

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 10 October 2000

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

A petition signed by 18 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to maintain services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was presented by the Hon. Dean Brown.

Petition received.

CHILDREN, EXPLOITATION

A petition signed by 1 290 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to protect under-age children from illicit drug use and sexual exploitation, was presented by Mrs Geraghty.

Petition received.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A petition signed by 322 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to ensure that the needle exchange program distributes only retractable syringes and is extended to include users of intravenous medication, was presented by Mrs Geraghty.

Petition received.

POLICE, ALDINGA STATION

A petition signed by 14 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ensure that the Aldinga police station is open twenty-four hours a day, was presented by Mr Hill.

Petition received.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Animal and Plant Control Commission South Australia—
Report, 1999

Citrus Board of South Australia—Report, 30 April 2000
Primary Industries and Resources South Australia—
Report, 1999-2000

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

Environment Resources and Development Committee—
Response to Report on Environment Protection in
South Australia by Minister for Environment and
Heritage

Ministerial Statement—Tourism Precincts

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

Rules of Racing—Racing Act—Gaming Supervisory
Authority—Principal

By the Minister for Water Resources (Hon. M.K. Brindal)—

Department for Water Resources—Report, 1999-2000
Ground Water (Qualco-Sunlands) Control Act—
Regulations—Principal.

LITTER CONTROL

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Prior to the last election, the government promised to work with KESAB to control litter and by July 1999 had reduced the incidence of littering of products not under container deposit legislation (CDL) by 25 per cent. Our environment and natural resources policy was very clear in that, if this target was not met, the government would move to bring these types of containers under CDL.

A recently expired two-year moratorium granted to the industry to enable it to demonstrate a reduction in the incidence of litter for containers not presently covered by the legislation was simply not successful. Surveys conducted by KESAB during the moratorium period clearly show that the 25 per cent reduction target set by the government's litter committee was not met. Therefore, I wish to advise the House today of the government's decision to expand CDL to further reduce the incidence of beverage container litter and provide uniformity of treatment for containers serving the same market. The government has decided to embrace a range of additional beverages not presently covered by the legislation while at the same time removing a number of longstanding anomalies. The change will be regulatory in nature.

The government's decision follows a recent consultancy report on CDL which recommends that the legislation be amended to cover additional beverages and that the current anomalies should be removed. Incidentally, the report also indicated that approximately 400 more flow-on jobs could be created in the recycling industry and other sectors as a result.

There can be no question that CDL, first introduced in 1975, has been a very successful and popular tool for reducing beverage litter and increasing the recycling of drink containers. Unfortunately, the legislation has not kept pace with the changing drink market, confusing consumers and industry alike. It was simply not envisaged 25 years ago that we would have non-carbonated beverages such as sports drinks and what amounts to ready-to-drink cordials competing with carbonated soft drinks. We also have the situation where cider, competing with beer when sold in a glass container, does not carry a deposit yet beer does. Water flavoured with fruit juice is not covered, but plain water is, even when sold in the same container.

CDL has been a resounding success in South Australia, significantly reducing beverage litter compared to that experienced in other states. It has reduced the amount of glass, plastic and aluminium cans sent to landfill. It now employs some 800 people directly and 114 businesses throughout the state with a flow-on effect of some 1 700 jobs. It is important to note that many of these businesses are located in regional areas where there are, all too often, limited employment opportunities. Beverage containers are large and very visible when compared to items such as cigarette butts. Extension of the legislation will have a significant effect on the visual aspects of litter.

The South Australian model continues to be an effective litter control mechanism and, as a bonus, has proved to be an effective recycling mechanism. Bolstered by strong public support, the system achieves high recovery rates of deposit bearing beverage containers. PET (or plastic) has a recovery rate of some 74 per cent, beverage glass 84 per cent, and

aluminium 84 per cent. South Australian companies gain high prices for clean recyclables as a direct result of the legislation. They also gain economies of scale through the increased qualities of material. Local government, in particular, is supportive of CDL, as it reduces clean-up costs, assists in maintaining kerbside systems and helps to solve litter problems.

I am advised that about 133 million glass beverage bottles, 149 million aluminium cans and 77 million plastic containers are recycled each year in South Australia as a direct result of CDL. Recycling certainly does help the environment, and it is certainly worth pursuing. Extending the legislation will streamline the system and reduce costs by reducing the need to sort deposit from non-deposit beverage containers and should allow the recycling industry to move to improve handling methods. The other benefit, of course, is to community groups, volunteer organisations, church groups and schools which use deposit bearing containers to supplement fundraising activities.

This announcement to expand CDL represents a landmark decision which will see recycling industries develop further in South Australia, providing job opportunities and enhanced markets for recycled materials across the state. The changes which I announced earlier today will take effect on 1 January 2003, giving industry the opportunity to establish the necessary labelling and other infrastructure arrangements required to bring about a smooth transition.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): I bring up the first report of the committee and move:

That the report be received and read.

Motion carried.

Mr CONDOUS: I bring up the second report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I bring up the thirteenth report of the committee on rural health and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: Any questions today directed to the Premier will be referred to the Deputy Premier.

ALICE SPRINGS TO DARWIN RAILWAY

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the progress achieved in resolving outstanding legal issues, is the Deputy Premier confident that the Prime Minister, the Premier and the Northern Territory Chief Minister will be able on Wednesday next week finally to sign off on an agreement giving the formal go-ahead for the Darwin to Alice Springs railway? Given previous delays to this project, is the Deputy Premier confident that the banks involved in financing the Asia Pacific consortium will approve credit to the project in November; and is he confident

that work will then commence on the railway before Christmas?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): The Leader of the Opposition has raised a range of issues. My understanding is that we are getting close to the agreement on the railway line, and that there remain only a couple of issues, which I will not divulge here. We are confident that things will go ahead. Obviously, the Premier knows more about this than I do at the moment but, having spoken to the Premier on Monday, I can say that we are confident that it is pretty much on schedule.

DRY LAND SALINITY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Will the Deputy Premier please provide a South Australian response to the announcement today by the Prime Minister in relation to a national action plan for dry land salinity and water quality?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier): Certainly, given the interest we have shown in these issues over a long time, South Australia welcomes the long awaited federal government commitment to put together a national action plan for both dry land salinity and water quality. Both issues are very important to us.

While we are still short on the detail of the funding package for it, I have had the opportunity to look at the plan itself. Certainly that plan is a positive response to the range of issues that have been raised with the federal government by the Premier over a period of time. I pay credit to the Premier for that. He has taken the problems of the Murray-Darling Basin to the eastern seaboard. He has raised the profile of those issues outside of the basin, which has been very important in making sure that the states in which the bulk of voters in Australia reside start to understand the threats that the Murray-Darling Basin is under.

Certainly, the Minister for Water Resources has well and truly backed up the Premier in promoting the need for us to address the problems of the basin. This plan is not only about water quality but also about dry land salinity in general. There is no doubt that, within this plan, there will be an enormous amount of focus on the Murray-Darling Basin area. Also, we have the South-East and rapidly growing areas on Kangaroo Island, Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula where dry land salinity is an increasing problem. If one looks at the huge hectares in Western Australia that have been lost to dry land salinity one can see an indication of what could well and truly happen in this state in the future.

Whilst we do not have much detail on the funding, certainly the plan identifies the high priority and immediate actions to address dry land salinity and deteriorating water quality in key catchments and regions across Australia. The plan really is about motivating and enabling regional communities to use, coordinate and target action to ensure that we start addressing and then reversing the trends in dry land salinity and, importantly for all South Australians, to improve the water quality and the security of our allocations into the future. The action plan addresses several elements: first, to set targets and standards for natural resources management, particularly in terms of water quality and salinity, on which an enormous amount of work has already been done in the Murray-Darling Basin. If you do not have standards you will not have accountability.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission earlier this year carried motions to ensure that the states start working together towards achieving end-of-valley targets in connec-

tion with salinity. Also, the plan points out that integrated catchment and regional management plans need to be developed by communities, drawing together all the elements affecting natural resources which, ultimately, impact on soil and water quality. Reference is also made to capacity building for communities. The Community Advisory Committee of the Murray-Darling Basin has made much of the fact that it needs to be able to empower their communities to understand the problems and then do something about them.

In addition, the plan not only looks at the governance framework to secure investment and action but also clearly articulates the roles of the commonwealth, the states and the communities to address the problems involved. The other element relates to a public communication program, which is absolutely vital to what we are doing. The action plan builds on where we have been with NHT and considers some of the Murray-Darling Basin initiatives that have been floated, as well as the salinity plan.

We look forward to gathering more detail so that we can make a proper assessment. Following one interview I gave, Peter Beattie from Queensland was quoted as saying that this was a political stunt. My instant reaction to that, however, is that, from the way in which Queensland has dealt with the Murray-Darling Basin problems, it is a bit rich for Peter Beattie to make such a statement. Certainly the plan announced gives us a framework, and it is very timely. The Premier will no doubt lead the discussions on these issues at the COAG meeting in early November. What the federal government has given us today is a commitment that there is a way ahead with respect to salinity and water quality in Australia.

POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services confirm that the South Australian police anti-corruption squad raided the head office of the minister's department on 13 September? Can he tell the House the nature of their investigations and give an assurance that Education Department staff are fully cooperating with the police in assisting them with their inquiries?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the leader for his question. During an internal review being conducted by the department, some anomalies in accounts were noticed. The police were immediately notified and, as the leader has said, the police entered the Education Department offices and are currently undertaking an investigation of the issues that have been raised. Departmental staff are fully cooperating.

An honourable member: All of them?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Yes.

EDUCATION STRATEGIES

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Can the Minister for Education and Children's Services detail further advances in education strategies which are impacting on South Australian schools and preschools, given the success of Partnerships 21 over the past year?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Hartley for his question. Media reports have it that the Leader of the Opposition is desperately seeking a new image which will

appeal to the mums and dads out in voter land. He believes that education will just do the trick. However, I do not think so, because—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: —I would suggest that the better title is Austin Powers' 'Yo, baby.' Need I remind the House that Austin Powers is a character from the 1960s who is locked into that line of thinking, locked into those ideas and stuck in a time warp? Yes, the Leader of the Opposition is just like Austin Powers, a man of mystery.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: It is a good analogy, as he is, to me, quite a mystery, because the other thing that is occurring, to make this act even more convincing, is that he has a sidekick, an actress named Hurley.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the leader to order.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: It is mystifying to us to realise how this regurgitated laundry list is a serious education document, because the Labor Party has come out and criticised Partnerships 21, yet in the Labor Party document it is under 'Local Management' as a policy of the Labor Party. He has called for an inquiry into P21. Yet he must have meant, I think, P76, because that was another poor choice of his back in the 1970s. Again, it is a mystery as to why he keeps referring back to the retention rates of seven years ago, when students did not then have the choice that they have today: they could not undertake vocational training, they could not undertake apprenticeships, and they were left with no choice. Here it was at a time when we were having—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: —the recession that we had to have, with high youth unemployment of over 40 per cent. Is it any wonder that they stayed in school with the options that were available to them—over 40 per cent employment? Yet he calls this Labor's best moment. Students are now provided with lots of opportunity and choices, because they can now undertake vocational education training and they can now undertake an apprenticeship or a traineeship while at school. Many more options are available to them.

I also see that the leader has had a reinvention of civics education and that he is going to have civics education taught in our schools. I remind him—

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Exactly—as the member for Newland says, in the last century we revised the curriculum in terms of that area of education. Our man of mystery would be very capable with Labor's narrow paths of the past because students now, thankfully, have more than one choice of tertiary education and it can be done before they even leave school.

The Labor Party says that it is committed to ongoing consultation with the trade unions. That absolutely guarantees them and the community of South Australia that we will be locked into the 1970s. There is absolutely no doubt about that—one only has to look at the meagre utterances of the Australian Education Union to realise that it is still back there at the barricades and has not moved forward one little bit.

When I think about these things in the 1970s, why do I always think of bell bottoms, beads and bad platforms when I think about these two groups involved in education—the Labor Party and the AEU? I note also that the Leader of the

Opposition is going to concentrate on literacy and numeracy. Has he not heard of the literacy and numeracy strategy—the early years strategy—and the disadvantaged student index, all brought in by this government but conveniently ignored?

The leader may well take some comfort in the fact that his popularity has risen by 5 per cent—he is now Mr Twenty three Per Cent. If one looks at public education, we can celebrate increases statewide: a 25 per cent increase in vocational education training; a 48 per cent increase in schools coming into Partnerships 21; a 52 per cent increase in the number of international students now studying in our South Australian secondary schools; and a 100 per cent increase in apprenticeships and traineeships. I think that is an excellent record. The big mystery, though, is why this man of mystery with his obsolete platforms, his defunct ideas and his redundant notions still has Labor's star billing.

EDUCATION, ENTERPRISE AND VOCATIONAL BRANCH

Ms WHITE (Taylor): My questions are directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, as follows: did the anti-corruption squad seize any government records or computers during the raid on the enterprise and vocational education branch on 13 September 2000? Has any officer been stood down or requested to take leave? Were any charges laid?

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the minister please resume his seat. Will members on my left respect the chair when they are called to order and at least let ministers reply.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): The member for Hart may think that this is a laughable matter but it certainly is not. I view this as a very serious matter indeed. In answer to the members questions: yes, the South Australian police have taken documents; no-one has been stood down or taken leave; and charges have not as yet been laid because the police are still undertaking investigations concerning the documents that were taken.

POLICE ACADEMY

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Can the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services outline the details of the latest police graduation and tell the House how many police officers have graduated this financial year?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I thank the member for MacKillop for his question because I know he has a real interest in what is happening with police graduations, given that he is looking forward to one of the new police officers being sent to Narrung—out from Meningie—on the peninsula as part of the policing of his rural electorate. I am pleased to advise that since 1 July this year we have seen 84 police graduate from the Police Academy. Those 84 police are part of a commitment this year for 255 police officers to go through the academy, and I remind members that 113 of those 255 are new police officers over and above recruitment and attrition. These police officers will be located at local service areas such as Adelaide, Elizabeth, South Coast, Port Adelaide and Holden Hill, and, further, in order to keep the community safe when

on public transport and in conjunction with the inspectors recently announced by the Minister for Transport, an additional four officers will become transit police.

I am sure that, given the opportunities I have had to visit the academy and support these officers and their families at the graduation, in the future we will see some fantastic career paths created, because the calibre and quality of the police officers graduating from the academy is absolutely superb. I am pleased to see that we are right on track and that we will have 255 police officers (or thereabouts) either on the streets or at the academy by the end of June this year, in line with the commitment of the government.

It is interesting to note also some comments from the shadow spokesperson as reported in the *Sunday Mail*. I do not know, if I were a member of the media, whether I would bother to telephone the shadow spokesperson if I wanted a quote because, whatever the article, if the media were to flick back over the last few years, the quote is always about police resources. We all know that the shadow spokesperson is not known on the other side for being Mr Energetic and, as we hear in the corridors, we all know that the shadow spokesperson does not spend a lot of time doing his homework. In the future I would say to the media: 'Just look back through all the old clippings', because, whenever an article appears about policing, it is the same old rhetoric about police resources.

To the shadow spokesperson, I say, 'Wrong, wrong, wrong!' in relation to his outrageous claim and allegation on Sunday, because the matter in question had nothing whatsoever to do with police resources. However, talking about police resources, it is quite interesting, when you get a chance, Mr Speaker, to look at 'Justice and the law: our rights and responsibilities', as I have done. Of course, I refer to the issues involving my portfolios and the platform paper that the opposition is putting out at its conference at the weekend. I hope that the conference goes somewhat better for the Leader of the Opposition, who has been continually telling people around town how he is modelling his style of leadership on that of Tony Blair because, having been in London during the week of the Labor Party convention, I can say that the leader would have an absolute disaster on his hands if he had a convention similar to that of Tony Blair.

In fact, all the issues that I have seen with respect to this paper have been acted on. I can start at no. 63 and work through to no. 91 of the points relating to my portfolio and put a tick alongside every one of them to indicate that we have already taken action on them or that we are in the process of taking action. In April the Leader of the Opposition told the media, members of parliament and subsequently the community of South Australia that when he had his convention in October he would have every policy costed: 'Every policy will be costed.' Here we have 136 pages of claptrap—136 pages of tired, old direction—and I say to the media, 'Have a look at the direction in which the Labor Party is trying to take the future of this state if it is given the opportunity.'

Mr CONLON: I rise on a point of order, sir. The point is relevancy. The minister is a long way from the police academy at the moment.

The SPEAKER: Has the minister completed his reply?

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Not quite, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: In that case, I will rule on the point of order. I ask ministers to confine their replies to the substance of the question. There were times when the minister started

to stray away from it into areas of debate. I ask him to return to the question.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In conclusion, when one looks at the question asked by the member for MacKillop about police recruitment and commitment to policing, one sees that our record stands. Members should look at what we are doing with recruitment and resources. Where was the \$30 million when Labor was in office to upgrade police resources in Adelaide? It was squandered on the State Bank. Where is the future of South Australia when it comes to police resources? In answer to the member for MacKillop's question, if Labor happened—heaven forbid—to get into office, it would be squandered again. It disappoints me that, while we are committed to current police recruitment and have made an ongoing commitment as a government to recruit at attrition, the Labor Party could not make a commitment even to recruit at attrition.

EDUCATION, ENTERPRISE AND VOCATIONAL BRANCH

Ms WHITE (Taylor): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Did the Executive Director of the Enterprise and Vocational Education Branch (Mr Peter Turner) and the General Manager of that branch travel to the United Kingdom in May/June this year; and will the Minister provide a breakdown of total cost to the government? A written answer from the minister to a question on notice states that a visit to the UK by the Executive Director of the Enterprise and Vocational Education Branch in May/June cost \$6 024. However, the opposition has been informed that the Executive Director was accompanied by the General Manager of the Enterprise and Vocational Education Branch on this visit and that the total cost exceeded \$20 000, including a substantial amount for arranging travel.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I will seek the information that the honourable member requests.

TOBACCO COMPANIES

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Flinders.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hart!

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Can the Minister for Human Services explain to the House the government's position on tobacco companies offering promotional gifts to young smokers?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services): It was suggested about four or five weeks ago that certain tobacco retailers in South Australia were retailing cigarettes and offering a gift, such as a watch, with those cigarettes. That is clearly in breach of the law here in South Australia. As a result, I have written to the tobacco companies and highlighted the law to them and said that we will take them to task and to court if, in fact, they repeat the exercise of offering gifts in South Australia.

While talking about tobacco, I comment also on the fact that, when reading the Labor Party policy that is due to go up to the convention on Saturday, I happened to see that a small section therein on tobacco basically supports exactly what the government is currently doing at any rate. Indeed, I happened

to read all 32 pages of the health policy of the Labor Party that is going up to the convention. I must say that it is a lot of recycling stuff. In fact, most of the initiatives are exactly what the government is already implementing.

If the Minister for Education refers to Labor's policy as one of Austin Powers, I would say that in the health area, at least, it is more like Forrest Gump: it is wanting to stand up and embrace exactly what the government is already doing. Let me read to the House, for instance, some of the policy. Item 29 on page 63 states:

An important factor in relieving the burden of illness is the provision of home support services, rehabilitation services and palliative care services.

Just a few weeks ago at the Repatriation Hospital we opened probably the best rehabilitation service in the whole of Australia, and six months ago I opened the superb rehabilitation services out at Hampstead Gardens. So, this government has put into place what the Labor Party is saying, and I quote: 'A Labor government will not ignore these services.' The fact is that the Liberal Party is providing these services; we have them in place. We have implemented a number of palliative care measures. As for home support, we are currently putting \$70 million a year into home support services in South Australia. It appears that the Labor Party has just woken up to this.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Well, your policy is that you will not ignore these issues. We are already putting in \$70 million. Then I read section 31 of the policy which states that mental health, cancer, injury, cardio-vascular disease and diabetes are the major national health issues, which also apply to South Australia. We all know that.

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, sir. This may be very interesting to the minister but, contrary to Standing Order 98, he is clearly debating the issue. The minister has no responsibility for the ALP platform.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The chair has some sympathy for the point of order. It is getting very close to being upheld. I am not upholding it at the moment, but I ask the minister to come back to the substance of the question.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Certainly, Mr Speaker, but I will make the point that those are the health priorities of Australia. They have been listed for the past three years as the national health priorities. We have state health strategies for implementing those priorities here in South Australia, and have had them for three years. So, this is nothing but a recycled policy; it is simply endorsing what the government is already doing. It will be a pretty big yawn this coming weekend.

EDUCATION SPENDING

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Given the government's strategies to cut funding for schools in 1999-2000 by \$53.6 million, why did the Minister for Education and Children's Services spend more than \$570 000 on sending a total of 300 staff overseas? The government's 1999-2000 budget strategy to cut spending by \$53.6 million included saving \$500 000 by closing schools, \$3 million by cutting student tuition by one week and \$1.7 million by cutting school buses. The annual report from the Education Department shows that in 1999 a total of 300 officers went overseas at a net cost of more than \$570 000 to the government. Some 61 employees attended

conferences in 19 countries, including South America, at a cost of \$151 000.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Taylor for her question. One could only assume from that question that the Labor Party policy is that no teachers will be sent overseas for professional development, to look at further ideas, to expand the options for South Australian education, to improve the model that we have here in South Australian education and to look at new ideas—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:—that may well be enacted overseas and determine whether they can be brought back here. One can only assume that the teachers of South Australia will now be locked into the 1970s and will not move outside the state's borders to see where there are new ideas or new inspirations and will therefore just remain within this secular little spot of South Australia. Well, the liberal government is not in favour of that. I believe that our public servants and our teachers must go overseas to ensure that they are exposed to the latest that is happening in education and the best methods that are being used.

When these trips are taken, quite often we find that in many cases South Australia is already at the leading edge. I need only refer to Peter Upton with whom I talked only two weeks ago. As one of Prime Minister Blair's top education advisers, he commented to me that South Australia's model of local management, P21, is currently, in his opinion, the best operating in the world that he has seen. That comment came from Peter Upton, one of Prime Minister Blair's chief advisers. That comment is further backed up by Michael Barber, who is also one of Prime Minister Blair's chief advisers in that area. If we do not travel overseas we do not see those sorts of things.

Not only that but the honourable member fails to recognise the amount of work currently being done in international education. There are many instances of members and officers of my department travelling and selling educational packages overseas. I need only reiterate that, through the Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE, we are now delivering information technology courses at industrial colleges in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. As a result of delivering that information on the trip I undertook with the education officers concerned, the state government has recouped well over \$200 000, which more than paid for the costs involved in that trip.

Those are the sorts of initiatives and forward thinking occurring in my department under the CEO in terms of encouraging people to be exposed to trends in education world wide; to give people experience of that exposure and for them to see what is happening in South Australia, recognise the quality of education occurring in South Australia and, if there are better ideas overseas, bring those back to South Australia so that we can use them and further improve our own education system.

SNOWY RIVER

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Will the Minister for Water Resources outline the state government's response to the news that the New South Wales and Victorian governments have agreed to a deal on an increase in the environ-

mental flows from the Snowy River and indicate what effect, if any, this will have on South Australia?

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Water Resources.

An honourable member: Good minister!

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources): Yes, I think you're right. I was absolutely stunned at the opposition's response to the interstate announcement by Premiers Carr and Bracks. I heard one news report on ABC radio last Friday evening in which the member for Kaurna—and I would have hoped that he was misquoted but, as I actually heard him say it, he was not misquoted—criticised the lack of South Australian government involvement in the \$300 million package announced for the Snowy. I know that the honourable member is wont to go down to the South-East and shoot off his mouth and accuse me of not knowing about water, but he should listen because I think that he should learn a lesson about water.

First, we have a cap; secondly, every state is obliged to keep to that cap; and, thirdly, the savings the states make from within the cap they can on-sell and do with as they wish. If the New South Wales and Victorian governments wish to apply \$300 million to their scheme to save water, what they do with that water is, in some measure, their concern, unless the member for Kaurna is suggesting—

Mr Hill interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: —that South Australian taxpayers' money should be used to bail out and rehabilitate schemes for Victorian and New South Wales taxpayers. I note in the *Advertiser* today—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Yes—under 'Labor's Fair Tax', which was part of a leaked document that we received yesterday—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Well, they laugh and say that this document is available on the web. I took up their invitation and tried to get to it on the web. Dial the number and you cannot get the document: dial the web page and you cannot get the document. I pray that South Australia will not be subjected to the opposition's ever resuming the Treasury benches. I know what their fair system of tax will be: it will be taxing South Australia's taxpayers to fix up the problems in the Victorian and New South Wales irrigation systems. That is not a very fair tax. We have seen what the Leader of the Opposition did in the Labor conference—this champion of bipartisanship, this man who gets on the radio before the Murray-Darling Commission meetings and says, 'Me, too; take me along.' We saw exactly what he did: he sat there silently while the ministers in New South Wales and Victoria cooked up an alliance. He sat there silently while Senator Schacht, who was there and who has been shunted off the Senate ticket, was the only one to stand up for South Australia. Schacht had some spine, but the Leader of the Opposition went AWOL on that issue. Yet he comes back here and calls for a bipartisan approach on the river.

It is about time that the Leader of the Opposition started standing up for South Australia, and doing so not just on local ABC radio but also in New South Wales, Victoria and wherever his mates can be influenced. The Snowy River Scheme is not a party political problem: it is a problem for 1.5 million people in this state, and the government is fighting it not on behalf of the Liberal Party but on behalf of South Australians. If he wants to be bipartisan, let the leader

get behind the people of this state and not play petty political games.

The leader would be well aware that the last time he stood up in this chamber and asked questions on the Lower Murray irrigation swamps it was a feature story in the *Melbourne Age* the next day. It religiously—

Mr Foley: You're scaring the kids.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to return to the question.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: It reported—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right will remain silent.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I may have a touch of Churchill. The Leader may be accused of having a touch of Mussolini. The last time the Leader stood and asked questions on the Lower Murray swamp, it is a fact that the next day the *Melbourne Age* did not want to report the answer; rather, it reported all the accusations. That is all it reported. In the eyes of Victorians having their Weeties in the morning, it made South Australians look like a mob of carpers and whingers on an issue that everyone in this chamber knows it is not carping and whingeing: it is important to the future of South Australia.

Members opposite can make their deals on the Snowy River, but the Premier of this state has said that we will not sign off on any agreement that compromises the quality, the quantity or the timing of flows to South Australia. They need our signature and they need the signature of the commonwealth, so next week, when I am having a meeting with Senator Minchin and the two ministers, I will be arguing South Australia's position and saying that South Australia is not opposed to corporatisation but that there should be some benefit for the Murray River.

At its mouth, at present, the Snowy River flows at 59 per cent of its traditional flow—59 per cent. At its mouth, at present, the Murray River is flowing at 21 per cent of its original flow. The Murray River is responsible for 40 per cent of the agricultural and horticultural wealth of this nation, and 5 per cent of Murray River water put here on the Adelaide Plains and in the northern cities returns to the economy about three times the agricultural and horticultural return.

There is no question where the prime and best use of Murray River water is in this nation. If the New South Wales and Victorian governments want to corporatise the scheme, and enhance what is largely a tourist river, an iconic river for this nation, let them do so. But it will not be done at the health of the greatest treasure this nation has—the Murray-Darling system. As long as there is one member in this place, and as long as there is one loyal South Australian, we will not lose this fight. I suggest that if the opposition want to lose the next election, get on a different train from us on this matter and see what the South Australian people will say to you.

PARTNERSHIPS 21

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Given the statements of the Minister for Education and Children's Services that no school would be disadvantaged by Partnerships 21, how does the minister justify redirecting resources to P21 schools for programs not available to non-P21 schools? On 12 August 2000 the Chief Executive of the department issued an extensive list of new benefits available exclusively to schools joining Partnerships 21 next year. These benefits include preferential arrangements for staff recruitment, lap top

computers for preschools, priority access to new senior school service officer positions, a second round of \$1 million grants for environmental projects, a re-offer of uncommitted DECStech computer subsidies, and special computer training for principals.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I believe the statement made was that no school entering Partnerships 21 would be worse off than if it remained under the old system. To my recollection, that is the correct statement. This is not a system that we are forcing schools to go into.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Mitchell!

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: This is not a system that schools are having their arms twisted to come into—it is a voluntary system. Under Partnerships 21, schools have the choice to come in and undertake a degree of local management and the responsibility that goes with it. What has been right up front right from the start is that when undertaking that responsibility the school will receive and have access to this level of resources and this level of its own determination.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Well, there is no-one holding the rest out. Tell me who is holding them back: only the Australian Education Union—they are the only ones holding them back. The whole point is that because this government has not rolled over and given the AEU what it wanted in its wage claim the union is saying, 'Don't back P21.' I have plenty of evidence in schools to say that that is what is happening. There are plenty of principals around the place who are saying, 'Well, we will come into P21 once the Industrial Commission has come down with a finding on wages because we can see the benefits of it.'

This system of local management—as described by Peter Upton and many others—is currently the best in the world. We have the best model. Of the additional resources and flexibility that schools are receiving through Partnerships 21, in the schools I have visited some 75 per cent of that is being spent on additional teachers and SSO hours. That is reducing class sizes, and giving additional help to students who need it. If the opposition is not in favour of that sort of reduction in class sizes, and is not in favour of extra SSO hours for students who need it, let members opposite say so right now. Let them say, 'We do not want schools to have this choice.' I see a point of hypocrisy here because in the policy statement they have released, they have said that they want to continue with local management. I ask members opposite which way do they want it. Do you or do you not want schools to have local management, choice, flexibility and the additional resources that that can provide? If you do not, have the guts to come out and say so.

This model is delivering a far better outcome to schools than what has been achieved previously. The principal of a school at Elizabeth North, who is giving an hour of literacy and an hour of numeracy each morning of every week, said to me, 'I could not do this under the old system—'

Mr Hanna interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: —but Partnerships 21 grants me the flexibility to bring in these extra teachers and to deliver that to my students, and I am already seeing improved results because of it.' As I said, if members of the opposition do not want to see lower class sizes and additional help being

given to our students, then let them come out and say so, but we on this side of the House are committed to local management, because this model is delivering better educational outcomes to our students in South Australia.

INFORMATION ECONOMY 2002

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Information Economy outline to the House the feedback he has received on the 21 initiatives of the government's Information Economy 2002 policy?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Information Economy): I thank the member for Colton for his question about a very important issue for the South Australian economy in general, because all sensible and observant commentators have identified that information economy and a state or an economy's ability to handle the challenges which it provides will be the determinant into the future. It has been very interesting to see the sort of feedback we have received following the launch of the 'Information Economy 2002: Delivering the Future' document a month or so ago. In particular, some of the media commentators have been particularly praiseworthy.

One of the keys is from the editorial of the *Australian* of 19, 20 August which states:

The key factor is that the Olsen government is staking the state's development on the future, not the past.

That is the nub of the information economy: does the South Australian economy want to move forward or does it want to stay rooted in the past? Clearly, in their lucid moments every member of the chamber would say that they want the South Australian economy to move forward. However, for political reasons, members opposite say that the information economy is a fad; they do not ask any questions about it and, indeed, they fail to grasp the significance of it. However, Robert Gottliebsen gets the significance of it and in the *Australian* he said:—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr Conlon interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Robert Gottliebsen said:

At last, a government in Australia has realised...what the internet is about (for Australian consumers).

