

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 27 March 2001

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS

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

Hairdressers (Miscellaneous) Amendment,  
Netherby Kindergarten (Variation of Waite Trust) Act  
Repeal.

### PROSTITUTION

A petition signed by 44 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House strengthen the law in relation to prostitution and ban prostitution related advertising, was presented by the Hon. D.C. Kotz.

Petition received.

### FIREWORKS

A petition signed by 2 978 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ban the personal use of fireworks with the exception of authorised public displays, was presented by Mr Wright.

Petition received.

### QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the *Notice Paper*, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 9, 22, 26, 27, 30 and 65.

### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The **SPEAKER**: I lay on the table the report of the Auditor-General pursuant to section 22 of the Electricity Corporations (Restructuring and Disposal) Act on relevant long-term leases.

The **Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier)**: I move:

That the report be published.

Motion carried.

### MOTOROLA

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN**: As the House would be aware, the government supported a motion presented to the House by the Labor opposition to establish an inquiry into matters surrounding the inquiry of Mr Cramond. The government supported the opposition motion for one simple reason: we, too, want to get this matter cleared.

I also want some answers on this issue, in particular, in relation to the advice which was provided to me at the time pertaining to documents given to the original Cramond inquiry. I am and the government is committed to ensuring that the intent and integrity of the motion as moved by the Labor opposition is complied with.

At the request of Mr Clayton, I have issued an instruction to all ministers and ministerial staff that they must make available to the inquiry all relevant information, including internal project working papers; personal papers; any official government or public service documents not made available to Mr Cramond; and entries in diaries of ministers and their ministerial staff involved in the Motorola contract discussions for the years 1994 through to 1997.

The motion calls upon me to ensure that the inquiry has the powers to subpoena documents and witnesses and to take evidence under oath. The motion put to the House by the Labor opposition cannot achieve that aim. In its current form this motion is flawed. I do not have the authority to compel—

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member for Elder will come to order!

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN**: I do not have authority to compel people to give evidence under oath. I am now seeking advice as to how we ensure that the motion is honoured in the spirit with which it was supported by this government. As I said at the outset, the government is committed to the intent of the Labor motion, despite the fact that it is flawed, and we are committed to ensuring that the inquiry is as open and transparent as possible, with all the necessary powers afforded to it to ensure a hasty resolution of the issue once and for all.

### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Public Sector Management Act 1995—Information relating to the appointment of all Ministers' personal staff

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

Passenger Transport Act 1994—Section 39—Service Contracts: Report of the Passenger Transport Board Regulations under the following Act—  
Chiropodists—Fees  
Development—Various  
Harbors and Navigation—Tumby Bay Marina

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

Public Corporations Act—Regulations—Children's Arts Company

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

Environment, Resources and Development Committee, Forty First Report—Native Fauna and Agriculture Response  
Judges of the Supreme Court of South Australia—Report, 1999-2000  
Environment, Resources and Development—Rules of Court—Principal

By the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services (Hon. R.L. Brokenshire)—

Correctional Services Advisory Council—Report, 1999-2000

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

National Competition Policy Review—By-Laws—Moveable Signs.

## QUESTION TIME

### ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Premier. Was the Electricity Industry Regulator, Lew Owens (appointed by your government), wrong to state publicly that poor planning by your government was to blame for the fact that South Australians now face electricity price rises of up to 30 per cent and a lack of guaranteed supply, and that this could—and I quote from Mr Owens directly—‘have a serious negative effect on the South Australian economy’?

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** You appointed him!

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Once again, the Leader of the Opposition has been somewhat selective in his reporting of Mr Lew Owens’ comments. I think what he did say was, ‘Governments over the last 10 or 15 years have not effectively planned for the increase in electricity consumption in South Australia.’ I do not need to remind the leader that it was the member for Hart, in particular, who led the charge against Pelican Point being built. In 1996 we indicated that there was a need for additional generating capacity in South Australia. In fact, we pushed ahead, against opposition, to get the Pelican Point power station in place. What that has meant is that—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:**—despite there being a historic demand in terms of electricity required in this state, on every day during the summer period—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hart to order!

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:**—there was spare generating capacity in South Australia. We did put in place some planning; we did get private sector capital investment; we did get a new power station built—and we had it built on time—to supply generating capacity this summer.

Where the issue has been clearly highlighted is the fact that we expected a growth in demand for electricity consumption of the order of two to 2.5 per cent, I think the figure was. Electricity consumption demand for the year has grown at a rate of 8 per cent. All of a sudden, through economic development and further spending by consumers, the demand in electricity has grown almost four times that of the projections. I would rather have growing pains in this state than a contracting economy and set of circumstances. The fact that the economy is growing and the commercial and industrial demand for electricity is growing is clearly something that we have addressed.

ETSA Utilities has met part of the demand and responded by an announcement that it will put in place \$12 million worth of additional transformers to meet the peak demand where it has grown in the metropolitan area, so that electricity from the generating plants, where there is spare capacity—plenty of capacity—gets through to the consumer, whether it be commercial, industrial or residential. That issue has been fixed.

Let me address the interjection from the member for Hart about the Riverlink proposal connecting with New South Wales.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** And we have said that we would fast-track and support the Riverlink proposal into South Australia, but do not ask the taxpayers of South Australia to underwrite the New South Wales government for any losses that it might incur. If the New South Wales generators and taxpayers want to sell, by all means we will assist them—we will fast-track it, as we did with National Power; we will facilitate that. At the end of the day, however, we object to having a blank cheque book available to Bob Carr and New South Wales’ taxpayers and the amount we will have to pay.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Finally, in relation to the leader’s question, clearly, we have had a growth in demand that has been unexpected and unprecedented. We are putting in place measures to meet that demand.

### ELECTRICITY, SUPPLY

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** While the Premier has just advised the House of what has occurred regarding electricity supplies in South Australia, can he now inform the House of the latest developments concerning future electricity supplies for this state?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** This question goes to the heart of underpinning future growth and demand. If the projections are that year on year we will have 6 to 8 per cent growth in electricity consumption through economic development and consumer confidence, putting in place air conditioners and other appliances, then it is certainly our wish to facilitate private sector investment to meet that demand.

The Treasurer has already revealed that National Power is looking at three new peaking plants to be in operation next year. That will provide more than 100 megawatts, with about 60 megawatts available this next summer. This is on top of the MurrayLink interconnector, which is expected to come online this year, bringing in another 250 megawatts. As I understand it, being 180 kilometres in length, that is the world’s longest underground power interconnect. That will take that 250 megawatts of power into the Riverland, which is a region where we have seen quite significant economic growth—the figure is about 30 per cent, three if not four years in a row. In the 1980s we saw in the Riverland very dire circumstances, but that has changed substantially. We now have new investment, new growth and, of course, jobs being created in the Riverland. The MurrayLink proposal will clearly assist in that.

All that increases supply and competition, and that is what you need as a prerequisite to apply pressures to the pricing components. We have increased generation in the state by 30 per cent in the last couple of years, and we are still working hard to increase that capacity. Instead of the government’s having to borrow the money, that 30 per cent increase has been provided by the private sector investing in that. That enables us to spend those funds in other areas such as social services and social infrastructure. If you are taking it out in one way, you are applying pressure in another way in terms of availability of funds and being able to service those funds.

That 30 per cent growth in electricity generating capacity that has increased in the last couple of years is in stark

contrast to the 1980s and 1990s, when it was almost static; there was hardly any movement in additional generating capacity. Of course, back in the Bannon government days, let us not forget that they leased our power utilities. Of course, let us not forget that the national electricity market was a policy model put in place by the Keating government.

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** Signed by Dean Brown.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Indeed, all states signed off on that after about 18 months or two years of a Labor model being put in place. That is why we have put in place a task force to look at that model's application 10 years down the track and where there are circumstances in practice that are not delivering what the theory or the model of the Keating Labor government had in mind for us. We are intent on smoothing out the hiccups in the system. We are intent on keeping up economic growth; I can assure the House of that. We are also intent on ensuring that the capacity of delivery of the service is upgraded, and certainly ETSA Utilities has taken an initiative in that. However, importantly, we are intent on putting in place the infrastructure to meet the demand of the future.

I want again to highlight the fact that our actions have delivered greater capacity, in stark contrast to the 1980s and 1990s, when there was no action to look at any growth and substantial growth in demand. I suppose one could say that in the 1980s and 1990s we did not have any growth to account for, so there was not a need to project forward; nor did they chase it, because they were not preoccupied as they should have been about economic growth, new investment and job generation. We have delivered on each one of those points and will continue to do so. I simply ask the House to compare and contrast what is being delivered—the future being secured—versus what has been delivered in the past—simply no action.

### HOSPITALS, ELECTRICITY PRICE

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):**

Given the Premier's statement that privatisation would lead to lower electricity costs, will the Premier inform the House how the government will fund increased power costs at public hospitals? The Independent Industry Regulator, Lew Owens, whom you appointed, has warned that poor government planning will expose consumers to price increases of up to 30 per cent from 1 July. The Flinders Medical Centre has an annual electricity account of \$1.3 million, and a 30 per cent increase would add \$390 000 to that.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** The fact is that the government, across government in a number of agencies, is looking at securing pricing for government.

