now, but most certainly what we knew then was that we could not allow large tracts of land to be tied up by a small number of land-holders who simply were happy to pay shepherds to look after sheep and wandering stock. No; more intensive development was appropriate, and the same logic applies to water. We need to send that signal to the public, and boards need to be given legislative power to do that. The relevance of these remarks to the motion before us is quite simply that it is our fault as legislators.

To argue now about whether to disallow or allow the regulation is really irrelevant. We ought to be examining again the structure of the philosophy behind the establishment of catchment water boards, which are essential in the public interest unless we are to end up with a hell of a mess that destroys the value of the land and destroys the confidence of the people who could otherwise be deriving something from it for themselves and for the broader community. They are essential. It is the structure of the legislation that is wrong. It is the philosophical background underlying that structure that we did not give enough consideration to before we brought in the legislation.

The board must be allowed to continue and it must be on its head if it has set the rate too high. I do not think now we can change that. It is a pity we did not set the rate in legislation. I do not support the motion, but do support the retention of the levy.

Time expired.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): I will not take up too much time of the House. Most of what I wanted to say has already been said more than adequately by members on this side of the House and, strangely enough, by members on the government side. As the member for Elder quite rightly points out, they always have a 'but' with respect to why they will not take any action. I rise today because I am the duty Labor member for the seat of Schubert. I was recently up there, in fact last week, attending one of the Telstra round robins that they are conducting as a community consultation, with my good colleague Senator Quirke.

While I was up there I also had the pleasure of meeting the National Party candidate for Schubert, Mr David Lykke. He is a member of the Barossa District Council and he seems a very imposing person. This National Party candidate said to me, though—and I stood up for the member for Schubert—that when the going gets tough the member for Schubert does not have the bottle to stand up for his region. I said, 'No, no, no, that's not what—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to tie up his comments with the substance of the motion.

Mr CLARKE: I am coming to that, sir. Very much at the forefront of the mind of the people at that meeting was the water levy and the water catchment board. These issues were discussed there. The National Party candidate suggested to me that, when push came to shove, the member for Schubert would put aside the interests of his district in the interests of his political party. I said 'No, that is not the man I know. The member for Schubert is known down here as "the lion of Schubert", that he could almost trace his ancestry to the Lion of Judah, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie.'

Mr Venning: What a lot of nonsense.

Mr CLARKE: I was sticking up for you, Ivan. I was trying to defend your interests as a local member against the incursions of the National Party in your own seat.

Here we have a classic example of where the member for Schubert only 12 months ago said the same thing he said today in beating his breast and saying that the report, the management plan and the levy rate being struck by the water catchment board were not up to scratch. He said, 'I give you fair warning that if you do this next year, I will roll over again,' and that is what he has done two or three years in succession. He has done it again today. He has given the water catchment board fair warning, while beating his breast, about what will happen when push comes to shove in 12 months time when they again present their plans with limited time for the Economic and Finance Committee to issue its due report and to be much more critical and try to get some changes to the board's eventual plans. They will say again, 'If we do not implement it straightaway you will have to cop what we have done because we have run out of time, we will not be able to get the rate notices out, and so on, and will not collect any money.'

They know that the member for Schubert will do what he has done in the past, which is roll over, as this government has done. The simple fact of the matter is that the member for Schubert can cry wolf once too often. He can stand up for his electorate and put a bit of punch, a bit of the steel hand inside the velvet glove he wears by voting against this proposal. The board will not collapse. The work will continue, because it will have to continue, and measures will have to be found to ensure that its work will continue; and he will be sending not only this catchment board but every other catchment board the clear message that this parliament is serious and is not a Sir Humphrey Appleby parliament where the bureaucrats run us by deliberately leaving everything to the last minute and presenting us with a fait accompli. The honourable member has put a great store of faith in the present Minister for Water Resources, but he also placed a great store of faith in his immediate predecessor.

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: The member for Unley says 'No.' I am sure that the member for Newland would be only too happy to be informed that her successor had no faith in her role as Minister for Water Resources. The Minister for Water Resources (the member for Unley) will join the other 46 members of this House who were of the same opinion—sorry, 45, because the member for Newland had faith in herself. Obviously, the member for Schubert likewise had faith, because on past occasions, dealing with similar issues, the member for Schubert had his tummy tickled and was only too happy to roll over and accept whatever good grace the member for Newland dished out when she was the Minister for Water Resources.

We have also heard from the member for Schubert that he has some knowledge—a secret boys club deal or whatever—between himself and the Minister for Water Resources known only to those two which gives him faith in voting down this motion. Why does the Minister for Water Resources not share that same information with the whole House, as it is the whole House that is voting on this matter? Or, at the very least, if it is so confidential that it cannot be shared with all the elected representatives of this state, at least it should be shared with the member for Taylor, the person with whom the member for Schubert says they must work so closely together in a bipartisan fashion with respect to these issues. Why was that information not shared with the member for Taylor as well? Why was she not brought into the loop, rather than the boys club deal between the minister and the member for Schubert?

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: The minister says his door is open, and I suggest that there are a lot of spiders through that door. If the minister was so worried about this motion that he had to collar the lion of Schubert to make sure that he would not trip over, fall across the line and mistakenly vote with the opposition on this matter, equally he should also have informed the member for Taylor. In the interests of transparency he should tell this House—and I presume he will have the opportunity when he closes the debate—exactly what he has promised the member for Schubert in this matter so that we are all better informed when we come to vote on this issue.

I conclude with a simple appeal to the member for Schubert: do not disappoint me. I stood up for him against the National Party candidate. He was surrounded by a number of notables from Tanunda, locals and government officials, who all know him, and they were starting to nod some agreement with his National Party opponent, who was saying that the member for Schubert did not have the bottle to stand up for his district. But I was saying, 'No, no; that is not the man I know.' I hope that the member for Schubert does not disappoint me and make me a liar, and that he does not make me eat the words that I uttered only a week ago in his defence.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): I plead with members opposite to reconsider their position vis-a-vis the member for Ross Smith because, as a psychologist, he makes a very good member of Parliament.

I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. The House knows that I have not long been the Minister for Water Resources, and in the whole 10 years I have been a member of this place I have never underestimated the value of this institution or the committees of this parliament. I have listened, and will continue to listen, to the opinions of all people in this House, no matter how much I disagree with them.

I say from the outset that, although I do not doubt the sincerity of some of the contributions from members opposite, this House needs to be informed. I ask some of those members opposite who contribute to consider the following. The land based levy of the Northern Adelaide and Barossa Council Catchment Board 2000-2001 was tabled in this House yesterday. I will not embarrass anyone by asking how many copies of that report—which we have been debating for over an hour—were taken, because I do not believe the answer would be very many. I say to this House

in absolute honesty if people are going to come here and debate a matter let them be informed, with the documents laying on the table.

I know that the shadow minister and members of the Economic and Finance Committee can and will have a copy of that report and that they have read it. To some other members who contributed, in all honesty and probably believing what they said, I wonder whether they have examined the report.

Mr Hanna: You are sanctimonious.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Actually expecting this House to be informed in its deliberations on behalf of the people of South Australia is hardly sanctimonious! If we took notice of the sort of rubbish that he spread yesterday, then this House would be rather less informed than it should be. The member for Mitchell is an exact example of the sort of parliamentarian that perhaps this House could do well without. I once represented that seat, and it deserves better. As has been stated, the proposal—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:—appears to be, in percentage terms, a large increase; I acknowledge that. Members opposite have also admitted that, in dollar terms, it represents for the people in the electorates of the members for Taylor and Napier on average less than \$2 a week. I do not underestimate any increase. I know that some people in this state are doing it tough. I know that the members who contributed today are not those who might forget, because they live in their electorate. While we are privileged to get much more than some of our electors by dint of our service in this House, if you live in your electorate and you know they are doing it tough, they are doing it tough. However, they are not doing it any tougher than those in the electorate of the member for Kaurua, and that board charges considerably less.

I can honestly say to northern suburbs members that in the western and southern suburbs there are places where it is just a tough as it is in the north. Yet they have been asked to pay and are paying a levy per household that is considerably more in dollar terms than is paid in the Barossa. One of things I would put to this House is the quantum. At the end of this, after a 14 per cent increase, this remains the second lowest levy in the state of South Australia. The only lower one is in the South-East of the state, and that is after this.

Ms White: Is it value for money?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: That is a good question. The House acknowledges that I have not been here long as minister, and I cannot look at all things at once. I am sure that, if minister Kotz was standing here as the Minister for Water Resources, in the face of this House she would have the same open mind and be prepared to examine the issues.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As the member for Taylor knows, yesterday I listened to part of the deliberations of the Economic and Finance Committee. I regret that I could not listen to more, but I had other appointments. I am aware of some of her contributions to that debate, and I acknowledge that many of the points that she, the member for Schubert and others (including the shadow minister) have made are worth looking at—and we will look at them. I acknowledge that there are legitimate questions which need to be asked and answered.

This House passed the Water Resources Act. It now says that that act contains components, including this one, which

are before the Economic and Finance Committee, but that the committee's deliberations will have to be rushed because of a problem with time. I think that needs to be looked at, because it is not fair to the House, the Economic and Finance Committee or the boards themselves. I acknowledge that this matter needs to be examined and that we need a better system, but members and I are stuck with the system for which this House voted. This House gave me and every other member of this place this system. Therefore, it is this House, not I, that can change the system.

Mr Clarke: It's David Wotton's problem.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Ross Smith wants to apportion blame. The fact is—

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I'll get an extension.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The fact is that the House has the right to change the system, and, for the benefit of the member for Spence, I undertake to have this matter examined, because my colleagues, including members opposite, have said that the matter needs to be examined, and I happen to agree with them. So, it is the quantum on which we should concentrate here, not the quantity. I say to members—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I ask the member for Spence to consider this: while they are doing it tough and although \$2 is not easily asked for, will the same members rail if their local councils increase the rates by \$50, \$60—

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: That's good, as I will support them 100 per cent in that, because I say to members opposite—

Ms Stevens: Be consistent.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: No. I say to members opposite that the environment is important. I think all members of this House accept that there is no more important resource than water. The shadow minister has acknowledged that education is an absolutely vital part of the water debate.

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: The member for Taylor says that perhaps the mix is wrong, and the shadow minister says that perhaps the way we educate is wrong. I agree with both members, and I will look at those matters. I therefore ask members to disallow what you have before you so that you can vote the way I want. Regarding the so-called boys' club, the member for Schubert—and the member for Taylor is welcome to do the same thing—asked me about this, and I said that, if this goes through today, I will use such capacity as I have within the legislation to ensure that, next year, no levy is brought before this—

Ms White: Next year! That's what the minister said last year!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: No. I am sure that is not true, because you could have me for misleading the House. Listen. No levy that exceeds the CPI will be presented by this board before the House. In other words, no levy that exceeds the CPI will be brought by me before this House from this board.

Ms White interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: If you can find where a previous minister said that, do so. That was my undertaking to the member for Schubert, who said that this was unreasonable. He also asked me—and, again, the member for Taylor and the member for Napier can contribute to this—to look at aspects of the catchment management plan and the education

system to see whether we can do it better and get it right, which I have promised the House to do. All I can say to the house is that I acknowledge the concerns about percentage, that the quantum is not insignificant and that we can and must address value for money. I ask the House to support the government and allow this levy.

The House divided on the motion:

AYES (20)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Breuer, L. R.	Clarke, R. D.
Conlon, P. F.	De Laine, M. R.
Foley, K. O.	Geraghty, R. K.
Hanna, K.	Hill, J. D.
Hurley, A. K. (teller)	Key, S. W.
Koutsantonis, T.	Rankine, J. M.
Rann, M. D.	Snelling, J. J.
Stevens, L.	Thompson, M. G.
White, P. L.	Wright, M. J.