He went on to say:

The South Australian move is probably Australia's most innovative attempt to start reducing (the digital divide).

They are very influential quotes, and I would have thought that the members of the Labor Party wanting the digital divide as it is termed—in other words, wanting the digital divide to be diminished; wanting no-one to miss out on the advantages of the information economy—would be very supportive of these sorts of policies. Certainly, economic commentators such as Robert Gottliebsen are.

In the *City Messenger* of 23 August Terry Plane said:

(IE 2002) sends a message of constructive flexibility (that will create a perception of the state as a place with a positive future.

Again, very important—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Yes, indeed. He was very praiseworthy of the policy. The feedback in the media has been excellent, but it has also been fascinating to see what people have said in relation to the matter of the general person talking about it, and indeed one particular consultant

from Chicago, a young South Australian man working for Ernst and Young over there, sent us an email and I will refer to his comment particularly regarding the virtual electorate. He said:

...(the virtual electorate proposal) is brilliant, forward looking and outward looking. It taps into the way—

the member for Elder laughs; that's good—

business and people now interconnect, especially here in the US. This is not a question of party politics but of reaching out and tapping all the resources available to you. South Australia has done a lot of political firsts; this should maintain the momentum...To the detractors of this idea, I can only say, shame on you, get in touch with your constituents and find out what is really going on not only in our own state but in the world at large.

There was another particularly interesting quote on Talking Point where the person said:

I too am a life-long Labor voter and I am disappointed that the local Labor Party—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Yes, I know; it is factual, though. The person concerned said:

I too am a life-long Labor voter and I am disappointed that the Labor Party has chosen to mock this project. The government has really got the right idea with this one!

I actually—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sorry to interrupt the minister. I warn the member for Hart. I point out that the honourable member is deliberately attempting to disrupt the Minister as best he can. The chair will no longer tolerate it, despite it being a relatively quiet afternoon.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In preparing for this question I thought about what would happen when I answered it: would the Labor Party say yes—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The chair will not tolerate the member for Peake taking up the cudgels. I warn the member for Peake.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thought would the Labor Party, like Saul on the road to Damascus, say, 'Yes, that's right. We've actually got this wrong; this is actually forward thinking, an important way for the future of the South Australian economy.' I have to say, much as I would have liked that to be the case, that I expected the reaction we got today, which was a series of mock laughter, interjection, derision and so on. Why might I have expected that? Because I looked in the Labor Party policy document for what is said about the information economy. Every sensible commentator world wide would indicate that the information economy is the key plank for the way forward. The Labor Party in 136 pages gives the information economy five paragraphs.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: There is no need to email it; I already have it, Mike. The Labor Party gives the information economy—the absolute groundswell of the way forward on a global scale—five paragraphs in 136 pages. That is a terrific contrast between an opposition which does not get it—

Ms Key interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The member for Hanson asks what is our policy: I would be delighted to identify to her that I have explained the policy in great detail. I think I have even sent her a copy of the document. I shall check and make sure.

Ms Key interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: By email, she identified. Of course, that is a problem because it probably has not been opened. Anyway, it is fair to say that our policy has no password protection: we want people to read our policy, so we are very pleased. There is a clear difference between a policy such as IE 2002: Delivering the Future with 21 initiatives—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, sir. Consistent with your earlier ruling, sir, in relation to standing order 98, the minister is clearly debating the matter.

The SPEAKER: I ask the minister to return to his reply.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Certainly, sir.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The chair did not hear that interjection. Has the minister finished his reply?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: As I said, having read the Labor Party platform backwards, forwards and sideways and finding five paragraphs about the information economy, I was appalled, frankly. However, given that I have had one question in over two years in relation to the information economy, I guess one ought not be surprised. However, it is a direct contrast between an opposition that does not get it—and what that means is an opposition which will consign South Australia's economy to the irrelevant—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, sir. The minister is clearly flouting the chair. I ask that he be sat down.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order and ask the minister to come back to the substance of the question.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Sir, I just finished.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Given the Premier's call for bipartisan support to increase the school leaving age from 15 to 16 years, will the Minister for Education and Children's Services undertake to introduce legislation to increase the leaving age from the commencement of the 2001 school year; and will he say whether the annual cost is still \$6.3 million, as stated by the minister in estimates last year?

On Sunday, the Premier announced that cabinet had already decided to increase the leaving age from 15 to 16 years. The media report stated that the Premier refused to outline any plans to increase teacher numbers or funding to cope with the proposal and would not say when the change would commence.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services): The Premier announced that the school compulsory leaving age will be 16 years when the new act is promulgated. A lot of things have changed in the past four or five years and things are different from 1996. In 1997, this government brought in vocational education training, which gives more options to those students who had that option closed off in 1991 when the Labor government of the time closed Goodwood Technical High School—our last technical high school.

Students are now able to involve themselves in and take the opportunity of vocational education training, and they are doing so at a great rate of knots. In 1997, about 2 000 students undertook vocational education training, whereas some 19 000 students are undertaking training this year. In addition to that, apprenticeships and traineeships are now available while students are still at school. So, more options are available to students than were available in the past.

I remind members that students need not be in school until they turn 16 as long as they are in an approved form of

training. It may be that they are undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, attending TAFE, going to school or attending a private provider of training in order to conform to the school leaving age. The new act is now in the hands of the parliamentary draftspeople, and I look forward to this change being included in the new act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Local Government): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I place on record for the information of members some comments regarding the report of the May 2000 council elections which was prepared by the Electoral Commissioner and which I tabled last week. As members are aware, these were the first elections conducted under the provisions of new legislation enacted by the parliament in 1999. As I recently stated, they have been widely acknowledged as being highly successful.

At the outset, I express my congratulations to the Electoral Commissioner and his staff and to the deputy returning officers, electoral officials and council staff for the professional way in which the elections were planned and conducted. In addition, the commissioner's report clearly identifies that a large number of other players contributed greatly to the process, and I acknowledge the efforts (often under considerable time pressures) of Australia Post, the Council Purchasing Cooperative, mailing houses and printers.

The commissioner's report is comprehensive and provides a wealth of statistical and other data which will serve as a valuable reference resource for many years to come. For example, it lists in alphabetical order the name of every candidate who stood for election, together with the ward or other position which they sought. The report gives the number of votes cast for every mayoral, councillor at large and ward councillor election, both as to the first preference votes and the total number of votes for each candidate after distribution of preferences or when the candidate was excluded from the count or declared elected upon achieving a quota.

The number of candidates standing, the proportion of elections which did not require a ballot, and the proportion of female candidates were remarkably consistent with the corresponding figures in 1997. The statewide voter turn-out, however, showed a pleasing increase from 34 per cent to 40 per cent. Tables 3 and 4 of part 2 of the report are worthy of mention. They show the number of electors per representative in every council, and I note that the numbers for metropolitan councils vary from about 1 000 electors per representative to over 5 000. I recognise that circumstances vary between small and large councils and within differing geographical contexts, but these tables suggest to me that councils may need to benchmark their representation structures against their peers and consider whether their communities might be—in some cases at least—either under or over represented.

The report does the community as a whole a valuable service in providing such a range of data in a readable and easily accessible form. The commissioner has identified a

number of matters for consideration and assessment by the review which I have instituted, and these will be followed up.

The steering committee for the review, which includes the Electoral Commissioner and a senior officer of the Local Government Association, expects to make an appointment of an independent organisation to conduct the consultation phase of the review within the next week or two.

Mayor Brian Hurn, the President of the LGA, and I have already written jointly to all councils and invited them to make a written submission. The report prepared by the Electoral Commissioner is—I repeat—a most valuable record of the processes for planning and conducting the May 2000 council elections of the individual candidates and the voting support they received. It is a source of a wide range of other useful data.

SHOP TRADING HOURS

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises): On behalf of the Minister for Workplace Relations, I table a ministerial statement made by him recently in another place.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I am certainly delighted and confident that the Alice Springs to Darwin rail contract will be able to be signed at a ceremony on Wednesday, 18 October (Wednesday next). I am also certainly confident that the Prime Minister, the Premier and the Northern Territory Chief Minister will be able to sign the contract documents now that the outstanding legal issues which have held up progress—because the contract was supposed to be signed in July in London—have now been resolved, and that the next stage—and probably the most important stage—will be that the bankers will agree to financial closure on the investment package from the private sector in November.

I understand that the Prime Minister has been asked to clear his diary so that he can be in Adelaide next Wednesday and that bookings have been made. Certainly, we understand that, if that is the case and if the financial closure is able to be completed in November, the \$1 billion plus deal to construct the railway will mean that work will begin in December. It is expected to be completed by early 2004. Certainly, the consortium is confident that the railway will be more than competitive with road freight. The South Australian, Northern Territory and federal governments have jointly put up \$480 million, with \$750 million to be raised by the private sector.

South Australia's commitment of course has been capped at \$150 million following an agreement between the government and the opposition which was acknowledged by the Premier in this place in terms of the bipartisanship needed to secure the extra funds. The Howard federal government lifted its commitment after Kim Beazley announced his promise of up to \$300 million in support from a federal labor government. The rail line will be an important gateway to Asia for South Australian products and will provide a boost to regional South Australia, especially in the upper Spencer Gulf. We certainly hope that this will give the upper Spencer Gulf cities the boost to jobs and local economies that they deserve, and in particular we want this opportunity to ensure that the BHP long products operation, soon to be officially designated as the One Steel operation in Whyalla, is present-

ed in the best light possible in terms of its potential to supply the rails for the project. Certainly, all of us hope this can be a new beginning for the cities of the upper Spencer Gulf. It gives the cities a breathing space in which to plan retaining their existing industries and secure new and diversified investment opportunities.

It is now vitally important, however, that we all work to achieve our 70 per cent of the total project costs being spent on goods and services supplied from South Australia and the Northern Territory. This is as critical for the upper Spencer Gulf cities as it is for the state. The project should mean up to 2 000 extra jobs in the construction phase, with hopefully 1 000 or more of those jobs coming from South Australia. The 1 410 kilometre railway will make strong demands on South Australian industry for materials, including 155 000 tonnes of steel rails, 2.3 million sleepers, 120 new bridges, 3 500 tonnes of structural steel and 100 000 cubic metres of reinforced concrete. The project entails earthworks, culverts, bridges, ballast, sleepers, rail and rail clips; rolling stock, track laying, signalling and communication; terminals, electronics, and buildings; the supply of fuel, fencing and security; accommodation for the construction workers on the site; catering for the work force; maintenance of plant and equipment; hire of tools, plant and equipment; offices; and design, management of procurement and testing services, to name just some of the goods and services required. There is obviously potential for South Australian firms to provide the lion's share of these items.

I know the Partners in Rail group is working on this issue, but it is vital that South Australian firms are geared up to participate fully in the project and that some things that can be supplied locally are not simply bought off the shelf from overseas, as with other major projects, because local firms have not been given enough time or information about what they need to do to put in a competitive bid. So, there are real opportunities for our troubled heavy engineering sector, not just for this project but for export and other local work.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): I am delighted to be able to commend you, sir, and your officers today. In reading through the *Advertiser* this morning I was very pleased indeed to come to page 19 and to see 'What's on in your parliament'. I am particularly pleased about this, because it is something that I have been trying to promote for the past 25 years. It did happen for a few weeks and then it stopped—and that was a long time ago—but the most important thing is that it is back again. Only last week I raised with you the concept that had been picked up by the federal parliament. Those of us who take the *Australian* saw in it last week a similar advertisement—if we can call it that—indicating what was on in that week in the House of Representatives and the Senate. It made a lot of sense to me and, when I mentioned it to you, you said you would follow it up and here a week later we have proof that you did so.

I believe that it is important that this be bipartisan, that it reflect the responsibilities of the parliament for the week, that it inform people about legislation that is before both houses and that it also refer to matters that are before the parliamentary committees. That is exactly what this advertisement is doing. In addition, it is good that it informs the community about the excellent web page that we now have for people to look up. So, both the telephone number and the web page information are in the advertisement.

So, I congratulate you and your officers. I hope that this does not last just for a few days but that it continue on while

the house sits and that people are provided with that information. The suggestion has been made that we might consider letting people know in the advertisement that visitors are welcome into the house during the sittings of the house. I think that is a very good idea. I am delighted that it appears there under 'What's on in your parliament' and I look forward to its continuing.

I want to refer briefly to another matter which I have brought to the notice of the house on a number of occasions in relation to the work of the friends of parks in South Australia. I was delighted to learn from the minutes I received recently of the sixth annual meeting of the Friends of Parks Incorporated that in 1999 some 5 002 volunteers were involved. The number of days they worked was 47 945 and they worked on 723 projects, and I understand that these figures are conservative. The 47 945 days of volunteer labour equates to 9 589 weeks, which in turn equates to 204 full-time staff.

It has been put to me that, in dollars, based on an average salary of \$30 000 per year, this is worth about \$6 120 000 to National Parks and Wildlife SA per year. That is a great effort, and I take this opportunity to commend all those people throughout the state who assist the friends of parks. Having had something to do with the setting up of that organisation some time ago, I can say that I am delighted with the results, and I think everybody in South Australia should be pleased with those sorts of figures. They are quite staggering and obviously represent a saving to the state of a considerable amount of money.

Ms RANKINE (Wright): It is over 12 months now since I raised with the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning the need to upgrade Golden Grove Road. Golden Grove Road from Grenfell Road through to One Tree Hill Road is in an absolutely disgraceful state. At that time the minister undertook to conduct an investigation, and I will return to that issue a bit later, but the result that came back was that it was not necessary to upgrade that road for at least 10 years. That situation is simply not tenable. That road is unlit, it is narrow, it has no footpaths, the verges are unsealed, at night when it is raining you cannot see and you literally take your life in your hands. In its current state, the road is totally unsuitable for the type of traffic using it. A huge range of traffic uses that road. It is used by quarry trucks, large B-double vehicles, semitrailers, all ranges and sizes of trucks coming out of the garden supply business on Golden Grove road and a large number of normal domestic vehicles. It is envisaged that the council's waste transfer station will create an extra 2 400 movements up and down that road each week.

This road in this particular section abuts Industry Park, provides access to quarries and to the Hallett Brick and PGH plants, Garden Grove and a hugely expanding housing development along that stretch of road. I met with the mayor of Tea Tree Gully not long ago and she agreed with me about the need to upgrade that road. In fact, in one piece of correspondence she wrote to me and thanked me for my letter regarding the need to upgrade Golden Grove Road, a view which, she said, is wholeheartedly shared by the council and its staff; and, at the last council meeting, that view was confirmed. I attended a council meeting together with other members of this House and some officers of the Department of Road Transport. The council listed its priority for road upgrade. In relation to Golden Grove Road the motion that was passed at council stated:

Council calls on the minister to acknowledge that special circumstances exist in relation to Golden Grove Road given the nature of diversity of traffic it accommodates and the impact this road has on local industry development and employment opportunities—

and that is a very important factor—

and, furthermore, council urges that the government allocate a separate and special funding allocation for its immediate upgrade.

The council did not list Golden Grove Road in its list of priorities simply because it believed, as I do, that it is a very special circumstance. During this meeting I asked the officers from the Department of Road Transport whether they took into account the diversity of traffic using a particular road; they said no. I asked them whether they consulted with industry about future needs. Again, they said no.

If this road is not upgraded it will cost our area jobs. The other area of concern about Golden Grove Road is the section of road from One Tree Hill Road through to Greenwith, which is currently under the control of the council. It is imperative that the speed limit for the section of road north of the Golden Grove township be reduced. It is probably the most dangerous section of that particular road. It is a one kilometre stretch of road with an 80 km/h speed limit. The rest of the road, where there are two lanes either way or the unsealed verge section of the road, has either a 70 km/h or 60 km/h speed limit.

Travelling along some very winding, narrow stretches of this road, one is suddenly confronted with a 60 km/h speed limit sign. Then, within exactly 100 metres (I have measured this in my car), one is expected to travel at 25 km/h past the Greenwith and our Lady of Hope Primary Schools and the Greenwith Kindergarten. Those two primary school campuses accommodate 1 000 primary school students. Each day 1 000 primary school students are attending these primary schools, as well as 120 children attending the kindergarten, yet the response so far from DRT is that there is absolutely no reason to change the speed limit. There is no consistency in this approach whatsoever.

The minister, sadly, has received some bad advice on other issues in relation to traffic in my electorate. I would urge the minister—as she has done on other occasions and been able to fix problems—to visit the area and have a look for herself. I am sure that if the minister visited the location and met with parents she would change her mind.

Time expired.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Members would be aware of my continuing commitment to civics and citizenship. I attend as many citizenship ceremonies as possible, and it would probably be possible to count on one hand the number of ceremonies I have missed due to other commitments in the past six years. So, it was particularly pleasing when a Mr Gratton Miller sent me a copy of a letter that he sent to the *Eastern Courier* regarding citizenship. I would like to quote Mr Miller's letter. As I said, I attend as many citizenship ceremonies as I can within the Norwood Payneham St Peters Council area and the Campbelltown and Burnside council areas. Mr Miller's letter refers particularly to the citizenship ceremony at the Burnside council and states:

Dear Sir/Madam,

It was good news, and there was no media there to report it. Do we only have to be served up bad news? I do not believe so. In the same week that there were riots in Woomera by illegal migrants, which covered the front pages of most major newspapers and jumped out at us from the tele on the evening news, there was good news too. On Tuesday evening, August 29, at the Burnside Council's Civic

Centre, 35 'legal migrants' became Australian citizens. All were well presented and with names that indicated that they were from all parts of the world. I am sure that they all will make very good Australians and contribute to our country. We will, I believe, all be better off for accepting them into our local community and our Australian family. Congratulations to them all. [Her Worship, the Mayor of Burnside] Wendy Greiner officiated, and among the honoured guests were Tourism Minister Joan Hall and Hartley MP Joe Scalzi.

We were entertained by members of the South Australian Flute Ensemble, and after the ceremony we were treated to refreshments, food from many nations and our own meat pies with sauce. All our new citizens were given a wattle tree to plant. Okay, it is not a story to make the front page of the *Advertiser*. But a group photo of our new citizens with the mayor would make a much better photo than an ugly cement brick wall, as was recently shown on the front page of the *Eastern Courier Messenger* [last week]. By the way, where was the Messenger? Is it not a community paper reporting our community events? Well, as they say, bad news travels fast and fortunately this was good news, so do not tell anyone!

I must commend the *Eastern Courier* for publishing that letter. I believe that the media and the community in general should make more of citizenship ceremonies. As we move towards the Centenary of Federation, celebrating 100 years of the most successful democracy, we should acknowledge our gold medals in this area. It would be good, as Mr Miller has suggested, for a group photograph and an article to appear in the Messenger newspaper and, indeed, the *Advertiser* from time to time saying 'Welcome' to new citizens who have made a commitment to Australia. I say this because there are still 750 000 permanent residents in Australia out of a population of approximately 19 million who are not Australian citizens.

They have not taken the final step as these citizens have. We can argue about Australia's history and when we became a nation. We acknowledge our first settlers (the indigenous people) and then the European settlement. We can talk about ANZAC, the Second World War and when Australia became a nation. There can be much discussion about the importance of when Australia became a nation, but there is no mention when a citizen becomes an Australian: a person who becomes an Australian when he or she takes out citizenship and makes that commitment to this country. I commend Mr Miller for writing this letter to the *Eastern Courier*. There should be more acknowledgment of this, and I believe that we should think about acknowledging young people when they turn 18 and become Australian citizens also.

Time expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I have raised this issue previously but, unfortunately, I feel compelled to do so again given that, certainly over the past 18 months to two years, nothing has changed. In fact, I think that this situation has become worse. One of my elderly constituents, Colin, has been given the royal run-around over a set of dentures. Over the years Colin has spent several thousand dollars of his own money on denture repairs. When he reached a stage where he did not have funds available to repair his dentures and he needed to use the services of the public dental clinic, the system treated him incredibly badly.

Colin, finally having been able to make an appointment, thinking that his denture problems would be taken care of, was informed that it would be many months before anything could be done. When the time passed he made inquiries and was told that he would have to wait a further 12 months. In the meantime, Colin's dentures had deteriorated and, as is the case when dentures or a person's own teeth deteriorate, eating solid food had become incredibly difficult. In Colin's case, his bottom gum had also deteriorated, so he had little gum to

hold the dentures in his mouth. Having had the opportunity to view Colin's difficulties with his dentures, I have to say that it was an appalling sight. His health was suffering and he was becoming extremely frustrated.

I wrote to and telephoned the dental clinic and got another appointment for Colin. After that appointment he was sent to a private technician who, sadly, was able to make only minor repairs to the dentures and was not able to fix the problem. That meant another letter from myself to the dental clinic, and that saw Colin go off to another dentist, who agreed that Colin had exceptionally serious problems and needed specialist work, but again Colin was told that he would have to wait. Colin was sent to another private dentist, who was horrified (I have some of this in writing) not only with the condition of Colin's gums but also with his dentures, because by that time the bottom dentures had completely disintegrated. Unfortunately, that dentist did not have the expertise that is required to make Colin a new set of dentures because of his gum deterioration.

Colin, who is a very placid, patient man, was becoming extremely upset and frustrated and totally disenchanted with our public dental system. He had been such a patient man but enough was enough. He could not continue to endure such suffering, and the continual delays were taking a toll on his health. His intellectual wellbeing was also suffering as a result. In the end I wrote to Minister Brown because I had absolutely no alternative, and only by doing that were we able to receive some results. Colin is to get new dentures, but only after a series of visits to a dentist for fittings and other procedures associated with making him special dentures because of the deterioration of his gums. At least now Colin can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

This man has endured a lot of frustration and pain and, as I said, he is completely disillusioned with the system. He had spent thousands of dollars looking after his own teeth but, when he needed the support of our public dental service, it was just not forthcoming, and Colin is not the only one. I know of numerous people on waiting lists, and I now get emails from people complaining about their own or their parents' dental problems. I appreciate the support that the minister gave me in Colin's case, but I ask the minister, the government and the Premier to look seriously at the state of our dental health care system.

Time expired.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to speak of the crisis in East Timor and to call for further direct South Australian involvement from local businesses and the South Australian government in the reconstruction of that troubled country. During the break I had the privilege of accompanying the Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon. Alexander Downer, to Timor for the first anniversary celebrations of the popular consultation vote in August 1999, which, as all members are aware, was followed by considerable violence and ultimately by the deployment of Interfet under Australian command. I think I was probably the first South Australian member of parliament to visit the war-torn country, and while there I managed to meet and speak with a number of South Australians who are part of the UN effort to reconstruct the country, particularly some of our police officers, South Australian servicemen and a number of aid workers from South Australia.

In Timor, I accompanied the minister to the Santa Cruz cemetery to attend a very moving service commemorating the death of so many people during the harsh crackdown some

years ago by Indonesian forces at that site. I also went to a number of wreath-laying ceremonies and festivities associated with the celebration of the first anniversary of the vote. It was my honour to meet Xanana Gusmao, President of CNRT; Mr Sergio Viera de Mello, senior representative of the Secretary-General of the UN in Timor; Bishop Belo; Mr Jose Ramos Horta; and a range of other UN and Australian diplomats serving so well in the name of peace.

There are considerable opportunities in East Timor for South Australia. UN contracts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars are available for the taking in logistics, construction, transport and other administrative support to the extensive UN operation, which involves almost 9 000 people. Having commanded an Australian peacekeeping force in Sinai-Egypt in 1993 and having seen an international peacekeeping effort at work, I appreciate the way in which such forces consume resources and engage private contractors in the business of sustaining their effort.

I strongly urge South Australian companies to find out what opportunities are on offer up there and to bid for contracts because, apart from supporting the UN effort, which is the first part of the opportunity, there is the ongoing opportunity to participate in the reconstruction of East Timor with all the potential contractual benefits to South Australian businesses. I understand that the South Australian government is picking this up and is doing something to promote access to those opportunities for South Australian companies.

I have also written to the Premier and to a number of government ministers suggesting that we do something to help the people of East Timor. We could adopt a school, a fire station or an emergency services depot. Perhaps we could adopt a local council and help it to reconstruct its systems of management. By developing such a relationship directly, we could put a South Australian stamp on some of these establishments and institutions in Timor and provide a real, positive benefit to the reconstruction of the country. I expect that, if we were to ask South Australian public servants to volunteer to serve in East Timor in their own time, perhaps for a couple of weeks at a time, we would be deluged with applicants, and a number of people have contacted my office expressing such an interest. I hope that proceeds in concert with our national government's efforts.

I also compliment and draw to the attention of the House the outstanding efforts of Minister Downer. Minister Downer is proving to be one of our most astute and capable foreign ministers since World War II. The way in which the whole matter of Timor has been handled is commendable. I also congratulate members of his staff, particularly Mr Neil Mules, Mr Scott Dawson from Ausaid, Ms Amanda Hawkins, who is a diplomat on his staff, and James Batley, the Australian Head of Mission in Timor. These people are doing Australia proud in the effort to help that country get back on to its feet.

Time expired.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 5 October. Page 59.)

Mr VENNING (Schubert): It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the motion that the Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor of South Australia's opening speech be adopted. I commend the mover of the

motion, the Hon. David Wotton, who raised many noteworthy issues in his speech. I also thank His Excellency for delivering the opening speech, which outlined this government's tremendous economic achievements over the past 12 months. Through that hard work we are now able to focus on strategies that will improve our social wellbeing in areas such as education, health and safety. I think the theme of the speech could have been the balance between economic gains and social justice.

His Excellency spoke about the 2000-01 budget being a balanced budget in cash terms, the first for many years. The Governor also spoke about our most valuable tourism industry which, in 1999, generated \$3.1 billion in consumer spending and supported 36 000 full-time equivalent jobs. I notice the Minister for Tourism is in the House at the moment, and certainly she has done a wonderful job. It was great to see her active on the weekend again promoting tourism in South Australia.

Also, Mr Deputy Speaker, in thanking you for moving this motion, I was pleased that you put a lot of your experience into your speech. I know you have announced your intention to retire but I hope that is still a long way off. Certainly your experience is much appreciated in this place.

The Governor also outlined the legislative program for the coming months, which certainly responds to the needs of our community. It will deliver a more productive, competitive, innovative and safe environment that all South Australians deserve and will enjoy.

I congratulate Sir Eric and Lady Neal for the splendid job that they continue to do for this great state. Their workload is terrific and they carry out their duties with dignity and ease. They are certainly two very special people and we are very fortunate to have them as our vice-regal couple. I wish them both the best of health for many years to come and look forward to many years with them as our state's number one couple.

It was great to see His Excellency riding in another Hupmobile in the Bay to Birdwood Run on Sunday. I was driving a 1912 model and His Excellency was in a 1914 model, I think. He certainly appeared to be enjoying himself. I noticed the Minister for Tourism was there, too, to flag us off. It was a great day for South Australia. There were thousands of people out. I remind the House that this is the largest event of its type in the world. It is great to be participating in it and I congratulate all those involved in organising it. It was a fantastic day. Certainly the weather had a lot to do with that.

Since I spoke to the Address in Reply motion last year, I believe that we as a state have at last turned the corner and that we as a government have turned this state's fortunes around. We have leased ETSA and have pretty well cleared all of our non-commercial debt. Our other strategies aimed at improving our economic strength are also paying dividends, and by not shirking our responsibilities we have entered a new environment where we can clearly see the prosperity that lies ahead.

We only have to look at some of the statistics. Our gross state product has grown by nearly 9 per cent; agriculture, forestry and fishing have grown by 24 per cent; output in manufacturing industry has grown by 13 per cent. Of course, to top all this off, the wine industry is now this state's leading export industry. As the member for the Barossa, and also a grain grower, I marvel at that and am very pleased.

In regard to jobs, the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in July show South Australia's unemploy-

ment rate has fallen by .3 per cent to 7.8 per cent. Youth unemployment fell a massive 5.5 per cent. South Australia now has a lower youth unemployment rate than Victoria and Tasmania. In the last 12 months the total number of employed South Australians grew by 14 000.

I was pleased to note in the Governor's speech the reference to our state's competitive position being underlined by the reduction in WorkCover costs to businesses by 7.5 per cent on average and by our industrial relations record, which is second to none. This is a magnificent feat because WorkCover costs have been a hurdle for many of our employers in this state, particularly the small business sector. This is one of the great victories that I believe is unheralded at this moment. To see a reduction of 7.5 per cent, on average, is massive and certainly businesses appreciate that. I think that is part of the reason why we are seeing a new confidence. The government is leading the way.

In the 10 months to April 2000 the state's exports grew by 16.7 per cent to \$5.1 billion, an increase of \$732 million compared to a year earlier. National exports increased by 9.7 per cent over the same period. Wine, as I said, is our biggest export earner totalling \$6.18 billion in the 1999-2000 year, overtaking cereals and grains for the first time. Cars and car part exports increased by 41.8 per cent. Over the 10 months to April 2000 exports to the Middle East were up 12.8 per cent; to the European Common Market up 16.4 per cent; to New Zealand up 23.9 per cent; to Japan up 24.7 per cent; and to the US up 41.7 per cent.

South Australia's fastest growing export commodities were fish and crustaceans, cars and car parts, metals and manufacturing and wine. South Australia's population grew by .4 per cent, reversing a trend where our population was declining. Certainly this performance is fantastic and when ABARE picked up the comment in its last forecast about farming in general, it said that the farmers in South Australia are probably the most efficient and best performing farmers in Australia. So certainly every sector of the South Australian economy is doing well, and I think the government needs to take a large share of the credit for that. These are only but a few items, but the list certainly goes on and on.

I was interested in His Excellency the Governor's reference to the Controlled Substances Act to allow for the introduction of a police drug diversion scheme to deal with drug offences. I wish to reiterate my opposition to any tolerance in the growing of marijuana for personal use. I am opposed to allowing 10 plants, and even three plants. If we were dinkum in combating drugs in South Australia I believe it should be an offence to have any plants. I have said it before and I say it again: I do not believe there should be any tolerance at all. I cannot believe, when we hear rumours about South Australia becoming a drug state, that we allow this position to continue.

We as the government and a state, because we have cleared out debt, can now invest in new hospital buildings; we can build a railway through the middle of the country; and we can clean up our river. We have a bright future to look forward to, which was not the case when Labor was in government. It lost a million a day over 10 years, which was very poor management. The people of South Australia know this and they should not forget it, though I believe they should be reminded at times. When we stumble upon the occasional hiccup that the government has—and every government has them—I ask them to think of the bigger picture, to think of where we have come from and to think about where we are going.

I would like to talk about some big issues that lie ahead of us which are also very important, positive issues. The first I want to discuss is water resource management. This government has taken a lead role in promoting cross-border national management of the River Murray. This government has been instrumental in convening a council of Australian governments' meeting to discuss the River Murray and other natural resource management issues. The government continues to pursue improved management for the River Murray to support sustainable irrigation and protect our major source of water and river ecosystems. This will be achieved by obtaining additional water for economic development through trade and improved irrigation techniques and working with the Murray-Darling Basin Commission to review the operation of barrages along the Murray to improve flows, enhance fish flows and rehabilitate wetland habitats.