### VICTORIA SQUARE

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Can the Premier report back to the House on progress between the state government and the Adelaide City Council towards moving to declare Victoria Square a dry zone?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** I thank the member for his question. I met with the Lord Mayor, Alfred Huang, last week on the issue. This has been a complex and difficult issue and one which successive—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair would like to hear the reply to this one.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:**—councils have struggled with. I made it clear to the Lord Mayor that the government is prepared to work with the council, but I also made it clear that I am not prepared to allow the issue of the dry zone again to be put into the too hard basket as it has been now for a considerable period of time.

For too long we have seen the pros and cons of a dry zone argued without any action being taken. The council has raised a number of issues with the government, particularly with regard to social support services that underpin any trial dry zone. I inform the House today that the state government not only recognises the need for those services but also that it will commit funding towards them.

I hasten to add that this is in line with previous commitments of financial support given by the government on a number of occasions over the last four to five years—commitments that previous councils have rejected and not taken up. I make that point quite clear: on previous occasions a number of different proposals relating to homelessness and a detoxification centre have been put to the council and the council has rejected those social support services that go hand-in-hand with and underpin a dry zone.

I am aware that there is opposition to a dry zone in Victoria Square. I am aware that some members opposite do not want a dry zone in Victoria Square or want it to be declared a dry zone.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** In light of the latest developments regarding a dry zone, I have noticed that the Leader has been particularly quiet. I guess that that is because the candidate for Adelaide has a very clear view relating to a dry zone, and that is in opposition to a dry zone in the CBD. I have indicated to the Lord Mayor that if some decisive action is not taken by the council within a reasonable time frame the government will act. However, it will act as an exceptional case: it will not put in place a unilateral policy for local government but only as it relates to the Adelaide City Council and a dry zone for the city itself.

Should that be required—if the Adelaide City Council does not act and the government seeks to legislate through the parliament to put in place a dry zone—it will be interesting to see the opposition's position. I would welcome any bipartisan support that might be forthcoming on this issue because clearly some members are out of step with the community's attitude.

I noticed that the *Sunday Mail* contained a survey which was undertaken by the Adelaide City Council and which showed that some 80 per cent were in favour of the introduction of a dry zone—and that is not only those people living in the metropolitan area. Over the last week I have been at a number of functions throughout the state—at Lucindale, at a function on Yorke Peninsula, a community cabinet meeting in the Riverland and at the Glendi on Saturday. Whether it is Lucindale, Berri, Loxton or Yorke Peninsula the message is the same: do not step back from a dry zone being put in place for the CBD of Adelaide. It is a statewide view in relation to the introduction of a dry zone.

I hope the Adelaide City Council will now act. Previously we have put measures before it and we will do so again. Failure to act means that the government will act, and then we will see what the opposition will do in terms of developing a policy on this issue.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Bragg!

### HOSPITALS, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Well, I want to know about the Premier's electricity policy. My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Does the plan by the Treasurer that public hospitals should contract to use their emergency generators when electricity retailers are unable to meet demand expose the Treasurer's ignorance of how your hospitals work? On 23 March the Treasurer, Rob Lucas, was reported in the national media as saying, and I want to quote this exactly:

One of the main concerns of retailers is being able to meet demand during the peak summer period, so a hospital may be able to negotiate to use its own generator at those times and build that into a contract.

At the Flinders Medical Centre the emergency plant, the generator, can provide only 20 per cent of the hospital's power because emergency units are not designed to meet the full power load. When operating on emergency power the Flinders Medical Centre has no airconditioning or refrigeration, is required to cut lighting to the minimum to maintain power in intensive care and in other critical care areas.

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The leader has asked his question and can remain silent for a few minutes.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The Treasurer's office has been working specifically with the hospitals to look at making sure that in fact when there is a power blackout or a power shortage those hospitals are, as far as possible, isolated from any switch-off, and we have also through the Treasurer's—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** There is a specific regime that I understand the Treasurer's office has put down with the hospitals. It is appropriate for the Treasurer to come out with that, but—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Well, he has done the negotiating with the individual hospitals, and so I will leave it up to the Treasurer to give the details.

### NURSING HOME BEDS

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Would the honourable minister agree with me that the provision of nursing beds is a key priority, and could he advise the House of the number of unused nursing beds in South Australia, both high care and low care, and what action is being taken by both the state and federal governments to make more beds available?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I have been doing some checking on the number of nursing home beds that are not operating now that were operating 12 months ago; in other words, nursing home beds that have had to close because of problems with accreditation. I find that there are now 123 nursing home beds that have closed down within South Australia as a result of wanting to transfer those beds to a new facility but where the new facility has not yet been built. A licence has been issued, but is not yet operating, for a further 62 nursing home beds (high

care beds). I know that 17 of those licences were issued at only the beginning of the year, but that still leaves a significant number. Therefore, 185 high care nursing home beds are not operating but could be operating because a licence has been issued.

A total of 855 hostel beds—or what we now call low care beds—are not operating where licences have been issued. Licences for 700 of those 855 beds were issued at only the beginning of the year and I think that everyone understands that it will take 12 months or two years for those facilities to be built and become operative. However, there are at least 155 low care beds or hostel beds for which a licence has been issued for 12 months or more and the beds are not operating.

On top of that, I know that two nursing homes providing high care beds in the metropolitan area have indicated that they expect to close within the next few weeks. One of those nursing homes has 38 beds. So, licences have been issued for over 200 high care beds, and have been for some time, which may well have been operating but are not operating at present. It is interesting that, in fact, we assess that within the public hospital system in South Australia about 165 people are waiting to go into a high care nursing home bed. So, the figures would show that if, in fact, 200 extra high care beds were opened, the situation in our public hospital system would be relieved quite significantly.

On Friday, the state and territory health ministers met with the federal health minister and we discussed a number of issues in terms of relieving the pressure in the public hospital system. The first was the shortage of nursing home beds throughout the whole of Australia and I have provided specific information about the problem here in South Australia. It is worse now than it was 12 months ago, because we have 200 high care nursing home beds that are not open where, in fact, licences have been issued, and we have evidence that at least probably another 60 or 70 beds will be closed very shortly indeed.

We have asked the federal minister to check on the numbers—I have the numbers for South Australia and he is checking on numbers nationally—and suggested to him that it would be appropriate for him to fund short term, over an 18 month period, if you like, transition beds or special beds while the new facilities are being opened so that we can quickly take the pressure off the public hospital system and, importantly, find nursing home beds for people in the community who are looking for them. I know that many people in South Australia are currently looking for nursing home beds for relatives and parents.

I know the extent to which there is a considerable delay. So, state health ministers welcome the fact that the federal minister has agreed to look at the number of beds that are not operating where licences have been issued over a reasonable period and to examine whether it might be appropriate for the federal government to fund some short-term transition beds so that, in fact, an additional maybe 150 to 250 extra high care beds and a certain number of low care beds can be provided fairly quickly to take up the demand that clearly exists within the community. It is very important, indeed, that we do this, together with implementing a number of initiatives, so that we relieve the pressure on the public hospital system before the coming winter.

### SCHOOLS, ELECTRICITY PRICE

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Will the

government guarantee to increase funding to Partnerships 21 schools facing higher power bills under deregulation, or will school fees go up? While the minister has told parliament—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms WHITE:** While the minister has told parliament that Partnerships 21 schools would be able to retain any savings on electricity costs, electricity prices have been forecast by the independent regulator to rise by as much as 30 per cent from 1 July this year. An increase of 30 per cent would, for example, add \$22 000 to the cost of power at Hamilton High School; over \$20 000 at Fremont Elizabeth City High School; \$21 000 at Hallett Cove R12; \$19 000 at Mount Barker High School; \$27 000 at Parafield Gardens High School; and \$16 500 at Seaford Rise High School.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** This is obviously power day. Let me tell members about the power that Partnerships 21 schools have given to their communities, because plenty of power has occurred there and it has devolved local decision making. In a study of schools and principals across the number of P21 schools, 81 per cent said that they appreciated the additional flexibility, and 76 per cent appreciated the power that they had in making decisions at the local school level. Over 75 per cent of schools are now P21 schools, and they are enjoying the fact that they can make their own decisions. They are enjoying the fact—

**Ms WHITE:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My question related to increased power costs in P21 schools.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** As I said, over 75 per cent of our schools are now P21 schools. They have the flexibility to deal with their own budgets. They can make their own decisions where they spend their money, and that is being appreciated by the school community. Not only is it delivering them additional power in making their own decisions but also it is improving the literacy and numeracy outcomes of the students in our schools. That is what this is all about: getting better outcomes for our students.

The member raised the issue of electricity. I know that government departments are dealing with that issue at this point in time, and I am sure that it will be addressed in due course.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The House will settle down.

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Will the Minister for Water Resources advise the House what is the policy of the South Australian government with a view to obtaining greater flows in the Murray-Darling system into South Australia from the eastern states which believe that they have a greater call on the water than the long-suffering people of South Australia?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Water Resources):** I thank the member for Stuart for his question, and I know of his long-going interest which he shares with other members in this place in the Murray River. I notice members opposite who rely 100 per cent on the waters of the Murray River. The short answer is definitely yes. Any measures to increase flows into our state and so help the Lower Murray and Coorong should be strongly supported. To that end, I certainly agree with the federal Environment Minister, Senator Hill, in a key point in today's *Advertiser*,

that is, that there is a distinct lack of determination showing by the eastern states when it comes to South Australia's interest in the Murray.