NOES (25)

Armitage, M. H.	Brindal, M. K.
Brokenshire, R. L.	Brown, D. C.
Buckby, M. R.	Condous, S. G.
Evans, I. F.	Gunn, G. M.
Hall, J. L.	Hamilton-Smith, M. L.
Ingerson, G. A.	Kerin, R. G.
Kotz, D. C.	Lewis, I. P.
Matthew, W. A.	Maywald, K. A.
McEwen, R. J.	Meier, E. J. (teller)
Olsen, J. W.	Penfold, E. M.
Scalzi, G.	Such, R. B.
Venning, I. H.	Williams, M. R.
Wotton, D. C.	

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Motion thus negated.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON A HEROIN REHABILITATION TRIAL

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Hamilton-Smith:

That the report be noted.

(Continued from 4 May. Page 1080.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): It is high time that this report was considered by this parliament. It has been before us for a long time now, and I am well aware that the members of that committee would like it disposed of today. I hope that, in the short amount of time available, that can occur. I have some concerns with some of the recommendations put forward, in particular, recommendation 7, that the provision of supervised injecting rooms warrants further investigation by government. I have great problems with that proceeding further.

I recognise that the report is simply putting it forward as a recommendation that it be looked at further, and I hope that the government will reject any move in that direction. I say that not only because I am personally opposed to it but also because the commonwealth government has made very clear that it believes that, in terms of international conventions and international law, injecting rooms will not be part of the agenda in this country. I hope that it will stick to that.

However, many other recommendations are very positive, and I fully acknowledge that and compliment the members of the committee for many of their recommendations. It is obvious that a lot of work has been done on this issue, and I

believe that it is important for this to be further considered by the government, because drug abuse, drug misuse, is a great problem in our society and I am one who wants to see that decreased as much as possible.

It is a great shame that so many of our young and not so young people are destroying their lives at a very rapid rate through drug abuse. I would also like to comment briefly on the minority report put forward by the member for Playford, Jack Snelling, who noted a few salient points. He says:

However, the committee did not conclude that a trial should never happen, nor did it conclude that a trial be unethical. Rather, for practical reasons, the select committee was not prepared to recommend that a heroin rehabilitation trial occur at this time.

Mr Snelling goes on to say that he has concluded that a heroin trial is unethical and therefore should never happen in this state, and he also makes a few other very salient points about heroin experimentation.

This matter needs to be considered further with so many of the recommendations that have been made. I have some problems with a few of them. That does not mean, though, that I am expressing total opposition. Certainly, all we are doing today is noting the report so that it can proceed further, and in that respect I am pleased to have had the opportunity to make a few comments.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I thank members for their contribution to this most important debate on the report of the heroin trial select committee. I think the report that has been produced by this parliament on this occasion is something of which it can be proud. The report has added something to the nation's and to the world's body of knowledge on this vexed issue.

I would like to run over some of the main points made during the course of the debate. I remind the House that the report contains a number of world-first recommendations which, if implemented, would not only be world first but would also give us an opportunity to really look at some new approaches to the heroin problem. In particular, the proposal to look at other short-term acting opioids (drugs that have similar effects to heroin but are not heroin) as alternative treatment options and as an additional weapon in our arsenal to be used in treating addicts.

I refer to the other recommendation in respect of a trial of the pharmacokinetics of heroin on the body in order to answer the questions that we still do not understand and to help us to recognise what effect this drug has on the body. That scientific trial, were it to be conducted, would again be a world first.

The response to the select committee's report and the focus of the debate has been on the issue of whether or not we should conduct a heroin trial. As has been pointed out during the course of the debate, the select committee did not rush in and say, 'We should drop everything and conduct a heroin trial tomorrow.' Rather, the committee took a sensible and balanced view that far more needed to be done immediately to address the problem of heroin abuse. There were issues of education, policing and adequately funding other treatment programs so that we do not have, as we do at present, addicted people turning up looking for treatment in, for example, methadone or some other program and being turned away because we simply do not have the resources.

However, the committee did recognise that there was a place for heroin in the range of treatments offered and that eventually it may indeed need to be one of those things that we should look at. It did not rule out use of heroin in the

future. I think that is a very important point. The media and others in their coverage of this have focused on the issue of a heroin trial, recognised that the report did not immediately recommend one tomorrow, and have said, 'We will move on.' I would encourage the media and others to look at the detail because this is not a simple issue; it needs to be addressed with great care and great consideration. I think the report does that, and it is a foundation for us to build on in the years ahead.

Around \$33 million needs to be spent if we are to be serious about implementing some of the recommendations across all portfolios. I will be interested to see what the budget has to say about this and, on behalf of the committee, I also look forward to the government's response to the trial and hope that many of the recommendations we have made are picked up and implemented.

Finally, I again thank committee members for their effort in contributing to the report and for all members who made a contribution to the debate.

Motion carried.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

APPROPRIATION 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.

RECREATIONAL GREENWAYS 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.

BEACHPORT BOAT RAMP

A petition signed by 20 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the Wattle Range Council to consider the Glens Point site for the proposed Beachport boat ramp, was presented by Mr Williams.

Petition received.

COURTS, AGE OF MAJORITY

A petition signed by 29 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House lower the age at which a person is treated as an adult in criminal courts to 17 years, was presented by the Hon. R.B. Such.

Petition received.

MOSQUITOES

A petition signed by 9 498 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ensure that resources are provided to control mosquitoes breeding in the Port Pirie and regional council areas, was presented by the Hon. R.G. Kerin.

Petition received.

LIBRARY FUNDING

Petitions signed by 5 352 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ensure government funding of public libraries is maintained, were presented by the Hons.

M.H. Armitage and D.C. Kotz, Ms Maywald and Mr McEwen.

Petitions received.

SPEED ZONES

A petition signed by 679 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House support the retention of the 40 km/h speed zone in Westbourne Park and Hawthorn and its extension throughout the City of Mitcham, was presented by Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Petition received.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Supported Residential Facilities Advisory Committee—
Report 1998-99

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

Direction to General Lessor Corporation (GLC)—
Execution of Sale Agreements—Optima Energy Pty Ltd—
Ministerial Direction.

Direction to General Lessor Corporation (GLC)—
Execution of Sale Agreements—Synergen Pty Ltd—
Ministerial Direction.

ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Reconciliation Week begins this weekend. It is a time for all of us to reflect on our history as a state and a nation and to reinforce our commitment to greater levels of understanding and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The Premier will represent the government and the people of South Australia at the major national reconciliation event, Corroboree 2000, in Sydney on Saturday. Corroboree 2000 celebrates the achievements of reconciliation and the common ground of support for reconciliation which unites Australians. The theme for Reconciliation Week this year is Sharing our Future, which focuses on the importance of making commitments to ensure that the reconciliation process continues for the coming generations.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I will represent the government at a number of important ceremonies beginning this Friday with the Journey of Healing. On an individual level, the journey to reconciliation begins in our hearts and minds and, at the community level, it is through the decisions that we make as a society. In April this year, I restated in this House the importance of recognising the injustices of the past and the need to move forward to find measures that can begin to address the hurt and the disadvantage that Aboriginal people carry as a result of past policies. Reconciliation Week should also be seen as a week of learning, as we discover more about our past, both the good and the bad. What we learn may transform our attitudes and relationships with our fellow Australians as we gain a greater understanding about our past and how it relates to the present and impinges on the future.

The National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation has prepared four draft national strategies to advance reconciliation, focusing on the need to recognise the rights of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the need to advance their economic independence, the need to address disadvantage in their communities and the need to sustain the process towards greater understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

The state government is committed to reconciliation and has been active in supporting a number of initiatives in the areas identified by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. A key advisory group, convened by the Division of State Aboriginal Affairs, monitors progress on the recommendations of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. Some examples of the progress include a recent public meeting on the separation of children, held at the Adelaide Town Hall, which attracted some 1 000 participants. The Families project in Port Augusta has been successful, and the South Australian Link-up Service is providing family tracing and counselling support. In addition, an Oral History project has begun in South Australia which gives individuals and families the ability to record their perspectives and experiences in relation to being separated from their families.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Investment Fund has been established by the Department for Human Services to support students undertaking tertiary studies. In addition, an Aboriginal Work Force Development Strategy has been prepared, as well as an Aboriginal Emotional and Social Well Being strategy. The latter includes the development of a curriculum for specialist training for health workers in this area and the provision of funding for engaging traditional healers.

The government continues to provide positive leadership in relation to economic development and independence for Aboriginal people, and over the past two years the state government has sponsored business skills programs for high school Aboriginal children. Recognising the importance of education to the reconciliation process, it is pleasing to see the results of this year's basic skills test, which showed positive signs of improvement in the numeracy and literacy skills of Aboriginal students across South Australia. These are the practical ways in which we as a community—through the democratically elected government of the state—are addressing the inequalities and results of past injustice suffered by Aboriginal people.

I invite all South Australians who share the government's commitment in this endeavour to make a particular effort during Reconciliation Week to support and promote reconciliation in their communities, workplaces and organisations. The South Australian government remains strongly committed to the promotion of reconciliation, respecting the richness of Aboriginal culture and the continuance of the journey of healing.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): I bring up the 127th report of the committee, on the State Library redevelopment, and move:

That the report be received.

This is a final report of the committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the report be published.
Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

ETHNIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Ms KEY (Hanson): My question is directed to the Minister for Youth. Why has the minister and the Premier ignored the recommendations of the assessment panel established to examine applications from councils for ethnic youth development officers? On 28 March this year, I received a written answer to my question to the Premier from October 1999 on ethnic youth development officers. In brief, the Minister for Education and Children's Services and the Minister for Youth said:

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.

My understanding is that the panel recommended offering funding to the City of Salisbury as it was the only applicant to address adequately all the selection criteria.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Youth): It is a while ago, as the shadow minister acknowledges, and I will provide her with full detail of her question. Suffice to say that my ministry, and I am sure all the other ministries in this government, just do not give away money. As the House has been informed previously (and as the shadow minister, I think, has been informed), we had some problems with the quality of the applications. There has therefore been a delay, which I do not normally find acceptable. But I say to this House: better to delay than to give out money inappropriately for programs that just simply do not reap the benefit that the government wants. As to the specific detail, I will provide the shadow minister with a considered reply.

SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg): Will the Premier outline to the House, and particularly for the benefit of the absent member for Hart, the difference between surpluses and deficits?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I would be delighted to respond to this question, and I really am disappointed that the member for Hart is not in the chamber at the moment. It is reported to me that the honourable member had a pretty rough time on the ABC this morning. The member for Hart got a little rattled during that interview. I can understand the member for Hart's consternation because he has been backgrounding the journalists now for a number of weeks, saying that the government was in tight financial circumstances and would be bringing in this very significant deficit at the end of the next financial year. This is from a guy who has not even seen the budget papers yet, but he is out there predicting what the result will be. I guess he choked on his weetbix this morning when he heard the Treasurer on radio saying it will be a balanced budget next year and in the three out years it will be a balanced budget. Having been caught, the member for Hart cast his mind around for what he could say and he said, 'Yes, but there will be a structural deficit in South Australia.' For the benefit of the member for Hart, we

do not account for structural deficits in state budgets. Most of them have come down, and to my knowledge none of them have referred to any structural deficits. That term is used in relation to the commonwealth outlays, not to the state outlays; and there is quite a difference between the two.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Senator Quirke? They would have been exchanging numbers in another way, I would guess.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It clearly demonstrates that the member for Hart and the Labor Party have done no homework and have no understanding of the budget strategy. I guess, in part, that is why when we came to government we had a recurrent deficit in this state of some \$301 million, annually spending more than we were earning. Through prudent financial management we have been able to eliminate that. When a question is put to the member of the Hart about the track record of the previous administration, his catch cry is, 'Well, I wasn't around then,' and he washes his hands of ALP ideology. But, in fact, he was a key adviser to no less than the Premier, so the member for Hart had his hands right in there on some levers from which he is now wanting to distance himself at a great rate.