Other activities undertaken with the commission include improving flow to the lower lakes, Coorong and the Murray Mouth and reviewing the cap of water diversions upstream and developing a basin salinity management plan for the River Murray in South Australia. Salinity is a big issue and further work on at least three salt inception schemes will start in 2001-02 as part of the Murray-Darling salinity and drainage strategy. There is a lot of work to be done to save our river, but this government, led most competently by the Minister for Water Resources, the Hon. Mark Brindal, is tackling the problem with great gusto and will fix it. I believe that increased pressure has to be put on upstream irrigators to reduce their water usage because at the moment the amount of water used by rice and cotton growers in New South Wales is absolutely staggering. I appreciated the minister, Mark Brindal, being present at the public meeting at Blanchetown to discuss the water problems in my electorate last Friday evening. It was a large meeting and the minister certainly had a captive audience when he discussed these issues, particularly those involving water requirements, water purity, the trading of water licences and how to get them. People are only just realising what an important issue water is.

I refer now to the sale of PortsCorp. As a grain grower—and therefore a shareholder in the South Australian Cooperative Bulk Handling (SACBH), which, as of yesterday, has been renamed AusBulk—I have been delivering grain over a period of many years and, because I have delivered X tonnes, I now have X shares on that ratio. Every farmer who has delivered grain over the past 10 years has shares in the company. I declare my interest in this matter and will be very careful of what I do during the next few days in relation to this issue; and, sir, I will be guided by you, the House, the Clerk and everyone else. I do not believe that my interest should exclude me from voting but if it does I will not do so. I strongly believe that any infrastructure upgrade must be bound to the sale process. This state needs an ironclad guarantee that when the ports are sold the upgrade of the infrastructure is a certainty by law.

Another important issue in relation to the ports is what shape and form the upgrade of the facilities will take. There are plans to upgrade the inner harbor at Port Adelaide, which involves an extensive dredging program extending the full length of the Port River to make the port Panamax capable, that is, capable of handling ships of up to 80 000-plus tonnes capacity. World markets are looking for ever-increasing efficiencies and using Cape size vessels, which are absolutely huge ships with a capacity of 120 000-plus tonnes. I believe that, if this state is to improve its competitiveness against other states and other countries, we must have a facility that

is Cape ship capable. If that is the case, there is no way to dredge the Port River in order to allow Cape ships to enter into the inner harbour, because it is not deep enough or wide enough to allow ships to be turned around—there is just not enough room both along the river and in the port itself for Cape ships. Therefore, I ask the question: where will a new facility be built—Outer Harbor or somewhere else? Hard decisions have to be made and I am very pleased that the Premier and Minister Armitage recognise this, and work is currently being done to consider the best options to ensure that this state remains competitive.

I want to refer briefly to the wonderful season most farmers are enjoying throughout the state. If there are widespread rains over the next couple of days, it will be a very good season and could well be another record harvest for the state's grain growers, and with prices at the moment being at an acceptable level the local economy will benefit. However, there is one very big and real threat to the success of the harvest, and we have heard plenty about it—the impending locust plague. Reports over the weekend revealed a huge outbreak in the north of the state, especially between the Pimba and Glendambo regions. One report stated that the density of the outbreak was beyond description. In many districts, hatching of locust eggs has well and truly started and we are on the brink of the main onslaught, with the aerial spraying operation getting into full swing earlier this week. I congratulate and commend the Deputy Premier, Hon. Rob Kerin, on the action he has taken and the comprehensive strategy developed by PIRSA in conjunction with local councils to combat this menace.

Potentially, this is the worst locust plague with which this state has ever been faced, and the damage that could be caused could well total hundreds of millions of dollars. It is imperative that PIRSA implement its strategy successfully, but it is equally important that each and every farmer keeps an eye out and assesses their own situation and, if they do find locusts in numbers, they need to report it immediately to their local council. Farmers need to keep checking their properties, even after they have sprayed, because further hatchings can and will occur.

I raise another issue other than the locust plague that is threatening our land. I speak about the price of fuel and the impact it is having on the person on the land and people living in our country communities. We all know that, when your operating costs rise, the bottom line that is, the profit margin, drops. Profits are being continually squeezed and, if it were not for the Aussie dollar being so poor against the greenback, giving our commodity prices a boost, farmers would be in real trouble. The weak Aussie dollar makes our fuel more expensive and also imported machinery and parts much more expensive. Next week will see the first major price rise for imported machinery and parts. Certainly, we are absolutely in a squeeze, and the winner out of this is good commodity prices—as long as they remain good, because, if they slip further, we will be on an all-side loser. It is dearer fuel, parts and machinery, but the trade-off is a better price. I hope that continues.

The price of crude oil has risen significantly over the past 18 months, even before the Aussie dollar began to fall. Country people often have only one option, that is, to use their car and to buy fuel to enable them to travel around. There is very little, if any, public transport, so they are forced to use their private vehicles. The federal government must look at ways in which to remedy this, because our rural and regional areas are suffering.

I have spoken enough about the state and the larger issues, so I would now like to focus on my electorate of Schubert. In the main, as I have said dozens of times before, things continue to boom in Schubert—and it is booming on many fronts. Its economy, its employment, its tourism and its quality of life are all booming. It really is an idyllic place, particularly in the Barossa. Although some areas continue to struggle, in the main things are pretty good. However, this cannot go on forever, if one most important and vital issue is not addressed. That issue is water. I spoke about the Murray as a separate issue earlier, but I am talking here about a sustainable supply of fresh water in primary producing areas, particularly the Barossa Valley.

The Premier has said that water will be the gold of the future, and that is definitely the case in my district, particularly the Barossa. We have seen massive new vine plantings throughout the region and, with the infrastructure that we presently have, we are faced with an unsustainable future. I have spoken about this previously, and I am most pleased that work has progressed by BIL (Barossa Infrastructure Limited). Its project will deliver a supplementary supply of fresh water to hundreds of Barossa vineyards. Literally thousands of hours of work has been put into the planning of this project. The Managing Director of BIL, Mr Mark Whitmore, the board of BIL chaired by Professor David Klingberg, the Premier, cabinet, SA water and many more, including myself, have all been involved in the process. I was most heartened to hear that approval in principle has been given by the Barossa and Light Regional Council and that the project has now progressed to the design and construct stage. I understand that the Development Assessment Commission has to consider the plans and, with all going well, we could see some pipeline construction in the next few months.

For members' information, this \$34 million project, funded by growers, will bring a separate, unfiltered supply of water into the valley from the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, piped to the Warren reservoir and then distributed to the vineyards. This will ensure that the Barossa is preserved as the premium winegrowing region in Australia, providing surety in the industry and insurance in adverse seasons.

The final chapter occurred last Wednesday night. I attended the annual general meeting of growers, and they agreed to sign off on the project. So, after all this, it is now a reality. It is probably the success story of the year for me and for the people of the Barossa.

I will speak briefly about the emergency services levy and local government involvement. I am pleased to say that the emergency services levy is providing the resources of which our emergency services have been starved for so many years. I am very pleased that quite significant reductions in the levy have come about as a result of the reclassification of the Barossa region. On some properties a reduction of 70 per cent has resulted—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Be patient. I am also very happy with the effect of the levy. However, I still believe that local government should become more involved in the process, particularly in the collection of this levy. I believe that this will provide greater efficiencies in the administration of the levy, and the resultant savings could then be passed onto the consumers—the property owners—and our emergency services. Another aspect of local government involvement should be in the decision making process on where and how the money is spent. Having decisions made on a regional basis would

definitely bring cost savings and further efficiencies that could also be passed on.

I question why in every other area, particularly in our health administration, we have gone regional, but in this case we have gone away from regions to a central state based system. That is a further concern of mine, and I am prepared to work with the government on that and, hopefully, the last chapter of this should involve much more involvement with local government and certainly bring in necessary efficiencies.

I sincerely believe that through the hard work and tough decisions, although at times unpopular, the Olsen government has made a difference—a very real and positive difference. We have got this state in good economic shape, and we are now in a position to move forward and take advantage of any opportunities that will enhance our way of life.

I pause here and mention that this morning I attended the funeral of Mrs Joyce Olsen, the mother of our Premier. Certainly, it was a privilege to be present, and I pass on to the Premier and the Olsen family my condolences and those of my family. Certainly, Mrs Olsen was a lovely lady and a pivotal person in the Kadina community. Irrespective of who you are and where you are in life, family comes first. Certainly, it was a quite humbling experience to attend the Premier's home community to pay our respects to his mother—and what a fine community person Mrs Joyce Olsen, OAM, was.

I also wish to raise another matter in relation to which I attended a function last week. This initiative, which involves a new concept in the valley, is an initiative of one of the sons of the valley, that is, Mr Herman Thumm of Chateau Yaldara fame. This man, at 87 years of age, with his foresight and ability to see beyond today, absolutely amazes me.

The name 'Barossa' is a misspelt word of 'Barrosa', which means hill of roses. At Chateau Barrosa there is a hill, and in his twilight years Mr Thumm—HT as we call him (HT, high tensile, if you like)—has seen fit to plant this total hill out to roses. I do not know how many acres it comprises, but it is a multimillion dollar project. This will be the largest rose garden in the Southern Hemisphere, and it has been overseen by experts from around the world. I wish to congratulate Mr Thumm. Not only is he smart enough to come up with this concept but also he is smart enough to patent the word 'Barrosa'. There is some concern that it might confuse people having 'Barossa' and 'Barrosa' circulated as a brand label, but I do not think it will, because the wineries are in the Barossa and this vineyard 'Barrosa' uses the original and correct spelling of the word. Of course, it means hill of roses, and we have just that—a hill of roses.

Earlier I was speaking to the Minister for Tourism, and I am sure that she will visit this site at the first opportunity because this is something special. I believe that the first rose will be flowering within the next two to three weeks, and it is a pleasure to be associated with Herman Thumm, and his wife Inga. Certainly, they have done much for the Barossa already and, at 87, Mr Thumm continues to do so.

I commend the Governor's speech to the House and again thank him for opening the parliament and outlining the government's legislative program. I have pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): We enter the spring session of parliament with the state's finances in a parlous state, with taxes and charges at record levels and with massive spending

by this government, yet spending on the wrong priorities. That is becoming clear. At the same time as this massive spending on wrong priority areas, we are seeing severe cuts to essential services. After seven budgets and seven years of Liberal government at the helm, the people of South Australia have a right to ask, 'After the sale of \$7 billion worth of state assets, significant increases in existing taxes and charges and the introduction of the new emergency services tax, why are we seeing hundreds of million of dollars worth of cuts to health and education?'

Yesterday's lead in the *Advertiser*, 'Family bills jump \$198', reported on what many of my constituents experience only too closely and have to struggle with every day. Electricity, water and gas bills are spiralling; annual electricity bills have risen 18.4 per cent since 1996, that is, by \$114; gas is up by 23.4 per cent or \$64; and water, after all the promises of a 20 per cent reduction in costs, has not been cheaper at all but, rather, has increased in price since privatisation in 1996. We were promised cheaper electricity as a result of the sale of ETSA but, instead, prices have gone up and, if you have difficulty paying these bills then you are doubly behind the eight ball because the penalties for late payment are huge. We see a new disconnection-reconnection electricity fee of about \$50 and, similarly, on the emergency services tax you are up for significant fines if you have trouble finding the money in time. The cumulative impact of all these increases in charges is hitting people, such as my constituents in the Salisbury and Elizabeth areas, very hard indeed.

Yet, for all this pain, there has not been the gain. Despite its own self image, not to mention the incredible amount of taxpayers' money that has been squandered on promoting itself, the Liberal Government is proving itself to be a very bad economic manager. We have sold ETSA but we now have the highest electricity prices in the nation. For the trouble, we have received a relatively low price for the assets. After bungling the sale process, we find now that only \$4 billion, plus the proceeds from the latest sale in the sequence, that is, the sale of ElectraNet for \$938 million, has been wiped from the state debt.

Where has the balance of the money gone? Well, the people of South Australia have a right to ask. Principally, the money has gone in budget mismanagement. The government has been running up deficit budgets in several departments. Hospitals are in debt, and the government has had to eat into cash reserves in education this year to the tune of \$28 million. That unsustainable strategy did not just start with this year's budget. When asked in estimates about how it would balance the budget next year, bearing in mind the significant cost overruns that have already emerged, it became apparent that the government has no strategy. The minister claimed that he had a strategy of balancing the books by running down cash reserves. This is not sustainable and, on scrutiny, it became apparent that he does not know how he will meet the big black hole in the next education budget, to which the minister is surely turning his mind now.

The money has also gone in separation packages for public servants. We have seen a downsizing of the Public Service, which is costing a huge amount of money, but people in the suburbs are seeing a decline in the services that used to be provided by the Public Service. We are paying more but we are getting less service all round. The sum of \$2 billion should have come off the debt as a result of the sale of all these assets yet it has not. It has contributed to the debt.

Basically, we have additional expenditure by this government that has added to the debt rather than come off the debt.

Indeed, the Auditor-General in his most recent report, which was tabled last week, pointed with criticism to the strategy of this government and the weakness of our future finances as a result of bad management of debt by this government, its overrunning of budgets and the way in which it is prioritising government expenditure. We are seeing blowouts in expenditure in many departments across government as a whole. We are seeing blowouts of tens of millions of dollars in education, and across government we are seeing blowouts in the costs of consultancies and wastage of funds on overruns on projects such as Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium. The Auditor-General's recent report stated that a couple of wine centre consultancies were awarded without due process, one for \$228 000 and one for \$160 000. When questioning pursued that issue, an alarming cloud was placed over the processes of this government in relation to the awarding of consultancies. It seems there is not the acceptance of the basic principle of how to deal with public money and how it ought to be dealt with in this state.

I want to focus mainly on the issue of education and what has been happening progressively in education, particularly education funding at this time. There has been a lot of focus recently on both the federal and state governments' management of education funding, because it is a mixture of state and federal funds that run our public and private schools. Members would know that it is a policy of the Labor Party to abolish the EBA funding formula which has such a devastating effect on our public schools. It takes money with each student who moves from the public school system to the private school system: it denies those funds to public schools and shunts those funds into private schools. Of course, a great portion of those funds is withheld entirely from the state and returned to federal Treasury. It is a policy of the Labor Party to abolish that unfair mechanism for funding.

Currently legislation is before federal parliament dealing with David Kemp's new funding formula for private schools, to take effect from next year. That funding formula takes from the many in public schools to give to the few in elite private schools. We have learnt in the past couple of weeks that, despite last year cutting funding to government schools by over \$27 million under the enrolment benchmark adjustment policy—a policy which I just indicated Labor will abolish if elected—the Howard government now intends to give that same amount of money—\$27 million—to just 12 of Australia's wealthiest private schools. One of those 12 is a South Australian school, which would receive an additional \$1.5 million at the expense of South Australian public schools.

Some 7 000 government schools had their funding reduced by a total of \$27 million to give it to just 12 of Australia's wealthiest schools. How this can be justified is beyond the comprehension of the people of South Australia. A formula which robs our public schools of precious funds to give to the few elite schools cannot be justified as fair funding. Yet, at the same time that all of this is happening in the state, the state minister decides to reduce state funds to education and to cut \$180 million from education spending in this state over three years. So, on top of the funds being withdrawn by the commonwealth government, we have this massive attack on education in our schools and TAFE colleges in this state, to the tune of \$180 million being withdrawn over three years.

In addition, we are seeing that the scarce funds that are left are being mismanaged: a huge blow-out in expenditure in the

Education Department; a run-down of cash reserves in order to balance the books; and the new Partnerships 21 system, which sets up a two tiered funding regime in our public school system, disadvantaging schools that are non-P21 schools in favour of schools that have decided to join the scheme, simply on the basis of a political decision rather than on any basis of equity or funding need. How can that be a fair and right system for the public schools of South Australia?

While it came out in estimates committees that \$29 million of funding on Partnerships 21 had been removed from other areas of education, of course there are not overall increases to the education budget. Members must understand that this reallocation of funds to certain schools in the public system comes at the expense of other education priorities in the budget. There is not additional money: in fact, it is occurring in a context of massive cuts to the education budget—progressively, as we have seen, particularly over the past few years. At the same time as education is being starved of funds, we are seeing over \$570 000 being spent on overseas travel in the department. At the same time as we are seeing \$53.6 million in the 1999-2000 budgetary cycle being cut from education, we are seeing the sorts of over expenditures in areas of education that are difficult to justify.

We are seeing \$3 million cut from the budget by shortening the school year by a week; \$1 million cut from adult re-entry; and \$500 000 cut from the budget through school closures; some \$4.4 million budgeted for full-time equivalent staff redundancies; and \$13 million cut from the budget by freezing school grants, and the like. School bus routes are being rationalised—that is, cut—in order to save \$1.7 million, and we see a massive cut to TAFE approaching \$10 million in order to make that \$53.6 million cut to the education budget that the minister has imposed on South Australian education.

From what we are seeing, the opposition is quite concerned about the state of the education budget and the priorities of this government in mismanaging that budget for some time. On 7 September, after receiving a leaked document concerning the implementation of the government's latest plan in Partnerships 21, local school management, we called for an inquiry into the Partnerships 21 scheme. It came after receiving leaked information from the department about the divide growing between rich and poor schools under Partnerships 21—the haves and the have-nots. Evidence was received about some schools involving 300 to 400 students being forced into financial difficulty while other schools with far fewer students were receiving and becoming flush with funds; funding discrepancies between schools entering Partnerships 21; and the admission that the whole funding formulae would have to be reworked before next year.

The fact that disadvantaged schools were facing even bigger difficulties in attracting staff, the fact that country teachers were looking at being locked out of city transfers and the increase in the number of unplaced teachers in the metropolitan area were just a few of the things that, coupled with the \$28 million black hole in the education budget, suggest that this government has been making up Partnerships 21 as it goes along and has not been managing the introduction of local school management appropriately.

We have called for an inquiry today. As I mentioned today, the prejudice in allocation of funds and the programs and resources that are being denied to non-P21 schools do not make for a fair and equitable public school system. We have seen the evidence that preferential treatment is given to Partnerships 21 schools that is denied to children attending

non-Partnerships 21 schools. On 12 August this year the Chief Executive issued an extensive list of those benefits that were being made available to some and not others within our supposedly equitable public school system.

There were benefits, including preferential arrangements for staff recruiting, laptop computers for preschools, priority access to new senior school service officer positions, a second round of the \$1 million environmental grants that had been promised to be offered to all schools after they were offered only to P21 schools this year (yet next year they will be available, we are told, only to P21 schools), and a re-offer of uncommitted DECS*tech* computer subsidies and special computer training for principals. Those are all services to which parents would expect children in all public schools to have access, not just those children in those schools that had decided to join P21. That is not about equity and it is not the sort of public education system that is sustainable or one that we want.

As I say, we announced our intentions to move for an inquiry on 7 September, and tomorrow in another place debate on that motion will proceed. We are interested in investigating the impact of Partnerships 21 on the education budget. The minister has been asked repeatedly about this in estimates but has declined to explain the funding reallocations of Partnerships 21—how much exactly it is costing and from where the money is coming. The minister has declined to explain. Also, we will be looking at the global budget and resource issues for schools. Many anomalies are turning up.

I have mentioned preferential funding for Partnerships 21 schools, top-up funding for schools disadvantaged by joining Partnerships 21 and schools' reliance on top-up funding. There has been a fundamental shift in funding formulae. Some schools have asked whether, once their agreement finishes in three years, that top-up funding is available? What happens to them and from where is that money coming? Teacher recruitment and placement, transfer rights and temporary relief teachers are all issues of concern.

One major issue of concern is what is happening to special programs, including disability funding. The question that needs to be answered by this government is how the funding is being organised. Moneys are being reallocated here and there at the expense of other programs. The minister refuses to explain. We are attempting to inquire into school audits, their accountability and cash reserves. One very big issue is the impact of the implementation of Partnerships 21 on school service officers. We have seen the government, unlike other state governments, which, with the implementation of the GST, provided additional resources for schools, leave school support officers to struggle under the load. Schools must bear not only the load of the implementation of the GST but now also the implementation of Partnerships 21, and this is not being properly considered by the government.

The department's implementation staffing and cost is another area into which we wish to inquire, as well as the new formulae for school maintenance funding. The inequities and different risk profiles that exist between various schools need to be addressed. I mentioned risk management. The whole \$28 million fund that was established, as well as the insurance issues that surround vandalism attacks, breakages and maintenance costs at schools need to be addressed. These and other issues are mainly of a budgetary nature; they have not been explained by the minister in any form.

Many questions to the minister over the past 18 months have gone unanswered, both in parliament and in parliamentary estimates committees. There is a shroud of secrecy over

where and how Partnerships 21 funding is being allocated, from where it is coming and at what expense. Today we are seeing evidence of mismanagement of the education budget. It is a decreasing budget, \$180 million over three years having been cut from the budget, yet over-expenditures in areas of education are leading to under-expenditures in other programs. These are all issues of concern that we hope to pursue further through this inquiry and through this parliamentary session.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I want to devote the next 30 minutes to the South Australian economy. I am extremely pleased that the shadow spokesperson for treasury matters, local government and a range of other areas is present, as well as my fellow members of the Economic and Finance Committee, because one of my concerns is that too many members of parliament, on both sides, do not understand some of the dynamic changes that are occurring in the South Australian economy at the moment.

I will focus on the new economy, which is having a dynamic effect on what is happening in the world of business. I will also range out into other areas that are quite vital to the way in which business is being done in South Australia at present.

The advent of the information economy—some observers are calling it the new economy—is a major step forward to the world of business but one which needs to be kept in perspective. I will compare it to the industrial revolution, because that is the way that it is taking shape. Back at that time an agrarian-based world economy and cottage industries were changed forever. There was a movement of labour from country to city, and an agrarian backlash in the form of a populist movement in the 1880s and 1890s, called Luddites, set out to smash the machines that threatened to secure the world of the time.

The introduction of two new technologies, the telegraph and the railroad, once commercialised, allowed business to span any countryside. During this period changes in terms of social dislocation and the evolving nature of work sound familiar and relevant to the new economy changes of the 21st century. Those who resisted the advances of the industrial age were overrun. A good example in the late 19th century is the British cotton textile industry, which clung to inefficient, labour intensive batch production methods, while American textile companies, such as Lowell and Maldon, invested in modern management methods and new electronic, mechanical semi-automated production.

Toyota and other Japanese auto makers did the same thing to the big three US car makers in the 1970s and 1980s. Those who resisted change, who have refused to be flexible, have simply been steamrolled out of existence. The social dislocation of the industrial revolution was total and makes any dislocation we are experiencing today seem to pale into insignificance. It is therefore interesting to note the contrasting views outlined in an article I read recently in the *Australian Financial Review* which asked US market experts to rate the historical significance of the new economy on a scale of one to 10 compared with the industrial revolution. This is what they said:

Byron Wien, Investment Strategist, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter: 'Possibly 10. This is a very significant period...a rate of productivity increase that is the most dramatic probably in the twentieth century.'

- Abby Cohen, Investment Strategist, Coleman Sacks: 'This is a truly extraordinarily important time in US economic history. But we have had other such periods.'
- Ed Yardeni, Chief Economist, Deutsche Bank: '10. It's a revolutionary change. It's a major historical change.'
- Richard Bernstein, Quantitative Strategist, Merrill Lynch: 'The industrial revolution would be a 10. This is probably a six or a seven. The market is treating it as a 25. The real economy is not obsolete.'

The lesson of history is very clear. To succeed in the industrial revolution, business had to understand transportation and railways, the telegraph and electricity. It is apparent that to succeed in the new economy the focus of commercial activity is moving towards the information world so computer literacy, understanding operating environments and applications, is crucial to survival. Nobody can afford to be a Luddite.

I have enjoyed hearing evidence before the Economic and Finance Committee from unions and other labour-oriented organisations calling for the reintroduction of subsidies and a movement back to the old economics of the 1960s and 1970s. I have also had an interesting read of the ALP's platform for government, which ALP members are going to talk about this weekend. There is nothing in it about the new economy, there is very little about the information economy and very little about innovation. There is nothing in it to indicate that the other side of the House appreciates the points that I am making and those that I am about to make.

The dominant drivers of change within the Australian and South Australian economy at the moment are developments in information technology and the accelerating pace of information that these IT developments have facilitated. The startling growth of information capabilities and the direct and indirect impact on other sectors suggests that the information industries have a powerful locomotive effect on the whole economy. It logically follows that states that can connect firms, industries, business clusters, education systems and their overall economies with the information economy will grow relative to those that fail to connect.

Defining the new economy is complicated by its very nature as a diverse global coming together of a range of factors that act together to create the phenomenon. I will attempt to define some of these developments within an Australian and South Australian context, pointing to evidence that the new economy affects productive improvements, competitive pressure and management practice across the whole state. I will also outline what I term some rules for the road and some guiding principles and attributes of the new economy that purport to indicate how firms and governments might survive and grow within this environment. Finally, I will examine the survival of government in the new economy, because my conviction is that the South Australian economy and governments as we have known them will be transformed in the next five to 10 years. Very few members of parliament in this country can see it coming.

In its information economy 2002 policy, 'Delivering the Future', the government prefers the term 'information economy' rather than 'new economy'. In general terms the policy explains that the global economy that has emerged from the relatively newly acquired ability to access and transfer information from anywhere in the world at any time is with us. Across the world 24 hours a day, intelligence and defence organisations exchange information, governments confer on political crises, business negotiates multimillion dollar deals, products and services are bought and sold, banks

process millions of financial transactions, journalists report news stories from where and as they happen, travel agents organise business and holiday trips, students research assignments, and friends and family chat, exchange letters and pictures all via electronic communication. This is the new economy.

That is how the government has defined it in its new policy, but information does not simply mean data. Qualitative judgments and emotion are included in the information that is exchanged and they are inextricably interwoven with the sharing of numbers and facts. Denotation and connotation are fundamentally inseparable.

Phillip Evans and Thomas Wurster, in their book *Blown to Bits: How the New Economy of Information Transforms Strategy*, have defined the information economy in terms of the 'glue' which binds companies, industries and human activity together. They say:

When we picture value and supply chains, we tend to visualise a linear flow of physical activities. But it is information, in the broadest sense of the word, that flows across these activities and binds them together. Information flows ultimately determine what is inside and what is outside the business unit, value chain, supply chain, consumer franchise and organisation.

Another view argues that if the traditional economy refers to everything from income, growth, production and consumption to prices, interest rates, the stock market and currency, then in the new economy economic growth is stronger, standards of living rise faster, job creation is better, inflation is lower, the stock market is higher and interest rates are lower. The improvements are meaningful and sustained. The growth, productivity with low inflation perspective of the new economy is interesting, partly because it is, to some extent, quantifiable.

Up until the 1990s, Australia showed a remarkably stable pattern of gradual growth in output per hour worked, based on steady capital accumulation and steady, but unspectacular, growth in multi-factor productivity. From the beginning of the 1990s, Australia has taken a different and faster growth path, with output per hour worked now 15 per cent higher than it would have been had our old growth path continued. The Productivity Commission reports that growth that would have taken 13 years on the old path has been achieved in six years. Productivity growth in this country is faster now than in the so-called 'golden age' around the 1960s.

Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates show that multi-factor productivity growth has accelerated to an average of 2.4 per cent a year between 1993-94 and 1997-98, compared with a long term average of 1.4 per cent. Australia's growth experience in the 1990s is unique, in the 33 years of evidence available to us.

Although Australians have enjoyed relatively high standards of living during this century, built, in large abundance, upon a wealth of natural resources, productivity growth, which is a major contributor to living standards, has been low by international standards over the long term. As productivity increase has occurred, a growing perception has developed in Australia that the economy is performing in a different way from in the past—that there may be some new underlying factors at work, adding impetus to the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s.

In its 1999 Semi Annual Statement on Monetary Policy, the Reserve Bank observed that the combination of strong growth and exceptionally low inflation over recent years is quite unlike the experience of the preceding 30 years. A more balanced view is to see that both macro and micro policy

influences appear to be behind the remarkable performance of the Australian and global economy. Government driven reforms that have increased workplace and capital flexibility, resilience and productivity growth are seen as a central part of the story but, as capital, labour and information have become increasingly globalised, the ability of governments to control the economy has been further marginalised. What is happening is not fully understood. As one commentator observed:

One fallacy is that the new economy is nothing more than a high-tech internet-based stock market bubble destined to burst. The second fallacy is that the new economy is simply a temporary event caused by unexpected circumstances, such as the Asian financial crisis. The third error is that it is a distinctly US phenomenon with little global substance. The truth is rather different. The new economy is really the latest iteration in our long history of capitalism which, like mercantilism and industrial capitalism before it, will continue to rattle from country to country like wildfire.

The productivity effects of the information economy are widely discussed but rarely measured and reported. However, it is expected, and case studies support this view, that reduced inventories, streamlined ordering and payment systems, easier distribution of information, reduced margins in the distribution chain and lower transaction costs generally will all contribute to higher production and lower costs. This points to the impact of e-business upon the value chains and upon relationships with suppliers and customers, and reinforces the relevance of the five forces and diamond models put forward by well-known management analyst Michael Porter of Harvard University which gauge the workings of the economic paradigm.

Examples of the scope and distribution and transaction costs in using e-commerce given in recent OECD studies have been tabulated. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a table of statistics without my reading it.

Leave granted.

E-commerce impact on selected distribution costs, US\$ per transaction

	Airline tickets	Banking	Bill payment	Term life insurance	Software distribution
Traditional system	\$8.00	\$1.08	\$2.22 to \$3.32	\$400 to \$700	\$15.00
Telephone based	-	\$0.54	-	-	\$5.00
Internet based	\$1.00	\$0.13	\$0.65 to \$1.13	\$200 to \$350	\$0.20 to \$0.50
Saving %	87%	89%	71% to 67%	50%	97% to 99%

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Similarly, a recent estimate suggests that a business to business (or B2B) system being established jointly by Ford, General Motors and Daimler-Chrysler has the potential to reduce costs of a car by up to 14 per cent. In Australia major retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and service providers are all finding new ways to use e-commerce to reduce costs, penetrate new markets, challenge rivals and substitute and reduce factor inputs.

Productivity is benefiting enormously from the industrial revolution-like pace of change in the workplace, product technology in micro-electronics, telecommunications and space age materials. According to Peter Leyden, author of the book *The Long Boom*, this process began around 1980 with the widespread arrival of network computer technology, the new Reagan-Thatcher politics of big government to privatisation and a more entrepreneurial business-friendly environment. The opening up of Eastern Europe and the emergence of the tiger economies of Asia added to this momentum by creating a more diversified trade and market environment. Leyden believes that the first technology wave of digital computers is being followed by three more waves—biotechnology, alternative energy technology and nanotechnology, or the manufacture of one atom at a time. South Australia might be well placed to play a significant role in these fields.

The consequence of heightened competition is likely to be ongoing upgrading of corporate performance, particularly in product range and quality, service costs, prices, innovation and productivity or, for companies that fail to adapt to the new digital environment, loss of market share and falling profits. In his book Leyden states:

Nothing exposes incompetence, inefficiency and a lack of focus in the executive suite more than an aggressive competitor that operates better than you do and has an easy access to your marketplace.

As someone who has come into this parliament from business, I can underscore that comment. E-commerce is enabling the aggressive and innovative attack of larger competitors. As inflation can work to hide a multitude of

management sins, the stable prices and brutal competition of the new economy are a further challenge to poorly managed enterprises. Deregulation and privatisation have combined with new technology to place additional pressure on previously protected enterprises, the enterprises protected by years of tariffs and supported by the opposition. Leyden also states:

The fewer the rules that govern a marketplace, the greater the power of consumers and the more immediate the consequences of weak management.