New South Wales and Victoria—Labor governments, for example—can find \$300 million to send an extra 300 gigalitres down the Snowy River, but try to get them to commit one extra cent to sending more water down the Murray and that is another matter. This Friday's meeting—

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The member for Elder says, 'Yes, they are Labor governments.' He is quite right; and ahead of this Friday's meeting at which the three recalcitrant states will all be his mates—Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales—perhaps the shadow minister and the Leader of the Opposition could get out there and demand a bit of justice for South Australia and South Australians. Perhaps—just perhaps—instead of the greedy self-interest shown by Queensland, the Labor Party in this nation could take a national approach and could demand what is right and fair for this state. I will tell you one thing that we will not do: we will not be going there on Friday with cosmetic solutions or prop-up answers.

What did the Labor candidate for Adelaide do? She decided that Rymill Lake was looking a bit tired, but there was a television event coming up, so what did she do? She dyed the lake so that it would look good for television. The lake has an environmental problem and it was dyed to cover it up! That is just what we are not doing. We are not covering up problems with the river: we are out there trying to fix them up. Instead of grizzling, carping and carrying on like ne'er-do-wells opposite, perhaps the opposition could come up with a policy; perhaps they could ring their mates in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and get them on the national bandwagon and not see our greatest icon destroyed.

*Members interjecting:*

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

#### ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** They are a sensitive mob today, aren't they, Mr Speaker? I too would be if I had read Saturday's *Advertiser*. My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Premier ruled out provisions of subsidies to businesses and other organisations that face large increases in their electricity prices after 1 July this year? On 13 March the Chief Executive Officer of the Tea Tree Gully Council wrote to the Treasurer, as follows:

The advice received by the council is that it can expect a minimum 20 per cent increase in costs for electricity. . . adding a minimum \$25 000 recurrent operating cost to council's budget in the first year. Council is of the view that this is contrary to assurances given by the state government and that the introduction of competition would provide electricity at a lower cost. This cost impost, combined with a lack of assurances from electricity retailers about guaranteed supply, is of extreme concern to council, and a subsidy for the additional cost placed on council and its ratepayers is sought.

And that should worry the member for Newland.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** I am pleased to respond to the member for Hart's question. Perhaps the member for Hart would want us not to proceed with the WorkCover reductions that will lead next financial year to \$108 million in savings for small and medium businesses in our state. Let me just remind the Leader of the Opposition that on 1 July last year, there was a 7.5 per cent reduction—a saving of \$25 million. On 1 July this year, there will be a

14 per cent reduction amounting to some \$80 million and creating a saving totalling in the order of \$108 million for business operators in this state. I remember Mr Owens mentioning a figure if the worst came to the worst, and I think he was talking about an additional cost of \$10 million or \$15 million. My reckoning is that businesses on that figuring are well in front, and well in front in terms of costs of operating that business. Let me contrast that to what I have been advised is the position in New South Wales.

*The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the Minister for Water Resources!

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** In New South Wales there is an unfunded liability of the order of \$2 billion and it has been growing at the rate of approximately \$100 million extra a month. In Victoria there have been some legislative changes. Monash University's WorkCover premiums have gone from \$3 million to \$6 million. In other small businesses in Victoria there has been a 50 to 60 per cent rise in WorkCover premiums. Let not the Labor member for Hart come into this place drawing a long bow like that, because this government, through eliminating unfunded liabilities, has actually reduced the costs of operating a business in South Australia.

**Mr FOLEY:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! We have a point of order.

**Mr FOLEY:** My question was a specific one about the 30 per cent price increase in electricity. It was not about WorkCover, and it was not about unfunded liabilities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hart will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Will the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing, who is responsible for volunteers, advise the House what action the government is taking to protect volunteers in our community?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing):** The House would be aware that about 18 months ago the government hosted a volunteer summit and forum in relation to trying to improve the lot of the average volunteer in our community. From that we have had a series of announcements and positive policy initiatives that we think are taking the right steps in relation to volunteering. At the seminar 18 months ago, a number of themes were raised by the 300 people from all over the state in relation to how government per se can help the volunteer. Issues involving training and the relationship with government and the media were raised. One of the main issues that came out was the individual volunteer's liability. I will come to that later.

With regard to some of the other initiatives such as training and relationship with government, and so on, the government has put in place a series of programs with groups such as Volunteering SA and other training organisations to try to provide better training services to volunteers across the whole state. Of course, we have also introduced our volunteer round table which consists of 13 to 14 people from a whole spectrum of volunteer organisations giving our government advice as a policy sounding board on ways to improve policies, government procedures and, indeed, community programs for volunteers. Just as governments previously have set up things such as the Office for the Status of Women and the Office for the Ageing, we have also set up an Office for

the Volunteer which is a dedicated office across the whole of government looking at whole-of-government volunteering policy.

The volunteer community said that it also wanted to get closer to the business community, so we introduced our 100 Hours program in conjunction with Business SA, and it has organised businesses to donate 100 hours of their services to various volunteer organisations, trying to provide those services that the volunteer organisations need to help grow their organisations and to grow volunteering.

Liability and the volunteer is a complex matter, because the volunteer community itself is made up of a whole range of volunteer organisations of different structures, skill bases, management skills, legal structures and insurance capabilities. However, we recognise that at the seminar and forum 18 months ago, there was a very clear message that a large group of volunteers were concerned about their risk as volunteers and their potential for being sued. We took that on board, and we have done some work over the period of the seminar until now. We have looked world-wide at legislation that is available to protect volunteers.

From memory, President Clinton in America introduced six or seven pieces of legislation in relation to volunteers, and we have looked at that model to see whether we can adopt it to our South Australian society. I am pleased to say that we have released a discussion paper in relation to protecting volunteers. The discussion paper is out for public comment until 25 May. We are in the process of posting about 4 500 of the discussion papers to MPs and all the community groups that are on our mailing list.

Essentially, the principle is that we are trying to develop a scheme that will lift the liability off the volunteer so that volunteers can go about their normal duty without fear of having their own assets at risk through some legal action. There are some riders on it, as there is with any legislation. Obviously, if volunteers are conducting a criminal act, they are not covered. If they are under the influence of drugs, they would not be covered. If they are over .05, they would not be covered and their motor vehicles would not be covered. A whole range of issues need to be worked through. We do not argue that we have it perfect the first attempt: we argue that we are the first state—an Australian first—to go down this path.

We actively seek comment from the broader community. We think the principle of taking a step to protect our volunteers long term is right. For those who want to contribute to the consultation process, 25 May is the close-off date. I am pleased that, through the volunteer round table and other community groups, we have been able to develop this discussion paper and put it out for public comment. I look forward to a positive response from members opposite, government members and the broader community in general.

## ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** Again my question is to the Premier and it is about electricity, not WorkCover or unfunded liabilities. Given that electricity price increases of up to 30 per cent are predicted—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** My question is to the Premier—Rory, or is it Joan or Mark or Robert?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hart will come back to the question.

**Mr FOLEY:** Sorry sir, we had heard that there was a Kerin-Brokenshire ticket and a—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Hart for flouting the chair.

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, sir. I have a question to the Premier. I can't believe that ticket!

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Hart for a second time and suggest that he ask the question.

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that ruling. Given that electricity price increases of up to 30 per cent are predicted, how much extra will the government—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Given that electricity price increases of up to 30 per cent are predicted, how much extra will the government have to spend to pay the increased cost of power to run government services? What will be the effect on the 2001-02 state budget?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** What the member for Hart is doing is scaremongering; he is putting in place hypotheticals because, until such time as negotiations are complete, the exact fees paid for ensuing years will not be known. The member for Hart knew that full well when he asked the question, Mr Speaker.

#### OAKVILLE POTATOES

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** Has the Deputy Premier or any other minister, other government agency or department to date provided any financial assistance for infrastructure or any other purpose directly or indirectly to help Oakville Potatoes at Nildottie? Does the government have any plans to do so in the future, and why?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** In relation to this, I did read in the newspaper that there would be an approach to the government for assistance. I am yet to see any approach so I am not sure whether one will be forthcoming. I have heard that there will be an application made but to date I can assure the member that I have seen no approach from that group for financial assistance.

#### ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Premier. Given the threats of a lack of electricity supply and higher prices facing South Australia, will the Premier as a matter of urgency now support my call for an ongoing ministerial council on electricity (in addition to the COAG review that the Premier has now supported), as agreed to by the New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, to address issues of pricing, interconnection and supply of power under the national electricity market?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** A task force will be established to look at the NEM. I had been looking at the application of the original model to see how we might better position the guidelines and the principles of the operation of the NEM to ensure that we minimise the unintended impacts that might flow from the model that has been operating. I hope to be in a position to announce that task force relatively soon.