Through prudent financial management we have gone from a position of a \$300 million recurrent deficit under Labor to one where we are bringing in balanced budgets for the forward. We are not mortgaging our kids' futures, as Labor did so well. Members opposite should hang their head in shame over their track record of financial mismanagement in this state. It is clear from the shadow Treasurer that they have learnt nothing and, more importantly they do nothing on the other side to equip themselves with budget strategies, alternative policy and new ideas. Time and again the Labor Party and its spokespeople contradict one another. One wants to spend, one wants to curtail; one wants to balance, the other does not. The total level of inconsistency in the Labor Party is extraordinary.

The member for Hart has also been off the starting blocks saying, 'This is a high taxing government.' Well, let us go back.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The member for Peake, this Johnny-come-lately, chimes in. He has been here for about five minutes and wants to demonstrate that he is a font of knowledge on everything. I can also understand the member for Peake's agitation, because I understand that there is a very good Liberal candidate for the new seat, and this new candidate is starting to worry the member for Peake—and he should be worried. To come back to the member for Hart's claims, if we look at the six years to the year 1999-2000, we see that there has been an increase in the revenues of government of approximately 47 per cent, but that includes gambling revenues, introduced by the former government and of which this government has been the recipient. I acknowledge that, but that measure was introduced by the former government. If you want to compare like with like, you must take that out. If you take that out, the revenue increases other than from gaming machines have been of the order of 35 per cent. What do you reckon was the increase over the last six years of the Labor administration to 1992-93? That administration increased revenue by 91 per cent. That clearly indicates—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: That clearly indicates that our track record—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Something like that; three times better. The figures clearly demonstrate that the high taxing party in this state is the Labor Party. Not only is it high taxing but also it has shown total economic mismanagement in its own performance and track record. Performance speaks a thousand words, and the Labor Party has no credibility and track record on economic management.

CRESTVIEW RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Will the Minister for Human Services inform the House what action is being taken by the Department of Human Services against Australian Retirement Homes Ltd for not attending to structural damage caused by leaking pipes in a resident's unit? My constituent, who is a resident of the Crestview Retirement Village, has had to endure severe cracking of internal and external walls to her unit for over three years. Having first complained in writing to Australian Retirement Homes in September 1999, she was told that, as a result of the leaking pipes (which have now been fixed), the soil at her unit had to dry out before additional repairs could be done in January 2000. After no action by April 2000, my constituent approached the Department of Human Services, which wrote to Australian Retirement Homes stating that legal action would be taken by the department if repairs had not commenced by 12 May 2000. As yet, no construction work has commenced on her unit, and she has heard nothing back from the department.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: It is a very serious matter to an elderly person.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is now commenting.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): If the honourable member can give me the details I will certainly take up the matter with my colleague the Minister for the Ageing, who administers this act, and I will make sure that action is taken. I can imagine the distress experienced by the people involved, particularly as in this case the honourable member's constituent is older. If there has been cracking and structural damage to the house, it is time that it was fixed by the people responsible.

ABORIGINES, YOUTH

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Further to the welcome statement made by the minister earlier this afternoon, will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs outline to the House the measures undertaken by this government in particular to further the opportunities of young Aboriginal people within our education system?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I welcome the question from the member for Heysen, because it is an exceptionally important one. As I outlined in the ministerial statement, the educational needs of young Aboriginal people in this state are a key priority for this government. Members would be aware that the government continues to monitor the educational needs of Aboriginal students and recognises the need for appropriate school curricula for them and an emphasis on providing skills for gaining future employment. The government is also expanding the role of Aboriginal people in the management and support of education in their own communities, and it

continues to work with the commonwealth government and Aboriginal communities in assisting in the improvement of employment prospects for Aboriginal people.

The success of this state's Aboriginal students was highlighted last weekend. Representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services, I had the pleasure of presenting Aboriginal students with certificates acknowledging their success in undertaking the South Australian Certificate of Education 1999. A record number of Aboriginal students successfully gained their SACE, and that in itself is an amazing achievement and one of which we are thoroughly proud. It is a fantastic achievement for the students themselves, and it is certainly a good indication that the policies of government are working and continuing to improve. Some 46 Aboriginal students from 37 schools across the state successfully completed the SACE certificate last year, including a group of students who undertook external study. A significant number of those who achieved certificates are now continuing their studies at universities and TAFE institutes, while others are undertaking traineeships.

It is important that we recognise these achievements of Aboriginal students and also give credit to their families and communities who have supported them in numerous ways and helped them to achieve these positive results. I also congratulate the South Australian Aboriginal Education Training Advisory Committee (SAAETAC), which continues to show tremendous leadership on issues relating to Aboriginal education. Obviously, the government acknowledges that we still need to work towards overcoming barriers that may exist for Aboriginal students, and the government's recently implemented Plan for Aboriginal Education in Early Childhood and Schooling—1999-2003, which focuses on numeracy and literacy, is one of the ways in which we are doing that.

I am sure that the members of this House are aware of Evelyn Scott, the Chairperson of the national Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Evelyn and I share a considerable passion for improving the literacy skills of Aboriginal students as we believe that this is the means to improve equity for Aboriginal students to become—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, sharing a passion for literacy—that's exactly what I said. This is one of those important areas where we believe that equity can be provided through literacy and other aspects of education to give Aboriginal students a truly positive future.

This year's basic skills test, to which I referred earlier, showed obvious signs of the improvement in numeracy and literacy skills of Aboriginal students across South Australia. From the moment the government began to take an interest in improving literacy in schools, I do not think that one member on this side of the House has stood up and apologised for introducing basic skills, because it is now showing just how important this program is proving to be.

In the light of the success of Aboriginal students and with Reconciliation Week commencing on Saturday, it is imperative that we highlight the important and significant achievements that are currently being attained by our indigenous students across the state. Mr Speaker, if you could have seen the faces of the students who received these certificates, you would understand that this type of support enables our young Aboriginal people to self-determine their own priorities and gain greater confidence and recognition, which is an important ingredient in the whole reconciliation process.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What measures are being taken to ensure that there is a real commitment to provide and promote indigenous language programs in schools, especially in regional areas such as Port Augusta and Ernabella?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): A number of programs are being undertaken in terms of indigenous language. I received a letter only the other day asking why indigenous language is not the preferred language being taught in these schools. The council elders decided that they wanted English to be the dominant language taught in these schools so that young Aboriginal people could compete for jobs and continue their education and also that the indigenous language and history of their tribes could be brought into these schools to enable young Aboriginal people to understand their history.

This is part of the five year Aboriginal education program on which the government and Aboriginal elders signed off last year. Under this program, Aboriginal parents will work more closely with teachers and students to ensure that the education that parents want for their children is delivered. When this program was released at the Wayville Showgrounds last year, the elders were extremely happy with the direction that the department is taking, particularly the inclusion of parents in these schools so that they can have a say in what the students learn.

This five year program will benefit all Aboriginal students. As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said earlier, one of the pleasing things to come out of the basic skills test this year is that Aboriginal students have shown a significant improvement over last year's test. In fact, from memory, they have gained an additional nine months of learning during the 12 month period: they have picked up an additional nine months worth of learning for their age—and that is a great outcome. It shows that the money that is being put into the early years strategy and targeting those young people through the basic skills test money—and the government has now put in some \$32 million—is having results. The indigenous language program is alive and well in our schools. It is working extremely well with the approval of the Aboriginal elders and I certainly look forward to the results.

PACIFIC SCHOOL GAMES

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise the House of the success of South Australian school students who recently competed in the Pacific school games?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Waite for his question and also for the encouragement that he gives to young sportsmen and sportswomen, particularly those South Australians who competed at the Pacific school games.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am not aware of his own sporting ability but he certainly encourages young people within his electorate, so that is good to see. This prominent sporting event, the Pacific school games, was held in Sydney earlier this year and it meant that people from South Australia—and some 300 young primary and secondary school students from all areas of the state competed in athletics, diving and gymnastics—were able to use the top

facilities in Sydney, some of which were at the Homebush Stadium, and were able to compete against all states. It is great to see because it is one area on which this government has particularly concentrated; that is, bringing back competition for schools and for our school students.

Members will recall that, when the Labor government was in power during the mid 1980s, it took away competition for our school students in sports. No students were allowed to compete in competitions interstate and I think that was a very sad thing. This government has brought it back and it enables young people to compete at the very top level in Australia. The large contingency from South Australia competed against students from some 50 other countries at the Homebush facilities and they acquitted themselves extremely well. In fact, they brought home some 20 medals in athletics, 18 in swimming and diving, and four in gymnastics. In addition, five students with disabilities also took part, which was good to see, and are to be congratulated on winning medals in swimming and athletics.

The financial support for the South Australian team was provided by our primary schools and secondary schools amateur sports associations, my department and also Westpac as a South Australian team sponsor and the major sponsor of the Pacific school games. Westpac contributed some \$20 000 to reduce the costs for those young people to compete. The event is an ideal introduction to the Olympic games for these students and our schools are also doing a good deal to focus the students' attention on the upcoming Olympics. Some of those activities include schools nominating students for consideration as Olympic torch escort runners, students preparing banners for displaying near the Hindmarsh Stadium as part of the Olympic football project, and students interacting with overseas teams coming to Adelaide to train prior to the Olympic games as part of the linking the world program.

The young students gain many benefits from this. As members know, as young people we all had—and probably still do have—idols in our sporting areas. When we are able to compete on the same surface as Olympic athletes not only is it a great psychological benefit and kick up to your self-esteem but so is the fact of being able to look back and say, 'I actually ran on the same track on which Olympic athletes competed.' I think it is a fantastic outcome for our young people. It is good to see them competing, and I congratulate them on the successes that they had at the Pacific school games.

HOUSING, EMERGENCY

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. What progress has been made in increasing the supply of emergency housing in the southern suburbs? Last year, as a result of varied and repeated representations about the crisis in emergency and priority housing in the south, the minister provided resources to allow the most appropriate response to be identified. Since that time people in urgent need of housing have continued to come to my office, with the trend for whole families to be homeless becoming more acute as the private sector fails to meet their needs.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): Of course, I am aware of this issue, which involves the lack of availability of crisis accommodation in the southern suburbs. I, together with several other members of this House, am a member of the southern partnership, which has been set up by the Onkaparinga council and which

has established a working party, included on which, at my request, is a key member of my personal staff whose task is to examine options. I will need to find out exactly what has been done thus far in that regard. I know that they were looking at a range of different facilities with the possibility of purchasing some of those facilities. I will get a report and bring it back to the honourable member.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Minister for Tourism outline to the House how the government's \$1 million tourism development fund has been committed to support minor infrastructure projects throughout the state?

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): I thank the member for Flinders for her question, bearing in mind that the region she represents is one of the important recipients of a number of the minor infrastructure projects that we have been able to support. Members may recall that when the budget was handed down last year money was set aside for the industry development fund. Given the growth in the tourism industry that has been developing over the past few years, it seemed to us that a great deal of catch-up was necessary, and the focus on and importance of supporting infrastructure development projects became very real and a top priority of this government.