An environment has also been created for unprecedented levels of merger activity. Such mergers boost productivity by creating efficiencies and synergies, lowering unit costs and enabling technology transfer. These realities underline the point that technology without the means to apply it goes wasted. In summary, the new economy is more than new technologies or information based capabilities, which is all that gets a mention in the Labor Party's platform document. Rather, it is a confluence of a range of national and global developments, over time, which have come together to create momentum and critical mass.

The new economy is a completely new coming together of technological innovation, open markets, deregulation, strategic vision, focused fiscal and monetary policies and firm leadership from political and economic elites to deliver sustained real economic growth with lower inflation.

The old levers are out and new rules apply. Recessions and stock market corrections will recur and the business cycle is not dead, but the economy now has a higher speed limit than was once thought possible.

One effect of global competition is the reallocation of wealth from industries requiring large investments in tangible assets and producing moderate returns on investment, to industries that use intangible assets and produce higher total returns. A feature of the new economy business is the reliance on intangible assets such as knowledge, skills, relationships and brands to produce value.

To underpin the changes to which I refer, it has become evident over the long term that, in the top 25 United States

businesses ranked by market capitalisation, the number of businesses based on e-business and information business is rapidly increasing. In 1969, of the 25 top stocks in the US stock market, about 40 per cent of those companies represented high technology firms. The figure today is almost 60 per cent. This dominance of the top 25 stocks list has continued, notwithstanding the market correction that occurred in April 2000. A similar rise in the proportion of high-tech and information technology stocks is occurring in the Australian market. For example, nine of the top 50 Australian firms (by capitalisation) have a significant IT business presence, as do 24 of the top 150 firms. Similarly, the market capitalisation of high-tech stocks on the Australian Stock Exchange (excluding biotech stocks) is in excess of \$200 billion.

Studies by the University of Texas and Cisco divide the industries comprising the information economy into four layers.

- the internet infrastructure indicator layer, which includes the telecommunications companies, internet service providers, internet backbone carriers etc;
- the internet applications infrastructure layer, which involves software products and services necessary to facilitate web transactions and transaction intermediaries;
- the internet intermediary layer, which includes businesses that generate revenues through advertising, member subscriptions, fees and commissions; and
- the internet commerce layer, which includes companies conducting web-based commercial transactions.

It is in the first three layers that growth has been most evident to date. However, I propose that the future is likely to show that the commerce layer and e-business ultimately deliver the greatest productivity dividends. During a series of briefings in Sydney in September 2000, Sun Microsystems' CEO Scott McNealy described four 'revolutions' that the internet would host. People were just coming to terms with the first one, messaging. The other three would be e-commerce, telephony and entertainment. He outlined a future in which every electronic device with a 'digital heartbeat' would one day be connected to the net, providing a means to communicate and interact with other devices and perform a range of previously unimagined automated functions. Manufacturers of cars and equipment would have on-line access to their products. He stated:

Name anything that is not being put on a web site...Yet we haven't even got 20 per cent saturation, and that is a huge, huge opportunity...What the internet is, is everybody being given a chance to go on the spot market...price lists are going to go away...Within five to seven years more than half of voice traffic would be sent across the internet, and within three to four years mobile phone technology would have advanced to the point where full motion video would be seen on the phone's display screen.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: This dramatic transformation is going on in our economy, and the shadow Treasurer says, 'It's boring.' I hope that he takes note. How does business survive in the new economy? A number of suggestions have been made. Peter Leyden says that businesses need to go global, that they need to open up. They need to let go of previous paradigms and need to grow more. They need to adapt. They need to value innovators and to keep learning, and they need to get connected. They need to be inclusive, but they need to stay confident. This needs to be considered in the light of Porter's diamond model, which talks about the factors affecting an industry's viability, about related and supporting industries, about firm strategies, structure and

rivalry, about factor and demand conditions and, importantly, about the role of government. The themes of innovation, connectivity, openness and inclusiveness make sense, given that the internet has connected everyone with everything.

The CEO of Cisco Corporation, John Chambers, likes to say that the rules of competition have changed: the big will not beat the small, and the fast will beat the slow. This means that government, too, must move quicker. Government must be based on speed, just as industry is based on speed; we cannot have a regulating apparatus that is slow.

The book *Blown to Bits*, by Evans and Wurster, to which I referred earlier, contains an argument that the new economy is causing the glue holding the supply chains together to melt. The fundamental cause is the explosion in connectivity and in the information standards that are enabling the open and almost cost-free exchange of a widening universe of rich information. When everyone can communicate richly with everyone else, the narrow hard-wired communication channels that once tied people together simply become obsolete—and so do all the business structures that created those channels to exploit them for competitive advantage.

Evans and Wurster put the view that strategy and management in the deconstructive environment of the new economy does not involve a whole new set of rules. With the possible exception of the '.com' information businesses, the strategies for success are essentially the same: scale, market share, cost innovation, capabilities and competencies.

The authors suggest 12 guiding principles to help businesses to rethink strategy, and those principles have to do with not taking any of the past rules of doing business as being 'given' for the future. They have to do with preparing oneself to face the new levels of competition involved with the use of the new information technology. They have to do with getting strategies right. They have to do with recognising that the world of industry has changed forever. Most importantly, they have to do with a state getting its culture and its strategy right, and with a business getting its culture and strategy right.

How will South Australia survive in the new economy? The IE 2002 policy recently announced by the government makes a head start, and it follows work done by the federal government through the information industry task force, which in 1997 produced a very readable report which stated:

The information industries are the sleeping giants of the economies of the 21st century. Our policy makers have to develop a sense of urgency...we must become leading and professional users of information technology...[it] will underpin the international competitiveness of almost every business and industry. It will be central to education, health care, leisure, entertainment, government and deity living. We face no option as a nation but to buy it or make it.

There is a message here—a message for every member of this House and this parliament. The competitive nature of business in the economy is transforming. Industries that are here today may be gone tomorrow. New industries may spring up—whether they do or not is up to us. We must recognise the challenges ahead. The size and impact of the change needs to be identified. National leadership needs to be provided. We need to attract the right investment. We need to go global. We need to enhance skills formation, and we need to focus on enhancing R&D. If we do not do that, South Australia will slip further down the greasy pole to oblivion because the fundamentals of the South Australian economy at present do not augur well for a bold new economy of the future.

In the *Age* recently, in fact a couple of days ago, the OECD was quoted as ranking Australia at the bottom of 18 Western nations in the size of our information technology and communications sector. If the South Australian government does not ensure that South Australian companies pick up the cudgels and take the lead in this new economy, we will be blown to bits not only by other states in Australia but by other regional economies who have simply picked up the ball and run with it, leaving us dramatically behind. The high-growth, high-value jobs of tomorrow will be based around the new economy. They will not be based around the economy we have been guiding for the past 50 years. This is the most radical and transformative change in recent times.

Time expired.

Mr CONLON (Elder): With this address from the government through the Governor we are, thankfully, entering the final lap for what is a very tired and sad government. The Liberals have now had in their various guises, under Dean Brown and then John Olsen, seven full years since 1993 to make their mark and find their place in history. John Olsen as Premier has now had three full years as a premier elected in his own right. Although, as we all know, he was barely elected and managed to turn a record majority into a minority government.

Reference was made in the Governor's address to the approaching Centenary of Federation. It is worthwhile, in reviewing the seven years of this sad government, to reflect that on many occasions South Australia, though a small state, has shown the way to the nation in many fields: from the very early days with Charles Cameron Kingston's contribution to such things as the development of a unique industrial conciliation and arbitration system, to his contributions to federation itself; through to the state building of Thomas Playford; and, of course, the Dunstan years when South Australia and Adelaide were considered, quite rightly, to be the Athens of the south, when people moved to South Australia instead of moving away from it. When we reflect upon that, we can see that South Australia and its government have had a pretty proud history. There have been some very well-performing South Australian governments and parliaments that have, to use Mike Rann's turn of phrase, consistently fought above their weight division. It does cause us to reflect upon this government's place in history now that, thankfully, the curtain is coming down on it.

What has this government done in its seven years of what I would describe as unremitting mediocrity? The answer is that there have been little more than shifty side deals, shoddy secret arrangements, enriched consultant mates, brutal, bloody infighting—the most divided government in the history of this parliament. We know because its members use us to do their dirty work. We get to hear all the sordid things they say about each other and we get to hear them regularly.

I go to my pigeonhole and pick up copies of Cabinet documents that I am sure you have to be in Cabinet to receive. It is the most brutal infighting government ever. And, finally, what is its other contribution? An ongoing vandalising of assets that once were owned by all South Australians. That is the place in history of this mob opposite. That is what they have achieved. That is what they will be remembered for. Will they be remembered for achievements? No, they will not be; they will simply leave a nasty taste in the mouth of the electorate. This government is to South Australian politics what Equatorial Guinea is to olympic swimming—

they are monstrous underachievers. It is time, in my view, to write the obituary for this sad and pathetic government.

It is worth reflecting on the achievements of this government in its various guises. It started in 1993 with Dean Brown—remember Dean Brown: he won office with a huge majority. At that time, the government contained some fundamentally decent people such as Stephen Baker, who recognised the challenges the government faced and who, it must be said, worked responsibly in the interests of South Australia in his portfolio. He worked very hard. Unfortunately, others were working to undermine him, but he did take an honest and hard working approach. Unfortunately, others took a very different approach.

We know now that the Liberals were only in office for a few short months when the then Minister for Infrastructure (I think he was), John Olsen, entered into his clandestine, secret arrangements with Motorola—a multimillion dollar contract which never went to tender, never had the scrutiny of parliament, never had the scrutiny of the proper processes and, as we do know, about which the Premier persistently misled parliament until he was finally caught out. These arrangements were not only hidden from the parliament, but, ultimately, led this state, which is in a tightly circumscribed financial position, into a commitment to a \$250 million radio network. I repeat that: a \$250 million radio network.

Only in John Olsen's government could we see this happen in a state that cannot afford to employ adequate numbers of police—and we hear the Minister for Police raving about the fact that he has finally recruited some. He has finally recruited some police because he has run them down so far that there are not enough to do the job. He recognises that, if the government does not fix the problem, they will be out on their ear. I can tell him that he will be out on his ear, anyway. As I said, it is only in a John Olsen government, in some sort of Alice in Wonderland logic, where you cannot afford sufficient police to do their basic job but you can afford a gold plated radio network. That is the legacy of this government and its standard and its shoddy and secret deals.

There we had it; that is, on the one hand, we had Stephen Baker working hard, assiduously and cautiously for South Australia and, on the one hand, we had John Olsen with secret deals and high paid consultants. Unfortunately, it was the John Olsen approach which came to prevail and which came to be the hallmark of the way in which this government does things.

Let us reflect on that because what was next? The next instalment was the water contract, the outsourcing of the management of South Australia's water. It occurred against massive public opposition. Once again the arrangements were played out in secrecy behind closed doors. The probity of the bidding process was profoundly flawed and every single promise of the government to the South Australian people concerning it from the price of water to Australian ownership of the outsourced contract was broken—every single promise. Again, the standards of this shoddy government were in evidence and they were standards we came to see repeated and repeated and, as I said, fortunately we will see them only for a short while longer.

Four years ago these Liberals made a plain statement of their values because they had a choice. We remember and remember it very well. I am not sure I would be in this parliament if they had not made the choice. On the one hand, they had the choice of Dean Brown who had won them a record majority and who was assisted, as I have said, by the

hard working and honest Stephen Baker; and, on the other hand, they had a pair of slick talking telemarketers in John Olsen and Graham Ingerson. We know which decision they took and it is one that so plainly evidences the standards, or, should I say, the lack of standards of this government. I am sure that, were there a few more Liberals in this room, they would have pause to reflect upon the decision they made—and I guarantee this: some Liberals who are no longer in this House would like to go back and revisit that decision because they think that they might still be here. No, we got the telemarketers.

What was their next move? They pulled off the great ETSA heist together, did they not? John Olsen and Graham Ingerson before the last election ran around telling people that, when Labor said they would sell ETSA if they were re-elected, we were liars. They said that there would be no ETSA sale, full stop, full stop, full stop—in the usual great eloquence of the member for Bragg. That was a deliberate misleading of the people of South Australia. They snuck back into government on a lie and a broken promise. They snuck back with a minority government, but they would not have if they had told the people what they really intended to do with their assets.

Even then, what sort of standards did they bring to the privatisation of ETSA: more deception, more secrecy and more fat consultants. We saw them buy a few ex-Labor votes and rush it through while they had them, despite the warnings from the Auditor-General about the manner in which they were doing it. They ignored the Auditor-General. They were quick to raise the Auditor-General when they wanted to sell ETSA, but they ignored him when he warned them about the way they were doing it. They said that they knew what they were doing, that it was all going fine, and that the consultants were getting \$120 million—or whatever it was—so it was bound to go well.

We found out that there had been a stuff-up. The matter came back to parliament accompanied by huge embarrassment. The Treasurer—chance the gardener of politics—took the blame for his consultant mates, and they did not lose a single cent of the South Australian money that went their way for selling this very valuable asset. I pause at this point to reflect that, despite all the arguments, warnings and rhetoric from these fellows who were desperate to get some lucre into their coffers and despite the warnings about the danger of holding on to electricity assets, a great portion of this asset was bought by the Queensland government—which would suggest that one government is smart and the other is silly, and I am prepared to have a bet on which is which.

The former Deputy Premier, the member for Bragg, finally became a belated victim of the lack of standards of this government. He misled this parliament once too often. He decided to interfere to try to have someone stacked to stand over a member of the racing community. Finally, he went too far, his lack of standards brought about his undoing, and he is now a backbencher. I cannot wait to see the day when Vicki Chapman takes his seat and brings a little more talent into this place.

The show ground on without the member for Bragg and with the same lack of any sort of a standard. It has been made clear, not just by me but by the member for Hammond, who is now an Independent, that it should not have been just the member for Bragg who went but that the Premier should also have gone. The findings of the Cramond report into Motorola said that the Premier should have gone. The Premier had his mate, John Cambridge, running interference for him, but

despite that, simply on the face of the findings of the Cramond report, the Premier should have gone.

By this time, this government virtually had no standards: there were no standards in this place. We saw the fruits of the Motorola incident in this parliament—the great government radio network, the cost of which was growing like a chemistry experiment. I stress that. This government, which cannot find sufficient funds for schools, teachers, hospitals or police, is continuing to pay the price for the Premier's side deals.

What else did we see? Before he lost his job together with Joan Hall they wanted the member for Bragg for the Hindmarsh Stadium deal. By this time, they had got the technique down pat. There was more shoddiness, shonkyness and secret deals with funds being slipped around, more slippery practices even than in the cabinet itself, and then we found out that they had blown \$36 million on the deal. It was going to cost us \$8 million: they blew \$36 million. There were lots of consultants getting money out of this deal, of course, but now we have 'a one soccer club' town with a rolled gold stadium.

I will not say much more about that, but I will say this: there will be an Auditor-General's report on this matter, and we expect that report to speak volumes despite certain documents going missing from someone's car. Suffice to say, if you want an adequate explanation, some sort of an idea of how good the Hindmarsh Stadium dealings are, do not ask the Opposition: go upstairs to the Legislative Council and ask Liberal member, Julian Stefani. He knows the sort of shonkyness that has been going on and he is one Liberal—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr CONLON: The member for Hartley shakes his head because he is happy with the standards of this government. The best I can say for him is that it is probably because he does not understand what is going on. That is what we saw: more shonkyness, more sharpness, more secret dealings and more fat consultants. What did we see just last week in relation to the consultants at the wine centre? Despite government guidelines by this time to control what we do with these consultants—with these mostly mates of this government—what do we find? The sum of \$350 000 has been spent on them contrary to the guidelines. When it is raised by the opposition, what does the executive officer at the wine centre say? He said, 'Yes, I did it, and I will do it again.' Well, I have to tell you, Mr Acting Speaker, that if he was working for me, spending my government's money and ignoring my guidelines, he would not be working for me any more. It is about time this government did exercise some standards in the expenditure of public money. This is the way the government does things.

I want to refer briefly to the appointment of industrial commissioners. This state has a very happy history in industrial relations despite the best efforts of this government. This state has always taken a more conciliatory approach to industrial relations than other states. We have always reaped the benefit in terms of industrial relations in seeking a consensus approach. On this occasion, three industrial commissioners were to be appointed. A panel was set up and recommendations were sought from the chamber and from the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia. The panel met and made its decision. It got recommendations from the chamber and the Labor Council. It considered them and most members of the panel thought they were good so naturally they would be appointed.

But, of course, they were not appointed. The government had some other agenda for appointing them. I want to pause

on this point because I think that it is a scandal. One recommendation was for Mick Doyle, who was recommended by the panel, the Labor Council and the head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet but one Liberal member on the panel did not want him. Why did he not want him? Was he not competent? No, that was not it. Was he not honest and fair? No, that was not it. He did not want him because his union had run a campaign mentioning politicians' wage increases. The panel member in question did not want him as a commissioner because he had embarrassed the Liberal member about his wage increase. That is a scandal, and the Hon. Angus Redford, who made those comments, should hang his head in shame. This has not been the way in which these matters have been dealt with in the past in South Australia. I can give this undertaking: it will not be the way in which we deal with it when, finally, we occupy those benches opposite.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr CONLON: Joe says that we have a long way to go. It will not be of any interest to the member for Hartley because he will be safely ensconced in teaching again. There is a shortage of teachers, I understand, Joe, and we will address it by adding you to the list.

Mr Scalzi: What is wrong with teachers? Teaching is a noble profession.

Mr CONLON: I am worried about returning the member for Hartley to the ranks of school teachers because I am not certain that he does not do less to the community simply by sitting on the back bench than by being unleashed on innocent minds. Members who have been sitting in this place for three years as I have must start to wonder about the lack of standards and competency on the government front bench.

Mr Foley: Walk us through it.

Mr CONLON: I will walk you through it. But before I do that, I believe in giving credit where credit is due. I have bucketed this government on many occasions for what it does. But I think the government has one or two competent people, and the Minister for Water Resources is undoubtedly one of its more competent ministers. He has worked hard and responsibly. Members should not get me wrong: he is only an honest plodder, but at least he is honest and at least he plods on in a straight line and is not diverted by infighting like the rest of them.

So, what will they do with what is probably their best minister? His preselection is under threat. You do not want him going around setting those sorts of standards in the Olsen Liberal government, do you, or else they will all have to live up to them. Let's get rid of this bloke quickly! It is worth while doing a little report card on the front bench of this government. The Olympics have just been, so perhaps we could do it with Olympic flair. What would they be? The Premier John Olsen would plainly be into fencing. The trouble is that he would not lunge until you had your back turned. Dean Brown found that out. Lord Armitage would be into dressage, mucking about in his fancy clothes saying, 'Let them eat virtual cake.' That is the sort of approach he has always taken in this world. Dorothy Kotz, the new Minister for Local Government, is special. She almost single-handedly closed down local government in her first three months in the job. I am not sure that anyone in the Olympics could be compared with her.

Let me come to the Minister for Police—the very special Minister for Police. He is a fellow who has all the talent of Eric the Eel but none of the charm. I can see him now in my mind's eye floundering in the middle of that swimming pool, but it is not really his fault: it is the weight of that horrible

emergency services levy that Iain Evans quickly shoved onto his back when he was not looking.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr CONLON: He's not waving; he's drowning. We know that Mark Brindal is for the high jump. The Minister for Tourism is into soccer; we all know that. Despite spending \$36 million in a flash preparation, she looks unfortunately like being red carded by the Auditor-General; she is not even going to get onto the ground. It is very sad. Of course, we have the Minister for Primary Industries and Resources, Wayne Matthew. He is plainly in the team pursuit, but it is hard to tell which team he is on from day to day. I would think that the Deputy Premier has probably got the build for Greco-Roman wrestling. I am told by the member for Hart that he had better stick to that, because he is the only bloke he knows who will be lapped in the 400 metres. Finally, we know that the Treasurer only likes to watch. He would not be in the Olympics: he would be a spectator.

On a more serious note, what I have tried to illustrate in this Address in Reply at a time when members opposite are entering their final lap and the curtain is coming down on them for the last time (one hopes) is that South Australia desperately needs a change of government. It also needs a change in the style and culture of government. The first thing it needs—and I stand by this—is more openness in government. No more deals behind closed doors; no more hiding of documents or fudging of FOIs; no more hiding the costs of credit cards or sitting on boards; no more secret deals or deals that do not go to tender; no more consultants getting their fees increased outside the guidelines; no more secrecy: we need open government. Open government is good government, and we will be a more open government.

We will be a government that returns to some basic standards in administration. We do not need fancy ideas or Lord Armitage telling us that we need some hologram MPs. We will just get back to good, sound management, put some character and integrity into public office and work hard in the interests of the people of South Australia. I believe that we will have the ability to do that. With any sort of fair run at all, after the next election we will have the team to deliver decent government to South Australia. I think I have upset Eric the Eel; the Minister for Police has woken from his reverie.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr CONLON: I was going to deal with that. We have already added Bob Sneath to our ranks. At this point I would like to acknowledge the contribution of George Weatherill, a close friend of mine, a great Labor man and a great trade union man. I am very pleased to see him replaced by Bob Sneath, someone in a similar mould. In addition to that, after the next election, of course, Lord Armitage will be retired to his manor, whether or not he likes it, and Jane Lomax-Smith will come in to add undoubted talent to this team.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr CONLON: She is a friend of mine. She speaks highly of you, too, Joe, but that's because she is a very charitable woman and for no other reason. She will add undoubted talent to the Labor team. We have Paul Caica and, of course, Moira Deslandes, who will shortly see poor old Robby to an early retirement as well. It will be Moira Deslandes who sees the current member for Mawson back bothering cows and not us.

I will not use all my time; I have always been a man of few words. I sum up by saying that the Governor's speech demonstrated a government on its last legs, and we look forward to offering a better government in a short time.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I rise in support of the motion for the adoption of Address in Reply, and add my congratulations and thanks for the manner in which His Excellency and Lady Neal carry out their duties—in particular, for their interest and support for the people living in the regional areas. As Sir Eric and Lady Neal know from their visits, my electorate of Flinders is a great place to live with clean air, wide sandy beaches, many parks and wonderful people.

However, we have suffered four tragedies in the past few months that have shaken us: the air disaster near Whyalla, taking eight lives; followed recently by the death of a young mother and her two infants; and, within two days of one another, two deaths from a shark attack at Cactus Beach and Elliston. I know that the sympathy of the government and opposition members will be with the families and friends of these people whose lives have been cut short before their time. These events clearly demonstrate our human vulnerability and have left many of us grieving. Although the tragedies have been spread across the region, our communities are very close. They often have family, sporting and other social ties that have brought them together.

I was confidently able to reassure one young man, when he came to my office concerned about the welfare of the wife of a shark victim at Cactus Beach, that she would be looked after well, because our communities always close in and support those in need in crisis—even when they do not know them personally. Checking confirmed that this was indeed the case.

Our gratitude and thanks must especially go to the police, emergencies services volunteers and other services and volunteers involved in each of these tragic events. Each in a different way demonstrates the absolute necessity of having trained personnel available instantly. In the country, we often rely on volunteers, and I have noted the positive difference that has already come through the emergency services levy providing facilities, equipment and training. One never knows when they may be needed.

It is heartening, too, that a bereavement support group has recently commenced in Port Lincoln, aiming to provide support for people experiencing grief. Being able to work through issues helps with the healing process and assists one to pick up the pieces and go on with life. Carer groups, largely made up of volunteers, have been established across South Australia to provide support when needed. It is so important in times of grief and stress to know that you are not alone and that others are there to support to you.

Community spirit is strong on Eyre Peninsula, and I know that we will bounce back after these tragic events. However, some are vulnerable and they must be comforted. I am concerned that everything that can be done is done to assist with the aftermath of these events.

Fortunately, summer is now on its way, and the season 2000 looks like a good one for our farmers. Farm export income has been one of reasons why we have been able to improve our economic position as a state. In addition, Eyre Peninsula now boasts three vineyards, and the Boston Bay Winery, owned by Mary and Graham Ford, last week received a gold medal at the Royal Adelaide Hospital wine show for its 1998 cabernet sauvignon. Congratulations go to everyone involved.

I also congratulate the government and the people of South Australia on working together to bring our state to an AA-plus credit rating. This has been a magnificent achievement that will benefit us all. We are fortunate to be living in this

century, which is moving into areas undreamt of even last century. Technology is racing ahead and changing how we do things from moment to moment.

South Australia is a leader in information technology, and I commend the government for seizing the moment to bring this about. One of my pleasurable tasks a short time ago was opening the information technology suite at the Lake Wangary Primary School, with its 90 students, described by its principal, Tom Pointon, as 'a small school, a public school, and a disadvantaged school in many respects'. Tom goes on to say:

South Australia is a known leader worldwide in the provision of IT facilities for its students and what we have here...is very much the envy of many schools...especially in other parts of Australia and other countries. Our department and our government have committed large amounts of funding towards helping our students achieve excellence in IT. Our students are among the nation's and the world's leaders.

We can all be justifiably proud of that. Our government has recognised the importance of computer technology and the need for students to be literate in its uses and applications. Students in my electorate are undertaking subjects using internet and computer technology—subjects that were impossible for them to do only a couple of years ago. The internet makes businesses contactable from anywhere with two-way communication. Unlike factories that need to be close to transport and markets or offices that need to be close to business, information industries can operate anywhere. While people have traditionally looked towards working from the city, it can be safer and cheaper to operate businesses from the country.

This forward approach to our business community has been taken up by West Coast Security Pty Ltd. The business, purchased by Gary Scholz in 1993 with 480 customers, has expanded today into a grade one monitoring service with over 2 500 customers monitoring homes and businesses in four states. West Coast Security trains its staff, ensuring that all have their commercial security guard and communications licences. The business, with 20 staff, operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, monitoring a vast range of businesses as diverse as a business in Mount Gambier involved in gas extraction.

Occupational health and safety standards require West Coast Security to contact that business hourly to ensure that everything is safe. Gary Scholz, together with Ron Warland, has designed and purpose-built some unique monitoring devices, enabling the monitoring of pumps, water flow, air temperatures and freezer alarms for the aquaculture industry. Closed circuit television monitoring of tuna farms is another monitoring service being developed. This diversification is an extension of Gary's business in the home and business alarms that we have become used to. A classic example of the direction information technology is taking us is my recently launched web site, created by local business Webquarters, for the Flinders electorate.

Cathie Smith and Marianne Cox have developed their business which is rapidly expanding. My web site had 240 hits in June, 293 in July and 244 in August. Those who accessed the site came from the United States of America, Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia and Oceania. The longest session was up to three quarters of an hour, with a number of people visiting the site for more than 15 minutes. Surprisingly, Taiwan has been topping the list of contacts outside of Australia. Distance and communication have always been disincentives to doing business in the country. The computer

age is overcoming both disincentives and, in some areas, has made being in the country an advantage, providing a stable work force and lower overheads in a very pleasant environment.

Today it is unnecessary to get people to cross your doorstep to do business. Potential customers—invisible customers and clients—seek you out on the internet and, if you are not there, you miss out. The virtual electorate proposed by the Minister for Information Economy, Dr Armitage, will help to tap into the contacts and business that we are currently missing from our expatriate population and encourage them to return with expertise to our great state. Tourism is the growth industry of the moment and this industry, too, uses information technology as a means of communicating to visitors where they can visit. Port Lincoln has the largest number of passenger movements of any airport in South Australia outside of Adelaide.

Many of these visits are for business, but often these people return with family or friends to visit our beautiful parks and beaches. The response to the Olympic Games in Sydney has been overwhelming, and such positive publicity will bring tourists from all over the world to Australia. Major events and festivals play a huge role in attracting visitors, and the South Australian Tourism Commission, under the Minister for Tourism, Joan Hall, is once again supporting events on Eyre Peninsula. This financial year these events included the Gawler Ranges Outback Challenge, the Ceduna Oysterfest, 2001 Port Lincoln Afloat and the Port Lincoln Mini Masters Games and Tunarama. Each of these events caters for a different corner of the tourism market but all attract tourists and their money into an area, thus bringing an economic benefit with them.

Jetties have always been an integral part of seaside tourism. Local government, communities and the government working together are overcoming the problems of retaining the jetties in a safe condition. Denial Bay, on the Far West Coast, was the first of three jetties in the Ceduna District Council area to be upgraded under the state government's recreational jetties divestment program. Minister for Transport, Hon. Diana Laidlaw, said more than \$1.2 million has been spent on repairing and upgrading recreational jetties in the council areas of Ceduna, Elliston and Streaky Bay alone.

Infrastructure is an essential component of the tourism market. Again, the state government is working with local people and groups to bring infrastructure up to market demands. An exciting project to receive \$14 000 from the Tourist Development Fund is the Mt Wudinna Reserve Interpretive Trail. The grant will assist the LeHunte District Council in constructing a 2.5 kilometre interpretative walking trail in the 90 hectares of bushland and reserve at the base of Mount Wudinna. Incidentally, Mt Wudinna is the second biggest rock monolith in Australia; only Uluru is larger. The trail complements other attractions in the district such as Poldra Rock Trail, Pildappa Rock Trail and the Gawler Ranges National Park. Local communities such as the Thevenard Residents and Ratepayers Group have used Coastcare grants to advantage. The Thevenard group received \$8 000 towards the cost of planting native vegetation at Pinky Point Lookout and constructing a large viewing platform that will provide panoramic views from St Peters Island and back across the bay to Ceduna. The work and the time put in by volunteer group members like Chris Gascoyne, Marion Uzzell, Coral Wilcox, Joe Haitana and Jim McBain, together with Ceduna Area School students, TAFE students and others ensure that every dollar of funding is very well spent.

While on tourism, I am delighted that Don Saltmarsh has set up a regular bus service, 'Coastlink', along the west coast of Eyre Peninsula between Ceduna and Port Lincoln. This is fantastic for the community and as a result it is anticipated that the Nomads backpacker chain of hostels that operates in Australia and New Zealand will soon create a link for backpackers to visit Eyre Peninsula. Jacqui Giles-Brown and Craig Brown who run Dutton Bay Woolshed hostel and museum, and who have been pushing for this service, have signed up with Nomads. It is anticipated that accommodation providers in other towns will also soon come on board in order to be part of the backpacker trail. The combination of local people, departments, businesses and the government is once again delivering a positive result that will benefit all communities along the route.

The community, local, state and federal governments have combined to improve the quality of health delivery in the Cummins district with the redevelopment of the Cummins hospital medical clinic to include adequate room and facilities for visiting specialists. The elderly and disabled in Cowell benefit from a day-care centre joining the hospital and hostel buildings. This was yet another joint effort. The executive officer of Cowell Community Health and Aged Care, Ms Sharon Godleman, appreciated the way in which the Department of Human Services under the Hon. Dean Brown acknowledged the needs of rural communities. Kimba Hospital now has the additional security provided by an automatic emergency power generating plant.

Governments are continually being asked to spend more. However, governments are also continually being asked to reduce taxes and charges. It is an impossibility to do both. But enterprising people look for and help to find solutions instead of harping on the negative. Every community in South Australia could well copy the example of Tumby Bay and Cummins Hospitals in improving their financial position. The secret: the support given by local residents who used their private health cover when admitted to hospital or when undergoing medical procedures increased hospital revenue and consequently lifted the service that the hospitals could provide.