In addition to that, I have written to the Prime Minister, I think about a week ago. The letter to the Prime Minister has asked for this matter to be listed on the COAG agenda. I think COAG is scheduled for the second week of May this year. I have asked for this item to be listed high on that agenda. I

have also sent copies of my request to the Prime Minister to the other states—

*The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** As the member for Bragg rightly points out, look at the hundreds of millions of dollars of loss that New South Wales and Queensland are fronting up and, of course, there is only one person who pays hundreds of millions of dollars of loss, and it will be eventually the taxpayers of Queensland and New South Wales. I have also raised the issue of a ministerial council, and I certainly would want to see a ministerial council put in place over NEMMCO, the purpose for which is to ensure that there is political management of the issue, an oversight of the issue, so that we might, through the political process and the respective state governments, and federal government, bring to the attention of NEMMCO, and NECA, those issues that the various state jurisdictions are finding with this National Electricity Market. The import of the leader's question is that he would support that and I thank him for it.

#### SCHOOLS, TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Can the minister advise the House of the government's commitment to providing computers and information technology infrastructure to our schools?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I thank the member for Bragg for his question. In 1997 this government embarked on a very progressive plan in our schools called DECSTech 2001. That plan had an aim of providing one computer for every five public school students, and I would just add that when we took over in 1993 schools only had one computer for every 13 students, with some junior primary schools having up to 25 children sharing the use of one computer. This was the appalling legacy of the previous Labor government. So they spent a mere \$360 000 in 1993 on computers. That is about \$3 per student, and that is about the amount that you raise in a chook raffle, I would suggest. We have spent, in stark contrast, \$85.6 million over the last five years in putting computers into schools and ensuring that our students move with the times in terms of information and communication technology.

It is particularly important that our students enjoy the benefit of these computers and have access to the internet to be able to ensure that when they leave school they are fully trained in terms of going into the work force or going into tertiary education where they will be using computers every day as a matter of course. Let us compare, though, the computers in South Australia relative to other states and also other countries, because our one to five ratio is one of the best computer ratios in the world. In the United States, for instance, the ratio can be up to one to 60. In this country only South Australia and Victoria have reached the one to five ratio, which is a world-class ratio.

With the school population base that we have here we recognise that our students must be well trained, in fact the best trained, to be able to attract industry to this state and to ensure that they are attractive as employees to industry when it enters South Australia. Unlike Labor we have not turned our back on technology. We have not stuck our head in the sand and said that this will all go away. We have taken the opportunity and we are leading the way. We are leading the

way not only in this country but also in the world in terms of computer ratios.

In terms of what we have actually been able to do, some 22 800 computers have now gone into some 1 000 public schools, and it has been an excellent partnership between the schools, between parents and between the government in terms of the raising of money to pay for these computers and the subsidies that have been provided by government to the school communities to ensure that our students have that access.

I ask: what policy does the opposition have on information technology? It has no policy; it is a policy void, just as in every other area. Nothing has been said in previous years about a commitment to information technology for students. Nothing has been committed, and no money has been suggested. As with everything else, it is a void, and the opposition has no policy and no direction. That is very different from this government's approach and direction for the next five years.

#### ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Given the review of the Environment Protection Act which commenced two years ago, in early 1999, when will amendments to the act be made to give the EPA powers and resources to address serious concerns held by South Australians about ecologically sustainable development? Last week, I attended three community meetings at which great concerns were expressed about the ability of the EPA to protect the community from pollution. On Tuesday night, at a public meeting in Victor Harbor, I was told about the failure of the EPA to protect the Inman River and Encounter Lake from serious pollution by SA Water; on Wednesday, at a public meeting in Marino, I was told about the failure of the EPA to enforce pollution controls in a quarry and asphalt plant run by Boral; and on Thursday night, at a meeting in the council chambers at Mallala, I was told about the failure of the EPA to take into account community concerns over the proliferation of landfill sites to the north of Adelaide and their possible impact on livestock production.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage):** As the member well knows, three or four papers were published in relation to the EPA's powers, responsibilities and those sorts of matters. The agency is still considering those papers and, when the matter comes to cabinet, we will make a policy decision at that time. I cannot give the honourable member a firm time frame.

#### WINE TOURISM

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism. Can the minister provide the House with an update on current and planned activities being undertaken to ensure that we continue to foster our reputation as Australia's premier wine tourism destination?

**The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism):** I know that the member for Schubert takes the response to this question very seriously, because he reminds us all the time that his electorate is, without doubt, one of the premier wine tourism regions in the country. This morning I had the pleasure of launching the results of the first cellar door survey ever conducted in our state. The reason we conducted the research was to ensure that we maintain our premier wine state

position. Some competition coming from Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia is quite formidable and, unless we remain the best, will cause us problems in the future.

The latest figures from the survey show that nearly 4 million visits by more than 900 000 people to our wineries in the last year generated \$342 million worth of economic activity. It is interesting, if people care to look at some of the research—and I am very happy to provide all the details—that the Barossa Valley (as I am sure the member for Schubert would be very interested to know) has attracted the largest number of cellar door visits—2.4 million, which is 60 per cent of the total number of visits. However, Clare Valley, Fleurieu Peninsula, the Limestone Coast and Adelaide Hills are increasing their visitation numbers.

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

**The Hon. J. HALL:** My colleague wants to know the figures for the Fleurieu Peninsula: there were 550 000 visits. The reason that this is so important is that we have to come to grips with some challenges and opportunities, because one of the expectations of wine tourists and visitors is that the whole experience of wine and food is increased in cellar door areas. We all know the figures for South Australia: we have 43 per cent of Australia's vines, and we produce 50 per cent of the country's wines and 70 per cent of its wine exports. I think the important thing to understand is that some of the findings are quite different from our expectations. The survey found, in fact, that 78 per cent of cellar door visitors are day trippers and that 22 per cent are overnight visitors. The profile of visitors shows that wine tourists are younger people and that 97 per cent of those surveyed said that they were highly satisfied with our wine product.

The South Australian Tourism Commission's Product Development Unit has been working very closely with the wine industry to ensure that significant initiatives are continued in the future and, to that degree, the Wine Advisory Board, which has been in operation now for just over 12 months, has put in place a significant strategy for improving and continuing to develop this very lucrative section of our tourism industry.

The South Australian Wine and Brandy Producers Association has supported the production of a number of very good pieces of material, including *The Wines of South Australia*, which outlines in detail the magnificence of our wine regions, and it has also helped us produce wine trail brochures for each of the wine regions. We are also working on some specific strategies for the opening of the National Wine Centre in Adelaide later this year. There is some very interesting material in this research, and I acknowledge that the member for Peake might be interested in this. The number of people making cellar door trips I think is worth repeating. The member for Schubert might be interested to know that day trip visitors to the Barossa Valley made 4.2 cellar door trips per region. That shows that those who only attend during the day—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come back to order. I remind the minister of the opportunities available to her through ministerial statements.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** The member for Schubert asked a very important question, and some of this research is of great significance because of the economic benefits that flow through.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!



**The Hon. J. HALL:** I am sure that the member for Schubert did not hear because of my colleagues opposite, who really do not like success stories; they get very touchy about them. The member for Schubert might like to know that 4.2 day trips were made by visitors to the Barossa Valley who attended cellar doors—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will resume her seat. The member for Ross Smith has a point of order.

**Mr CLARKE:** How much longer do we have to put up with this charade of the minister giving this type of answer?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. At the moment, the minister is not out of order as regards standing orders.

**The Hon. J. HALL:** The member for Schubert does want these figures, and I think it is quite important. The fact that the member for Ross Smith does not give a nick about the success of this industry I think should bother us. For the member's benefit, the overnight visitors who attended your cellar door wineries visited 5.6 of them, and those who were international stayed 2.4 nights in the region, equating to 2.4 million cellar door visits and more than 192 000 visitor nights. I think it is important for members to understand the significant contribution that wine and tourism is making to our state and the extraordinary benefits that are flowing into our regions from the growth in this area.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Hart for the third time, and I warn any other member. I remind members of the procedures of this House: that is, that members will remain silent when the Speaker rises to address the House. I suggest that a few members remember that.

---

#### MINISTERS, STAFF

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** By leave, I table the Public Sector Management Act 1995, information relating to the appointment of all ministers' personal staff.

#### OFFICE FOR THE AGEING

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** On behalf of the Minister for the Ageing, I table a ministerial statement made in another place.

#### NATIVE BIRDS

**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:** Today I tabled the government's response to the Environment, Resources and Development Committee's 41st report concerning native fauna and agriculture. Bird management issues have attracted increased attention over the past decade, parallel with the increase in both horticultural production and the broader community interest in environmental matters. Many growers experience some level of fruit loss due to birds. Indeed, it is estimated that damage to South Australia's cherry, apple and pear crop last year equated to a loss of around \$4 million.

As members will recall, last year this parliament debated amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and indeed section 51A of the legislation. It was in 2000 that amendments were agreed to and not in 1999, as the ERD Committee report suggested. I note that this was corrected by the chair of the committee through a statement to the House recently. Section 51A enables the minister to declare protected animals of a particular species to be destroyed without written permit if they are causing damage to crops.

A declaration under section 51A must specify the species concerned, regions of the state and types of people to which it applies and the circumstances in which and the methods by which animals may be destroyed. Section 51A was used in 1999 in respect of musk lorikeets, rainbow lorikeets, yellow rosellas and of Adelaide rosellas for commercial orchards and vineyards in the Riverland, Barossa Valley and Mount Lofty Ranges. As part of the revision of the legislation, section 51A underwent a comprehensive review and was reinstated by this parliament for a further five years. In December last year, it was used in respect of musk lorikeets, rainbow lorikeets and Adelaide rosellas for commercial orchards and vineyards in the Riverland and Mount Lofty Ranges.