More than \$1 million has been allocated now to what is called a minor infrastructure fund, and some quite exciting projects have resulted. In total, since this time last year, we have actually supported 37 minor infrastructure projects, and these have been managed, I think most effectively, by officers of the SATC. The general principle is that, when applications for support from this fund are received, money is usually provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis, normally in conjunction with a local government organisation or a developer. We try to work on the principle that the local communities, as well as the visitors, are indeed the beneficiaries.

In fact, just this week I have announced another four projects in which I think the House may be interested, one in particular being of great interest to the member for Flinders. That is a feasibility study into improving the supply of bore water for Venus Bay on Eyre Peninsula. That is one project where the local residents will also be a beneficiary, hopefully, when we get some good results from this project.

Another project that has been announced this week involves \$42 000 towards a new sewerage pump-out station near Mannum on the Murray River. Again, this is one of the projects that I believe will have enormous benefits for the entire community. We have also contributed \$20 000 towards the construction of a viewing platform at Cape Northumberland in the South-East, and this will be part of Mount Gambier's upcoming bicentennial celebrations, again another important project that has been able to be supported by this fund. Also, an additional \$15 000 has been spent to improve the very important railway precinct at Victor Harbor.

Projects such as this are extremely important for the general development of infrastructure projects across the state, but it is particularly important to areas of regional South Australia because, as we know, tourism is one of the fastest growing industry sectors in the world and, fortunately, it employs more people than any other industry sector in the world. I think it is great that the beneficiaries of so much of this infrastructure spending live in regional South Australia.

I will illustrate the sorts of projects that this fund has supported over the past 12 months—and many of them would

be of interest to members on the other side. For example, \$1 400 has been spent on a tourism signage program to assist at Coober Pedy. As we know, Coober Pedy is one of our very important tourism destinations in this state. It has a very significant international profile, and it is a place on which we should be encouraging a great focus. In addition, \$50 000 has been spent on the Bookmark Biosphere Interpretive Centre, again another internationally important—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think there is a point of order.

Ms HURLEY: Sir, this is a travesty of question time. Ministerial statements are available if ministers wish to go into this kind of detail. We have had four government questions in half an hour of question time.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order because of the way in which the standing orders are written. However, I remind the minister of the availability of ministerial statements. I call the minister.

The Hon. J. HALL: Thank you, sir. I am surprised—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J. HALL: —by the point of order, because I should have thought that some of these projects would be of great interest to members in the House, because they have such enormous ramifications. I have a list of major and minor infrastructure programs that have been supported. I would be very happy to supply it to any members opposite who would be interested, because some of these projects have enormous implications for future employment growth and economic development in the regions of our state.

I think it is important that we acknowledge the importance of programs and development funds such as this, because it enables local communities and local stakeholders to become involved in economic growth. The member for Flinders (as have other members) has been incredibly vigilant in her area in supporting tourism programs and tourism projects that will have great employment and economic benefits in the future.

JOINT SPIRIT

Mr De LAINE (Price): Has the Minister for Environment and Heritage been informed of claims that an overseas ship now at Port Adelaide's berth 27 discharged oil from its bilge at the anchorage and, if so, what action have the minister and the EPA taken? The opposition has been informed by the Maritime Union of Australia that it has evidence that a vessel called the *Joint Spirit* discharged oil and other waste directly into Gulf St Vincent while waiting at anchorage.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I am aware that the Australian Democrats have raised an issue in relation to allegations that a Chinese freighter has polluted the marine environment within South Australian waters. As the member for Price said, members of the MUA have raised that matter not only with the opposition but also with the EPA and, obviously, members of the Australian Democrats. I understand that that matter was raised yesterday afternoon. The EPA officer then contacted the federal authorities that deal with these incidents if they happen to occur in international or commonwealth waters. My officers, through the EPA, and the federal officers have been discussing this issue since then. My understanding, before attending question time, was that the EPA was waiting for the federal authorities to finish their investigations and was awaiting their advice.

YOUTH INITIATIVE

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Will the Minister for Youth outline a new initiative by which the South Australian government is contributing to a new—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: —youth—

The SPEAKER: Order! The chair is having difficulty hearing the member for Fisher.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Third time lucky, Sir—initiative out of Canberra?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Youth): I thank the member for Fisher for his question and his ongoing interest in this matter because—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I regret that there is only 27 minutes left.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ross Smith!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: However, an announcement—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the member for Ross Smith.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: —made last week by the federal Minister for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs was, indeed, very good news for South Australia and was a very good example of this government's practising what it preaches: working with the community and community organisations to produce good outcomes, not only for government but for the community in this state. In essence, it was a huge feather in the cap of this state. The Office of Employment and Youth and the South Australian Division of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award have been jointly awarded a \$600 000 contract to coordinate and assist youth development activities on behalf of the nation.

The submission from South Australia for a new contract drew on the experience of both organisations and on the practical experience gained in developing the Premier's Youth Challenge, about which I hope this House will hear more very shortly. The South Australian Department of Training and Employment, together with the local Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will establish a unit called Aus Youth to deliver the service. Aus Youth's services will include the development of best practice documentation, a series of national and state forums to exchange information, and the establishment of a program of corporate sponsorship for community-based youth development programs and activities.

South Australia has looked at the experience of other states in developing a youth development program and South Australia will begin its own youth development program in schools as early as 24 July this year. These youth development programs also operate in Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria, with a proposal being developed for the approval of the Northern Territory government. In South Australia the program will be aimed at all students in government, catholic and independent schools from year nine upwards; and, apart from defence-style youth development activities and those involving police, emergency services, scouts and surf-lifesaving, negotiations will also take place with conservation and arts groups regarding their involvement with youth.

Under the commonwealth contract, a small team from the Office of Employment and Youth will work with government and community organisations in each state and territory to identify the most effective youth development practices. In conclusion, can I say how pleased I am that we scored this coup with the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We are not the first state to do this; we will be the fourth. But in establishing this scheme in South Australia, as a result of our being so thorough, well-prepared and so much in concert with our local community organisations (such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme), the commonwealth has acknowledged that, while we are yet to get started, we are in fact leading the rest of the nation.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Will the Minister for Human Services agree to undertake an audit of the building structure of the Modbury Hospital? Many constituents have expressed their concerns to me that the outside brickwork around the windows of the hospital proper on the southern side has severe cracking on most floors and appears to be in danger of falling away. They are concerned for the safety of people.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): Certainly I will have the claims investigated. No-one has brought to my attention anything that suggests that the building is unsafe. Some work is underway at the Modbury Hospital at present but I will look at the claims. They do appear to me to be rather extreme if the honourable member is trying to imply that the building is unsafe. I will have those claims investigated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Local Government provide the House with an assessment of the operation of the recent local government elections under the new legislative framework?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Local Government): I appreciate the question from the member for Colton, knowing the many years of experience and continued interest that the honourable member has in that area. I have some preliminary comments from the Electoral Commission, although at this stage the full content of the review is still another 10 days or a fortnight away. To improve services, accountability and outcomes for the people of South Australia, this government undertook one of the most extensive reforms of local government ever undertaken in South Australia. I acknowledge the efforts of my colleague the Hon. Mark Brindal for his tremendous efforts in carrying through the parliament the second phase of the reform program—although, based on his comments this morning, which I understand were a slip of the tongue, I may have to reassess that accolade. In endorsing the results of the recent election, the Local Government Association stated:

Enormously successful local government elections have topped off a decade of dramatic changes for local government in South Australia.

Preliminary indications are that the conduct of the elections ran relatively smoothly, and all results were provisionally declared on 19 May. Obviously, the review that is part of the legislative framework will now be undertaken on the operation of the elections to ascertain whether any points of clarification or streamlining are required. This will be the first

review to be conducted under the new legislation. At the present time the terms of reference for that review are being drafted by the Office of Local Government and will be formed in conjunction with the Local Government Association and the Electoral Commissioner.

Members will also be aware that one of the reasons for moving to universal postal voting in local government elections was to attempt to encourage greater participation by voters. The State Electoral Commission has advised that the early estimates indicate that a statewide average of 40 per cent of eligible voters took part in the voting process.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, it is very good. This figure is up from 34 per cent in 1997, and this will be verified by the Commissioner following his detailed analysis of the elections. About 25 councils have achieved turnouts greater than 50 per cent, and this in itself is a very good result. In particular, I am sure that the member for MacKillop will be very pleased to know that the District Council of Lacedepe captured the highest turnout of voters, with some 67.7 per cent, which is excellent, and obviously shows the interest in local government elections in the district of Lacedepe.

It is particularly interesting to note that 27 per cent of council positions across the state have been taken by women, and that is without the need for a quota. I had the pleasure of attending the swearing-in of the Mayor and elected councillors of Salisbury just recently.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I do know the answers to all those questions, but in the first instance I will say that I was most impressed by the fact that 50 per cent of the elected councillors in the district of Salisbury are women, so we have an even gender base across the board, and that is excellent. It was an extremely good night, with Tony Zappia being the re-elected Mayor. I found Mayor Zappia extremely courteous; however, I am not surprised that he did not exactly send on best wishes to the member for Spence. The evening was certainly very worth while.

Provisions in the act allow for action to be taken should there be allegations of improper conflict during these elections. On the advice of the Crown Solicitor, a complaint regarding certain alleged activities involving the Adelaide City Council elections which has been received by the Electoral Commissioner has been referred on to the police. Of course, the police are now investigating this allegation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all those newly elected members and to pay a tribute publicly to those many long-serving, dedicated mayors and councillors who are not continuing their services. As we are all aware, local councils continue to play a vital part in governance across this state. We have been fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers and committed members of our community serving on our local councils.

Special thanks must also be extended to the state Electoral Commissioner (Mr Steve Tully) and his staff and, of course, the many council staff across the state who worked fairly tirelessly to ensure that these elections ran smoothly. The Local Government Association also needs to be congratulated for its efforts in improving and increasing public awareness of and participation in the local government area. The government will now work with local government to implement what is the third phase of the reform agenda, that is, a functional reform. We look forward to a continued partnership between state and local government sectors as we

move to improve services and in particular reduce costs for all South Australians.

ABORIGINAL LANDS

Ms BREUER (Giles): Given that this week is Reconciliation Week, will the Premier direct the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to convene a meeting of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Parliamentary Committee and provide reports to the Parliament as required by the legislation? The committee has not been convened by the minister since November 1996, and a report has been tabled in the parliament since 1996, and that is a statutory requirement. The minister is breaking the law by not fulfilling her statutory requirements. Section 20B of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1996 refers to the parliamentary committee and states that it must:

... provide, on or before 31 December in each year, an annual report to parliament on the work of the committee during the preceding financial year.

There was a motion in this House on Thursday 25 March 1999 condemning the minister, yet still no action has been taken.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I thank the honourable member for her question, as I recognise her interest in matters of Aboriginal concern. The parliament has already asked the questions that the member for Giles has asked and received an answer which at this time is still a quite suitable one, that is, that in the moves towards reconciliation, which I know the Labor opposition supports very strongly, today in this world we will not look at the paternalistic messages of the past.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith will contain himself.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: To that end, the Aboriginal Lands Trust implies quite a degree of paternalism. On several occasions I have advised the Labor opposition that the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act is under revision—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! It is up to the chair to make sure that the member for Ross Smith upholds the standing orders of this House. I ask that the member remain silent.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am quite sure that the member for Ross Smith also understands that it is extremely important that Aboriginal communities which have expressed their opinions along the lines of paternalism of the past have also given me instructions and directions on where they want to see this act undertaken. At present, the act is under review. I am quite happy to give the House and the member opposite who is complaining details of the developing proposal that we are looking at to amend the Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation.