Chairman of Lower Eyre Health Services, Anne Hall, said more funding for procedures meant that the hospitals were able to make better use of the top class facilities that have been put into rural hospitals in recent years. In addition, the clustering of the 10 hospitals and many health services on Eyre Peninsula into multipurpose service units has also increased efficiencies and the communities are to be commended for working together and undertaking these changes, changes that will help to ensure that we can keep our hospitals in our small communities.

This is an appropriate point at which to mention the late Mrs Natalie Bruza of Port Lincoln. Mrs Bruza suffered renal damage and required constant dialysis. Dialysis facilities in Port Lincoln are inadequate and many patients have to travel to Adelaide for treatment. Instead of sitting around complaining, Mrs Bruza—despite her own ill health—set about writing submissions, fund raising and using whatever means possible to get a home dialysis machine at Port Lincoln Hospital so that users and their families could obtain care, respite and the necessary teaching for their condition. Once again, the Minister for Human Services, the Hon. Dean Brown, has given government support to what the late Mrs Bruza and this active local committee are doing. A dialysis facility at Port Lincoln Hospital to serve the community on Eyre Peninsula is one of the goals to achieve in this term.

I am pleased to report that our government has assisted in providing funding for a number of projects on Eyre Peninsula for the benefit of youth. Possibly the most exciting was the purchase of a property in Ceduna for conversion to a youth centre. A property came onto the market that was ideally suited to use as a youth centre. Ceduna District Council had already identified the need and had prepared a detailed summary of what was required. Therefore, speedy action to secure the property was possible because the essential background work had been done. Thanks go to Minister Dean Brown and his department for assistance with funding towards the project. The Chief Executive Officer of Ceduna District Council, Tony Irvine, when passing on council's appreciation, said:

Would you please convey the community's gratitude to all concerned for their prompt action in granting funds for the purchase of this much needed facility? The promptness of gaining the funding is a credit to all.

In supporting the purchase, the officer in charge of Ceduna Police Station, Senior Sergeant Kym Thomas, said:

In the past, communities have expected that crime will decrease by police action alone. This has not worked and there is a realisation now that crime is a community problem that requires a community solution.

He went on to say that evidence given in the National Crime Strategy 'Pathways to Prevention 1999' program suggested that intervention in early life can have a long-term impact on crime and other social problems such as substance abuse.

Ceduna Community Hotel Motel supported the project with a \$20 000 grant towards the refurbishment cost and thanks must also be given to the former railway workers who donated the contents of the Australian National Railways Institute at Port Lincoln on the condition that the furnishings and equipment go to good causes. As a result, a pool table, table tennis tables, chairs, coffee tables and a pie warmer from the hall have been donated to the Ceduna Youth Centre.

Roads are already a topic of conversation in rural areas. Country South Australia has felt and seen the positive difference that a Liberal government makes. Local people have identified some of the most hazardous spots on major roads and their input has been helpful when deciding where to allocate funds. The main road between Kimba and Cleve has been sealed and work is progressing on the Elliston-Lock road. Lincoln Highway, both north and south of Cowell, has benefited from upgrading to improve the safety and efficiency of the highway. The widening of the Eyre Highway is also proceeding, with entrances to Poochera township included in the latest section.

Housing for underprivileged people in our society is an issue that this government has tackled in partnership with community groups and churches. Mark Thiel heads a committee in Port Lincoln that is tapping into government assistance to provide housing for people in most need. The South Australian Housing Trust has allocated some houses to the scheme this year. The committee and helpers give their time and skills to enable this type of project to proceed successfully. This program is additional to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for youth and women's shelters for people in crisis.

Liberal governments have been at the forefront of bringing conservation to public attention as an issue. Country communities are often seen as being environmentally reckless when, in fact, the reverse is the truth. I have mentioned previously the tremendous national Landcare competition win by Karcultaby Area School, but it is worth bringing to the

attention of the House again. Those students, in a small, isolated rural school, are at the top of caring for the environment in Australia. Most of those children can reasonably be expected to remain in a rural community. However, all will retain the knowledge and expertise gained through their Landcare project.

Again, the state government is at the cutting edge in initiating positive work on the environment. Seventy-one Partnerships 21 schools and preschools around the state are pioneering projects that investigate issues such as waste management and water and energy conservation. Education Minister Malcolm Buckby said that school communities have already shown great commitment towards preserving the environment, and students, supported by parents and staff, have a high awareness of environmental issues. Partnerships 21 schools have demonstrated a spirit of enterprise in strong partnership with their local communities; hence people and governments working together will again deliver success.

Larger projects see farmers and communities, the Eyre Peninsula natural resource management group and government cooperating to overcome salinity and land degradation. The Driver River catchment project covers the Kimba area from the western side of Cleve hills to Arno Bay, an area about the size of Fleurieu Peninsula. She-oaks are being used to control wind erosion in the Elliston pastoral lands.

Conservation is not limited to out-of-doors projects. I am delighted that the leafy sea dragon has been accepted as the marine emblem of this state. I am equally delighted that the only seahorse farm on mainland Australia is in Port Lincoln. Proprietors Tracy and David Warland have undertaken several years of research, spent thousands of dollars and carried out untold hours of work—and worry—to bring their business to the stage of exporting overseas.

The Warlands went into the commercial farming of seahorses in response to market demand and the unsustainable level of harvesting stock from the wild. It was very much a trial and error process, since almost no information exists anywhere in the world. Once they had proved that they could breed and grow seahorses in captivity they received a grant from the Aquaculture Business Development Program, a joint initiative of the Department of Industry and Trade and the Department of Education, Training and Employment, which enabled them to finalise the necessary details and procedures for export of live animals. They are continuing their research program to include other species, including the weedy seahorse, and hope in the future to extend that to the leafy sea dragon. Sea horses have arrived in Japan and South Africa in perfect condition, and negotiations are progressing for export to the United States. Individuals and the state government are working together successfully. Community input is valued.

I commend the work of the Eyre Regional Development Board for its proactive role in promoting new business enterprises on Eyre Peninsula. I quote from its web site as follows:

The Eyre region contains less than 2.5 per cent of the state's population, yet it produces one-third of South Australia's grain and two-thirds of its seafood harvest. So although the area is relatively sparsely populated it is highly productive.

I also commend the councils, particularly the Ceduna District Council, the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association, the hospitals and the hospital boards and the people of Eyre Peninsula for being proactive and working with their communities and governments and always striving to improve on how things are being done. As we prepare to

celebrate Federation in 2001, the future for Eyre Peninsula and for all of South Australia is bright. I support the motion.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I thank the House for the opportunity tonight to speak on the Address in Reply to the Governor's speech. I wish to make some important points in my contribution tonight. I intend to cover a range of topics: I will touch on issues within my electorate and also issues that are within my shadow ministerial responsibilities, as the opposition's shadow treasurer in this House.

Given that it is two minutes to 6 p.m., I will not go into the full detail of what I intend to talk about tonight. I do not want to give the House a disjointed presentation, as we know that many members await my contribution with great anticipation. I would not want to start it only to have to pick it up again after dinner, with members opposite having lost the train of thought in terms of following my discussion.

Clearly, as the state member for Hart (and, after the next state election, if I am successful, the member for Port Adelaide), there are a number of issues that impact on my electorate. Whilst I spend much of my time dealing with my shadow ministerial responsibilities, people in the electorate of Port Adelaide and Hart can rest assured that their concerns are never far from my thoughts and that at all times I consider and undertake activities to support the electorate of Hart and the people of Port Adelaide and surrounding suburbs. I will touch on a number of issues, particularly the redevelopment of Port Adelaide and the effects of industry in parts of Wingfield and Ottoway within my electorate. I would like to touch on issues relating to the very end of my peninsula—the very controversial area of Pelican Point—and I intend also, if time and protocol permit, to touch on issues that affect my new electorate, should I be successful at the next election.

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

Mr FOLEY: I now want to touch briefly on a number of issues in my electorate and then I will quickly move on to a concise critique of the government's economic management. There are a number of issues facing Port Adelaide that give me some concern. One issue is the future of Inner Harbor. My colleague the member for Lee is here tonight with me and, of course, part of my electorate will be his after the next state election, should he be successful. These issues certainly impact on his area of responsibility in the local area, and I refer to the future development of Inner Harbor and the future development of Port Adelaide.

The government, sir, of which you are a member, has a number of strategies at present for the development of Port Adelaide which are causing me great concern. I had hoped that we would have a strategic approach to the development of Inner Harbor, and for some time I was hopeful that the Minister for Government Enterprises, the member for Adelaide, would assist in delivering that vision. However, of late, we have seen competing interests when it comes to the future of Inner Harbor and, indeed, inner Port Adelaide. By that I mean that with the third river crossing that will be built in my electorate across the Port River I understand that a portion of harbourside land will be offered to the developer of that bridge to enable that person to put in place a development strategy for the area.

The sale of the Ports Corporation may, indeed, involve the offer of some land for urban development. On top of that, we have the overall plan of what was the urban projects department, the Urban Lands Trust, in terms of what it sees is the

future for that area. So we have competing government agencies trying to decide the appropriate use of Port Adelaide as far as future urban development is concerned. I think that is a recipe for disaster. I think it is nonsensical and very wrong of the government to have two or three agencies competing or making available to the private sector large areas of urban development opportunities without a considered and concise strategy.

We will be debating later this week the government's plans to sell the Ports Corporation, and I know I cannot touch on it tonight in too much detail, but there are suggestions that Outer Harbor will be the site of a new grains terminal, and that has very serious impacts on my electorate. I implore the minister, before he makes the decision to go ahead with a new grains terminal at Outer Harbor, to do the local community the courtesy of some public consultation. I make a public appeal tonight to the member for Adelaide, the Minister for Government Enterprises: please do not again put on the people of Port Adelaide a government sponsored development without at least giving the people of my electorate—the people of the peninsula and of my community—the opportunity of some public consultation.

There are many issues in my electorate and, whilst I had intended to canvass them in some depth tonight, there is another twelve months, at least, I suspect, until the next election, which will give me some opportunity to expand on these issues in more detail. What I might do for the few remaining moments—

Mr Wright interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Well, I am happy tonight to allow some of my other colleagues to share, not so much the glory, but the opportunity to express on behalf of their communities issues that are important to them. But I want to say a few comments about this government's track record with financial management. The current member for Light has twelve months remaining in this parliament and may well go back to lecturing in economics or being an economist at the Centre for Economic Studies.

The Minister for Education, the member for Light, might be interested in this, although he is busy there with a docket. I could ask him to table those dockets, but I will not be so petty. This document is an economic briefing dated July 2000 from the Centre for Economic Studies, the minister's former employer, whom he holds in the highest regard. I will make some comments shortly about what that centre had to say regarding the condition of this state's finances and the quality of the government's budget.

We have already asked what has been the result of seven years of Liberal government. We had tight budgets and major cutbacks in the early years, only to see John Olsen tear his way to the leadership of the Liberal Party—

Mr Scalzi: That's what you said last year.

Mr FOLEY: I doubt whether the member for Hartley really wants me to go into the history of the coup that saw Premier Olsen elevated from Minister for Infrastructure to Premier of South Australia, because I remember the role of the member for Hartley in all that. Indeed, the member for Hartley was a loyal (and I do mean that) supporter of former Premier Dean Brown. That is on the record.

Mr Wright interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: No, Joe didn't: Joe was under an enormous amount of pressure but, in fairness to the member for Hartley, Joe stuck with Dean all the way through—some would say to his detriment, in terms of career opportunities. However,

I cannot criticise the member for Hartley for not sticking with Dean.

Mr Wright interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: No, he wasn't, unlike the member for Coles, the member for Bragg, the then member for Florey and, of course, Scott Ashenden, then member for Newland. I am sure that the Deputy Speaker has some views on this issue. They were all great, loyal supporters of the former Premier. They all schemed behind the scenes to knife dear old Dean, but Joe stuck. I will give him that: that was a mark of loyalty, and he stuck with Dean all the way through.

That is probably why he is still on the back bench, but I will not mark him down for that because it was a good sign that he stuck. It was a stressful period for him. I know there was some ill feeling on the night in question. But never mind: I will let the member for Lee and the member for Reynell know all about that a bit later. But what have we seen? Premier Olsen comes to office, and we all know that John Olsen always has been a big spender. He is not a fiscal dry, as some would call them; he is a big spender. We have seen extremely large asset sales, not just that of ETSA. We have seen a number of government asset sales, some of which the opposition has supported but, when it came to ETSA and some other major asset sales, the collective view of the Liberal Party was that we would oppose it.

Since John Olsen was elected Premier we have seen a government that has continually delivered to this parliament budgets that have ultimately had a string of deficits—a string of deficit budgets that have clearly ensured that we have run up further debt on the state. Indeed, we have added further debt to the credit card.

The recent BankSA trends report pointed out that government outlays as a proportion of state output have risen since 1998. And what do we know about 1998? That was the year when John Olsen became Premier. In fact, it was a little earlier than that, but 1998 was the first year in which he was the Premier in his own right, elected by the population of South Australia. Since that point, we have seen significant growth in outlays as a proportion of state output. That is why the debt in this state is nowhere near as low as it could be.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: No, I do not want you to spend less on health and education. What I would like the government to do on behalf of the people of South Australia is spend less money on consultants, soccer stadiums and government radio networks, all the silly, foolish and outrageous expenditure that you have undertaken. If the member for Hartley believes that it was better to spend \$40 million on a white elephant of a soccer stadium which was not even filled during the Olympics, when seven kilometres down the road in the western suburbs a hospital is badly in need of government expenditure—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: It was 90 per cent. The state of South Australia has built a soccer stadium—

Ms Thompson interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Exactly; dodgy figures. There would have been a few dodgy figures that night, would there not?

Ms Thompson: They were about 25 per cent overestimated in the Public Works Committee.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart has the call.

Mr FOLEY: I do not want this to be a knock them down, drag them out debate about the Hindmarsh Stadium. I suspect that that opportunity will come in the next few weeks.

However, if the member for Hartley is telling this House that he believes it was better to spend \$40 million on six or seven games of Olympic soccer and a soccer stadium that from this day forward shall never be filled than doing a significant upgrade of the QEH or a hospital somewhere else in our state—

Mr Scalzi: You know you cannot just transfer figures like that.

Mr FOLEY: The point is that, when it comes to a choice in the next state election, it will be a choice of priorities. It will be a decision by the community of South Australia about who is able to better understand the priorities and needs of the community, and I have to say that I do not think the community will accept a government that would rather spend money on a soccer stadium than on their hospitals but, if the member for Hartley has a different view, good luck. I am sure our candidate, Quentin Black, will have a different view and I think will have much success in that electorate.

There was another report, not just Trends SA, but what I would consider to be a fairly definitive report in terms of analysing objectively the government's financial records; that is, the report to which I referred earlier, the Economic Briefing Report July 2000 prepared by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies. It is hardly a left-wing Labor Party think tank. In fact, it is a body that has been very much at the forefront of advocating the Liberal agenda. The current Minister for Education, the member for Light and the minister on duty in this chamber being a former employee of that body knows full well that the centre's view is one that the community should take extremely seriously.

In its July briefing, the centre made the statement that there had been major slippage by the Olsen government in meeting its own financial targets. It made the point that the underlying budget deficit is greater than was intended, in spite of reasonably good economic conditions, and that the government's unfunded superannuation liabilities have risen by about \$221 million since June 1997.

The centre also criticises the Olsen government's debt reduction strategy, indicating that the sale of our electricity assets has not improved the state's financial position. That is a very important point because much has been made of the government's strategy to sell ETSA. It has made a large sum of money available to retire debt in this state, but the principal focus has to be the bottom line improvement for the budget and what the government has done with this recurrent expenditure. On the one hand it has sold large public assets, it has run down the state's debt profile significantly—for that there is no argument, because that has occurred—

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: I am not arguing that. It is a fact and the Treasurer is right to say that debt has been run down. However, where he is so wrong and where his Premier, in many cases, is simply misleading the public is when they say that this is the result or the product of good financial management. It is easy to sell a state asset and run down your debt, but it is what you do with your recurrent budget and your expenditure. We have seen outlays grow. We have seen half a billion dollar growth in outlays since 1997. On the one hand, the government is selling state assets to give the appearance that it is managing our state finances but, on the other hand, it is racking up debt on our state bankcard. Future governments, be they Liberal or Labor, will face very tight financial circumstances because of this government's very slack budgetary strategy.

The report of the Centre for Economic Studies states that the government has adopted the strategy to 'sell the home, pay off the mortgage and reduce net debt', which of course reduces gross liabilities without increasing net wealth. The report confirms what Labor has been saying for some time: that is, that the Liberal government has lost control of its spending and that its continued budget deficits are adding to the debt even after the sale of ETSA. The report states:

...although net debt has been substantially reduced this is primarily due to disposal of the state's electricity assets. The state's equity in the electricity assets has been surrendered in return. The continuing deficit on the budget for the non-commercial sector actually makes debt levels higher than they otherwise would be.

I will repeat the last sentence. It is a pity that the Education Minister is not listening. Perhaps he is, but he just does not want to be seen to agree with me. I repeat:

The continuing deficit on the budget for the non-commercial sector actually makes debt levels higher than they otherwise would be.

So, the government is running budgets in the red and adding to state debt. We will debate the Auditor-General's Report later. However, that report bears out the claim of the Centre for Economic Studies in large measure. The Auditor-General states that:

...since the current Premier took office, government outlays have risen in real terms and will continue to rise by nearly 20 per cent, or over \$500 million in real terms, between 1997-98 and 2003-04.

That is on page 64 for those members, perhaps advisers to the Premier, who have not read the report. It continues:

The budget will continue to be in deficit until 2003-04 and will therefore have added to state debt.

The Auditor-General also states:

Discretionary use of dividends and returns from financial institutions and deferral of discretionary outlays such as past superannuation liability funding have been required to achieve underlying balanced budget targets.

That is the very point that I made literally within minutes of the state budget being delivered in this House: that this year's supposed budget surplus is on the back of the government assets sale. It is trickery. It is so obvious that it took only a matter of minutes for me and others to realise. I refer, of course, to the sale of the Adelaide Casino which enabled the government to have some money paid into superannuation and outstanding liabilities which required less from the Consolidated Revenue to balance the books. It was an asset sale to fund the budget bottom line. After seven years of this Liberal government and billions upon billions of asset sales, it simply could not balance the books.

I want to talk briefly about taxes. This week, we have seen more of the Premier's and the Treasurer's style. This time the issue was tax. Yesterday, with great amusement I saw the Treasurer, on a quiet Monday, trot out what he claimed to be a leaked document. What he had was a public document: the state Labor Party's draft policy platform, which has been distributed to hundreds of people (including the media) throughout the state of South Australia. It is hardly a leaked document. The draft platform of the Labor Party is a document that we produce during every electoral cycle in between state elections, normally in the latter part of a parliamentary term. The draft platform is a document that outlines the Labor Party's broad principles. It is the guiding agenda for us, the forward vision and the parameters to which the Labor Party as a democratic political party expects its parliamentary wing to adhere.

Surprise! Surprise! That has been happening for decade upon decade, and of course it happened federally recently in Hobart. It is a very broad statement. It does not contain detailed policy or detailed costings, nor is it a definitive document in terms of the policies that we will take to the next state election. It has been provided to the community of South Australia, as a regular feature of the Labor Party, parliamentary term after parliamentary term. It was with some amusement yesterday that the Treasurer trotted out that document. But, with even further and greater amusement, some gullible media leapt upon it and were prepared to swallow the nonsense of the Treasurer freely. It was with some disappointment and some amusement that I read in the *Advertiser* this morning and saw on electronic media last night the comments of the Treasurer so eloquently put into our media when they were, clearly, somewhat duped by the Treasurer yesterday.

Yesterday, the Treasurer claimed that the document had revealed that Labor had dropped its 1997 policy of not increasing taxes above CPI. The Treasurer knows full well that the document from which he was quoting is the ALP draft platform and is not its detailed and precisely costed policies that will be announced during the election campaign—as we did in 1997 and as we will do whenever the Premier chooses to call the next state election.

The hypocrisy of the Treasurer simply takes the cake. Does he remember narrowly winning the last state election with a campaign promise not to increase taxes and charges above CPI? I remember that very well. As the shadow treasurer during the last election campaign, I had the job of taking up the battle with Stephen Baker, and I remember vividly John Olsen and Stephen Baker making campaign promises not to increase taxes and charges above CPI. And, if he needs any further reminding of that, I am sure he would remember Stephen Baker, the then Treasurer, being reported in the *Advertiser* on 19 September 1997 as saying:

There is going to be taxation adjustment, but we are not out to get an increase in the quantum of tax.

Surely, Rob Lucas would remember that in the two budgets he himself has brought down following that election promise he has indeed increased state government taxes, fees and fines by nearly \$500 million. Stephen Baker said that there was going to be taxation adjustment but they were not out to get an increase in the quantum of tax but, if you are not out to get an increase in the quantum of tax, it is not a bad effort to raise somewhere in the order of \$500 million since 1997.

Is this latest foray into political debate by the Treasurer a case of his having forgotten how many times the government misled the public before, during and after the 1997 election, or is it merely a desperate strategy of continuing the policy of misleading the public? The Treasurer has said that the remaining debt following the sale of ETSA will be 'someone else's job to do'. I must say that I was surprised and stunned when he made that comment: either Rob Lucas is considering a change of life—which he is more than entitled to do—or he simply does not believe that the Liberals can win the next election with John Olsen as leader, or perhaps both. But, when the Treasurer of South Australia is saying it will be another Treasurer's job to deal with the remainder of the debt, it is clearly an indication that his time is up, that he is going to move on—perhaps become leader of his own party and appoint another Treasurer—or that he simply accepts the inevitable that this Liberal government has but 12 months to conclude its term in office.

It has been a woeful seven years of Liberal government. The Treasurer's foray into an attack on the Labor Party yesterday was amusing—nothing more than that. And I do not begrudge the Treasurer for playing a bit of politics. He is very skilful and experienced at playing politics. But I say to the Treasurer that he will have to do a little better than that if he wants to make a contest at the next state election, and I look forward with great glee to locking horns with the Treasurer during the next election campaign. I found Stephen Baker to be a wily opponent: this Treasurer, I have to say, does not offer the same trepidation that perhaps Stephen Baker did during the last election campaign, but I am sure he will be a more than worthy adversary.

At the end of the day, he will have a record of appalling financial management which he will have to defend and for which he will be judged. My role will be to assist the Labor Party to put forward a responsible vision of a financially responsible government, one that will provide excellent financial management. Most importantly—and picking up those earlier points that I made when the member for Hartley interjected—Labor priorities will be about delivering essential government services to the people in need, not the people for greed. When we look at this government, whether it involve consultants, soccer stadiums or other areas of government financial expenditure, the simple statement will be repeated time and again: we will be a party that delivers to those in need, not to those with greed. That will be a sharp difference between the two political parties at the next state election.

I will conclude my remarks by saying that we have only a short time—12 months—before the next state election. There has been a lot of comment by the current Premier, Treasurer and others that they have until about March or April 2002 before they have to go to the next state election. As we know, the four years will be up at the end of next year. I think you will find that by October or November the four years will be up but, through a quirk in the Constitution, or their ability to manipulate or use provisions in the Electoral Act, they can postpone an election to the year 2002 and perhaps to the end of March or early April.

I issue this warning to this government: if it considers going beyond the four-year mark we will ensure that the public of South Australia knows the reasons. There are two simple reasons: one is that the government is too scared to face the people of South Australia and is not prepared to put its track record to the democratic vote in this state. There might be another reason: there might be a number of government ministers who think that another six months in office might improve their parliamentary superannuation. I have done the calculations; I know what ministers will get if they get another six months in office, and it is not an insignificant amount of money. If members want me to give them the specifics I will be happy to do so at a later date.

My message to the Premier and Treasurer is that they were given four years at the last state election. By all means use those four years, but go beyond them and expect an unrelenting campaign by the Labor Party portraying the greedy Liberal government hanging on to the fruits of office to enable their parliamentary pensions to be increased by an extra six months, because they know they will lose office. If they really want that campaign to be drawn out for the months beyond the four-year mark, so be it. It was a threat Dean Brown made in 1993 to the then Labor government, and he was justified in making that threat, but understand this: the Labor Party will do the same.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I too rise in support of His Excellency's speech and the Address in Reply. I believe that we are very fortunate in having Sir Eric Neal as Governor, for he and Lady Neal serve us well. His Excellency's interests are very wide, indeed, in representing South Australia. Just as an example, I point out that on 15 October he will be the key speaker in an ecumenical service in my electorate, involving all the churches in the area, and that will be great to see in the International Year of Peace. Often we talk about reconciliation, and here we have a Governor who plays such an important role. Members might be aware that on 24 September His Excellency and Lady Neal were at the Montevergine Festival at Newton, and that is now known as one of the biggest religious festivals in Australia. As I said, we are very fortunate indeed to have such a Governor.

It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Hart's Address in Reply speech, particularly with the picture he paints and his over simplification of the government's progress in the past seven years and of expenditure that can be transferred from one area to another. It is also interesting to hear him talk of balanced budgets. If we look back before 1994 and 1993 to the 1980s, we see that the member for Hart cannot talk about balanced budgets. Going a little further back in history, we know that we had some difficulties with budgets in the 1980s, and there was a thing called the State Bank. It is quite ironic that the member for Hart seems to pick up the crumbs and ignore the loaves—the loaves of the hard labour that the South Australian public had to put up with in those years.

It is not by coincidence that this government has had to work hard in the past seven years to halve the debt and put us back in balance so that we can spend more on health and education and social infrastructure, which, I agree, is very much needed in South Australia. I, too, would like to spend more on health, education, infrastructure and transport and, no doubt, I would like us to spend more on supporting soccer. However, you cannot support anything unless you get the economics right, and this government has worked hard to get the economics right.

The member for Hart made the same speech as he made last year (anybody would think he was Kevin Maynard Foley), simplifying the economic situation. If we look at South Australia's indicators now, we see that unemployment is the lowest it has been for 10 years. There is no question that we have to do more, and there is no question that, even though the indicators are showing improvement, it is not much comfort for those who are still unemployed and for young people who do not have a job. The government recognises that, and that is why we support traineeships and work hard to attract investment into this state, as we have successfully done with call centres. That is why the Premier continuously supports our manufacturing industry, why we have supported the Adelaide to Darwin railway line, and why we have put investment into the Adelaide Airport—so that we create jobs. We will not create jobs by just taking money from certain projects in small amounts and thinking that somehow everything will be hunky-dory. It does not work out that way.

As outlined in the Governor's speech, South Australia has now stabilised the debt. It would be wrong to say that the debt has gone. Where is the member for Hart talking about unfunded superannuation liabilities? In all the years of the Labor government money was not put aside, and we had to deal with that. I am sure we could have used that money for more worthwhile projects, but we took it upon ourselves and

dealt with it. If we look at the economic indicators now, we see that South Australian business investment leads the nation. That is a fact. Figures show that private new capital expenditure in South Australia grew more strongly than that of any other state in the year to the June 2000 quarter. That is 18.4 per cent, with a fall of 2.2 per cent nationally. Investment spending in the key manufacturing sector had a particularly strong growth of 34 per cent. I did not hear any of those statistics mentioned by the member for Hart, and I suppose one expects it.

Recent statistics on employment growth from the ABS—Australian Bureau of Statistics, not the Adelaide Brake Service—show that employment has grown by 1.9 per cent, or nearly 13 000 new jobs, in the year to August. Manufacturing employment is up 5.8 per cent, and agriculture, forestry and fishing are up 11 per cent. We still have a long way to go, and I am the first to acknowledge it. However, let us put it in perspective. Let us look historically at where we were seven years ago. I am sure that even Joseph (from the story in biblical times) and his coat of many colours did not have to deal with seven years of bad luck such as we had with Labor before we got into office. We still have a long way to go. As I said, I can understand the concerns of those families who have unemployed members, especially young people. We are working hard to create employment opportunities for our young South Australians.

South Australian exports have increased to the extent that South Australia exports to more countries than does any other state. That is a fact. I do not know why the member for Hart omitted that, but that is a fact. I commend Nick Begakis, Chairman of CITCSA and Trish Sempler, Executive Officer for the ethnic chambers of commerce, for the work they are doing in ensuring that we do use our diversity as a strength to make connections with countries of origins so that we can create export opportunities, and we have done that. Travel along Greenhill Road and, when you see those flags flying, know that they are not just flags flying but are flags flying for export opportunities, and that has taken place. South Australia has led the way in that area. I look forward to taking a group from those ethnic chambers of commerce to the Adelaide Produce Market at 5.30 one morning (I have been there before), so that we can make those connections and concentrate on exports.

I would like to refer to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. No doubt Australia has had great success at the Olympics and, as Australians, we are all proud, but as South Australians we are particularly proud of the success that we had. One only had to see the parade to know how enthusiastic and appreciative the crowd was of our athletes. Australia is one of only five countries in the world to have participated in every Olympic Games since 1896—one out of five. How well we have done. In relation to the Olympics, the Premier said:

Of course, South Australia played a significant part in this aspect of the games, with the flawless hosting of a number of matches as part of the Olympic soccer tournament, culminating in a spectacular quarter final—

and I was there—

between the United States and Japan. More than 111 000 South Australians attended the matches at Hindmarsh Stadium, which I understand was over 90 per cent booked out.

And it was. These figures were omitted by the member for Hart. I do not know why, but one could ask him. The quarter final received live television coverage to Japan with an estimated audience of 55 million and a delayed telecast to the

United States with an estimated audience of 45 million people.

The Italian coach, Marco Tardelli (the 1982 world champion) said that Hindmarsh Stadium was one of the best pitches and stadiums for close contact sport. Some members opposite wanted South Australia to participate in the Olympics—but not at Hindmarsh Stadium. I suppose Football Park at West Lakes could have been used and spectators provided with binoculars so that they could see the soccer players. Is that what they wanted? It shows how little they understand soccer.

It was great to be there and, no doubt, as a stadium it has cost us, but it should be remembered that it has cost us to participate in the Olympics in general. How much did it cost to hold the volleyball in Sydney? Who would begrudge the money that was spent there or the other infrastructure costs in Sydney? South Australia was part of the Sydney Olympics 2000, but that would not have been possible without Hindmarsh Stadium.

Of course, the matches could have been played on a football oval, but we would have had to watch the soccer through football coloured glasses. Members who understand and love soccer would realise that soccer cannot be enjoyed if it is played on a football oval: football ovals are not meant for playing soccer. When one considers that Australia with the population base that we have was placed fourth in the Olympics after the USA, China and the Russian Federation, it indicates that we are the most successful sporting nation in the world. No-one can doubt that. It was a privilege to attend the soccer matches, and I confess that I thoroughly enjoyed them. I attended the opening match between Honduras and Nigeria (with six goals), the match between Korea and Chile and, of course, the quarter final between the United States and Japan.

As we move towards the year 2001 and the celebration of Australia's federation, it is important to note that this year is the hundredth year celebration of women's participation in the Olympics—and our athletes received a few gold medals. We must also acknowledge that Australia—and South Australia, in particular—has won many gold medals in a democratic sense. Australia—and especially South Australia—has been a pioneer in the representation of women. It was not until 1928 that Britain gave women the right to vote. Italy (my country of birth), along with countries such as Hungary and Yugoslavia, gave women the right to vote in 1945 after the Second World War. Switzerland did not give women the right to vote until 1971 and, sadly, there are some local government authorities in Switzerland where women are not treated as equal citizens. Of course, in Kuwait women still do not have the right to vote. The Olympics have made us aware of the countries that do not include women in their Olympic teams, so there is still a long way to go to achieve true equality for women, even in sport.