Native bird management issues are indeed complex. Some species of native birds have increased significantly in population over the last few decades, while other populations of native birds have significantly declined. This is influenced by factors such as access to water and legacies of vegetation clearance.

With ongoing public debate regarding targeted exemption of protected status for some common bird species under section 51A, it is timely for the government to consolidate its consideration of measures to address issues raised in the ERD committee's recommendations. The report raises a number of issues with respect to wildlife conservation which the government would like to further consider following consultation with the appropriate grower organisations, bird interest groups and other stakeholders.

I therefore announce that the proclamation enabling horticultural managers to control abundant native birds on horticultural crops without a permit will be revoked. National Parks and Wildlife SA will commence informing grower organisations today. This will take effect as from 30 April.

#### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

**Ms KEY (Hanson):** Before discussing my grievance in detail, I should say that, for a number of years, I have been a member of the Royal Automobile Association of South Australia and have always found it to be an excellent service, and I particularly compliment the road operators for the assistance and courtesy they have shown certainly when I have used them and when I have witnessed other people using the services.

However, the concern I raise today comes from a Mr Gordon Nixon of Plympton South. He has written to me saying that, although he has been a member of the RAA for over 40 years (throughout his entire paid working life), first, he has been unable to renew his subscription because he is now living on a social wage; and, secondly, he has found that the cost of living has increased so much that this is one of the services that he has had to forgo, even though he is a keen driver and has been given a licence to continue to drive. He says:

I made a request by letter to the RAA for a reduced subscription as I am an aged pensioner. I have enclosed their reply. 'Everybody'

says that pensioners need help and feels sorry for them as long as it does not affect their bottom line.

The only way to protect pensioners from the GST is to make pensioners exempt from GST when making their purchases and paying their services when their Centrelink pension card is presented with the payment.

Mr Nixon is suggesting—and I think it is a good suggestion—that pensioners should have that exemption.

With regard to the RAA, I think a number of valued community members in the aged pensioner category do drive and would like to have this consideration. The answer received by Mr Nixon was of some concern. In part, they say:

The matter of a reduced subscription for pensioners has been considered by the association board on a number of occasions. The board has also considered the position of charitable and other deserving organisations which, from time to time, have sought a reduced subscription.

The board takes the attitude that the provision of social services is clearly a federal government responsibility to be met from taxes levied from the whole community.

Not only would the adoption of a concessional subscription rate significantly reduce income, it would also greatly increase administrative costs and thereby have a twofold detrimental effect on association finances. The end result, of course, would be that the general membership would have to pay an even higher subscription.

With these factors in mind, the board has resolved that it would not be in the best interests of the association to require one section of the membership to subsidise another.

One way in which the association [offers] to help members in difficult circumstances is by arranging for subscriptions to be paid progressively during the year—say, two payments at six monthly intervals. Members desiring to make use of this facility are advised to contact our Member Services Department and we will gladly make the necessary arrangements.

I am glad that the RAA did take the time to respond to Mr Nixon, but, if, as they say, a number of people have asked for this consideration, I would strongly ask the RAA to reconsider its position, and I will certainly be making representations on behalf of Mr Nixon and also other members who reside in the electorate of Hanson who have raised this same issue with me.

Mr Nixon's letter points out the other problems that people in our community have. The GST has hit them, and a number of pensioners have told me that they have had to cut down on what food they are able to buy because of extra costs related to the GST; and they also have had to think very seriously about using their airconditioners and using heating in the coming winter. I have some real concerns that we will have people who have very few resources in our community being hit even more and having to cut back in ways that are really unacceptable in the affluent society in which we live. The RAA is one area that I think could be rethought, but certainly Mr Nixon's suggestion about pensioners being exempt from the GST is a good one.

**The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism):** In all facets of life I am sure that the word 'great' is sometimes overused as it applies to many memorable achievements and successes. Many people have been described in terms of this ultimate praise, but at the highest echelon of achievement there is always a small elite group acknowledged by most South Australians as truly great. Today I would like to acknowledge, thank and pay tribute to one of these, Mr Basil Taliangis, who recently retired as Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. Mr Taliangis' passion, involvement, contribution and commitment to this state in many areas are well known and well documented. He has been a trailblazer and a leader, particularly in the area of multicultural affairs, and his

advocacy of inclusion, harmony and respect across the whole South Australian community is a lasting legacy of which he can be justifiably proud.

Mr Taliangis' commitment and involvement in multicultural affairs began in 1955 when he worked for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in the migrant banking area and was one of the original officers of the inaugural migrant information service established in 1958. It was the beginning of an outstanding and varied career that has, thus far, spanned 46 years and included, among many things, his appointment as a Commissioner of the then Ethnic Affairs Commission in July 1984 and Chairman in 1996 until his retirement earlier this year.

One of his notable achievements through this time with the commission—because there are far too many to record here—was his role in conducting the first access and equity evaluation across the state government sector. Basil was the only South Australian appointed to the Council of the Institute of Multicultural Affairs. He has served in Rotary; the Local Government and Ethnic Affairs Task Force; the Ethnic Schools Board; the Ethnic Schools Advisory Committee; the South Australian Secondary School of Languages Council; and the Multicultural Arts Trust of South Australia—and the list goes on. Throughout all this, he has made time to make a huge contribution to his local Greek community through his involvement with the Association of Ethnic Aged Care Organisations, the Australia-Hellenic Business Council, the Glendi Festival, the West Adelaide Hellas Soccer Club and the Greek Orthodox Church.

Another most impressive success in which he has been so involved and which is much part of his life is Basil's involvement in the development of St George College, the only bilingual school in South Australia. The college opened in 1984 with 33 students in years 1 to 3. Since then it has expanded significantly. It now covers all levels of schooling from pre-entry to year 12 and has an enrolment of around 600 students, employing 50 teachers and 15 support staff. He was instrumental in facilitating this expansion and continues to play a major role in its operations.

Just to complement these achievements, Basil was awarded the Gold Cross of St Andrew in 1987 and made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1998 and presented with the Federal Senior Citizens Award in 1999. He will continue his involvement with the Anti-Cancer Foundation, which I am sure will benefit from his involvement. He has also found time to be an ambassador for our state by accompanying various premiers on overseas trade missions. I could speak ad infinitum about this truly outstanding South Australian. He comes from my home town of Port Pirie, and I believe it must be recorded that our state is richer because of his tireless effort; and his support and respect is mirrored across the numerous organisations with which he is involved.

Multiculturalism in this state is synonymous with Basil Taliangis. He has been a tireless worker in ensuring a continuing understanding and acceptance with pride of our cultural diversity throughout government, business and the community. There can be no more lasting legacy to him to know that he was the architect of the charter on multiculturalism. He fought tirelessly to ensure that services are equitable and accessible to all South Australians, and we must thank him for his vision of acceptance, tolerance and a fair go for all. I am very proud to be a friend of his and proud to be associated with his family over many years, in both a personal and professional capacity. His involvement now with the Lifelong Learning Centre, I believe, will take us into

another important policy area of this government, and I think that over many years, in his own modest way, Basil might even acknowledge that he has made a difference to the way in which we live in our state and to the vast number of people from a migrant background.

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** On Sunday 4 March this year, I had the honour and pleasure to represent the Leader of the Opposition at the Anzac Memorial Garden dedication ceremony at Anzac Plaza, which is located in the City of Holdfast Bay at the end of Anzac Highway, Glenelg, by Colley Reserve. Mr Speaker, I have been so very specific with these details of the location of this newest memorial to our fallen because I want to encourage all members to visit our electorate to see this remarkably thoughtful tribute.

The Master of Ceremonies was Deputy Mayor John Mathwin and it was a stirringly beautiful ceremony. As I recall, Mayor Nadilo spoke about the development of the project and its six dark boulders. 'A Chorus of Stones' is the title given to this outstandingly striking work by the Adelaide artist, Anton Hart, who was present among the many hundreds of people who gathered there that sunny morning. The boulders have been arranged in pairs in a sweeping arc around a black granite engraved stone with the image of the sword of sacrifice. Each boulder bears a single word—sacrifice, silence, loss, respect, love and forgive—each evocative of the emotions and spiritual stories surrounding wars and their results. I understand that an audio message is part of each of the six stones.

The event was part of Army Week in Adelaide—part of the national celebrations to commemorate the centenary of that service and its noble and fine history in this country. Apart from the significance of the ceremony for the many veterans and their families who were present, the other thrill was the opportunity to hear from and meet another great Australian—Australia's Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove, who had travelled to Adelaide to unveil the plaque of dedication.

General Cosgrove praised the powerful message of the memorial and commented on its sense of reflection, calm and composure. It has been with a particular source of pride that I have formed a close association with the Army, RSL, Vietnam Veterans and other service organisations over my years as a member of parliament and, after the official part of the day, I had the pleasure of being photographed with General Cosgrove and four returned men, two of whom I now learn were associated with the 9th Battalion RAR, which I understand is General Cosgrove's regiment. Michael Mummery and Jock Stratton were greeted warmly and with friendly familiarity by the General, as were Chris O'Neil from the 7th Battalion RAR and Jock Clarkson from the 3rd Battalion RAR.