We are looking forward to achieving greater autonomy for the trust itself, including the release of the trust's obligation to gain ministerial approval for many of the decisions that it makes, and the appointment of an independent auditor for financial reporting to the Corporate Affairs Commission. We are looking at increasing the focus on economic development and land management functions of the trust, more in line with a corporate style structure, following discussion and consultation with Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

Since the establishment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust in 1966, there have been a number of structural and environmental changes in the community relating to land ownership

and management. Aboriginal enterprise management and government administration have also changed, and that has had an impact on the objectives and functions of the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

As this legislation was enacted in 1966, I would be surprised if any member of the opposition who continued to proclaim support for Aboriginal communities would contest the fact that a great deal of paternalism was alive and well from 1966 onwards. We intend to change that. I assure this House that as soon as these proposals have been accepted by the Aboriginal Lands Trust we will bring an amending bill into the House.

I hope that, at that time, all members on the other side of the House will not continue to protest but support these moves which I assure them are appropriate in the light of Reconciliation Week and the many attempts we intend to make to support reconciliation in this country.

FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Will the Minister for Employment and Training detail to the House what the government is doing to support the growing food industry in South Australia?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Employment and Training): I will answer the honourable member's question in part only, because an analysis of the question will show that to go through all that this government is doing in terms of training in the food industry would require a ministerial statement. However, I will highlight a few matters.

The priority training areas for funding include: quality assurance and hygiene, exporting skills, environmental health, food business management, and occupational health and safety. There has been an increase in traineeships over the 1997-98 financial year of over 581 per cent. In 1996-97, there were 174 trainees and 144 apprentices in the food industry (a total of 318). In 1997-98, there were 2 060 trainees and 106 apprentices (a total of 2 166 or an increase of 581 per cent).

On many occasions, the Premier has informed the House of the government's encouragement of the food industry because it is vital not only for export but for the future of this state. The Premier has often told this House—indeed, I think he did so recently, and I am sure he will correct me if I am wrong—that we now lead the nation in aquaculture export. That is not bad when we consider that Tasmania had a decade's start on us. The aquaculture industry is forging ahead, and we all know about the viticulture industry, but there are other success stories.

Most notably, my colleague the Minister for Education and Children Services is to be commended for the \$31 million upgrade of the Regency Institute of TAFE, which we believe will be ready to commence programs in February 2002. That has often been referred to in this House as a leading facility, but I think the minister will join with me in acknowledging that the same sort of work done at the Adelaide Institute is on a par with and, in fact, pushes the Regency Institute. These two institutions are proud of their courses and vie for supremacy in this sector. This goes to the credit of both these institutions, because it pushes up the standard of our food and beverage industry workers. This is good news for South Australia. I note the disinterest of members opposite, but that is typical. Whenever there is good news for this state they seem—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I apologise; it is the only time this session that the member for Peake has ever managed to listen, so I acknowledge that he was listening for once.

TREASURER, DEFAMATION CASE

Mr SNELLING (Playford): My question is directed to the minister representing the Attorney-General. What has been the cost to the taxpayer of the legal defence of the Treasurer against defamation actions brought against him by the Hon. Nick Xenophon; was there any extra cost incurred in defending the member for Bragg; and from which budget line was the expenditure incurred?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I will seek a reply for the honourable member from the Attorney in another place.

PRISONS, DRUGS

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. Are you aware, Mr Speaker, it is the minister's 43rd birthday today? I am sure he will delight in celebrating the occasion by answering this important question. Will he advise the House of strategies in place to assist with drug rehabilitation in prisons?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I thank the honourable member for his question, knowing of his genuine commitment and concerns about illicit drugs and about all the social issues on which the illicit drug trade has a major impact. Of course, in the prison system there are significant opportunities enabling us to work hard on rehabilitation of people involved in drug issues. Members should recognise that approximately 70 per cent of all prisoners in the prison system have a drug or alcohol dependency—sadly, it is even higher in the women's prison, I understand—and therefore we are serious about doing what we can to address the matter of rehabilitation.

A therapeutic drug unit at the Cadell prison farm is achieving some fantastic results working with prisoners who have a drug addiction. I had the privilege of going there a couple of months ago and having a close look at the therapeutic drug unit. I saw the work being done with prisoners by the social workers and others involved in health issues related to drugs and, as I have said, some fantastic results are being achieved. There also is another initiative whereby prisoners enter into contracts in drug free cottages. They have to work hard to go through a range of rehabilitation programs before they have the opportunity of going into those drug free cottages. In addition to working with those people on rehabilitation issues and getting them away from drugs, they are also assisted when it comes to hygiene, basic living standards, nutrition and budgeting.

Often there are four of them in a cottage and they have to do all their planning, cooking, caring and sharing of the entire workload. For many of them, sadly because of the situation many of them have encountered as a young person which has taken them down the road of illicit drug use, this is the first time that they have had the opportunity of learning those real life skills. Another area on which we are working hard is Operation Challenge where first-time offenders, and obviously many of them are young, come into the prison system and undergo a strict program of being educated on a range of

fronts, including not only literacy and numeracy but also issues of harm minimisation and the impact of illicit drug use.

Of course, another positive side is the benefits that this work brings to the community. Obviously, we are very serious about ensuring that people pay for the penalty they have inflicted on the community. The people concerned have been doing a lot of work in places such as Troubridge Island and the like, and therefore, in a sense, putting money back into the community through the restoration of many government facilities.

Other issues are still being developed, and it should be recognised that we are looking strategically and holistically at how we approach the drug strategy. For instance, diversion teams are being set up by police. We have the drug action teams and, of course, we are all aware of the Premier's announcement of the establishment of the drug courts, which the Attorney is in the process of developing. These are other very important initiatives that will actually assist in getting people off drugs and stop them from becoming involved in crime. Obviously the desire of the government and the community is to see these people come back into the mainstream community and therefore being a net contributor rather than being involved in drugs.

A couple of things of major concern are the growth around Australia and the world in illicit drug use. When one considers that the illicit drug industry is actually a larger industry in dollar terms than the whole of the world's tourism industry, one can see the problems faced by governments right across the world when they try to combat drug trafficking. We all know the difficulties that we have around Australia with many ports and a large coastline.

To return to the question specifically, we also do quite a lot of work on short-term prisoners. Some prisoners come in for only a short time because of an offence they have committed, often as a result of a desperate attempt to get money in order to buy more drugs. Often we do not have the ability to work on them to the same extent as we do with those in the therapeutic drug unit who are in prison for a significant amount of time.

We could always do more, and we will always try to do more. The bottom line is that, when you look at the correctional services portfolio and the commitment of the officers, the policy direction that the Department of Correctional Services is taking is clearly integrated into the Premier's drug strategy direction. Other initiatives include the booklet that was distributed right across South Australia to educate young people and make them aware of the harms and dangers of drugs. I suggest that what we in the department are doing as our part is very good assistance.

BUDGET PAPERS

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I lay on the table the following budget papers: Budget Paper No. 1, Budget Speech 2000-2001; Budget at a Glance, 2000-2001; Budget Guide, 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 3, Estimates Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 1, Portfolio Statements 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 2, Portfolio Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 5, Capital Investment Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 6, Employment Statement 2000-2001; Budget Paper No. 7,

Regional Statement 2000-2001; Uniform Financial Information South Australia 2000-2001; and I move:

That papers Nos 2, 3 4 and 5 be published.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act for the appropriation of money from the Consolidated Account for the year ending on 30 June 2001 and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The SPEAKER: Does the Premier wish to have leave to continue his remarks?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Yes, sir.

Leave granted.

The SPEAKER: Admit the honourable Treasurer.

The Treasurer (Hon. R.I. Lucas) was admitted to the Chamber.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, two years ago, on behalf of the Government, I stood in this place and presented Members with a plan, a plan for the future. Today, I am pleased to be able to say that the plan is working.

We are buying back the future. The future of South Australia, which the previous Government did so much to throw away. Our children's future, which was being eaten up by the cost of the actions of the past, is being reclaimed.

Without decisive action we were destined to continue robbing the future to pay for the past.

That 1998 Budget outlined some very tough decisions for our State. That Budget made it clear our State could not hope to grow and prosper as long as it was weighed down by the State Bank debt and its crippling interest costs.

That Budget made it clear if we wanted to pay reasonable wage increases to police and nurses we had to raise the revenue to do so.

That Budget made it clear we could not afford the risks of operating government-owned electricity businesses in the cut throat National Electricity Market.

South Australians were asked to accept the challenge and make sacrifices to help clear up the mess of debt and crippling interest costs.

At the half way mark of this Parliamentary term, South Australians should be rightly proud of their achievements.

This Government has successfully completed the bulk of the lease of the State's electricity assets, and in keeping with the plan has used the proceeds to almost halve the State's net debt. Further lease proceeds will see further reductions in the State's debt.

Mr Speaker, the rewards of this prudent and responsible financial management have already started to flow to the State through reduced interest payments.

This Budget is a budget of cautious optimism for the future. It is a budget where gain comes from the pain and where benefits will start to flow as a result of those sacrifices.

South Australians have a right to expect to reap the rewards of their hard work and this budget is their first down payment with further benefits to be achieved in next year's budget and future budgets.

Mr Speaker, the responsibility of this Government is not limited to repairing the damage done in the past, repaying debts and funding black holes. This Government is proud of

its record in balancing the budget against the backdrop of a high standard of service delivery and a record of low taxes.

An essential condition of this balancing act is a recognition that we must live within our means and that we cannot rob the future to pay for the past.

I will now turn to a key feature of the Government's plan for the future, one which begins to buy back our future.

Lease of Electricity Assets

On the 28th of January this year, the Government received \$3.4 billion from the lease of ETSA Power and ETSA Utilities and a further \$331 million will be received in June 2000 from the disposal of Synergen and Optima. In addition, more than \$100 million of our superannuation liabilities have been accepted by the new operators.

Mr Speaker, through its asset sales program, the Government has used the net proceeds of almost \$3.7 billion to reduce net debt, reduced the annual interest burden, and reduced the exposure of the budget to fluctuating interest rates and the risks of the national electricity market.

With four increases in interest rates in the last seven months, the importance of reducing the size of the State's debt should be apparent to everyone. For example, a two per cent increase in interest rates with our previous debt would eventually mean increased interest costs of about \$150 million every year. The question for the opponents of the Government's plan is what taxes would they raise or expenditure would they cut to raise this extra \$150 million every year.

Recent events in the National Electricity Market in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia have clearly demonstrated the multi-million dollar risks of competition. In South Australia, as a result of the industrial action at Yallourn Power Station, an electricity business lost millions of dollars and possibly more than \$10 million in just two days of trading in February this year.

One of the first benefits of the ETSA lease was felt in December when Standard and Poors upgraded the State's credit rating to AA+ from AA. This was a significant achievement and a further indicator of the support for our plan from financial commentators.

Another major benefit of the ETSA lease was the ongoing net benefit to the budget as a result of the difference between interest savings and the loss of dividends from the electricity businesses. Since 1998, the Government has estimated the net benefit to be about \$100 million per year, and the Auditor-General in his 1998 report confirmed that the Government's forward estimates for the budget included this estimate.

Members will recall that critics of the Government's plan accused the Government of making false claims and in fact they claimed there would instead be a net loss to the budget.

Mr Speaker, this Budget includes an estimate by Treasury that the net benefit to the budget next year will, in fact, be \$109 million.

In each future budget, an estimate of the net benefit will be calculated. This will require an annual estimate of interest costs and the extent of dividends that a government owned business in a competitive electricity market might have been expected to earn. It is self evident that the longer the businesses are under private operation the more difficult this estimate will become.

With all the positives that the successful electricity asset lease has provided, those people who spent so much energy standing in its way should now be feeling a little embarrassed.