In 1894 the South Australian parliament gave women the right to vote and stand for parliament. Surely, we should be proud of that. This year there is much emphasis on reconciliation and I thought it was important to note that we as a parliament were one of the first to acknowledge the mistakes of the past. If we look at the foundation of South Australia as a colony, I would like to read a section from the proclamation by Governor Hindmarsh in 1836:

It is also at this time, especially my duty to apprise the Colonists of my resolution, to take every lawful mean for extending the same protection to the Native Population as to the rest of His Majesty's Subjects, and of my firm determination to punish with exemplary

severity all acts of violence or injustice which may in any manner be practised or attempted against the Natives, who are to be considered as much under the safeguard of the law as the Colonists themselves, and equally entitled to the privileges of British Subjects. I trust therefore, with confidence, to the exercise of moderation and forbearance by all the classes, in their intercourse with Native Inhabitants, and that they will omit no opportunity of assisting me to fulfil His Majesty's most gracious and benevolent intentions towards them, by prompting their advancement in civilisation, and ultimately, under the blessing of Divine Providence, their conversion to the Christian faith.

Now, there is no doubt that the Christian faith, according to the colonists, was considered to be superior, but there is that essence that in South Australia the indigenous population was given, according to the Proclamation, a status that it did not have, unfortunately, in the founding of New South Wales in 1788.

We must not forget that, in theory, according to our constitution in 1857 Aboriginals could vote and stand for parliament. That was three years before the civil war over slavery in the United States. When we look at it historically, we see that South Australia has a lot to be proud of. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go. However, I thought I would put forward that historical perspective when we are all enthused as a nation that has just succeeded in staging one of the best Olympics in the history of the modern Olympics. This should spur us on to achieve even greater things in developing the cohesion that was displayed during the Olympic Games.

Regarding the success of the Olympics, we could also reflect, at a time when we have succeeded so much in sport, that unfortunately there is not much industry in the production of sporting equipment in Australia. That saddens me. In a nation that is so ahead of others in sport, where are the tennis racquets made? Where are the shoes and soccer balls made—and the bicycles that Charlie Walsh has taken to such prominence? It is sad that we have not developed a sporting industry around our sporting success. We should reflect on that and aim to develop industries in that area.

In thinking of 'firsts', we should remember that we have also succeeded in many areas in science, and we should continue with that emphasis on science and technology and, in particular, medicine, because we have to excel in those areas if we are to retain the prominence and respect that we enjoy in the scientific field. We have a great history of that, too, which can be seen if we look at the Nobel prize winners: Sir William Lawrence Bragg, born in Adelaide 31 March 1890, shared the Nobel prize for physics with his father William in 1915. Florey won a Nobel prize in medicine with regards to penicillin. I heard only recently in the memorials for Sir Mark Oliphant of his success in science, especially in physics.

We have been successful not only in sport but in other areas of endeavour. In the last 18 months, scientists from the Hanson Centre for Cancer Research have identified an enzyme that controls how lipids stick to artery walls. South Australia is a world leader in cancer survival rates. How many people know that? A new generation of drugs have been developed for the treatment of asthma. Doctors at the Royal Adelaide Hospital have been encouraged by the results of Australian trials of E21R, which has the potential to switch off cancer cells. E21R is a modified human hormone found naturally in blood cells. So it goes on.

I have the utmost respect for our medical experts and for the care that we give in South Australia. I can honestly say that, if it were not for the good care of the Royal Adelaide

Hospital, I might not be here today. Some members opposite might say that would be a good thing, but I owe a lot to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and I look forward to the redevelopment that is taking place there. The government is putting funds into the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Modbury Hospital. A little bit at a time, we are putting in the infrastructure that is required.

It is important to note that, at a state and federal level, we must continue to put research dollars into developing better ways to deal with problems in health and agriculture. We have led the way in the past and I am sure that we will continue to play a very important role in the future, but it is true that funding is required, and I am the first to admit that state and federal governments must put more money into research, but we cannot do that unless we have a balanced budget. I am sure that the federal government would not have been able to support some of these endeavours if it did not have a balanced budget.

I turn now to discuss some of the successes in my electorate. First, I refer to the amalgamation of Newton Primary School and Hectorville Primary School. That merger was much talked about by my opponents, with claims that there were 200 protests. Yet the amalgamation went ahead. I did not politicise it. I kept out of it because I had faith in the review. I take this opportunity to commend the education review committee, which comprised the minister's two nominees, Clive Harrison and the Hon. Mario Feleppa; the two school chairpersons, Vicki Fazzini from Newton and Judy Secomb from Hectorville; the two school principals, Judi Francis from Newton and Ross Joel from Hectorville; one nominee from local government, Mayor Steve Woodcock, and his proxy, John Kennedy; one Australian Education Union representative, Alan Wilson; and one departmental nominee, Alan Young.

I thank that committee for doing an excellent job and for continuing with their review regardless of the mischief created by some of the amalgamation's opponents in the community. I was pleased when the minister announced that \$500 000 would be available for the amalgamation. I also thank the Minister for Transport for announcing that a crossing will be created on Reid Avenue so that the safety of the children is assured. The minister has also given a commitment that all community groups will be catered for.

The future member for Enfield is very much involved with Down syndrome organisations. Facilities are located at the Hectorville Primary School site at present, and I am sure that organisations such as that will be catered for—and that was never in question. I would like to thank the staff, parents and children for their patience in waiting for the education review. It was really good to see the Swedish swimming team visit Newton Primary School during the recent Olympics. That visit took place a week after the merger was announced. They were welcomed, and there was much goodwill in that area. I attended a meeting last night at Newton Primary School, and I would like to read from a newsletter written by the principal, Judy Francis—and this is important to note:

Ross Joel and I are meeting with the DETE staffing officer tomorrow to establish our staffing entitlement for 2001 and will begin looking at classes in a couple of weeks' time. We will have four shared staff meetings during this term to organise classes, rooms, furniture, etc., ready for the new year and to establish interim policies around behaviour management, assessment and reporting and roles and responsibilities.

The merger has taken place despite all the criticism, and they are planning in the best interests of the education community.

I commend the principals, the review, the staff, the parents and the students for their patience. I think it has all been worth while.

It is true that we have to do more for the elderly and that we have to try to find more funds for education, health and social infrastructure, but I know that the government has that as a top priority. Today when I was making my notes I reflected on the fact that last year I mentioned dental care for the aged. I remember the Minister for Human Services announcing in the last budget special funding of over \$3 million for dental treatment for the elderly. Now that the debt is off our back, now that we have a balanced budget—and blind Freddy can tell you that it is balanced, no matter what the member for Hart says—

Mr Hill: It's about as balanced as you are, Joe.

Mr SCALZI: If it's as balanced as I am, we've got a good future. When we look at it in cash terms, it is balanced. There is no doubt that we still have a debt to deal with but members should remember that, if we had not had a Liberal government for the last seven years, we would not be able to even think about a balanced budget. With the unfunded superannuation liabilities and an \$8 billion debt one would not be able to even think of putting money into social infrastructure.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I can only say that I am very pleased that the member for Hartley does not balance my cheque book, because he is not terribly good with figures—but perhaps some of us on this side of the House can give him some assistance afterwards. I think that one of the really sad things for South Australia is that we are now so tightly wrapped in John Olsen's government's privatisation phase of our state's public assets that South Australians are now learning of, and certainly experiencing, the awful price that not only the state but also its people will be forced to pay—and, indeed, are paying right now.

John Olsen and his Liberal government told the public that there was no alternative but to privatise our electricity industry, our water resources, soon the Ports Corp, the TAB and the Lotteries Commission, and on it goes. John Olsen said that we needed the proceeds of the sales to clear our state's debt, estimated then at some \$.84 billion. We were told that privatisation would be good for South Australia because it would reduce the government's expenditure. We were told by the Premier that there was too much economic risk to the state's economy if ETSA were to remain a publicly owned utility, and that privatising our electricity assets would create competition which would benefit the consumer. Well, the electricity assets are sold but now, I guess like many other members in this place, I regularly have constituents coming into my Torrens electorate office asking, 'What has the government done with all the money from the privatisation of the state's assets?'; 'Why are we told the debt is still high?' and, 'Could it be because of wasteful spending on consultants, or is it due to other ventures of this government where costs just blow out beyond all reason?'

Clearly the promise made was that all these asset sales would clear the state's debt, and this certainly was the first falsehood perpetrated by the state government on the public. The great concern for the opposition was that the short-term grab for dollars by the Olsen government sale of assets would end up selling short the long-term economic future of South Australia, and this is exactly what has happened.

A report by economists Quiggins and Spoehr outlined that the privatisation of state assets as forecast by John Olsen could not be justified on financial grounds if the sale price did

not reach \$10 billion. They also identified that \$7 billion would be needed to realise a net benefit to the state's economy from the sale of ETSA alone. Recent reports show that the government is likely to raise only \$4.3 billion, \$1.7 billion short of the government's own expectation. If one deducts the billion-plus that has been paid out by the Treasury in retrenchment packages overall, as quoted in the *Australian* on 25 September this year, one sees that our financial future looks bleak. The Quiggins and Spoehr report stated:

The sale price of \$7 billion dollars would be required to compensate taxpayers for the loss of income from ETSA. Even under a projection incorporating price reductions and loss of market share, a break-even price of \$6 billion is required. Under a projection in which revenue growth is maintained in line with state gross product, privatisation would entail losses of more than \$1 billion in the first 10 years.

This is certainly an economic disaster for South Australia. John Olsen has sold our silver, and now we have nothing left in reserve, yet we are in debt to the tune of \$3 billion or, as I have heard, \$4 billion. I agree with my colleague, the member for Elder, who said:

We are justified in our position that South Australia has had no net benefit for the sale of these assets and the loss of their income stream.

The Treasurer has sought to deflect the failure of the government's privatisation strategy by blaming the opposition for delaying the sale of electricity assets in parliament. Of course the opposition opposed the sale—we were concerned about the ramifications—but we were forced into a position with which we did not agree. Our concerns were grave and right, and we knew that the sale was not in the long-term best economic interests of the state, and clearly that is true, and a sad fact it is.

The fact is that the government's actions are at the expense of us all. The Premier was dishonest when he told the people that the electricity industry was not for sale prior and during the 1977 state election. Put simply, he knew that the people would not support his government if he told us the truth. Clearly, the government cannot be trusted—not then, and not now. They have sold us short to multinationals, and the people in our communities know that that is exactly what has happened.

The second great falsehood was that privatisation will deliver reliable and cheaper supplies of electricity because of greater competition. The state government's argument was that a national electricity market would have a greater infrastructure capacity to supply South Australia, as South Australia's own infrastructure capacity to supply the required amount of electricity was insufficient. These were spurious arguments and deliberately misleading.

In this House I have consistently argued that selling our electricity assets would prove a long-term disaster for South Australia, and this is obviously now so true. This was also a prediction outlined in the Quiggins and Spoehr report, which showed that independent privatised state corporations would get bought out, leading to a monopoly ownership, which in turn would affect prices upward for electricity power. I quote from that report, as follows:

Despite the description of the new system as a 'national market', it is in reality a set of interconnected state markets...representatives of the electricity industry are already advocating reintegration, primarily through mergers across state boundaries. It appears that the competitive phase of the national market will be short lived.

I did not believe that selling our assets would lead to a clearing of our state's debts, nor bring about a cheaper and more reliable supply of electricity to households. I believe

that the state government's economic rationalist competition strategy for our electricity industry was doomed to failure, because such a course would lead only to those private monopolies over our state's once-independent electricity supply. Such monopolies service only the shareholder and disadvantage consumers through higher charges for consumables, which we are seeing now in our power bills.

Those in the industry tell us that we cannot expect to be guaranteed a reliable supply of electricity this coming summer. Our elderly folk, those with young families and those who suffer from ill health want to know why we had to have power cuts last year. Now they want to know why we have to have power cuts in the coming summer period given that the privatising of our assets was to deliver a reliable and regular source of power. I refer to the following statement:

My advice to South Australians over summer would be to have a torch on hand and use their airconditioner sparingly to conserve power.

This is a most astonishing and alarming statement from Laurel Fox Allen, publisher of *Electricity Week* magazine. Last summer we suffered agonising cuts to power during periods of very hot weather. The government blamed the opposition for what it said were the delays in getting Pelican Point off the ground. We then discovered that the reason for the power cuts in South Australia was that South Australian electricity was being sold to interstate users during our blackouts, while South Australians sweltered.

This had a terrible effect on the elderly, on our children and those who were in ill health, not to mention the adverse effect on business, which depends on a reliable, regular supply of electricity. The revelation that the state government has conceded that it is powerless to control what occurs across the border and that we could face another summer of power cuts because interstate users do not have sufficient generating capacity to supply their own needs places South Australia back where it was in the 1940s.

During the ETSA privatisation debate in February 1998, I argued that this was the very scenario we were going to face after privatisation; namely, that we would lose our ability to receive a reliable and regular supply of electricity in a privatised national grid system. I actually used Tom Playford's own arguments, as I knew that that same relevancy would apply.

Being part of a national grid system and greatly dependent on interstate generators for our electricity supplies means that it will be the more powerful interstate authorities and industries that will have the first call on supply, and that certainly is at the expense of South Australians and business, particularly small business. Clearly, we no longer have a reliable supply of electricity for South Australia. As I have said, we have not had that for a while. The government put its privatisation agenda first and, to justify its actions, ran down our once-great power industry. Clearly, the government has failed the people of South Australia.

The third great falsehood used by the Olsen government to justify the privatisation of electricity assets was that it was too economically risky for South Australians to own their own power industry. We now learn that Mr Olsen has sold off our electricity transmission assets to a consortium in which the Queensland state government has an interest. The Queensland state government, which did not sell off its own power industry, has now, through its state-owned Powerlink, become a 40 per cent owner of South Australia's electricity transmission system.

If the Queensland government sees good business sense in owning a South Australian electricity asset, why has Mr Olsen not been able to identify the same business advantage? Now, with every switch of the light and power socket, it will mean more dollars for Queenslanders and a net loss for South Australians. That is not good business sense from a South Australian point of view. It certainly does not take Einstein to work out that the government has sold off profitable public utilities.

Privatisation is about transferring a profitable state utility to private multinational corporations that have no moral or economic obligation to us other than to repatriate profit out of South Australia. Privatisation is about disinvesting the South Australia public of its wealth producing assets and selling them—sometimes at bargain prices—to private companies whose owners are resident overseas. Where is the government's allegiance? Clearly, it is not to the people of South Australia and our communities are clearly saying that—they believe it.

For private companies the bottom line is about profit as opposed to service. It was the latter which ETSA loyally and efficiently provided to South Australians since Tom Playford first established our publicly owned state electricity assets in 1945. As I have said, the state government of Queensland thought the opposite of our government. It has not gone down the path of our government; it knows a profitable industry when it sees one and obviously it cares about its state and puts the provision of service first.

I listened to Professor Dick Blandy, Chairman and Director of the Centre for Applied Economics in South Australia, saying that we need to know what the government's strategy is for managing our state's affairs. I believe that is the question that we are all asking: what is its strategy, because other than privatisation we cannot find what the benefit is to us. The Liberal government has a privatisation and economic rationalist agenda—and I hesitate to use these words all the time, but clearly that is what it is. Apart from the sale of incoming generating assets there have been other major consequences for South Australian families and one of those serious consequences is the loss of thousands of jobs.

For instance, the privatisation of our electricity industry has seen full-time jobs reduced from 5 696 in 1990 to 2 726 in 1997. Since 1997, approximately another 800 jobs have been lost from the electricity sector. Many of these skilled workers have left South Australia with their families and gone interstate. The ripple effect of this has been extremely bad for small business not only because of the loss of skills but also because of the loss of wage packets across our economy. Another side effect of privatisation and this economic rationalism (or downsizing as it is often called to soften the truth and the reality of it) is the reduced services which accompany job losses. It is not uncommon for consumers now to be kept waiting for street lighting to be repaired and in fact they ask you to report it and give them the pole number so they know where to go when they eventually repair it. That also applies to other electrical maintenance work, which, prior to the privatisation, was completed in a prompt and efficient way. Now consumer complaints are simply placed on the end of the queue.

Companies in the telecommunications and banking industries are similarly affected. Consumers often come into the office complaining about errors on their accounts, heavy handedness—and I have raised this issue in the House previously—in the way in which telephone packages are sold to them or how they are wrongly signed up to some particular

company in the telecommunications industry. People are simply tired of endless queuing on telephone lines and the lack of the human touch. The human voice that they used to hear is now a synthesised voice. If you wait for a while and you are lucky you get to talk to a real person. A common and growing complaint is that the cost of the services is increasing, yet fewer people are being employed. That is a result of the privatisation process.

Another example is the staff losses. Certainly, as I said, those staff losses in telecommunications are due to the closure of locally operated call centres. Now when we pick up the telephone and dial the operator, we are probably speaking to someone in Darwin, Perth or somewhere else. This type of thing can lead to tragedies such as the instance that happened in South Australia when a mother made a 000 call concerning a fire in her home and the operator from interstate sent the fire crew to the wrong address in country Victoria. I cannot say that the rationalisation of services was any assistance in that particular instance.

In the banking industry it is not uncommon to be held in a queue waiting for an insurmountable time to try to finalise your business or to be shunted outside to use the ATM. That is the consistent feature of privatisation and economic rationalism that we see. These companies are making record profits, but the community is losing out because there is no corporate profit trickledown effect to people on pensions or low incomes. When you own your own assets, there is a direct benefit to the community.

One of the sad things that we are seeing today is the many low income earners who are struggling to pay the bills, put food on the table and support their family. That the rich are getting richer at the expense of the average citizen is reprehensible and an indictment upon a society where some are developing an abundance of wealth (most of which, as I said, goes offshore) without any regard for the citizens of this state or even this country.

Of course, this is an international phenomenon. We saw recently those visually very graphic scenes where the captains of industry faced demonstrations in different parts of the world. That was particularly the case at the World Economic Forum in Melbourne where thousands of people demonstrated against economic rationalism and the concentration of capital and industrial growth and power in the hands of a small minority. Whilst I deplore the violence, as I assume would most members—a small minority of demonstrators became slightly violent—I certainly sympathised with the sentiments expressed by the thousands who peacefully demonstrated against the direction which global capitalism is taking at the expense of human development and the best interests of the wider environment.

This current brand of corporate globalism is alive and well in Australia. Corporations determine what we see in the media, what we eat, how we work, and how the environment in which we live is shaped. This is not done by those whom we elect to our parliaments but by the unelected corporate leaders of the top 1000 or so companies worldwide. They must be made accountable for their decisions, and it should be the responsibility of governments to make them accountable. But how will a government, such as this state government, do that? How will our government make them responsible when it is actually trading away the best interests of the people in this state? I would like to talk about free and fair trade, but I will leave that for another time.

One of our major concerns in South Australia, amongst many others, is the number of job losses. We are losing jobs

at the Bridgestone tyre plant; we have lost jobs at Perry Engineering, the Submarine Corp, Mitsubishi, Galaxy and Clark shoes; and we have lost many jobs in the clothing industry, and in Gerard Industries recently. All those families are in a state of limbo. They do not know whether there will be a job for them in the future. They are being forced to live on unemployment benefits or any savings that they might have been fortunate enough to put away. Often they have been put in an incredibly precarious financial position. They do not have enough income to cover the mortgage, food for the family and the normal costs of raising a family.

The emergency services tax has added to their woes, along with other government charges to which home owners are subjected. If any tax is despised in this state, it is the so-called emergency services levy. It is a hated tax. The community quite understands that it is a tax. We all support our emergency services. Our emergency services were highlighted recently for my family and others who live in my street when we were subjected to a mini-tornado which savaged our street and a few others. Whilst we absolutely support our emergency services, this tax is unfair in its administration, not to mention the outrageous cost to collect all this money. Our emergency service personnel do a magnificent job, as I said, and I saw that first hand: I saw how dedicated the workers and volunteers were. We were ever so grateful for their assistance, but families just do not have the extra money to pay exorbitant taxes and charges. The emergency services levy certainly needs to be reconsidered.

The government has to realise the difficulties that families face and not implement and establish programs and then just expect that it can dip into the purse of the general public every time it wants to implement a new scheme. In relation to the emergency services levy, the legacy of this government venture is years of tax for a system that has yet to be proven. The moneys collected will be scrutinised carefully to ensure that they are justified and being used exactly for the purpose for which they should be used.

This government wants people to pay for their own dental care, regardless of whether they might not be able to afford that cost—and I spoke of my constituent Colin earlier today. The government takes a really hard line on students by fining them when they innocently make a mistake and forget to take their ID pass with them when using public transport—and I was discussing with my colleague, the member for Reynell, today the unfairness that can be put upon these students who innocently make a mistake and other inequities and anomalies in the taxes. All this is just more money for Treasury. Increases in public housing rents and other things eat into the meagre incomes of the low income and fixed income families. Sooner rather than later they will have absolutely nothing to give—and many of them are in that predicament now. This is the legacy that this government gives to the folk of South Australia.

Another important issue facing us immediately is the issue of South Australia's being proposed as a national dump for nuclear waste. I am absolutely and totally opposed to South Australia being used as a national dumping ground for nuclear waste—and I know many of my colleagues share that view. People in South Australia are very concerned about that issue as well. We do have genuine concerns about the build-up of low grade waste by-products from hospitals and other sectors, and we know we have to be responsive and responsible in managing that waste. We need to have a debate about how we will manage our own waste, but we do not want to

get locked into a national debate on managing the whole of Australia's nuclear waste, whether it be low grade or otherwise.

While I support the Leader of the Opposition's call to have the Senate select committee that is examining the contract for a nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights come to South Australia to give us the opportunity to directly voice our concerns on the whole issue, it is my belief that each state should take responsibility for its own waste. I certainly would not want to see us in a debate about whether we are to be responsible for the waste from Lucas Heights. Of course, New South Wales has its own problems as well.

Even Senator Nick Minchin, who is Minister for Industry, Science and Resources in the Howard government—and a South Australian—does not argue the South Australian case. He is actively targeting South Australia for a national nuclear waste dump contrary to the people's wishes. Many people oppose his wonderful grand plan, so should the select committee heed the Leader of the Opposition's call we can certainly tell them how we feel about it. We can say that as South Australians we are being responsible in not wanting to see a national or international nuclear waste dump developed in outback South Australia. Such a dump will create dangers on our roads and seas as a result of the transportation of these hazardous materials, regardless of whether it is low, medium or high grade material. Accompanying this will be the loss of fundamental rights of both the state and the individual because we will have very little, if any, say in the securities that will—one would hope—be put in place in the transportation of such toxic materials.

Once a dump were established it would not be long before all manner of waste (we will start off with a low level dump, but we would end up with high and medium) would all be deposited at this site. It would not be just national waste, but there would also be overseas waste. It is not inconceivable that a national nuclear storage centre could become a target for terrorist groups, and then we have the questions about who will manage it, who will look after the welfare and health of the state and who will monitor and check the environmental wellbeing of the dump to protect people and the wider environment from nuclear contamination. History has shown that, in all areas related to questions of the national interest, the public has never been fully informed about the full impacts of nuclear accidents when they have occurred or are about to occur. I do not believe that national authorities or private multinational corporations can be trusted to do the right thing by the people of South Australia in the management of a national nuclear waste dump if it were to be set up in our state—or anywhere else, for that matter.

We have all read about how profitable nuclear waste storage facilities can be, but we are talking about the most hazardous distances known to human beings and every celled organism on this planet. We have seen overseas reports where these so-called profitable sectors in the nuclear industry have had near catastrophic accidents as well as actual catastrophes. In the past, governments and authorities overseeing these catastrophes have hidden as much detail as possible about these accidents from the public and the international community. So, it is very hard to have any faith that things will change. Nuclear waste and its storage is too great an issue to encapsulate around profiteering. In this instance we certainly need to put people before profit because, if we do not, the consequences for our health and environmental wellbeing and the loss of human rights for our state will be astronomical.

Over the years (and I doubt that I will ever change) I have always consistently argued that selling off state assets, tariff reductions and investment in environmentally unfriendly industries was not the long-term answer for overcoming our state's debt problem and growth opportunities and, quite frankly, to date I do not think I have seen or heard anything that will change that view. In fact, I think that John Olsen's Liberal government in particular has only reinforced those beliefs, and I believe that is true of other people in the community as well. I can only hope that when we on this side of the House get into government and cross to the other side we have something left to work with.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): It is with pleasure that I also support the Address in Reply, and I thank His Excellency very much for the speech that he presented in another place at the commencement of our sitting. We are certainly very fortunate to have a Governor of the ilk of Sir Eric, and it is always a great pleasure and honour to have him in the electorate of Goyder. In looking at the speech that Sir Eric delivered to the parliament I was most impressed with what he had to say, and there are certainly a few things I would like to highlight and comment on. He said in his speech:

Since my government was re-elected to a second term in 1997 its priority has been to deliver to all South Australians a society which enjoys growth and provides security and greater certainty.

Further on, he states:

We have been in a recovery mode and significant recovery has been the result of patience and hard work by everyone.

I fully agree with those sentiments. It is very clear that it has been a very hard row for more than the past six years. People have had to sacrifice. South Australians have had to band together. It has not been easy. We have turned this state around from a basket case to a state which is now looked up to in the commonwealth.

I want to endorse the Governor's remarks and say a very sincere 'Thank you' to the people of South Australia for getting behind this government and the hard decisions that it has had to make. It is very easy to be critical and to knock hard decisions. It is another thing to accept the unpalatable and to acknowledge that, unless we make those hard decisions, we will simply slip further behind the other states.

So many positives have occurred. As Sir Eric highlighted, over the past year South Australia has enjoyed the strongest economic growth in the nation between June quarters. Who would have thought, seven years ago, that in 1999-2000 we would have recorded the strongest economic growth in the nation? No-one, I would suggest, because we were at the bottom and people tended to laugh at South Australia. Now we are right up there at the top, and it is wonderful to see that. It is great that, for the first time for a long time, the number of people coming into South Australia is significantly greater, and we are not having a negative turnaround in population numbers in this state.

Of course, that has also been reflected in house prices, in which we are seeing some significant increases, even in my own electorate. I heard on the radio this morning that prices in parts of Yorke Peninsula have jumped at a significant rate. This certainly reflects very positively on our state government. I say a very sincere 'Thank you' to all who have been involved in that turnaround.

But, whilst this government has made enormous strides in the area of economic development, His Excellency highlighted that one of the important things has been for the

government to achieve social justice. However, in the first instance, it had to get the economic fundamentals right. It had first to deliver on its promise to reduce state debt. I quote from His Excellency's speech, as follows:

In doing so it has created the conditions for long-term security and certainty for South Australians. No longer do the people of this state have to carry the burden of excessive debt. My government expects to have almost halved, in real terms, total public sector net debt by the end of 2001 compared with 30 June last year.

I will talk about debt alone. When we took government, it was generally acknowledged that in 1993 debt was \$9.4 billion. We have now brought that debt down to below \$3 billion. That is a massive turnaround in our debt situation—from \$9.4 billion to \$3 billion in under seven years.

We inherited a \$4.5 billion unfunded superannuation liability. So, in addition to the \$9.4 billion, we had to worry about another \$4.5 billion. We therefore inherited close to a \$14 billion debt, and we have sought to reduce that superannuation liability significantly. It really annoys me when opposition members criticise us for not reducing state debt by using proceeds from all our public asset sales. However, members should be aware that we have reduced significantly from asset sales the \$4.5 billion unfunded superannuation liability, because we are having to bring down that dual debt burden.

We also experienced the situation where the previous government was spending \$300 million more per year than it was earning—a massive blow-out in the budget each year. It meant that every three years we increased our debt by about \$1 billion. Even if the State Bank situation had not occurred we were headed for a diabolical situation in the near future as a result of spending \$300 million more per year than that for which we were budgeting. I am delighted that a Liberal government has brought in balanced budgets for the past few years. Again, this year, we are bringing in a genuine balanced budget. We are therefore not putting money on the credit card, which is the only responsible way to go.

Likewise, we inherited a \$13 million CFS debt. What has happened to that \$13 million CFS debt? We have paid it off in full. You do not hear too much about that but, again, it was something that we had to do. It meant that our state suffered to the tune of \$13 million when we would have loved to spend that money in other areas.

The Hon. M.R. Buckley interjecting:

Mr MEIER: The minister interjects and asks: what about the WorkCover debt? That is a very good question. We inherited an unfunded WorkCover liability of \$276 million—a massive debt in WorkCover and one that was escalating at a rapid rate. We had warned the then minister, the late Jack Wright, that the WorkCover system he introduced could not be funded. That advice was ignored and, of course, when we came into office we inherited a \$276 million debt that somehow we had to pay off. What is the situation now? We have a fully funded WorkCover. We do not owe anything on it.

So, in our six or seven years we have had to pay off the \$276 million debt in unfunded liabilities, and what does that mean? It means that businesses will now be faced with a reduction of 7.5 per cent, on average, in their WorkCover premiums. What does that mean? It means that they will be able to afford to employ more people. It is not surprising that South Australia has the lowest unemployment figures for the past 10 years. We have made these advances through hard work and through asking the people of South Australia to get behind us, and I am very pleased that they have.

His Excellency highlighted all those factors in his address to this parliament. The Governor's speech also addressed the fact that the leasing of the electricity assets has meant that there was no need to introduce the electricity levy that we intended to impose on the people of South Australia. Members opposite and everyone in South Australia would well recall that we had highlighted in the previous budget that we would have to impose a levy of \$180 per household in the last financial year. I can assure members that that proposal did not go down well, because I can remember receiving many telephone calls from people asking, 'What on earth do you think you are doing now? Another \$180 levy on us!'

Thankfully, due to two persons leaving the ALP in another place, we were able to get the lease of ETSA through the parliament. Thanks to the Hon. Trevor Crothers and the Hon. Terry Cameron each family in South Australia was saved \$180 in the last financial year and has been saved in excess of \$180 this year. I must admit, therefore, that the people of South Australia owe millions of dollars to the Hon. Terry Cameron and the Hon. Trevor Crothers and we should never forget that. We could look back on the situation when the Hon. Norm Foster was in this place, which was before I was elected. We owe hundreds of millions of dollars to Norm Foster for having agreed to the establishment of Roxby Downs. The then Labor Party did everything in its power to stop that happening. I hate to think where South Australia would be today without Roxby Downs. Our rural sector went through a crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s and so many people were able to find work in the Roxby Downs area.

So, the leasing of the electricity assets has meant that we have saved every family \$180 per year. This state has also had a net benefit of \$100 million in the period 2000-01 from the disposal of the electricity assets; the \$100 million is arrived at by considering the difference between the interest savings on debt and the loss of dividends and tax payments from the relevant entity. We are \$100 million better off than we were before leasing the electricity assets. This means that there are many projects that we are able to undertake that would not have been undertaken without the leasing of ETSA. His Excellency also said in his address:

The next step in my government's direction is to ensure our children of today have all the skills they require for employment in the future.