It is, of course, a measure of the esteem and high regard in which this great Australian is held that he was almost mobbed after the formalities and for some considerable time thereafter as he was signing autographs, chatting happily with people and posing for photographs. I passed a remark about how wonderful it would be if members of parliament were held in such high regard and esteem—and that caused some laughter in the throng. His charisma is obvious and inspiring, and it is a tribute to both him and his wife Lynne that they are sharing so generously of their time all over the nation—as they have since General Cosgrove's return from that very successful East Timor deployment.

I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you will go to have a look at this memorial—if you have not already seen it—and I am sure that the President of the Legislative Council (who was also there on that day) will encourage members in his House to make the time to visit the Chorus of Stone, when they are next in the area. I am sure they will find it a most worthwhile experience and I look forward to returning to listen to the messages of personal experience that each of the stones has as part of the oral history of our returned servicemen and women as they recall the horror and camaraderie of those who fell and who will always be remembered.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** Today I want to talk about the reasons why the government at the present time has a level of support that about equals the maxima on an autumn day—a very pleasant autumn day at that—and why the public temperature is about double that. It is because of the miserable way in which the government conducts its affairs and the uncertainty confronting members of the public when they try to do something in a reasonable manner in the interests of their community. It is no surprise, I guess, to members of the government to find themselves in this predicament when they have a leader, in respect of whom they do not know whether to believe what he is telling them.

Leaving that aside and drawing attention to a particular case in point that illustrates what I am talking about, there is a little place called Borrika in the mallee—but it could be anywhere on Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, in the Mid North or the Upper North, not only the mallee. It was a town that was settled earlier in the 20th century and, of course, it had its institute in it, did it not?

Of course, now the numbers of people who live in that locality are very much reduced to what they were at the time of settlement, and the infrastructure in the towns is, therefore, redundant; it is no longer needed by anybody. Of course, the institute was dedicated for that purpose on that land at that time so that it could become part of the distribution of books and other cultural purposes that it served.

There were trustees there, and in this case they were Herbert Sydney Green, George Langdon Bonython, Otto Fred Bauerochse, Richard Edward Wilhelm, Albert James Trevanion, Besley Arthur James Unios, Ernest Leslie Cowled, Reginald George Bonython, Laurence Pollock, Alfred Hockham and Clarence William Jones. They were all trustees. They have all passed on and, of course, the land, then, being held in trust by them, cannot be owned by their executors. It has nothing to do with them. So what happens? People want to see that building used sensibly. They do not want to see it vandalised or fall into disrepair, and there are folk who are willing to own it and use it in that way. So, inquires were made some two or three years ago in a very serious way to ascertain whether it could be disposed of and used for any suitable purpose other than an institute. It no longer has a purpose as an institute. We have repealed the Institutes Act.

My point is, then, that along comes the government and the advice, of course, that Crown law gives is always the advice that the minister wants. In this case, it is the minister who decided simply to do away with the rights and interests of the people who were interested in that magnesite mine in the Flinders Ranges in the same or similar fashion. Of course, what has happened is that the government has been told by Crown Law that the land belongs to the Crown. It will revert to the minister, because the trustees have all died—even though the land and the building on it was put there by public subscription of the people in the district. For a miserable

\$5 000 to the minister, government members are going to be like dogs in the manger and prevent the community from getting any proceeds from the sale of that property which would otherwise go to the appropriate purposes in the community of providing memorials and/or maintaining existing memorials in that district that need a bit of repair and maintenance done on them. That is what the people had in mind. But, no, the government says, 'Our money. Give it to us.'

How do you see that compared to the attitude of the government over the Hindmarsh stadium and what it was asking local government to do there? The attitude was, 'Sign off and hand it over, because it's not yours. We put the building on it.' I am telling the government that the people in Borrika put that building on that land and, if it is good enough for the government to claim that it owns the stadium at Hindmarsh, then it is ruddy well good enough for the government to give the hall to the people of the people of Borrika and the proceeds from its sale to that community to use in ways in which they think is appropriate or otherwise, cut the hypocrisy, get out of the way and let someone else who does have a conscience govern this place.

Time expired.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** I wish to raise today three matters which are all on the theme of the human cost of privatisation, on the way in which privatisation and the abdication of public service in many areas is having a harsh impact on people—and it does not necessarily mean more efficiency. By way of example, the telephones in my office stopped working. I believe they were installed by PlesTel some years ago. PlesTel was acquired by Commander Communications Ltd from Telstra about three years ago. They still trade as PlesTel. When I inquired of the appropriate government department as to how I am to go about fixing my phone, they said, 'You have to phone PlesTel.' I phoned PlesTel, and they said, 'Yes, there is a \$220 minimum call out fee.' I went back to the government agency and said, 'This is a rip off. Surely I can go somewhere else to get someone to fix my phones for a third of that.' I was told, 'No, you have to go to PlesTel.'

So I called PlesTel, and the man who came from PlesTel was very efficient. He walked in, went to the equivalent of the fuse box, flicked a switch, and the phones started working again, and he left his bill on the counter as he walked out. He was there for no more than two minutes—\$220 worth! I took the matter to the company and said, 'Let's be reasonable'—and I am trying to save the public's money, not my own—'can't we have some sort of cut price here? The guy was literally there for two minutes; I am sure he will verify it.' The reply was, 'No, the minimum call out fee is \$220.' I was basically told to get lost. I made submissions to PlesTel's customer relations unit—or whatever it is called—and was given the big brush off. It is disgusting. It is acting like a monopolist or profiteer in the marketplace. It is an indictment on our policy of giving what should be public services over to ruthless profiteers.

I will give the House another example. I have in my electorate a pensioner with quite considerable disabilities. She is on the minimum income we accord to people in our society. One morning in January, she walked out her front door and found the smell of gas. She thought, 'Maybe there's a gas leak.' So, she phoned Origin Energy, which was her only option, and was told it would cost her \$77 including GST, to have an officer come out and inspect the property for leaks—despite the public safety issue involved. She thought,

'Maybe it is the traffic fumes or something else. Maybe it is the neighbour's place. I will not bother to do anything about it. I cannot afford to spend more than a third of my weekly income on paying for the inspector.' So, she let it go until a month later an Origin Energy representative knocked on her door and said, 'We think there's a gas leak at your place because your gas bill is four times what it should be. It is \$160, and you will have to pay it.' What is more, the representative then did an inspection. After the inspection, it was found that the leak was on her side of the meter, so it is her financial responsibility, and that cost her a further \$190. Because she did not have money, it ended up costing her \$350 to fix this gas leak—something that should be a public service for what to her is an essential service to cook her baked beans on the stove. That is a disgrace, as well. It is an absolute disgrace that Origin Energy, which formerly had been a public agency, is entitled to charge whatever it wishes and it does not even have a pensioner discount.

A third example involves a young man in my electorate who was the victim of a vicious gang attack in the city. He was hacked at with knives and a Samurai sword and, consequently, he has very limited use of his arms now. Unfortunately, the incident occurred on the last day of school, and Centrelink has said to him, 'You can't get unemployment benefits if you are living at home and you haven't had a job since leaving school.' He cannot work; he can hardly lift his arms. Can he get the disability allowance? No, he cannot, because he has to establish six months disability, and he has been incapacitated for only three months. So he is absolutely without income. He was picked up by an ambulance and taken from where he was attacked in the city to the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Despite pleading on the telephone and in writing to the South Australian Ambulance Service, the matter has been put into the hands of debt collectors, \$474.20 being the sum involved. I have pleaded with them, and they have written that they are under strict instructions from their client to pursue vigorously the matter, regardless of the expenses involved. He will be sued for that amount, and it is a disgrace.

Time expired.

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Today I wish to talk about citizenship. Citizenship and multiculturalism are two sides of the one coin. If Australia is to continue to be a successful, harmonious and rich society, we must promote both. One without the other devalues the coin and, therefore, devalues us as a nation and as Australians. I start with that today, because this year is the Centenary of Federation. Not many people would be aware that 9 May is the centenary of the first parliament in Melbourne. Many Australians might not know that Melbourne was the capital of the federal parliament until 1927. I will be going to that celebration. Yes, I will be using my allowance, and rightly so. I feel very privileged as a member of this state parliament which had a lot to do with the forming of federation to attend the parliament as the many members of parliament did in 1901.

What concerns me is that in this Centenary of Federation, celebrating 100 years of one of the most successful democracies, still over 750 000 residents in Australia are not Australian citizens. That is out of a population of 19 million—a blight on us. I believe that the federal government should have made more of this in its promotion of citizenship. It is a pity that these three-quarters of a million permanent residents, many of whom have been here for a long time, will not be able to participate and contribute fully in our democra-

cy as we head towards state and federal elections. I urge those three-quarters of a million permanent residents to take up citizenship in this centenary of federation.

I believe that many are frightened to take up citizenship because they believe that they will be renouncing their country of origin. That is not the case. In many cases acquiring Australian citizenship does not mean that you automatically cease to be a citizen of your country of origin: it depends on the law of the country. I urge those permanent residents, before applying for Australian citizenship, to seek advice from that country's consular or a diplomatic representative in Australia as to the outcome of taking up citizenship.