In case they aren't, I must add that estimates suggest that delays in progressing the lease of ETSA and the fact that it was a lease and not a sale are considered to have cost the State hundreds of millions of dollars. I ask the Members opposite to consider the impact of those delays.

For example, a further 500 million dollar reduction in state debt carries with it approximately \$35 million of savings each year in interest costs. How many more police, hospital beds, teachers or jobs could have been provided using that money?

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Mr Speaker, the South Australian economy is continuing to show solid growth, with growth estimated to be 3¾ per cent during 1999-2000 up from the 2.1 per cent for the previous year. In fact, Access Economics has estimated that our growth rate this year was the second highest of all the States.

This solid growth continues to be underpinned by household consumption expenditure, private dwelling expenditure and overseas merchandise exports.

Decreased agricultural production resulting from drought conditions in the northern Eyre Peninsula, and low world prices for traditionally exported commodities have been more than offset by strong export growth in the fish and crustaceans, road vehicles, parts and accessories, metal and metal manufactures and wine industries.

Private business investment in South Australia remains relatively high when the record for the last decade is considered, despite falling moderately in 1999-2000. Major investment projects including the Adelaide-Darwin Rail link, the Adelaide Central Plaza in Rundle Mall, Riverbank precinct redevelopment and continued development at Mawson Lakes and the Port Adelaide Waterfront are expected to maintain business investment around the levels achieved in previous years.

Employment growth in South Australia increased strongly to 2½ per cent in 1999-2000. The number of people in employment reached a record level, and the number of unemployed has fallen since mid 1998. In addition, the percentage of the population participating in the labour force has risen compared with the same time last year.

In April of this year the youth unemployment to population ratio was 7.2 per cent and this figure compares favourably to peaks of around 11 per cent under the previous Government. However, South Australia continues to have persistently higher youth unemployment than the national average.

Mr Speaker, despite the positive signs in relation to unemployment and employment levels, job creation remains a high priority for this Government.

Whilst we have seen some improvement as a result of our focus in this area, such high rates of youth unemployment remain unacceptable to this Government. This budget includes new measures to tackle youth unemployment.

South Australia continued the modest population growth experienced over recent years, with interstate migration figures again showing that the dramatic losses of five years ago have been slowed. Interstate migration losses for the year to September 1999 totalled 3000, 5000 less than that experienced in 1995 reflecting the benefits of industry attraction and continued economic growth.

The effects of interstate migration continue to be offset by overseas immigration and this budget continues the Government's commitment to the attraction and settlement of skilled migrants through the Immigration SA initiative.

Mr Speaker, the budget assumes reasonably conservative estimates of future growth in GSP and employment, estimates that are below those for the national economy.

Creating the economic environment in which those estimates can be exceeded, as occurred this year, remains the challenge for government.

COMMONWEALTH-STATE RELATIONS

Mr Speaker, the last twelve months have seen the passage of legislation through the Commonwealth Parliament for the introduction of A New Tax System. With these fundamental changes to federal taxation arrangements come significant changes to the way the States will be funded by the Commonwealth in future years.

In last year's budget I outlined proposed arrangements under the "Inter-governmental Agreement on Commonwealth-State Financial Relations." Under the agreement 1999-2000 is the last year for which the States receive financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth. From this Budget the entire proceeds of the GST will go to the States.

Changes to the GST legislation by the minor parties have forced significant amendments to the Inter-governmental Agreement since the last Budget. These changes, particularly in relation to the exemption of certain food items significantly reduced the pool of funds available to the States.

The agreement guarantees that no State will be worse off under the new arrangements by providing for supplementary funding over and above the funds received from the GST. The Commonwealth has confirmed that all States will require this additional funding in 2000-01, with South Australia expected to require funding assistance through to 2005-06. This means South Australia will not receive a positive cash benefit until 2006-07.

In addition, the timetable for abolition of a number of State taxes has been changed as a result of this reduction in the pool of funds available for distribution. Financial Institutions Duties and stamp duties on listed marketable securities will be abolished from 1 July 2001 with Debit Taxes being abolished on 1 July 2005. In the case of business stamp duties the abolition has been put on hold with possible abolition to be reviewed in 2005.

The new taxation arrangements include a requirement by the Commonwealth Government that grants to the States are reduced by Commonwealth estimates of likely savings by departments as a result of cost reductions in purchases of goods and services. In 2000-01 these savings amount to \$36 million.

This factor will mean that in most cases, relevant government fees and charges will rise by the full 10 per cent of the GST from 1 July 2000.

The total implementation costs of the GST in the non-commercial sector will be in the range of \$40-50 million. These costs must be borne by the State Government.

The new funding arrangements are predicted to eventually make the States better off, with the revenue benefits flowing from economic growth flowing directly to the States. In addition, the Commonwealth has confirmed its commitment to continuing the use of horizontal fiscal equalisation as the method of distributing the revenue pool to the States.

Whilst all this is potentially good for the State it is important to note that the new arrangements must not be allowed to dilute the significant responsibility that the Commonwealth has in ensuring that the States are adequately funded to provide services.

States will need to continue to be vigilant that the Commonwealth does not, over time, reduce the level of specific purpose payments to the States.

It will also be critical to South Australia's future that there is not a roll-back of the GST by a future Commonwealth Government. If that was to be a possible option, it would be a critical test of political will and leadership in South Australia to ensure there was strong, bipartisan opposition to such a plan which could cost South Australia tens of millions of dollars in future budgets.

BUDGET FEATURES

Whilst significant progress in reducing debt has been achieved, the Government will push forward with already announced asset sales. It will continue to make the hard decisions, like the competitive tendering of public transport routes.

The Government's commitment to funding the unfunded superannuation liability remains. Payments in the next financial year will mean that a total of \$1.25 billion will have been paid from the unfunded superannuation liability since 1994-95. Through responsible financial management we are progressively reducing the burden of superannuation that had been left for future generations.

One of the important features of the Government's budget strategy has been that the forward estimates continue to provide a structured avenue for meeting unexpected cost pressures and new policy initiatives approved by Cabinet. This budget continues that sensible planning parameter.

Mr Speaker, salaries and wages are the largest single outlay for the Government and are expected to be around \$3.1 billion next year.

As outlined in last year's budget, Treasury has estimated that moderate and reasonable wage increases for teachers, police, nurses and public servants will add an extra \$450 million to the total wages bill in 2002-03 when compared to 1998-99.

The Government's current budget strategy continues to allow for modest wage increases without altering the level or quality of services provided, unlike the budget strategy adopted in the Government's first term.

Any significant unbudgeted movement in these costs will have major impacts on service delivery or funding requirements.

The Government's new policy was strongly attacked by some critics over the last two years with claims that it would lead to a wages blow-out.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to report that all wage settlements so far have been settled within the budgeted allocations and the current strategy.

This responsible and prudent management of wage outcomes in the public sector has resulted in wage outcomes that are on average one percentage point lower than the Australian average over the first two years of this four year plan.

In case the importance of such an achievement is lost on some Members, I stress that the annual impact of such a saving is around \$30 million.

I can also report that over the last two years, public sector wage increases in South Australia have actually been lower than the level of wage increases in the private sector.

The Government's commitment to an efficient public sector requires a willingness to review continually all management controls and processes relating to public expenditure.

The Government acknowledges there are always areas for improvement in terms of reducing the possibility of duplication, over-expenditure or waste.

Taxpayers rightly have high expectations and so too does the Government.

The Government is therefore intent on a series of major reforms in this important area.

The Government has already commenced implementation of a major new process for managing capital works programs. A number of changes have been approved including more detailed cost estimates of major projects before final approval by Government.

The second major reform involves a program to reduce expenditure on consultants across the public sector.

Over the next two years, the Government has set a target of reducing total public sector expenditure on consultants by at least \$40 million compared to 1999-2000 expenditure.

Non-commercial sector agencies will have a target of a 20 per cent reduction over two years which together with reduced costs for asset sales should see the aggregate target of \$40 million being achieved.

The Government will monitor and report publicly at the end of each financial year on the total cost of consultants and progress towards this objective.

This process will ensure that at the end of the two years, there will be little realistic prospect of further significant savings in consulting costs.

Savings from consulting costs will be used by agencies to help fund any new initiatives in this budget and next year's budget.

Mr Speaker, I would like to encourage Members to reflect on the significant turnaround in budget results over the last six years. When this Government came to power not only was the State languishing under a crippling debt burden, but it was living beyond its means, spending far more than it received in revenues. The result of this being that the debt was growing at an alarming rate. This Government has transformed the budget result from a \$301 million deficit in 1993-94 to ongoing balances from 2000-01.

As announced in June last year, when the Government decided not to proceed with the \$100 million power bill increase, a small deficit is anticipated for 1999-2000, primarily because of the implementation costs of the Goods and Services Tax. The Government is projecting balanced budgets for the next three years.

REVENUE

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that the lease of the State's electricity assets has immediate rewards for the community through reductions in State charges.

In addition to the promised abolition of the proposed power bill increase, which was to recover an additional \$100 million from South Australian homes and businesses, this budget includes further significant reductions in the emergency services levy.

The contribution required from households and businesses towards the levy has been further reduced by nearly a quarter.

For example the levy payable for a car will drop from \$32 to \$24, and there will be no levy payable on trailers, caravans and recreational boats.

In addition eligibility for concessions will be extended for self funded retirees where both partners are self funded retirees, even if one partner does not meet the 60 year age criterion. Charities will also see a very significant reduction in their charges.

Many of these amendments to the levy reflect changes recommended by the Reference Panel constituted to examine unintended impacts of the levy.

When you take into account the remissions and concessions granted last year, which continue in this budget the total amount of relief provided in this budget is around \$52 million. Relief from the levy has been accommodated without impacting on service levels.

The Government has noted the policy of the Australian Democrats that collections from the community should be set at \$82 million and the policy of the Labor Party that it should be set somewhere between \$60 million and \$80 million.

Given the Government has set the new level at \$76 million and that both the Labor Party and the Australian Democrats supported the original legislation, the Government will watch both parties' responses with interest.

Consistent with the policy used over the last two years, the Government has announced today a 2.8 per cent increase in a range of government fees and charges. The established policy reflects the cost of delivering the services to the community.

I have already identified a number of State taxes that are to be abolished as a result of National Tax Reform. In addition to these, the implementation of the GST will require amendment to gambling tax arrangements and fuel tax subsidies.

From 1 July 2000, the Commonwealth will provide a 100 per cent rebate of excise on most forms of off-road diesel use. The availability of a full excise rebate removes the need for State subsidies for off-road diesel. These subsidies will cease from 1 July 2000. State zonal subsidies for leaded and unleaded petrol and for on-road diesel will continue.

It is important to recognise that of all the States South Australia remains third lowest in relation to state taxation revenue per capita. In fact, South Australia's per capita tax levels are 31 per cent below those for New South Wales.

EXPENDITURE

Mr Speaker, when addressing the expenditure side of the budget, I am reminded of the wonderful joys of being in opposition. I recall after last year's budget when the Government announced a 5.2 per cent real increase in spending the Government was attacked by one part of the Opposition for too large an increase in spending whilst the rest of the Opposition attacked the Government for not spending enough.

Given that this year's budget predicts total real spending staying at approximately the same level, the Government will watch the response with interest.

Whilst total spending remains the same, the fact that the lease of ETSA has reduced interest costs means that the budget includes a number of new initiatives. In particular, there is a predicted real growth of 9.3 per cent in capital outlays.

This budget allocates initial funding for a process to facilitate the building of a second gas pipeline into South Australia by the private sector. The Government believes this project is potentially one of the most significant projects we have ever seen, for the future development of the State. There is no doubt that a more competitive gas industry with more competitive gas prices is critical for the development of a more competitive electricity industry in South Australia and also for assisting the possibility of major new industries such as SAMAG's proposal to build a magnesium plant at Port Pirie.