There is no doubt that education has been and continues to be an increasing priority for this government. As I have said—and as His Excellency acknowledged—a state or a country cannot do anything unless the economic situation is right. We have made enormous strides in this area and it is pretty well on balance at present: it is going well and looking positive. I think that is reflected not only in what the government is doing in education but also what the private sector is doing in education. As an example, how many new private schools do we have in my own electorate of Goyder? There are three new private schools in Goyder—Horizon at Balaklava; Harvest at Kadina (I had the privilege of opening this school during the past 12 months); and a new school at Edithburgh will be opened at the commencement of 2001 to serve the southern Yorke Peninsula area. Is there any other electorate in South Australia that has had three new private schools established since this government took office? I doubt it. That in itself shows the confidence that is coming back into South Australia. Private individuals are happy to establish new schools, and they recognise that the economic climate is so positive that they can support these new schools.

Of course, the government is committed to providing education for those who choose a public school education. We have sought to bring the community into the education system much more through the Partnerships 21 scheme. It has been very heartening to hear the minister in recent times addressing several questions in this House about Partnerships 21. I noted that only last week, and I think again today, the minister highlighted that nearly half our schools in South Australia are now Partnerships 21 schools. It shows that the parents, the students, the teachers and all associated with the government schools are enjoying the additional flexibility that has occurred because of the new partnership with the government.

It is something that has been talked about for a long, long time. In fact, I would say it has been talked about for the better part of 25 years. Some people here would remember the Endersby report of the 1970s. Philip Endersby was the author of that report, and way back then he was advocating a greater community participation in schools, amongst other things. This has come to fruition at long last. But do we get unanimous support? No; we have the education union slamming it. We have an orchestrated campaign by the union and by the opposition to try to belittle it.

I cannot understand the negativity of members opposite towards a new initiative. They want to go back to the dark ages. They want to go back to the past. They do not want progress: anything that upsets the present balance they say is bad, bad, bad. Well, I would simply say, 'Look on the positive side. There are so many positives that it is good, good, good.' And it is a shame that people opposite and the union do not recognise that. If we do not do that, we will be left behind. South Australia has had a reputation for leading in education initiatives for so many years. We are doing it again and there is no doubt that South Australia will show the way for the rest of Australia through Partnerships 21.

It is particularly interesting that these schools that have taken on Partnerships 21 are finding that the benefits are real; that parents are able to have a much greater say in how their school is operating. Likewise staff are having a greater say and people can direct the education of their children rather than having the bureaucracy decide how everything will be run. We do not want the 'big brother' approach. We want to get down to the local level and we are doing just that.

In addition, His Excellency highlighted the fact that South Australian curriculum standards and accountability framework will be introduced in South Australian government schools at the beginning of the 2001 school year. As members here would be well aware, this follows what probably has been the largest single curriculum consultation process ever undertaken in South Australia. Certainly, in my opinion, there is no doubt that this new framework will provide a curriculum literally from birth through to year 12 that will be to the benefit of all students in South Australia. It will provide a framework that will make it easier for teachers to plan, teach and report on student progress. In that respect, as His Excellency highlighted, and I quote:

Parents will be better able to determine how their children are progressing throughout their schooling. The framework includes a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and information technology.

I am sure that all of us will welcome the South Australian curriculum standards and accountability framework that will be introduced. Again, it will take our schools a step higher and a step forward. We in South Australia will be the ones who will benefit from our students having a better education.

It is wonderful to see this positive progress being made in education.

I highlighted before the situation involving employment. His Excellency also highlighted the fact that South Australia recorded employment growth of 2.4 per cent and full-time employment growth of 3.8 per cent to August of this year. That is a fantastic improvement, which again shows that we are on the right track. Members would probably recall that at least for one month during the year South Australia had a better employment rate than Queensland, the state that left us behind back in the 1950s and 1960s. We were level pegging with Queensland in the 1950s and now that state has left us behind, although we actually caught up with and passed it during the past year. Let us hope that that trend continues. It shows that this state has what it takes. In fact, there are at present a record number of people in jobs: 683 300 in August. That means that we have had the lowest unemployment rate since July 1990.

There is no doubt that this government will continue to make employment growth its number one priority, and we in the regional areas look to that. In fact, we have committed ourselves to the regional employment strategy, which provides regions with the flexibility and autonomy to tailor initiatives to meet their unique regional employment needs. In that respect, regional development boards have been allocated an extra \$2 million to implement the strategy and to assist economic development and we hope that, in the coming 12 months, an extra 1 656 jobs will be created as a result of that regional employment strategy.

How successful have we been in regional areas in creating new employment? I can consider my own electorate only. Let us look at some of the examples. The hay processing firms of Gilmac at Balaklava, Balco at Wakefield, which is about to move in part to Bowmans, Golden Plains Fodder at Paskeville and Yorke Hay at Wallaroo have been established since our government took office. Several of those companies employ in excess of 30 people. Basically, hundreds of jobs have been created since our government took office in that respect.

Also since our government took office, Primo Abattoirs has become established at Port Wakefield. At this stage the abattoir processes pork but, all being well, another line will be put in to process lambs. It has been employing something like 40 people and that will increase shortly to 75 to 80 people. With a little bit of luck, if the company can get another line going, 150 jobs could be going at the Port Wakefield abattoirs within the next few years. That is a magnificent achievement.

The Tickera aquaculture project has been established, and I attended the opening last year. It employs several people and it is involved with ornamental fish and codfish farming. It has had a setback or two but, all being well, it will go from strength to strength. There is also a codfish farm at Warooka, which produces a lot of Murray cod. Yorke Peninsula is breeding a lot of excellent Murray cod. That endeavour will go from strength to strength in due course. Grandax Crabs at Port Broughton has gone from strength to strength, with an increasing number of crabs being sent to Japan. It is a huge export undertaking in that respect.

San Remo has established silos at Balaklava and Kulpara and employs a considerable number of people at both silos, even though the factory is in Adelaide. SACBH has established a major grain holding at Bowmans, which is between Port Wakefield and Balaklava, and it employs quite a few people, which is a huge boost for farmers in that area. Oyster farming projects have been established along most of the

coastline of Yorke Peninsula. Whilst only small numbers are employed in each of the oyster projects, when they are added together it means that a significant number of people are being employed, bringing in a huge amount of money into the area.

The potential for tourism is also great. The Wallaroo Copper Cove Marina has been under development for several years. It has taken off particularly in the last three years or so and most of the blocks are sold. That will completely revolutionise northern Yorke Peninsula. Port Vincent marina has gone through all the government stages and it is in the final stages of getting the i's dotted and the t's crossed before it will be up and running, if not by the end of this year then early next year. Both those projects add enormously to my area.

Recently we had the opening of the Marion Bay Tavern, which I had the privilege of formally opening. People have asked, 'How many would the Marion Bay Tavern employ—one or two?' I asked that very question, and I was told that 15 people are being employed as a result of one tavern opening at Marion Bay. That will be a huge boost to the area, and we certainly need similar types of projects.

The Wheal Hughes underground mine has been established at Moonta—the only underground mine in South Australia that is open to the general public. The general public are not allowed to go down a Roxby-Olympic Dam mine, but they can go down a Wheal Hughes mine. The local council and the federal government have put a lot of money into that venture, and the state government also has contributed to this magnificent development. I also mention the new Dry Land Farming Museum at Kadina, which will be on a par with the Cattle Museum in Queensland and which will be a national museum.

There is also the latest development with the Garland Scallop farming proposed for the Moonta-Wallaroo area which will employ some 30 to 40 people in the first instance, and probably 80 people shortly thereafter. Only today, the Mayor of Yorke Peninsula formally announced another company that will establish a scallop and abalone farm off southern Yorke Peninsula, creating another 30 jobs. I mention also the deepening of our deep sea ports, which already has been agreed to by this parliament and which will provide enormous benefits for Yorke Peninsula.

There is no doubt that, with respect to regional development, we are going from strength to strength. I become fairly upset with people who ask, 'What is going on? Is anything happening?' I simply highlight the many issues that I have just mentioned. It is a positive development and is something of which we, as members of this parliament, can be very proud.

There are many other areas that His Excellency highlighted in his speech. In the remaining minute or two that I have, I would like to thank the minister and the government for addressing the situation of policing. Yorke Peninsula is enjoying an increasing number of tourists and, partly as a result of that, we are also subject to people who do the wrong thing. There is no doubt that we need additional police resources where possible, and I have asked for additional police resources in various areas. Some additional policing has been provided. Thankfully, the float in 20 police that was announced in the last budget will help us during times of annual leave and sickness, but much more is needed. Certainly, the minister's commitment that we are to increase the size of our police force by 113 will help in that respect, and it is something that I will be pushing a lot more. As I said

at the outset, it is with pleasure that I support His Excellency's speech.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): In commencing my remarks, I would like to thank the Governor and Lady Neal for the work that they carry out in our community. I particularly want to mention that I very much enjoyed representing the shadow minister for education at a schools event that was held recently at Government House. I had a great opportunity to talk with many young people who were very impressed to learn of the precedents that have been set in this state in the field of democracy. The Governor really welcomed them, gave them some inspiring thoughts for the future and allowed them to roam around a considerable extent of Government House. It is nice to see that our young people are valued in this way.

However, I was very disappointed with the speech that the Governor had to give at the opening of parliament. It in no way addresses the wide range of issues that I personally dealt with during the break. While I would have liked to come back to parliament earlier—because this is where we can raise the issues that we deal with in the electorate—it did give me an opportunity to attend an even greater variety of functions, to meet with a wider group of people and to spend more time with some of my constituents in dealing with the issues that they raised.

I found that there were a number of issues that came up many times. The first relates to problems with health care and, in particular, the lack of locum services in the area. People have to wait hours at emergency facilities in hospitals. We hear about that a lot. We do not hear so much about people waiting hours for doctors to call when they contact their general practitioner who has a locum service available. We know down south, and generally across the metropolitan area, that very few doctors' surgeries are now open after 7 p.m., and many doctors do not like to make house calls, so it is falling to a few people, often fairly new GPs, to take on locum services.

One constituent of mine, who suffers from a particularly debilitating form of migraine, found that on the last occasion she waited 10 hours for a doctor to call to give her Pethidine. This is just totally unacceptable in a modern society. People injured during the Vietnam war did not have to wait 10 hours for that sort of treatment. It is not appropriate that that should happen.

I contacted a couple of locum services in the south and asked them whether they could explain what was going on and how we could go about improving the situation. Both told me that they were convinced that the problem stems from the restriction on provider numbers for new general practitioners and, while locum services (after hours services) are regarded as a priority area, there are still not sufficient people available and not sufficient provider numbers available. This means that there are a number of vacancies in GPs' surgeries down south and, as I have said, it is an appalling service after hours, putting stress on hospitals and also on people similar to the constituent I mentioned, who really could not bear to be put into a car to be driven to a hospital. That is an unacceptable way of dealing with the problem. Such people are put through great agony and misery.

I did not hear in the Governor's speech that the Minister for Human Services is doing anything to convince his federal colleagues that they have got this system all wrong. The provider numbers issue is a federal matter. Seeing that people in South Australia have decent health care is the responsibility

ty of the Minister for Human Services, who needs to be much more persuasive with his federal colleagues.

Another issue that came up quite a bit in door knocking is the need for outdoor recreation facilities for our young people. These are not sporting facilities: I will come to them a little bit later. It is the new style of recreational facilities that young people are looking for—places where they can safely use some of their small wheeled vehicles and places where they can just go and mosey around, get a bit lost but be secure while they are doing it, so that their parents are comfortable that they are safe.

I commend the City of Onkaparinga for the work it has done to identify needs in Onkaparinga for outdoor recreation facilities. However, the needs that have been identified are far beyond the means of the City of Onkaparinga. The state government needs to work with the City of Onkaparinga to provide outdoor recreation facilities to give our young people the sorts of activities that they desire.

While talking with a number of people, I was pleased to hear that they recognise that our young people are not being given the opportunities for recreation and leisure that they need. During a couple of conversations, constituents and I said that we did not understand what some of the activities were that young people wanted to undertake, and it was quite clear to us that their choice of leisure activity is very much different from our choices some 20 or 30 years ago, but facilities are not there for them the way they were available for us. In a closely related area, I also found that sporting clubs are finding the going tougher and tougher. I was very pleased that several presidents of local organisations accepted my invitation to meet with the shadow minister for sport and recreation, and very interested to see the way they all raised the same sorts of issues. Again, it was pleasing that they said they thought the City of Onkaparinga was doing the best it could in caring for the facilities available.

I was really surprised to hear such unanimity about the services of the council because, as we know, it is pretty difficult for any sort of government agency to get good press; but it was getting good press. What people did not like was the way the government is spending money on big facilities and ignoring local facilities and the development needs of sport at the local level. They all commented that over the past few years there has been a declining volunteer base, and that in the last two to three years in particular there has been a decline in the amount of parent participation, including parents not coming to observe their children playing sport and to give them that very important support.

None of us assembled on that night could believe that parents have suddenly stopped being interested in their children's sporting activities. At the meeting the presidents told me that they find that many of the parents have to be on short call for the contract work they undertake; they are not prepared to be away from the phone. There are issues to do with families that are split, where there is a lot of travel involved in getting children to and from sporting activities, and parents are finding that the cost of petrol in getting to and from sporting activities is too high, so they are sharing rides.

They are even finding that the \$2 they have to pay for admission to some of the venues is more than they can manage. This is really a sign of a lack of health in our community, and it is a lack of health that has come about because of the short-sighted economic policies of this government. It has supported industrial relations so-called reform, which has seen people lacking in security, pushing

down wages and having to be at the behest of employers at any time.

Talks with the Retail Traders Association demonstrate how it finds that the extended hours they have to undertake are eating into the recreation and leisure and, particularly, the family time of many of their employees. So, the government needs to look further at some of its policies and look at how things such as an industrial relations policy is in fact having an adverse impact on sporting clubs and family life in our community.

I have noted a couple of areas where there are strong demands on the City of Onkaparinga for service, yet the City of Onkaparinga is in a situation where it cannot even plan its budget securely because it does not know what rates it will be receiving for the Mobil refinery. We have all been placed on notice that Mobil considers that it needs relief in rates. The government has been negotiating an arrangement for almost two years now, yet the matter has not been concluded. Recently, I received a letter from the Lonsdale Business Association, which called a meeting in the local area some time ago to enable people's views to be aired, and I must commend that association for what was a very profitable meeting.

It was clear that night and in the letter from the Lonsdale Business Association that it and I think the community generally—certainly I do—recognise the importance of the presence of Mobil, both for the south and for the state. The members of the Lonsdale Business Association want to protect their businesses, the jobs attached to them and the skills involved both in their businesses and at Mobil. However, we hear absolutely nothing from the government about how it will manage the issues associated with Mobil's long-term future. We know that everyone needs certainty and planning. Not only do the City of Onkaparinga and Mobil need to be considered but so too do the many small businesses in the area that provide services in different ways to Mobil. Again, there was nothing in the Governor's speech about how this difficulty will be resolved.

A further matter that I have found has raised a lot of emotion in the community is the issue of pick up and drop off at schools. Being able to move around the electorate at drop off and pick up time, I was even more aware of the congestion that occurs in local streets adjacent to our schools. It is not just congestion: it is a safety risk. This issue is remarkably emotive in the electorate because it is a nightmare for everyone. Parents do not have a secure area in which to drop off their children or to park for a little while if they want to walk to the classroom or have a word to the teacher, which is something that I believe we should be encouraging. Local government does not have the resources to keep on policing the congested areas around the school. When it does respond to a request from a school council and devote an officer to policing the school boundary areas, immediately a procession of people come to my office feeling most put upon by the issue of their fines because they do not see that they had any alternative but to behave in the way in which they did, especially on days when it is raining, the child is not well, or something such as that.

What I have discovered is that the policy governing the issue of pick up and drop off areas and parking at schools was developed in 1978. Things have changed quite a bit since 1978, Mr Speaker, as you would be well aware, particularly the patterns relating to how children get to school. They do not ride their bikes very often any more and they do not walk: they are mainly dropped off by their parents. Whether or not

we think this is or is not a good move, it is what happens. It is not just the congestion that is the problem but it is the safety risks that occur every morning and every afternoon around our schools.

I find that the situation is not the same for private schools. In general, when a private school is making a development application, the local council insists that pick up and drop off areas and short-term parking be included on the school grounds. It is very rare for this not to occur, and certainly it has been a requirement by the City of Onkaparinga in relation to the Antonio School, which is being redeveloped in my area at the moment. It was very easily able to accommodate a safe area for children to be dropped off. I am not suggesting that the provision of pick up and drop off areas is the highest education expenditure priority for this government—it is not—but we do need a framework that ensures that, when new schools are being built or when older schools are being redeveloped, it is possible for the safety of children, staff and parents to be taken into account in a much better way, and the policy must enable these areas to be included on the school grounds.

Extending my consideration of education issues, I have been appalled by some of the situations raised in our schools about the need for support experienced by some students. This support is often provided by LAP workers, who do a commendable job in my area. However, some of them have been stunned by the educational needs of some of these children being met by LAP workers instead of the education system. One LAP worker told me about an eight-year-old boy whom she supports who is having reading problems. She discovered that he had never heard a nursery rhyme, that, as a child, he had never been read to and that he did not know anything about fairy stories. Both the worker and I were moved by her story of how, when she discovered a book of nursery rhymes which this child enjoyed, he would come eagerly to his session with her every week clutching his book of nursery rhymes so that he could hear them read—at the age of 8.

Another worker told me about another eight-year-old child who had never been on a slippery dip. She was working with him to improve his coordination skills. No wonder he had problems if he had never been on a slippery dip. These are indications of poor parenting skills in the home. We need to look at programs that support parents, particularly young single parents who have an extraordinarily difficult job.

We also need to look at the allocation of resources to help address some of the imbalances experienced when children start school without having had much of a learning background. Some children are read to even in the womb. They have plenty of play time with their parents. They learn about language and numbers and they learn coordination skills through working with their parents and in appropriate child-care centres. Other children do not have these opportunities, and when they try to learn to read and write they are a long way behind the eight-ball. There is no provision in our system to enable the education department and our schools to address this imbalance. It is a scandal that this is happening.

Another issue that I have identified, which also raises emotion, is the provision of toilet facilities on home building sites. The South Australian regulations, unlike those of most of the rest of Australia, still allow long-drop and bore-hole toilets. Any member can go around their electorate and look at what happens with these toilets. They are filthy and often used for storage rather than for what they are designed. There is no running water. They stink, and they are a safety hazard

for both the workers and children who, as we all know, play on and explore building sites.

The alternatives in most states are chemical disposable toilets with running water or toilets that are plumbed into sewer and water connection points, if they are available on site, which often they are. In May, I wrote to Minister Lawson about this issue, and I am pleased that he has now replied indicating that he has asked Workplace Services to commence stakeholder consultation regarding this matter with a view to introducing amendments to the regulation. This is an important step.

However, when the Western Australian government sought to introduce amendments to its regulations, they were vigorously opposed by the major housing organisations. I urge Minister Lawson to ignore any such opposition if it does occur, because the experience in Western Australia was that, in the end, the housing organisations recognised that it was right to provide the construction workers who build our homes with decent toilet facilities and not insult them by treating them like animals, at times forcing them to refrain from drinking and to go off site to find sensible toilet facilities in service stations, hotels or shopping centres. This is just not good enough in this day and age, and I urge Minister Lawson to proceed rapidly.

I think all members find that their constituents are very concerned about graffiti and this issue is raised with me constantly as I go about the community. Local government is again active in an anti-graffiti program but, unfortunately, its results are spasmodic. There are some weekends when we come out on a Sunday or Monday morning to find huge areas riddled with graffiti. The state government's contribution to dealing with this issue seems to be the establishment of a code of practice for the prevention of the sale of items that are commonly used for the graffiti. Fortunately, KESAB has recently distributed a brochure and, if it were not for KESAB, it would be very difficult to know it was around. Again and again, constituents ask me why this is not law. It is quite clear to me that the code of practice that the Attorney favoured simply is not working and it is time that he reconsidered his position.

The community also wants more visible police whether they be in cars, on horses, on motorbikes or on cycles. They simply do not believe the Minister for Police when he talks about police numbers increasing. He seems to suggest that it is all rosy now. Even taking direct measures against graffiti, most of us know that is just a bandaid issue and that we really need to find out why these young people feel so alienated that they want to proclaim their alienation all over our fences and public property.

The issue of housing still comes up and, as a result of the reduction in the number of Housing Trust houses from 63 000 to 52 000 since this government took office, it is no wonder. This decrease in housing trust numbers is in no way made up for by a small increase in community housing. Many people are finding that the private rental market is just totally unsatisfactory. One young woman approached my office the other day and said that in the past two years she has been twice effectively evicted from private rental market homes because the homes have been sold or required for a relative. She has a perfect record in terms of her tenancy, payment of rent and respect for the property, but she is now looking for a house for the third time. It is so hard to find a house in the same area so that the children can attend the same school and you can maintain your relationship with a general practitioner and your relationship with the neighbours who are important

support bases in our communities. Again, we have another short-sighted government policy which has looked at the quick economic fix and failed to realise the severe implications on the community as a result of not providing stable public housing for people who need it.

I have also been quite surprised that several of my constituents have raised the issue of the Barcoo Outlet—or the Barcoo drain as I prefer to call it. They have heard me raise this matter in relation to the Public Works Committee and have asked me in a most interested manner what it is all about. I think this is probably because the residents of Reynell are generally interested in the environment. They are very happy living in the south, and one of the reasons is because they see that the air is clean, the oceans are clean, and generally it has good open spaces in which to bring up children and to live in relative safety. I might take this opportunity to mention that, according to a study undertaken for me by a parliamentary intern, Morphett Vale is twice as safe as Unley. So, if you are looking for somewhere safe to live, come and join us down at Morphett Vale; it is lovely.

I return to the Barcoo Outlet. I find that residents are very much aware that in relation to the Barcoo Outlet polluted water is being pumped directly into the gulf and that this is damaging what they consider to be a very important asset of this state, Gulf St Vincent. They are not always aware just how polluted it is to start with, but the divers certainly tell me about what is happening to the Port Noarlunga reef. When I talk with them further about the Barcoo Outlet, they are all outraged that this government is spending \$20 million simply to pipe polluted water out into the gulf instead of directing that money towards much needed upstream works. They cannot understand why that water is not being cleaned up and reused; nor can they understand why the long promised upgrade of the Heathfield waste water treatment plant has not happened.

When I talk to them about the publicity I have seen from the government about the need to upgrade the Patawalonga, which publicity focuses on the social and community value of the milk carton regatta, I must say that they are frankly amazed. Not one of them so far has told me that they place any priority at all on revisiting the milk carton regatta; they are much more interested in getting down to basic community practices of cleaning up our environment.

It is quite clear from speeches that have been made by a number of members on this side that the government has its priorities wrong. It also lacks accountability. It is wasting money on a wine industry centre that was once a wine museum, but now it seems that it will have very little community benefit at all. People are aware that there is a huge monstrosity growing behind the railway station, and wonder whether it was necessary to spend \$85 million on the upgrade of the Convention Centre. I assure them that the Convention Centre very much needed upgrading, and that it has contributed well to our economy over the past few years and provided many jobs. However, there was a cheaper option; it did not have to be an \$85 million upgrade. But the government has gone for an icon; it wants another big ribbon to cut and is wasting \$20 million too much on the Convention Centre.

They all know about Hindmarsh Stadium; it is hardly necessary to talk about it. They are also interested in what is happening at Football Park and, again, knowing that I am a member of the Public Works Committee, they sometimes ask me about what is happening there. I have to tell them that the matter is not being examined by the Public Works Commit-

tee, nor, I understand, by the Economic and Finance Committee, because the government thinks it has discovered some loophole to avoid scrutiny and accountability.

Many who would support the upgrade of Football Park are nevertheless disgusted that the government should avoid that scrutiny and accountability process, which they consider important. They realise, even if this government does not, that it is simply saying, 'You don't deserve to know what we are doing here and how the arrangements are made.' They are also angry about the emergency services levy.

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

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 10 p.m.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): First, like other members, I congratulate Sir Eric and Lady Neal on the work that they continue to do as Governor and Governor's wife in South Australia. They have visited my electorate on several occasions, and my constituents have been delighted to welcome them there. I wish them ongoing satisfaction in the role that they perform in this state.

I would like to canvass a range of issues, starting with what I believe is some very good news to come from the government over recent times. These are not all of them, of course. One relates to the upgrade of the museum. I have often argued that we need to go even further in providing a performing arts area for Aboriginal culture—and I am not reflecting on Tandanya in any way. At some time in the future we will need to spend probably in excess of \$100 million to provide a facility similar to what the Maoris have in Rotorua. That would attract tourists and provide great value to the community by showcasing Aboriginal culture.

I was pleased to see the recognition given to volunteers in our community, and that should continue. We saw that demonstrated through the whole Olympics, particularly the torch relay. The people of this nation and state are willing to put in and are often pleased to participate in community activities that might seem to be at the middle order of activity but, nevertheless, they put in, and they are willing to do so.

I welcome the establishment of the bio-innovation organisation within the state. I have been interested in biotechnology for a long time, and I commend that initiative. The decision to protect the Gammon Ranges was excellent. I wrote to the Minister for Environment and Heritage congratulating him on that decision. We would have had people marching in the street if that mine had been allowed to go ahead. We have alternative deposits of magnesite at Leigh Creek. It is not necessary to contemplate mining in what is a beautiful national park.

I also welcome the announcement about container deposit legislation—although I wish the time line was not quite as extensive: I would like to see it shortened. We should also give some consideration to the way in which we deal with the fast food wrappers that are often found in the litter stream. So, the expansion of the container deposit legislation scheme is welcome. However, we could be even more innovative in the ways we deal with the wider litter stream, whether by way of a levy or a sampling of litter and imposing some cost on the organisations responsible for that litter. I commend the increase in wine exports and exports from the automobile industry, and I trust that the quality of the wine will continue to improve.

With regard to education, a lot has been said and argued in recent times about Partnerships 21. It comes down to one question at the end of the day: what is in the best interests of students in regard to educational outcomes? I would like to see the AEU and the department engage in a more cooperative collaborative approach to this issue rather than what seems to be ongoing trench warfare. In some ways, whilst the question of local involvement by parents is important, we should not be diverted away from considering some of the wider issues of education. Our state schools need a lot of money spent on them—tens of millions of dollars, if not hundreds of millions of dollars. Over the past 20 years or so they have not had the resources allocated to them in physical terms that they need. We should be asking questions such as whether our schools are used in the most efficient and effective way and not just focussing on one particular aspect which is that embraced within Partnerships 21. We need to look at the cost of TAFE fees. Many of those are becoming prohibitive for students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds. Pre-vocational programs and so on are getting out of the reach of students who do not have affluent parents.

In respect of raising the school leaving age, of course the critical question is: why are students leaving school? Simply raising the age does not address that, and one has to look at the programs that are offered to make sure that they are attractive and productive. In that respect, we need to be a lot more innovative. In recent times, there has been progress in regard to more innovative vocational programs. That needs to be expanded considerably so that some young people can be at work while attending school part time. I continue to urge the screening of children in regard to physical and mental health, learning disabilities, and so on. That should be implemented particularly through the primary school years, and I am pleased that that is contained in a report which will be discussed in the parliament tomorrow.

I note with some concern that waiting lists in our hospitals are long and, in some cases, expanding. I would like to see that matter addressed and waiting times reduced. Likewise, in relation to dental treatment I am pleased that the minister announced extra funding for that issue a few months ago. However, it is still an issue requiring further resourcing and one where the commonwealth should come to the party.

I looked with interest at the report of the Auditor-General. I acknowledge the work that he does although I have to say—and, of course, this is no reflection on the Auditor-General—that, in essence, what is produced to parliament is of historical significance and I would like to see more interim reporting. Likewise, I would like to see a half-yearly budget presented to parliament, not the same length as the conventional annual budget but a half-yearly synoptic budget giving an indication of where the state is going.

I believe we could well copy the Victorian Auditor-General model, and I know that is a position that attracted some interest during the Kennett term. The Victorian Auditor-General focuses on the three 'E's—the economics, the efficiency and the effectiveness—and he is quite happy to look at specific issues such as the time taken for ambulance services to respond to accidents. I believe that is a role that could be undertaken by the Auditor-General in this state; not that specific topic necessarily but a more immediate analysis of issues could be undertaken in terms of efficiency and effectiveness by the Auditor-General here.

The environment has always been of great interest to me and I am increasingly concerned that we are changing the environment so much in this country—and in Adelaide—that

we are reaching a point where it is hard to distinguish whether or not we are actually in Australia. I am not being pedantic about the type of trees being planted along roadsides (and I do not think anyone should be an absolutist or purist in this respect) but if one looks at the ecology of the exotics their leaves end up in our river systems. They are not part of the natural eco systems and they do not assist in that process. So, it puzzles me why we are hooked into planting so many exotic trees as street trees and park trees even though, as I have said, I am not a fanatic about it. I am not saying that we should not have any exotics; I believe we should look at the end consequence just as we are doing in relation to litter.

There are many places and parts of the Adelaide Hills where it looks anything but Australian or South Australian with ash trees, which have gone absolutely feral, and hawthorn bushes. Despite the good work of Rotarians and others, in some parts of Brownhill Creek one can barely see the soil because of the coverage of feral olive trees.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done in respect to restoring the environment and that, of course, includes maintaining biodiversity throughout the state. One suggestion that I think is worth the government considering is in relation to those large areas of native forest under the current control of ForestrySA. I believe that the 20 000 hectares of native forest could sensibly be transferred to be part of the national parks comprehensive and representative reserves system.

It is to the credit of the foresters that we have those areas, just as it is to the credit of SA Water that some of the best conservation areas in the state fortuitously happen to be around reservoirs. Some of those areas held by Forestry SA include Wirrabara and Kings Paddock, both of which support important remnant grassy woodland. In other areas—Parra Wirra for example—there is a large holding adjacent to land controlled by national parks. So it makes sense to bring them together.

I commended the wine industry on its exports but we still have a few cowboys in that industry. I was dismayed recently to hear of unscrupulous operators destroying heritage listed bush in the Fleurieu area to plant additional vineyards. I have indicated before that it is my personal practice never to buy the wines of any company that is involved in destroying the bushland or breaching vegetation clearance guidelines. We are heading to a point where the companies that do it will end up being part of a dirty dozen, which will be boycotted by people who are pro environment and who are also consumers of wine.

In the area of crime, which is always a popular one for members of parliament, there is a feeling in the community that many people are not receiving appropriate punishment for the crimes they have committed. We had a recent example, which amazed me, of someone who was involved in a marijuana crop to the value of \$6 million where they used their house and property. The person involved received a suspended sentence because he told the judge that he was generously providing money to assist his wife to have a trip to Europe. As a result the judge, according to the media report I read, awarded a suspended sentence.

We seem to have a funny set of priorities in this state. I know that a government is not in the position to direct judges, nor should it, but I think as a community we need to send a clear message to the courts that where people engage in violent and serious crimes there should be an appropriate penalty and if people cannot behave themselves, if they threaten and intimidate, they ought to be taken out of circulation. I have no problem with that. If you cannot behave

yourself—nearly every night we are hearing of a stabbing or shooting—and you engage in that sort of behaviour then you are out of circulation as far as I am concerned. We do not need zero policing; what we need is vigorous policing and a proper application of the penalties.