Personally, I believe it is a great honour and a privilege to be an Australian citizen. If one were to lose another country's citizenship that, to me, would not be a problem, as I have only one citizenship. As I have said on other occasions, members of parliament should have only Australian citizenship, as is the case federally. That is not the case for the general population and those who can retain their citizenship (if that is their wish) should do so. However, I urge them to become Australian citizens so that they can participate and contribute more fully as Australians in this centenary year of federation.

I believe that Australia is a mosaic of which we are all a part. Without a vision we have only colour and texture, and without colour and texture we have no picture. Without the commitment of leaders and those in higher office to Australian citizenship that mosaic is in danger of becoming a collage ready to fall apart in difficult times. I urge all those in public office to promote Australian citizenship in this our most successful year and to celebrate one of the most successful democracies of modern times.

Time expired.

### COMMUNITY TITLES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Environment and Heritage):** I move:

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

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

Leave granted.

This Bill makes a number of amendments to the *Community Titles Act 1996*.

In 1996, the *Community Titles Act* (the Act) came into operation introducing a new and innovative form of land division. Almost 4 years on the Government is pleased to report that, on the whole, the Act is operating well. However, as a result of consultation with various stake holders in the industry regarding the operation of the Act for the purposes of a review of the Act, a few minor amendments have been identified. These few minor amendments will facilitate the effective operation of the Act.

#### *Service infrastructure*

The Act includes provisions requiring that plans of community division be certified correct by a licensed surveyor. It is often not possible for a surveyor to be certain as to the location of the service infrastructure of a scheme. The Bill inserts new subsection (13) into section 3 of the Act which provides that a certificate by a licensed surveyor will not be invalid if the surveyor has disclosed in the certificate which part of the service infrastructure shown on the plan he or she is uncertain about.

#### *Vesting of Lots on the Deposit of a Plan to Divide a Jointly Owned Allotment*

Currently, where one allotment, which is jointly owned by two or more persons, is divided by a plan, each lot created will vest in all owners of the original allotment. Therefore, if the owners of the

original allotment wish to divide ownership of the community lots they need to lodge reciprocal transfers of their part interests after the plan is deposited. For example, where an allotment owned by A and B is divided into a two lot scheme, the Act states that A and B will be named as co-owners of both lots. To achieve a situation where A owns one lot and B owns the other, interests must be transferred after the plan is lodged. This situation increases the financial and time costs expended by a developer and the Lands Titles Office.

This situation does not arise with respect to general land division under the *Real Property Act* because allotments will vest as specified on the plan. The only restriction is that only persons who owned the original allotment that is being divided may be vested with ownership of any of the allotments created by the division. This approach reduces cost and documentation for both developers and the Lands Titles Office because the division and allocation of ownership of particular allotments takes place at the same time. The same approach is suitable for adoption in relation to the division of an allotment by community plan. The Bill will make such an amendment.

#### *By Laws for Exclusive Use of Common Property*

The Act recognises that a by-law may confer a right to exclusive use of a specified part of the common property, and sensibly provides that such a by-law cannot be made without the written consent of the owner of the lot to which it relates. However, the wording of the provision has raised some concern in the industry about whether or not a developer can include a by-law providing for exclusive use of the common property in the initial by-laws lodged with the community plan. On occasions, developments are created with the intention that part of the common property, for example a driveway, will be exclusively used by one lot owner. A lot owner suffers no disadvantage if the by-law for exclusive use is detailed up front as it should be obvious at the time the lot is purchased. Therefore, the Bill will make it clear that a developer may include a by-law for exclusive use of the common property in the initial by-laws.

#### *Amendment of a Plan of Community Division pursuant to Development Contract*

An application to amend a plan pursuant to a development contract must be accompanied by certain documents, including the duplicate certificate of title for the development lot. Where additional common property is created by virtue of the amended plan, it would be useful to also empower the Registrar General to require the production of the duplicate certificate of title for the existing common property. Production of this certificate of title would enable the Registrar General to issue a new certificate of title for the whole of the common property in the scheme. The Bill will enable the Registrar General to cancel the certificate of title for the existing common property and issue a new certificate of title for the existing and newly created common property. The Bill recognises that, for that purpose, the Registrar General can require the community corporation to produce the duplicate certificate of title for the existing common property.

#### *Early Lodgement of a Plan of Community Division for Examination*

The Act allows the Registrar General to examine a plan of community division before the application for community division is lodged to 'determine whether the plan is in an appropriate form'. The purpose of the provision is to allow the Registrar General to conduct the examination of a plan and, where appropriate, provisionally approve the plan prior to an application for community division being lodged. This preliminary examination significantly reduces the time taken to register the application and plan when it is eventually lodged for registration. While the current provision recognises the Registrar General's ability to examine the form of the plan, it does not empower the Registrar General to 'approve' the plan in preparation for registration. The Bill rectifies this problem.

#### *Issue of new certificates when Strata scheme converts to a Community Scheme*

Where a strata scheme regulated by the *Strata Titles Act* resolves to be regulated by the *Community Titles Act*, the Registrar General is obliged to endorse this resolution on the original certificates of title. However, the automation of the Land Titles Register now means that it is easier to cancel the existing certificates and to issue new certificates of title. Clause 7(a) of the Bill amends the Act so that the Registrar General can either issue new certificates of title or endorse the conversion on the original certificates of title.

#### *Conversion of Single Storey Prescribed Building Unit Schemes*

The Schedule to the Act also sets out a number of transitional provisions providing for the conversion of prescribed building unit schemes, which are pre-February 1968 unit schemes. Currently, a

single storey prescribed building scheme will become a community scheme, not a community strata scheme, when converting under the Act. To be a community strata scheme there must be one lot existing above another (except where an existing strata titles scheme converts under the Act), which would not be the case with a single storey prescribed building unit scheme. As a result, such schemes are subjected to open space issues that are not confronted by schemes that convert into community strata schemes. This may deter schemes from converting to a type of scheme where a unit holders interest is registered and, therefore, easily traceable.

Holdings under most prescribed building unit schemes are similar to strata titles; that is, the owner only owns the space between the walls, floor and ceiling. Therefore, it is reasonable to allow the conversion of such schemes into community strata schemes. Clause 7(b) of the Bill recognises the ability of single storey prescribed building unit schemes to convert to a community strata scheme despite the fact that there is not one lot existing above another

*Saving Existing Statutory Encumbrances when Prescribed Building Unit Schemes Convert*

When a prescribed building unit scheme lodges a plan of community division at the Land Titles Office, and the scheme becomes a community scheme regulated by the Act, all registered encumbrances (except easements) entered on the original certificate for the land will be extinguished, and any related instrument will be discharged. Statutory Encumbrances will also be extinguished because the Act defines 'encumbrance' as including a statutory encumbrance. There is no justification for this, particularly given that statutory encumbrances are not extinguished where prescribed building unit schemes are converted under the *Strata Titles Act* or where there is traditional land division under the *Real Property Act*. Clause 7(c) of the Bill amends the Schedule so that statutory encumbrances will not be extinguished.

I commend this bill to honourable members.

Explanation of clauses

*Clause 1: Short title*

This clause is formal.

*Clause 2: Amendment of s. 3—Interpretation*

This clause inserts a provision that enables a licensed surveyor to validly certify a plan of community division even though he or she cannot be certain of the location of part of the service infrastructure.

*Clause 3: Amendment of s. 23—Vesting etc. of lots etc. on deposit of plan*

This clause makes an amendment to section 23 that will provide for the vesting of lots on the division of a single allotment that is owned by more than one person.

*Clause 4: Amendment of s. 36—By-law as to the exclusive use of part of the common property*

This clause makes an amendment to section 36 that underlines the fact that the consent of the owner of a lot is not required for an original by-law which is lodged with the Registrar-General with the plan and application for division.

*Clause 5: Amendment of s. 58—Amendment of plan pursuant to a development contract*

This clause adds a new subsection to section 58 that provides for consolidation of the common property of a scheme into one title.

*Clause 6: Amendment of s. 144—Preliminary examination of plan by Registrar-General*

This clause makes it clear that the Registrar-General can look at more than formal matters when making a preliminary examination of a plan under section 144.

*Clause 7: Amendment of Schedule—Transitional provisions*

This clause amends the schedule of transitional provisions.

**Mr De LAINE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable Notices of Motion: Private Members Bills/Committees/Regulations set down for Thursday 29 March to be taken into consideration forthwith.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** A quorum is not present. Ring the bells.

*A quorum having been formed:*

Motion carried.

## PETROL, DIESEL AND LPG PRICING

**Mr McEWEN (Gordon):** I move:

That a select committee be established to consider all aspects of petrol, diesel and LPG auto gas pricing in South Australia and in particular—

- (a) how the minimum wholesale price is determined;
- (b) if this price is applied equitably to all distributors and retailers;
- (c) oil companies practice and process of discounting and rebating and to whom it applies and which types of businesses are eligible;
- (d) who owns and who controls retail outlets in South Australia and what proportion of them are at arm's length from wholesalers; and
- (e) any other related costing and pricing issues.

The marketing and pricing of fuel is fraught with deeply entrenched problems which seriously restrict competition, resulting in market manipulation and excessive prices, especially in country areas. The significant difference in petrol prices between country and metropolitan areas has been estimated to cost country motorists at least \$2 million extra each week.