The Government is aware of a number of significant companies interested in bidding to build or operate the pipeline.

The Premier will announce details of the process in the near future.

The Riverbank Precinct project is potentially the most exciting development project seen in South Australia for many years.

There must be few cities with a riverfront that turn their backs to that riverfront, as Adelaide does, rather than embracing it and encouraging maximum usage and enjoyment of the precinct.

Adelaide's planning over the years for this area has used trees, embankments, walls, roads and urban design to discourage movement through the precinct and enjoyment of the precinct.

The Master Plan envisages walkways, pathways and landscaping to encourage movement north/south and east/west through the precinct. It will also provide for new cafés, restaurants and commercial spaces to encourage more South Australians and visitors to use the precinct at all times but particularly during lunch times, evenings and on weekends.

This project is designated as our State's Centenary of Federation project and further funding is provided in this year's budget. Whilst the Government has already committed \$85 million to the extensions to the Adelaide Convention Centre and \$19 million to upgrade the Adelaide Festival Centre, a further allocation of \$13 million has been provided to undertake the initial stage of the precinct works. Over the coming months, the Government will consider whether it will be possible over the next two years, to undertake further stages of development of the Master Plan.

This project is an icon development for South Australia and warrants the support of all Members and the community.

This budget provides the funds to allow for work to proceed on a five year \$200 million Hospitals Plan of major redevelopments for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Lyell McEwin Health Service and the Royal Adelaide Hospital. After years of neglect under Labor Governments, this Government has taken the decision to fund these critical redevelopments. In addition, funding of \$11 million has been made available in 2000-01 to commence implementation of a new Clinical Information System linking patient records across all metropolitan public hospitals.

In addition, further funds have been allocated to:

- Provide a 12 per cent increase in payments for foster carers;
- Extra \$12 million over two years to provide community accommodation for people with disabilities and new respite programs for families;
- Extra \$4 million over two years under the HACC program to provide services to support older people residing in the community;
- Extra \$7.5 million over three years to support and extend community based services to improve mental health services;
- Additional funding of \$2 million per annum for the Illicit Drugs Strategy;
- Extra \$3 million over three years for a new blood test to assist in screening for Hepatitis C and HIV;
- Extra \$1.5 million over three years for the needle exchange program;
- Extra \$500 000 per annum to provide increased help for people with gambling problems to be allocated

from revenue already collected by the State from other gambling providers in South Australia.

Whilst the total budget for the South Australian Health Commission remains tight for next year, with an increase in spending of about 1.7 per cent it is worthwhile noting that there will be a \$143 million or 7.7 per cent increase in spending in health in the two years to 2000-01.

The Government has today announced its intention to build the Australian Science and Maths School for senior secondary students at Flinders University. This \$10.8 million project for 450 students will become a national focal point for teaching and research aimed at fostering innovation in maths and science and encouraging more students to take up careers in science.

The Government has committed \$3.8 million for the Woodend School in response to strong community demand and need for the project.

An extra \$4 million over three years will be spent to improve literacy and numeracy by including trialing assessments for year 7 students.

Funding for vocational education and training for apprentices and trainees will increase by up to \$45 million over three years.

Due to the continuing high level of youth unemployment in South Australia compared to other States, the Government has decided to restructure the payroll tax rebate scheme to target the relief at young trainees.

From the 25th of May this year, to attract the rebate, new trainees must have commenced their traineeship before their 25th birthday. In addition, the rate of the rebate will reduce from 98 per cent to 80 per cent for new trainee employment.

The Government hopes that this targeting will lead to more young people being offered jobs as trainees or apprentices.

The Government will also provide \$4.4 million over four years for the Premier's Youth Challenge which will target the development of leadership skills for young people across the State.

As a result of a Task Force established in 1999 by the Premier, needs of the Police in order to provide better service, particularly at local level, have been addressed. Among other initiatives, extra funding for Police will see an additional 113 officers trained and working by June 2001.

Provision has also been made for an additional 27 support staff within SAPOL to assist in the administration of policing activities maximising the time available for community policing. In addition, the Government has allocated \$35 million to relocate all functions occupying the Adelaide Police Station.

The Government will also spend \$44 million to finalise the Southern Expressway by the middle of next year.

In this budget, the Government commences a \$36 million program to improve country water quality and there will be further funding for the Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Plan. In addition, there will be continued work on the \$40 million Loxton Irrigation District Rehabilitation Scheme.

Mr Speaker, in all other portfolio areas there are a range of new initiatives with the following funding levels for three year programs:

- \$15 million to assist local industry restructure;
- \$3.6 million to boost the local film industry;
- \$2.1 million to increase overseas visitor numbers;
- \$6 million to tackle locust and grasshopper plagues;

- extra \$3 million for Regional Infrastructure Development Fund giving a total of \$16.5 million;
- \$3 million to improve maintenance in national parks;
- \$2.7 million for legal aid;
- \$17 million for a series of IT initiatives to bring the benefits of the Internet revolution to all South Australians;
- \$1.6 million to deliver essential services such as water and power to Aboriginal communities;
- \$6 million for sport and recreation programs including Active Club Grant Scheme;
- \$6.6 million to stimulate the minerals and energy industries;
- \$24 million to seal rural arterial roads;
- \$1.5 million to construct further overtaking lanes in regional areas.

REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr Speaker, today this Government has released its first regional statement. This statement outlines the Government's commitment to regional development by identifying its spending on regional services—a commitment which exceeds \$1 billion per annum.

The statement includes specific initiatives totalling \$40 million in the coming year. The value of these initiatives is not measured in their cost alone, but in the contribution they make to the economic prosperity of regions and the quality of life of their communities.

SUMMARY

Mr Speaker, this section of the budget speech this year has been longer than in previous years due to the number of new initiatives being implemented by Ministers.

In part, this is due to the increased flexibility in the budget brought about by the decision to lease ETSA and slash debt. Members need to remember that without that decision some of these new initiatives would not have occurred.

Two years ago the Government mapped out a bold vision for the financial and economic recovery of the State.

Tough decisions had to be taken—and they were.

South Australians were asked to make a sacrifice—and they did.

South Australian families now want to reap the rewards for their sacrifice—and they will.

This Budget is another important step in delivering the vision for the financial and economic recovery of the State.

I commend the Budget to the House.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier): I seek leave to have the remainder of the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of clauses

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2 provides for the bill to operate retrospectively to 1 July 2000. Until the bill is passed, expenditure is financed from appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

Clause 3 provides relevant definitions.

Clause 4 provides for the issue and application of the sums shown in the schedule to the bill. Subsection (2) makes it clear that this bill supersedes the appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

Clause 5 is designed to ensure that where Parliament has appropriated funds to an agency to enable it to carry out particular functions or duties and those functions or duties become the responsibility of another agency, the funds may be used by the responsible agency in accordance with parliament's original intentions without further appropriation.

Clause 6 provides authority for the Treasurer to issue and apply money from the Hospitals Fund for the provision of facilities in public hospitals.

Clause 7 makes it clear that appropriation authority provided by this bill is additional to authority provided in other Acts of Parliament, except, of course, in the *Supply Act*.

Clause 8 sets a limit of \$50 million on the amount which the government may borrow by way of overdraft.

Mr FOLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): I move:
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): In my contribution this afternoon I will dwell on the fact that this government ignores its lawful obligations of its ministers. This afternoon, we had the example of the members for Giles and for Lee, who are the Labor party representatives on the Aboriginal Lands Trust committee of the House of Assembly. Today the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs told us that she does not care about her oath of office to uphold the laws of South Australia and, in particular, the statutes under her immediate control as the minister responsible.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to clear the centre of the Chamber and retire to their seats or leave the Chamber.

Mr CLARKE: I did not realise that my speech would have such a powerful effect that ministers would want to flee from the bolts of lightning I was about to hurl at them. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs epitomises the absolute arrogance of this government. The law of this state requires not only that these annual reports be made but also that the Aboriginal Lands Trust Committee meet on a regular basis during each year. The minister's stock standard answer is that we are being paternalistic. She says that she does not intend to call the committee together because the act is under review and she is forecasting that some amendments will be made. That is all very well for the minister. However, until this parliament changes the law, she has an obligation to comply with the law. In particular, I would have thought it is important for the Premier to insist that his ministers comply with the laws that bind everyone in this state, particularly the relevant minister.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is intent on defying the laws of this parliament. The Premier has done nothing about it. This House passed a resolution unanimously condemning the minister for her failure to carry out her statutory responsibilities, yet still nothing is done—not by the minister nor by the Premier. The situation is untenable. It is untenable that a minister deliberately flouts their legal obligations and the will of this House. It is a sackable offence. The fact that this Premier thinks so lightly of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act—that it is an act not worth enforcing—brings more discredit upon him and his administration than anything else.

I want to also draw the House's attention to other examples of ministers' refusing to answer questions. For a long time, I have had a question on notice of the Minister for Tourism. Question 59 deals with the invitations extended to state members of Parliament to frequent the government's corporate facility at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre since 1 January 1994. I have had that question on notice in one form or another for over 18 months and still there has been no answer. In the Estimates Committee last year I asked the Minister for Tourism when she was going to supply an answer. She said, 'My department is too busy.' That is not good enough. I had to put another question on notice asking

the minister when I will get an answer to question 59, and I still do not have an answer as to when I might even get an answer from the minister. If in the Estimates Committee I was to ask the Minister for Tourism this year, I will no doubt get the same reply.

I readily admit that I was once invited to the corporate box at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. I got the invitation just after I asked my second question on notice about who was issued invitations and how frequently. I thought, 'That's amazing. I have done 5½ years in this place—deputy leader for three years and never been invited, then I ask a question about who has been turning up and who has the invitations—'

Mr Atkinson: Did you go?

Mr CLARKE: I certainly did.

Mr Atkinson: Who was there?

Mr CLARKE: Our esteemed leader in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Carolyn Pickles, together with other people. She told me it was the first time she had received an invitation. I said, 'You can thank me, because I put the question on notice.' What I am interested in is this: I know from times I and others have been at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, when we have paid as general members of the public, you cast your eye up to the box, and who do you see up there from time to time at all the good shows: a bevy of Liberal Party state MPs.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Not me, mate. You never see me.

Mr CLARKE: Even they draw a line; even they have standards in the cabal. I have noted there has been almost the Minister for Tourism's factional cabal on regular invitation lists at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. That is all I can put it down to, because it is anecdotal; there are people I have seen there from time to time. I do not have statistics, but I am seeking those statistics. However, the Minister for Tourism is too overworked to get this information. This is the only Minister for Tourism in Australia who has only tourism in her portfolio. In every other state a minister for tourism has other ministerial responsibilities, including the federal Minister for Tourism. After the minister gets to the office on a Monday morning—

Mr Atkinson: Reads the paper!