In terms of the Murray River, I was pleased to hear the Prime Minister's announcement today, with the state government, hopefully, being able to contribute towards the regeneration of the Murray River. As we have always known, the commonwealth government does not give away too much without requiring a matching grant. In this context it is somewhat unfair, because state and territory governments do not have anywhere near the taxing capability of the commonwealth.

I take a different view to some in relation to the Snowy River. I think we should all rejoice if we can restore all or any of our rivers. As long as it is done in a way that does not diminish the Murray River then I think we should be proud if the Snowy River is allowed to run free again. I heard the minister earlier today talk about the flow into the ocean. However, in terms of the Snowy it is the volume of water up in the headwaters that is absolutely minimal. I think that we can have consideration of both our Murray River and Snowy River, as well as other rivers. I hope that we do not become too parochial about that issue.

Transport has been a hobby horse of mine for a long time, and I welcome some initiatives by the minister in recent times. She has contributed to a Park'n Ride at Aberfoyle Park and a similar facility at Coromandel station, although I notice that the Blackwood Primary School calls them Kiss'n Ride which is probably more exciting terminology than the Department of Transport would embrace.

Some things that could be done in relation to public transport are fairly simple such as shelters. In my area, where I have asked the council to provide more, people are getting cooked in summer and wet in winter. That is hardly an inducement or incentive for people to use public transport. On a wider scale, in Adelaide, we need an integrated transport system. I am not knocking the O-Bahn, which to some people it is an icon, but I have always been a stronger believer in a rail type of system. However, it needs to be integrated and total, including the people of the eastern suburbs as well as those in other parts of Adelaide. It is not too late to start planning towards that. Whether it is light rail, heavy rail or medium rail, it needs to be integrated and it needs to be the latest technology.

The promotion of South Australia is something to which I have given quite a bit of thought lately. Whilst programs such as SA Great have done marvellous things over time, I think that we need to reconsider whether or not that is the best strategy. In South Australia we are excellent at some things, very good at some things and not so good at others. With respect to this business of putting up signs (and I am not saying that SA Great does it), I noticed in one country town a sign that read, 'Great people, great river', and so on. I think that sends a message that you really have an inferiority complex, because if you are good you do not have to keep telling people about it. I think that we need to redefine the strategy of how we build self-confidence here in South Australia, and I do not think it is best achieved by banners saying that we are the best, because that tells other people that you have some sort of inferiority complex. If you are good, people know you are good. We need to develop our resources and talents in ways that make that talent obvious.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, as a state we are doing more in terms of biotechnology. We have some great companies here. But we need a lot of funding to go into research and development, and this requires the support of the federal government. In areas such as nanotechnology, which is small particle technology, we could be doing marvellous things here if we got stuck into that technology—restoring people's sight; micro machines travelling around inside people's bodies monitoring things. There are fantastic possibilities. We could be world leaders with some real effort in that field.

With respect to local government, I was dismayed to hear the Victoria Square saga dragged out once again. We know that many Aboriginal people have a serious drink problem. I have seen some of the children who are suffering, and will suffer for all their life, as a result of alcohol foetal syndrome. As I have mentioned before, a relative of mine fosters some of these children, who are born with hare lips, and who have enormous health problems that will affect them until the day they die. Yet this problem continues, and it is more than one of making someone sad. I think it is outrageous that we allow this problem to continue in our society, and that the people involved can keep on having children whilst they are so grossly affected by alcohol, with the consequence of a lifetime of suffering for those children. I know in one recent case the baby was so badly deformed that it lived for only a few days. Clearly, I will not name or identify the person, but I know of one case where at least four children born to the same mother are suffering from the effects of alcoholism through alcohol foetal syndrome.

Some people say that it is anti-Aboriginal and racist to talk about a dry zone. That is a load of nonsense. The Pitjantjatjara lands are absolutely dry—in more ways than one. You are not allowed to have any alcohol in their lands. That also applies in other Aboriginal areas. I think that we should provide counselling, and so on, but this idea that we have to have someone pick up these people in a bus and take them somewhere to dry out, only to have them return the next day, is just absolute nonsense. We are running away from the issue. We cannot have people being harassed. I noticed the other night some gentleman kindly irrigating the side of Old Parliament House. This would not be tolerated in most countries.

As members know, I am very pro-Aboriginal and believe in giving Aborigines a fair go, but I think as a community we should not have to accept that a small minority of Aborigines who have a drinking problem should be able to engage in antisocial behaviour in the heart of the city. So, a multi-pronged approach is required, but the problem will not be solved if the City Council and others just keep talking about it forever.

For me it raises the issue of what is the core business of councils. I am somewhat disappointed with the newly elected council of the City of Adelaide, and I am not sure that they are any better than previous councils. They might say the same about me or about this place, but I would argue that citizens of the metropolitan area at large, as well as those in the country, should have a say in what happens in the CBD.

I do not seek to pass judgment on the people of North Adelaide or other residents of the City of Adelaide, but the CBD belongs to all South Australians, and I would like to see a representative system which allows country people and people in the rest of the metropolitan area a meaningful say in the decisions which are made that affect the CBD.

Another area very close to my heart is that of young people. Young people are not getting a fair go in our society. It sounds a bit like a record, but it is true. In terms of facilities and resources, they should be getting the same sort of attention that we rightly apportion to our senior citizens. Young people need places to which they can go to talk to each other and get away from adults, as well as places where they can skateboard, and so on.

I was very impressed to learn that in New South Wales police still run youth clubs. In a place such as Broken Hill, three police officers are assigned to the local youth club. Victoria assigns some of its gambling money to youth facilities. I believe that we in South Australia need to provide more facilities and a range of facilities for young people, both in the skateboarding area and similar, but also in places where they can congregate.

In respect of parliament, I agree with the recent comments of Professor Jaensch that we should, in effect, sit more often. I think we have come down too far at the lower end of sitting days. When we are not dealing with legislation, we should have discussion about other general issues, whether it be youth employment or whatever. As well, I think we could open the parliament to have some of our more enlightened thinkers come and express their views about the future and their visions for South Australia. If we are not using it as a legislature, let us use this facility as a place to look at the future of South Australia and extract the best ideas from our forward thinkers.

At the outset I mentioned the Olympics, and I think the facilities that were provided in Sydney are a clear example that Keynesian economics work—that if you spend money on facilities you will get a multiplier effect. Of course, it does not apply just to sporting facilities, although somehow for some people it seems to be politically acceptable to spend money on sporting facilities but not on education or other facilities. There is no economic rationale for that. If you spend the same money on public housing, roads or transport, you get the same multiplier effect and the same benefits to the community in terms of creating employment. It is no coincidence that Sydney has an unemployment rate of 4 per cent or less, and that is due to the huge amount of money that the citizens of Australia have provided to Sydney by way of infrastructure for the Olympics. In terms of training, the question is: what sort of training are we giving? It is not only quality but it is also quantity. I have been in contact with the minister and have encouraged more frequent audits to make sure that what is provided is good quality and appropriate quantity.

Dealing with tourism, I would like to see in the regional areas provision of larger scale airports, one on Kangaroo Island and one in the Flinders Ranges, to take at least Boeing 737 size planes, because that is the only way we will open up those areas to tourism, whilst not wanting to damage the local environment. We also need to provide better quality accommodation in some of our regional areas.

I noted on my recent trip to Sydney that in Darling Harbor the Northern Territory government has an excellent venue to promote tourism to the Northern Territory, run in conjunction with a private operator. That is in strong contrast to the small office that we have tucked away in Pitt Street. In conclusion, noting a few quick issues, I would like to see us more innovative in terms of housing design.

We have gone towards the Tuscany look which, in 20 years, when the render starts to fall off, will create a big employment boom with people going around to replaster all

those Tuscan lookalikes. More important than the Tuscan look is the fact that we are not requiring people to put eaves on these houses and not encouraging them to site the houses so as to get the maximum benefit from winter sun, and so on. What we are doing is creating a nightmare for future energy use.

Those two storey eave-less, verandah-less Tuscan boxes in years to come will need to be airconditioned almost constantly. Certainly the upper storey will, where there is one. That might be great news for AGL, but it is not good news for the country. I predict that this coming summer, if not the next one, we will be under great pressure in South Australia to satisfy the need for electricity. Much of it will be because of the need for airconditioning, because of poor housing design.

We ought to be looking at a more innovative design for our state flag and at least ask people whether they want the current flag or some alternative. I am not anti-British—my ancestry is British—but I think that our state flag could do with a re-examination. If people want the existing flag, that is fine by me, but let us look at some alternatives.

An issue that I have taken up with the minister responsible is the lack of air bags in many government fleet cars. I have indicated to the minister, the Hon. Robert Lawson, that I think that all government fleet cars should have air bags to protect public servants in the event of a crash, and that it should be a minimum requirement in the tender. He has agreed to look at that and I commend him for that.

Finally, I have noted to my dismay that the operators of the airport in, not surprisingly, wanting to maximise their dollar return have gone a bit overboard in the advertising at West Beach and at Parafield. In fact, they are on the verge of getting into the tacky, particularly at Parafield. Whilst I am not naive enough to believe that people run businesses simply for the satisfaction of MPs, nevertheless I think they do have a community responsibility and I would like to see them moderate their enthusiasm for huge advertising hoardings.

I think it was Don Dunstan who brought in the rule that we were not to have hoardings along our public highways. Every time I go to Queensland and it looks like southern Texas, I say, 'Thank god for Don Dunstan, if he was the one responsible for saving us from the blight of those hideous roadside hoardings that afflict Queensland and other parts of the world.' So, a plea to the Manchester Airport Company in relation to advertising.

Mr HILL (Kaurna): In His Excellency's speech on Wednesday, at the opening of this session, he stated:

My government intends to continue to deliver to South Australia a future which emphasises quality of life.

In my contribution tonight I want to examine that statement as it applies to my electorate. Before getting into the detail, I wish to refer briefly to a report prepared by Flinders University and published in January this year, called 'Rising levels of disadvantage in Adelaide's outer south?' It is a case study comparing census figures from 1991 and 1996 of four postcodes in my electorate. They are 5169, 5170, 5173 and 5174, which cover the suburbs of Moana, Seaford, Maslin Beach, Aldinga and Sellicks Beach, in other words, a substantial part of my electorate. I am certain that what holds true for these areas is also true for the rest of Kaurna. As the report indicates, while it is true that there is a good level of satisfaction with the residential environment, the areas covered are relatively disadvantaged compared to Adelaide

generally. This is particularly so for Sellicks and Aldinga about which the report found:

...because of the area's poor access to employment opportunities and services, including public transport, low income households are in danger of being trapped in a spiral of disadvantage, including a dimension of local disadvantage that can particularly affect women and school leavers.

The report also stated:

The key policy response should be to meet households' needs for access to sound educational, health and social services.

To get back to the Governor's speech on Wednesday of last week, how is the government going in relation to these quality of life issues, as the Governor referred to them?

First, I will refer to the issue of health. Recently, I surveyed the older electors in my electorate to get an understanding of how the public health system was affecting them. The results of the survey were stark, if not surprising, and I will briefly refer to those results. I asked the people who filled in the survey form about waiting lists and I was told that 13.6 per cent of those completing the survey—and there were hundreds completing the survey—were on hospital waiting lists; 21.4 per cent of those on waiting lists had already been waiting for up to six months; 42.8 per cent had been waiting between six and 12 months; and 26.2 per cent had been waiting for longer than 12 months. Of those on waiting lists, 21.4 per cent expected to be waiting for another six months; 16.7 per cent expected to be waiting for between six and 12 months; 26.2 per cent expected to be waiting for more than 12 months; and an incredible one in three did not know how much longer they would have to wait.

The majority of people on waiting lists are waiting for hip, knee and other joint replacements, but a whole range of surgical procedures were nominated by those waiting. It is clear from this survey that a large number of people are on waiting lists and they are waiting for a long period before receiving the elective surgery that they need. Elective surgery in this sense is not just some sort of cosmetic change to their appearance; it is surgery which will remove great pain from a number of people. I have been told stories by constituents of people who have needed knee or hip replacements and who have had to crawl along the corridors to use their bathroom in the middle of the night because they were not able to walk. It may well be elective surgery, but for the person who needs the surgery it is vitally important.

I asked the question about quality of care in relation to the hospitals and I say, by and large, people are relatively happy: 6.7 per cent of people said the quality of care was poor; 28.7 per cent described it as average; 32 per cent rated the care as good; and 35.4 per cent said care was excellent. Interestingly, 16.3 per cent of people said they had been sent home too early from hospital. I asked the people in the survey what they thought of some policy pledges that the Labor Party made at the last election. The results were quite interesting: 89 per cent approved Labor's pledge to guarantee key elective surgery in a public hospital within published waiting times by providing a boost to recurrent funding; 78.2 per cent approved Labor's patients' rights charter; 90.3 per cent approved personal health care plans for all people leaving hospital; 81.8 per cent approved of hospital report cards; and 94.8 per cent approved of Labor's pledge to provide extra beds to backup public accident emergency services.

I asked the constituents who completed the survey what they thought of the priority given to health in the Olsen government's last budget: 93.2 per cent did not believe that

the Olsen government gave health a high enough priority in its recent budget. I then asked the people filling in the survey to comment about the health system and I will read some of those out for the benefit of the House. A woman in her mid 50s, who is a Liberal voter, told me:

We believe that [health services] have been neglected and it is most important that these services need immediate attention for the well-being of the state.

A woman aged 53 years and a Labor voter said:

It is time the government realised that not having a hospital bed does not stop people becoming ill.

Another woman aged 56 years who was a swinging voter said:

I believe health, education and employment are of the most concern to the public. This government does not appear to give priority to any of the above.

A man aged 73 years and a Labor voter said:

The health system at the moment is really scary to us, now in our latter years...I am on the dental list for dentures and feel I will be on baby food before I get them.

A Democrats voter, a woman aged 56, said:

I believe this is the most important issue needing to be addressed by government.

Another woman, a Labor voter in her 50s, said:

We are appalled and very angry at the introduction of fees for domiciliary care services which will impact on my 92 year old mother.

A woman aged 71, a Liberal voter, said:

I have always voted Liberal, but as they have elected not to do anything to improve the share of hospitals until next [election] year they won't be getting my vote then.

A man aged 69, a Labor voter, said:

I was originally told that the waiting list was 12 months. I was contacted and told it had blown out to 20 months, and finally told two years. What next?

That survey, that sample from my electorate, tells me that we have a crisis, that we have great problems in our health system. It is not only the public hospital system: we also have problems with nursing home beds. I refer to a report in the *Southern Times* of 4 October 2000. In this report, the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown) confirmed that 150 elderly people had been admitted in recent weeks to public hospitals while waiting for nursing home beds. According to this report, the minister said that '86 per cent of the elderly had to wait up to three months to find a nursing home bed, which meant people could be waiting until December for non-urgent elective surgery'. If people have gone into hospital to wait for nursing home beds, it means those beds are not available for surgery patients. The report states that Mr Brown said that 'the nursing home shortage was worsening and blamed the federal government formula used to allocate beds to the states'.

Interestingly, David Kemp, the Assistant State Manager of the Health and Aged Care Department, said that the state government's argument was spurious. He said that South Australia was allocated 51 nursing home beds per 1000 people aged over 70 this year. He said that he thought it was a bit simplistic to blame the shortage of nursing home beds on the commonwealth and that he understood that there was a shortage of public hospital beds due to the state government chopping \$20 million from hospitals this year. He said that the major problem facing aged care in South Australia was that the eastern suburbs had proportionately more nursing home beds compared with the rest of the city.

I think that is a worrying trend. Either the Liberal government of South Australia or the Liberal government in Canberra is responsible, and they should get together and try to sort out this problem. My constituents need more nursing home beds. There is a great need in the southern suburbs where very few nursing home beds are available.

I now refer to the issue of policing. Concern over law and order issues is high in my electorate at the moment. Calls to my electorate office about delays in police response times have been growing, and in the Aldinga area great concern has been expressed recently by many constituents about what appears to be a mini crime wave of robberies and break-ins particularly of businesses after 11 p.m. when the villains know that the Aldinga police station has closed. The local community demands that the government keep the promise that it made prior to the 1993 election to have a 24-hour a day police station at Aldinga.

I understand that the police are reviewing this station. I have written to the Police Commissioner asking for more resources. I understand that two extra police officers may be made available, but in particular I am asking for 24-hour operations. I have already tabled one petition in this House in support of this call, and I expect to be able to table many more in the weeks to come. I will read to the House letters from a couple of my constituents, a Mr Pridmore of Moana and a gentleman who will remain anonymous, both of whom sum up the feeling that constituents have about the issue of law and order and policing in the south. This gentleman, who is elderly, says:

On the night of 19 June we were woken at 3 a.m. by the sound of someone trying to gain entry to our house by trying the door and windows...As a member of the Neighbourhood Watch we are told to ring 11444 for urgent police response, which I did, and I was told that if anything happened meanwhile to give them another ring. I went all day the following day and heard nothing from them. So I wrote to Robert Brokenshire, MP and Minister for Police, about lack of police response.

In due course I got a reply saying a check of records at the Police Communications Branch revealed that patrols in that area were already attending another incident and that there were no free patrols available to attend our address at that precise time. The call taker tried phoning us but unfortunately our phone was not answered. At 3.43 a.m. the first available patrol was dispatched to our house and they arrived at 3:54 am. We did not get a phone call as I had the phone on the bedside and didn't sleep the rest of the night and the phantom patrol never arrived. We could have been attacked and lying dead on the floor for all they knew and to top it off I received a leaflet from Neighbourhood Watch which I enclose. Do you have to be a bank or Kerry Packer before you get police response? Doesn't the disabled or elderly deserve some responsibility from the police?

The Neighbourhood Watch note states:

Police have not attended most house alarms since 1 January 1996. The reason for this is that the majority of alarms are false and valuable police resources need to be directed to more urgent matters...Police will continue to respond to alarms on high risk homes and businesses such as financial institutions and premises containing valuable or dangerous items.

So, my constituent has read that to mean that pensioners and ordinary people do not get the priority they need. Another constituent has written about problems in Moana. The letter states:

The problem with dangerous driving continues on the Esplanade and surrounding streets here at Moana. Already in the last month or so, hoons have poured sump oil on the road at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Esplanade at least four times. There seem to be more cars than ever doing burnouts, etc., on the corner. It would appear that the word has got around that the Esplanade is the place to go for a bit of fun on any night of the week, judging by the number of cars which park facing the road in the car parks expressing their

appreciation by cheering or tooting their horns at particularly loud screeching of tyres or the amount of smoke caused by burnouts.

The writer then goes on to discuss some of the things the police have done and he commends them for doing it. The letter continues:

I have no complaint with the police; they have a difficult job trying to patrol such large areas but, minister, I do believe that prevention is better than cure and obviously more of a police presence would certainly help the situation.

He then goes on to suggest that a closed circuit TV camera mounted on a light pole close to the corner would be appropriate. That suggestion has been made before by a number of constituents. Certainly, we have video cameras in Rundle Mall. We would not want to have them on every street corner but, in areas where there are hot spots, it would be worthwhile the police investigating that option because it is impossible for police to be on every corner at all times. Perhaps that kind of surveillance in certain circumstances might be appropriate. In the case of the Aldinga area, it is certainly true that we need 24-hour policing. As one of my constituents said, the local people who break the law know that the police go home at 11 o'clock and, as soon as that happens, they get out and do the work they want to do. So, policing is a big issue in my electorate at the moment.

I refer briefly to education. A range of issues could be addressed in the area of schooling. Certain members have talked about some of those issues tonight, so I will not go through that. In the time I have available, I want to refer to one area which highlights more general problems in the administration of our school system, that is, the EDSAS system, the IT system used for school financial administration. I would like to read from the finance minutes of one of the schools in my electorate. Under the topic of 'Reports' the minutes state:

There were no reports given out as EDSAS was playing up yet again and the computers were down last week. It is more than frustrating with the amount of down time we have to experience with the EDSAS program. Term 1 we sent out fee sheets. We then received a large number of complaints as there were a lot of errors. These were not made because the wrong information was put on the system. It was because of the system itself. After sorting through it all [X] put through credit cards for the parents concerned, hoping that would be the end of it. Not so. Again the fee sheets were sent out in term 2 and again we got complaints from parents. Once again, [Y] and [Z] are going to have to put through credit notes. The system is rubbish! [Mr A] asked if it was happening in other schools. The answer is yes, that we are not the only school experiencing problems.

This is supposed to be the IT state which will be the centre of information economy. Yet our basic system in the schools is not working; it is causing problems and distress. A meeting of school support officers on 1 August considered this issue, and I will read briefly some of the comments because I think it is an indictment on the education department. They say that there is a lack of quality support; you get varying answers to same questions from different support personnel; it is very difficult to get through to the help desk; there is a lack of training and development, especially in accrual accounting; DETE has no foresight; the finance desk is keeping reports on SSOs who telephone in for support and grading them—maybe we should grade them on their support to us; we feel under stress all the time; self-esteem is low; when a problem occurs with EDSAS the support desk asks you to bring in or send in your back-up tape; sometimes you never get an answer. So, there are clearly problems in the education system, particularly in this important area of IT, which the Minister for Information Economy trumpets in here day after day. Rather than worrying about virtual electorates and

virtual reality he should concentrate on the reality of the performance of that procedure in our school system.

I refer now to transport. I have raised many times in this place my concerns about public transport, particularly for residents of Sellicks and Aldinga, who are not serviced as part of the metropolitan system. Today I wish to comment about the government's recent blitz on fare evaders. In general terms this is something that I support. However, the effect on many genuine, innocent and I might say low income people has been most unfair. My office has been approached by many passengers who have received fines of \$160 for not carrying their concession cards. While I understand that it is an offence not to carry such a card, the penalty seems rather harsh, especially when young people and forgetful pensioners are involved. I have a number of letters, but I will just read one, from the mother of a young woman (and I will not mention the girl's name but simply refer to her as 'F'). She states:

'F' was on her way to the Her Majesty's Theatre to help out in the Scouts' Adelaide Gang Show. 'F' was selling the show's programs in the foyer at the theatre. She was in her Venturer uniform. 'F' had the right ticket for her train ride. The only thing that was slightly wrong was her ID card. She had her old school's one. She had changed schools...and we had not yet got her new ID card. 'F' was told by the inspector at the gate that he would let her off this time, as he could see that it was her on her old ID card, but to get her new one before the next trip to town.

The letter continues. She did all the right things, but still the fine came, and \$160 for people on pensions and young kids is an enormous impost. Many people have said to me, and I am sure they have said to you, Mr Acting Speaker, that if you do not carry your licence on you when you are driving your car you get 24 hours; why can't the same concession apply to young kids who have done the right thing? They have bought the ticket but do not have the concession card on them. In relation to that, another constituent said to me:

You have not curbed the fare evaders; you have only taught the honest children to lie. If my child had not told you her correct name and address you would not know where to find her. But what justice did she get? None. You say the system of allowing a short period of time in which to produce a concession card after an offence was abandoned. Your reason was that it was 'not viable, as the majority of offenders provided false information at the time of the offence and were not able to be traced at a later date.' So, what has changed? The offenders will still provide false information, and the only ones you penalise are the honest ones. Great!

That just sums up the attitude that people have. Fining kids \$160 when they use a train is over the top.

I will briefly refer to the Department of Family and Youth Services (FAYS) and the concessions that are applied. I am glad the minister is in the House at the moment. I raise what to many may seem a relatively minor issue but to people on low incomes it is a matter of concern. I have been advised by a constituent that the system by which persons receive concessions from government for gas, electricity, water and council bills has been changed recently. Whereas in the past an unemployed person was required to show to FAYS their employment benefit form and their account in order to receive a benefit, they now have to show the employment benefit for the period following the bill. Thus, if a bill came on 6 September and the employment benefit was received on 5 September, the applicant would have to wait two weeks until the next payment, which may be after the account is due.

I have also been told that FAYS is a late payer, and this causes great concern to concession holders when reminder notices are sent to the concession holder and not to FAYS. My constituent's main concern in relation to this change is

that he was not told about it. There was and is I understand nothing in writing; all that exists is an email from the minister's office. If the customers had been told they would have been able to adapt adequately.

For a number of years now I have been raising the issue of country city boundaries. In fact, twice I put on the *Notice Paper* a series of questions on notice to each of the ministers about where government boundaries were in relation to the country and city and what the various services and charges were on either side of the boundary. The first time the questions were allowed to lapse; the second time I had an answer saying, 'We're looking at it.' I have written to the Premier and a variety of ministers about this, because the issue of what services they should have delivered to them and whether they are in the country or the city is of great concern to my constituents. Recently I wrote to the Premier on behalf of the Aldinga Bay Residents Association about this issue. I was aware that he had instigated an inquiry into the issue last year and that a report had been finalised towards the end of last year, and here we were in September and we had not heard from anyone in relation to that report.

The Premier wrote back. I asked also to bring in a delegation to talk to him, but he did not answer that part of my question. He did say that the government commissioned a consultant's report into the definitions of 'country metropolitan boundaries', not simply into the specific example raised by my residents' association, and that the report was delivered earlier this year. He said that the government was still considering it but had not yet made up its mind. How long must my constituents wait for an answer from the government on this important issue? It is not just in my area but it is also in the northern suburbs and through the Adelaide Hills. We need a clear understanding, something that is consistent across government departments so people know that, if you live on this side of the boundary, you get city services and you pay city rates and that, if you live on the other side, you pay country rates and you get country services. It should not be that difficult to organise. It has been something that people have known about for a very long time.

I refer now to an issue in my electorate, namely, the Noarlunga theatre, which was originally part of the TAFE complex. I will read from a briefing paper that was prepared by the Onkaparinga council, as follows:

The Noarlunga theatre complex was commissioned in the late 1970s as part of a state government initiative that saw the development of five regional 500 seat theatres. These theatres were designed to support professional touring theatre productions into regional centres around the state. By placing the Noarlunga theatre adjacent to the TAFE college and handing management of the facility to TAFE staff, it was envisaged that these arrangements were to facilitate shared educational arts and community use of the venue.

Prior to 1995, the Noarlunga theatre was managed by TAFE employees. During this period of management, the theatre was actively used by a number of community and arts groups, including school, dance and callisthenics groups. In addition, a program of activities was arranged with the Country Arts Trust, and there were numerous dance and music performances that were commissioned by the friends of the theatre.

I can vouch for that, having gone to many of them, including a performance by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. The briefing continues:

In 1995, the state government decided to divest itself of the management of the theatre. At this time, the City of Noarlunga, in conjunction with the Friends of Noarlunga Theatre, commenced preliminary discussions to take over the management of the theatre. Contrary to the wishes of the community and without formal negotiation with the City of Noarlunga, the state government decided to lease the Noarlunga theatre to Adelaide Commercial Theatres Pty

Ltd, whose principals are Mr Bob Lott and Mr Robbie Robertson. ACT received a five year lease and a financial contribution of \$133 000 over those five years. While community use has remained fairly constant in the five years since ACT took over management of the theatre, there has been a significant downturn in the number of professional theatre, dance and film productions.

In fact, the theatre has been dark more than it has been active. The company that took over ACT received a pile of money. It used that money for whatever purposes and provided our community with very little. I am glad to say that that contract is now up and the government is looking at it. I understand that it is considering getting TAFE involved again in the management of it and introducing some courses through TAFE which would take advantage of the facilities of the theatre. I sincerely hope that is the case, and I commend that process to the minister. I advise the House that I will be continuing to watch that issue.

During estimates I asked the Minister for Mines and Energy a question about the mineral sands at the Boral site at Maslin Beach. The minister asked his assistant, Dr Alley, to answer the question. Dr Alley said:

A review was done by the department which involved also the heritage or monument section of the Geological Society of Australia...It was concluded—

and this is in relation to the sands—

that they were very unstable and easy eroded. When the forms were exposed they were spectacular and colourful, but within a year they had a crumbled and it was a flat, sloping piece of sand. Everyone agreed in the end that there was no purpose in trying to preserve them, so the issue was put to rest.

I took that on face value. Then I was interested to see in the *Southern Times Messenger* on 4 October that it pursued this matter more vigorously than I did, and it asked the government under FOI for the papers in relation to this. It was interesting to find that the report to which Dr Alley referred was commissioned in 1994. The report said, in part:

Preservation of the coloured sands...is achievable...In its FOI response, PIRSA said, 'No departmental review has been undertaken' since the release of the...report.

PIRSA also said it was 'comfortable that Dr Alley, at the estimates committee, was referring to the 1994 report'—something that he did not make plain to the House when I asked him the question. According to the *Southern Times*, 'the 1994 report makes no mention about the sand's stability or any erosion problem.' It goes on to say:

Instead, the report said: 'The study team have established that the preservation of the coloured sands within a gallery park is achievable.'

I find it astonishing that during the estimates committee Minister Matthew permitted Dr Ali to answer a question, and he either misled the committee and Mr Matthew allowed him to mislead the committee or he was clearly unaware of what the report he referred to had said, because the information provided by the *Southern Times* is absolutely opposed to what Dr Ali told the estimates committee. What Dr Ali told the

estimates committee and what Mr Matthew allowed him to tell the committee has yet to be corrected. I believe that this House has been misled on this issue and I call on Mr Matthew, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, to clarify the position as soon as he is able because, if he does not, this mistake will remain on the public record.

I now refer to an issue that one of my constituents referred to me when he pointed out that many government departments use 1300 telephone numbers to provide the public with information. He said that when he checked his telephone bill recently he became aware that a standard rate of 25¢ is charged for those calls. They are not local calls which, I understand, can be as low as 16.5¢ depending on the provider. The standard charge for these calls is 25¢. So, the question has to be asked: who gets that extra 8.5¢ profit? Does it go to the government or does it go to the telephone company? Who gets this benefit, and is that the appropriate way for the government to be organising its activities?

I now refer to a letter I have received in relation to the Olympics. Many members in this House have spoken about the Olympics, and I guess there will be more discussion about it. I pass on my congratulations to all those involved. The letter is from a Ms Dulcie Donath, and some members might remember that she worked in catering in Parliament House some 15 or 20 years ago, I understand. I have spoken to some of the catering staff who remember her. Dulcie worked as a member of the Olympics in Melbourne in 1956 and she wrote to me describing some of the highlights from those Olympics, as follows:

Please find enclosed a copy of my Olympic Games certificate. The Olympic village was operated by three servicemen: army, navy and air force. So soon after the war we were the host city, the first in the commonwealth and entertained 65 countries. The athletes were all amateurs making their own way. There is no comparison to this 2000 who are all professionals. Black and white TV arrived in Melbourne in time for the games. It was a wonderful experience after the World War II horrors. My position was dining room supervisor. I chose the central Europeans. Ten dining halls and 1 000 waitresses. My misfortune was a fall and the right wrist in plaster. My manager spoke to the organiser and I was permitted to stay on.

My staff rosters and duty rosters were complete and I could sign my name. I worked from six in the morning until 11.30 p.m. six days a week, double shift, paid tax on it all and donated one shift back to the running of the games. Three hundred and fifty athletes and four different countries on one side, the kitchen down the centre and four more countries and 250 athletes. Victoria did not have a state flag. We lined up at school and sang the song of Australia.

I congratulate Mrs Donath and all volunteers and athletes who participated in the most recent Olympics.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.59 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 11 October at 2 p.m.