Mr CLARKE: —reads the paper, plots a little more amongst the Liberal party, what would she do after lunchtime? As the sole Minister for Tourism in South Australia, what would you do after lunchtime on Monday, except go to Le Mans or go to France and wave the chequered flag or try to discover the secrets of Adelaide and try to reinvent them. You could find out where the Adelaide Hills is so that you can put it in your Secrets campaign document. I would have thought that if her department was too busy, the minister herself would have ample time on her hands. In Queensland, the state for tourism, that minister has other significant responsibilities as well. It is just a joke that this minister has so little to do or is so little trusted by her colleagues that she is not given any additional responsibility. However, a question that has been on notice for over 18 months cannot be answered. If no details are available, that is slipshod administration by the department or the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. I do not believe they are slipshod; they are very successful.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: No doubt! I would suggest, as the member for Spence has suggested, that if we checked there might be a significant number of Liberal party members form the Morialta sub-branch, but that would depend on the cut off date. If they joined after a certain date, they probably would

not have got a invitation. However, provided they joined before a cut off date and were eligible to vote in the preselection ballot, they were entitled to go there, and no doubt they enjoyed it. I am glad somebody is enjoying it. I just want to know who. I am limiting it just to state members of Parliament. I do not know whether the member for Hammond has ever been invited there. I do not know whether he has ever been there. I do not know whether he is in that factional cabal. The Premier himself is not better, because I have had a question on notice, too. I have been waiting 18 months for an answer to question 61.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate and to see that considerable resources are being utilised to deal with what is going to be an extensive problem throughout the northern areas of South Australia. Because there is a fair possibility that the locust plague will enter the city of Adelaide, I think we will see considerable interest taken by all members. I do not know whether members of this House are aware that locusts have been coming into this state from Queensland and New South Wales, but they have gone as far as the Upper Eyre Peninsula, down to the Cowell area, up from Hawker, through the Mid North, through Booleroo Centre and Ororoo and across to Yunta, and obviously they will move south.

Action has already been taken in an attempt to control them. It is a difficult task and will require the cooperation of a large section of the community including landholders as well as considerable resources of government. I believe that \$6 million has been set aside, but I am afraid that it will take considerably more than that. There will be a great need for sufficient aircraft, including helicopters, and land based sprays and chemicals. It will be necessary to get permission from property owners so that there are no delays, otherwise we will face a potential disaster if crops are badly damaged or wiped out in the spring.

So, members of this House should be aware that, when people talk about this problem, they are not talking about some isolated problem to be scoffed or laughed at. We are not dealing with grasshoppers. Last year, we had grasshoppers; this year, it is locusts. I did not realise until a couple of years ago that, unfortunately, there is a considerable difference between those insects. The Plague Locust Commission has been operating out of Broken Hill and other parts of Australia with an extensive spraying program. I was told this morning that locusts are laying and hatching eggs in the pastoral country behind Burra. So, it looks as though the Riverland could also get some attention from these insects.

Another matter that I want to raise is that recently the Deputy Premier and I visited a number of areas of South Australia. That was very useful for the Deputy Premier, because he could see at first hand the number of difficulties that people are facing. The pastoral industry in the northern parts of the state is very pleased with the government's decision to transfer the Pastoral Board from the department of environment to the department of primary industries. That decision was long overdue. It has been government policy for a number of years, and I am pleased that that has now taken place. I am aware that certain sections of the bureaucracy are not particularly impressed, but so be it; they shall do as they are directed.

I look forward to the completion of that transfer because it was evident when the Premier visited the north that there was some concern about the assessment process. One of the great difficulties faced by people in a democracy—and I think

this is probably a world-wide phenomenon—is that bureaucracies take it upon themselves to make policy, and they sometimes believe that members of parliament are a jolly nuisance and get in their way, that—

Mr Clarke: You would probably have to say that bureaucrats are right on 90 per cent of occasions.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No. I disagree with the honourable member. They are fortunate in that they can stay away from the scene and do not have to account for themselves, but members of parliament do.

Mr Atkinson: They pulled your strings last night.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I don't know about that. We will debate that issue later. One section of the bureaucracy was taught a pretty good lesson in this House today about the power of the parliament over bureaucracy, and I look forward to a few more of those situations occurring. There is an urgent need—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will allow the honourable member to deal with that subject in his own time, because I am sure he is quite capable of doing that. I look forward to the contributions of the member for Ross Smith over the next 18 months to two years.

Mr Atkinson: He's been very good this week.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, it's a wonder that you didn't support his preselection if he's doing so well. I am sure that his constituents will remember that and take into account the contributions he has made, because they will be made aware of them. I look forward with great interest to this challenge and to the Liberal Party being able to play some role in this matter. Perhaps then we may be able to repay a few debts of the past. One of the signs of a democracy is that what goes around comes around. So, the power brokers may find that they have a small problem on their hands to deal with. In conclusion—

Mr Clarke: No, speak on!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have been very charitable to the honourable member. I have four minutes remaining. I think that Saturday is the anniversary of my entry into this place. I will have been here for approximately 30 years during which I have had the privilege of serving the constituents of my electorate. On most occasions, it has been an enjoyable experience, but I will own up: I have not always endeared myself to my colleagues. However, I make no apology for that, because I came to this parliament with one function in mind: to represent the constituents of my electorate. I refer to the people in the isolated parts of South Australia who are a long way from government decision-making.

I did not come here to appease the bureaucracy or my parliamentary colleagues but to work with them wherever

possible. However, at the end of the day, I was determined to stand up and be acknowledged, and I have done that. It might not have done my own self-promotion a great deal of good in this place, but I am not worried about that. I can make a living outside of here. One thing that I will not do is go cap in hand to people.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, go out and ask the electorate. You won't serve 30 years. I do not think that in the future many people will have that opportunity, because under the new electoral system which changes the boundaries every year it will be far more difficult.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think the electorate will deal with you anyway. It will be far more difficult to be able to stay here because with redistributions it will be that much more difficult to continue to build a power base. Some members have asked me about my plans. I am looking forward to making the member for Spence unhappy, because I see no reason why I should not come back here for an 11th parliament. I am fit and well and I put my trust in my constituents. I look forward to the challenges of the future.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Ask the Leader of the Opposition where he currently resides. I am happy to spread that around if he wants me to. It is Unley Park, is it not? That is a good working class area of South Australia.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, financed by the shop distributors union, the biggest contributor to the Labor Party. That's how you attempt to buy yourself a seat in parliament. We have the whole story. I look forward to the budget estimates. I have had a challenging 30 years, and I look forward to the next six years with a great deal of confidence, as I want to see this government re-elected in the best interests of all South Australians.

Motion carried.

LIQUOR LICENSING (REGULATED PREMISES) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.10 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 30 May at 2 p.m.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 23 May 2000

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

FRIENDS OF THE PARKS

21. **Mr HILL:** Will the Minister accede to the Friends of the Parks 1999 Conference request not to insist on the inclusion of her photo and message on the brochures produced for individual parks?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Following the change in ministerial portfolio responsibility on February 9, 2000, the matter is not relevant.

PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME

45. **Ms RANKINE:** What funding has been allocated in 1999-2000 to address the specialist accommodation needs of Prader-Willi Syndrome sufferers?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: People diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome are commonly eligible for services from the Intellectual Disability Services Council (IDSC), which may include accommodation services. I am advised that IDSC does currently provide some services to individuals with Prader-Willi Syndrome. In addition, the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital has a Prader Willi Syndrome Clinic as part of its outpatient services.

Although funding has not been specifically allocated for the establishment of a specialist accommodation service for people with Prader-Willi Syndrome, a proposal for such a service has been received and it remains a priority for future development funding.

METROPOLITAN/COUNTRY AREAS BOUNDARY

83-92. **Mr HILL** asked the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister representing The Treasurer, the Minister representing the Attorney-General, the Minister for Human Services, the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Urban Development, the Minister for Government Enterprises, the Minister for Education and Children's Services, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Water Resources: for each department, agency and instrumentality in the minister's portfolio, is there a boundary for administrative, service delivery or other purposes separating the metropolitan area from country areas and if so, where is that

boundary, how, when and why was the boundary established and is there a difference between the services provided and charges raised for citizens living on different sides of the boundary and, if so, what are the details?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The Premier has provided the following information in response to Questions On Notice 83-92:

Late last year the government commissioned SACES to undertake a broad review of issues concerning boundaries. The report will be considered by cabinet and will be available in due course.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

93. **Ms THOMPSON:** How many times were ambulances advised to divert from the Flinders Medical Centre during October and November 1999, what was the duration of each diversion advice and how many ambulances had to transport passengers to other hospitals?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The South Australian Ambulance Service was advised that Flinders Medical Centre had activated diversion three times in October and November 1999. SA Ambulance Service records do not directly identify the cases affected by the diversion.

On 14 October 1999, ambulances were diverted for a five hour period from 9 a.m. to p.m. During this period SA Ambulance Service recorded a number of cases which continued to be transported and accepted by Flinders Medical Centre.

On 8 November 1999, ambulances were diverted for three hours and twenty minutes from 10.40 a.m. to 2 p.m. SA Ambulance also recorded a number of cases which were transported to, and accepted by Flinders Medical Centre.

On 16 November 1999, ambulances were diverted for 13 hours from 9 p.m. to 10 a.m. the next morning. SA Ambulance identified five cases which may have been diverted to RAH from the southern suburbs. They further indicate these cases were not life threatening.

ONKAPARINGA WATER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

104. **Mr HILL:** Why did not the former Minister for Environment and Heritage appoint a community representative to the Onkaparinga Water Catchment Management Board, and what business interests do board members, other than local and state government representatives, have in water allocation?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As you would be aware, members of catchment water management boards are selected on a combination of skills, knowledge and experience, which they bring singularly and collectively to a Board.

In the case of the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, the current membership has been identified as possessing the following skills:

Current Members	Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Mr Roger Goldsworthy	· Managerial skills and experience.
Mr Jeff Tate	· Knowledge and experience in Local Government within the area covered by the Board.
Ms Anita Aspinall	· Knowledge and experience in Local Government within the area covered by the Board. · Actively participates in community affairs within the area covered by the Board. · Knowledge of water resource issues in area of the Board, particularly in her position on the Environment Protection Authority.
Mr David Paschke	· Knowledge and experience in the use of water in the upper catchment. · Experience in Local Government · Actively participates in community affairs in the area of the Board.
Mr Bob McLennan	· Knowledge and experience in the management and development of water resources. · Knowledge and experience in the conservation of ecosystems. · Knowledge and experience in water quality management.
Mr Joch Bosworth	· Knowledge and experience in the management or development of water resources or other natural resources in the Board's area with particular reference to the groundwater in the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area
Mr Michael Stafford	· Knowledge and experience in the management or development of water resources or other natural resources in the Board's area · Active involvement in community affairs in the area of the Board
Ms Lynn Chamberlain	· Knowledge and experience in public and business administration. · Knowledge and experience in Local Government in the area of the Board. · Knowledge and experience of regional economic development.

In addition to the above, all of the board members, except Mr Goldsworthy, live in the board's area, and as such can be said to have knowledge of the communities in which they live.

Clearly, the board's membership does include members who are active participants in the community and as such the membership satisfies the requirements of s59(1)(a) of the Water Resources Act 1997.

It is almost inevitable that some board members will have business interests in matters related to water allocation. Statutory requirements are in place to ensure members declare any interest and also abstain from any discussion where there is any potential conflict of interest.

In the case of the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, one of the board members is a vigneron and owns a property on which grapes are grown in the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area. As such, he has extensive knowledge of the issues affecting this important industry and, through his professional association with grape growing groups, provides valuable input into water allocation planning for that area.

Two other board members have business interests that could be affected by issues relating to water allocation. One has a viticulture enterprise in the Adelaide Hills and would be affected by any move to prescribe the water resources of that area and the other has an interest in a horticulture business also in the Adelaide Hills and could be likewise affected. Both of these board members make valuable contributions to the board, not only as a result of their general input to the board's business, but as a direct result of their skills and knowledge of the communities within which they live and the businesses that they operate.

QUESTION ON NOTICE No. 61

107. **Mr CLARKE:** When will the Premier respond to Question on Notice No. 61?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The following answer was provided to the member by letter dated April 18, 2000.

. . . I wish to advise that officers within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet are currently coordinating a response to your question, and that an answer will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.