There is considerable resentment throughout the country and enormous frustration, too, as people question why prices are so high and who is to blame. In the metropolitan area, while average prices are lower than for the country, motorists have fallen victim to a petrol marketing system in which prices fluctuate daily, even hourly, for no obvious reason. This frustration is matched only by the despair felt by many small business people in the petroleum industry, particularly independent and franchise retailers. Many are trying vainly to compete for a living in an environment where the major oil companies dominate and where normal rules of free enterprise no longer apply.

The foregoing statement is a quote from the Western Australian Select Committee on Pricing of Petroleum Products, and exactly the same words apply in South Australia. Further, the Select Committee on Petrol Multi-Site Franchising Report—a select committee of the fourth session of the 48th parliament in South Australia—recommended to the state government that the oil industry be required to establish a terminal price for petrol exclusive of freight available to all retailers wishing to purchase direct from the terminal.

The situation in South Australia is no different than that in other states. The core of the problem is that very recommendation of the Select Committee on Petrol Multi-Site Franchising and to date nothing has changed. Some people find themselves, simply because of location or lack of power, being charged up to 6¢ or 7¢ more a litre at the terminal gate.

**Mr Hanna:** It's the free market in play.

**Mr McEWEN:** Nothing to do with the free market. This is market manipulation. This is exploitation of people who do not have the market power to demand a better deal, and it is something we must all look into. I do not believe it is appropriate at this time that I spell out all of my concerns. That is the responsibility of the select committee that I am seeking the support of this House to set up. But I can tell you that the RAA and the MTA both support this committee, along with an enormous number of people in South Australia who are fed up to the back teeth with the exploitation they suffer at the hands of multi-nationals who simply choose to manipulate prices at their whim. It is time we got to the bottom of it and it is time we took some firm action to see that fair rules apply and, if necessary, the ACCC be involved,

as was recommended by the state select committee that I quoted, and also the Western Australian select committee.

The only hope I would have in setting up another select committee is that this time we follow through and the parliament follow up on any actions we recommend and we actually fix the problem. So I appeal to the House to support my motion that we set up a select committee to once and for all bring some fairness and equity to the marketing and distribution of LPG auto gas, diesel and petroleum products in this state.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** I want to make a few brief remarks, and there may well be other members of the opposition who wish to do so. I simply wish to underline that the issues of petrol pricing and gas pricing are indeed critical issues in the community today, not just for the type of rural electorate that the mover of the motion looks after but in the city as well. I know from my doorknocking that there are several issues on people's minds at the moment. The GST has had a harsh effect throughout the community. Health care is a perennial issue, and clearly not enough is being done there. But it may be surprising to members of parliament just how significant the petrol pricing issue is also. It is right up there with the other issues in terms of emotive responses that I receive from constituents. It really does annoy people when they see petrol prices fluctuating the way they do and never ever ratcheting down; it is always ratcheting up and up.

Another specific point that has been raised by a number of people in my electorate concerns the increase in gas prices, which should not be related to petrol price increases but seem to tag along. Whenever petrol prices go up the price of LPG auto gas tends to go up as well. It just seems to be someone, somewhere taking advantage of the poor motorist.

So I have to commend the member for Gordon in moving this motion because he really has touched a nerve and it is something which the state government seems to have failed to address so far. Admittedly, much of the solution to the problem must come from the federal government. What we have seen there, of course, is the Prime Minister announce a \$1.5 billion expenditure to lower petrol prices, which has had absolutely no discernible effect for motorists and absolutely no discernible political effect, in a positive sense, for the Prime Minister or his party. So it has been a complete waste of money as far as I can see. Something more needs to be done to solve the problem, and it may well be that, should this motion be passed, the committee will be able to come up with some sort of solution.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I, like the previous speaker, would like to commend the member for Gordon for initiating this inquiry. We live in a federation and, accordingly, we have a right to be involved in issues such as the pricing, retailing, etc. of petrol, diesel and LPG. The point has been made by the member for Gordon that we do not really have a true market operating; we have a manipulated market, and I would have to agree with him on that point. It has always intrigued me how, moving around Adelaide, you see the price of petrol move up virtually simultaneously, and I must commend the oil companies for having a very efficient fax or phone system, internet connection, which ensures that the prices jump simultaneously over such a large area.

I would like to make a couple of points. First, the Port Stanvac Refinery is an important employer in the state. It contributes about 1 per cent to gross state product. It is important in terms of having local availability of fuel. So I

am very strongly committed to doing all I can to ensure that that refinery stays, despite the fact that we have a contentious issue in relation to the rates which are payable by the refinery to the City of Onkaparinga. I hope that matter can be resolved very quickly, because the refinery is under a lot of pressure to survive in a highly competitive world, given that it is a smaller refinery in terms of most of its products. But it has been very innovative in respect of producing bitumen. It supplies, I think, three states with bitumen, and also has developed a very successful export in wax and other products. It is a key employer, but it is vulnerable and we need to be mindful of that. I am sure that, in terms of this joint select committee, the question of the role and the stability of that refinery will be considered and taken into account, because we do not want to see a situation where we lose that refinery, the highly skilled employees and the contribution that the refinery makes to the state economy.

One issue in relation to that refinery: members may not be aware but the refinery uses five megalitres of purified water a day. I hasten to add that they do not use it to water down the fuel. They use it in the refining process. They are using five megalitres, which is a lot of water, per day in the production of petroleum products, when it is not necessary to use that quality of water. I am encouraging the government, through the Minister for Water Resources and other ministers, to look at the possibility of the refinery being supplied with grey water. It would most likely be from the Glenelg Treatment Works, because I understand that the Christies Beach works is pretty well committed in terms of its grey water. But the Glenelg works could supply grey water to the refinery and it would be an enormous saving for the refinery and also get rid of the grey water, which currently ends up in the ocean. So it is a double bonus. That would cost several million dollars but I believe it would be a justified expense and contribution from the state government, and the federal government, to assist with that project.

**Mr Lewis:** Well, you could do a cost benefit analysis, couldn't you?

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** The refinery as we know now has a pipeline with its products going down to Birkenhead, so I do not see it as a great problem to use the same easement to bring grey water from Glenelg up to Port Stanvac.

I would like to mention a couple of other points. One of my local businesses, Lucas Earthmovers, is involved in the major earthworks for the Southern Expressway, and they tell me that, to date, on the second stage they have used 1.8 million litres of diesel—which is probably more than the member for Schubert does on his farm, not much more but a little bit more. When they entered into the contract to carry out bulk earthworks in 1999, the price of diesel was in the order of 60¢ or 70¢ per litre, and now it is 80¢ or 90¢, or higher. I am told that, because they are involved in earthmoving, they do not qualify for the off-road reduction in excise—which, as we know, is a federal matter but, nevertheless, is impacting seriously and negatively on a local business to the extent that the contract is costing probably close to \$500 000 more. No family business can sustain that sort of increased cost. That is also an issue that I have taken up with the Treasurer and with the Premier, in an effort to address that matter. There was no specific rise and fall clause in the contract but there was a provision that if, due to the GST, fuel prices came down, the company would refund money to the government: it seems to be a bit of a one-sided deal.

Another matter is the recent increase in the price of petrol because of environmental considerations. I do not have a

problem there if that is the genuine motivation, nor do I have a problem if the reason is to assist Port Stanvac. However, I would welcome being informed of the real justification and, if it is sustainable that in terms of air quality we pay a bit extra, so be it. I understand from the member for Gordon that that issue will be canvassed by the select committee if it is set up, as I hope it will be.

There is often debate about the price of LPG, many people being confused with CNG (compressed natural gas) which is exported to Japan in large quantities. Clearly, we cannot easily use compressed natural gas in vehicles and, although it is not specifically in the terms of reference, it would be advisable to look at options. I do not claim to be a technical expert on that or anything else, but we have enormous reserves of compressed natural gas and maybe we should look at the possibility of using them.

**Mr Lewis:** It must be compressed: you have to compress it.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** I accept what the member for Hammond says: that it needs to be compressed. Yes, it needs to be compressed. I realise that there is world parity pricing in relation to petrol, diesel and LPG, which is a federal matter. Obviously, the federal government benefits from an increase in excise, but it also benefits through oil companies, such as Santos and others, paying company tax on greater returns. So, as I said at the start, although we are in a federal system, we have a right to be involved in this issue. The principal responsibility falls on the federal government in terms of the macro issues.

Certainly, at state level we have a responsibility to look at the issues that affect motorists in a more immediate way, which includes looking at the Petroleum Products Board to see whether it is still warranted and whether there is unfair restriction on competition, for example, against Woolworths and others that wish to set up service stations in conjunction with their retail business. I have heard company representatives make the point that they have been hindered in establishing service stations because of that board and because some local councils do not want in their area competition directed against existing local businesses. So, I commend the resolution to the House and I look forward to watching the deliberations of the select committee and positive recommendations ensuing as a result.

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I am very pleased to support this motion. Indeed, I have been calling on the government to do something about petrol pricing for some time in the way of undertaking an analysis of the country petrol pricing subsidy. The government refused to release the Treasury report on country petrol price subsidies with its findings on whether subsidies were getting through to motorists. This subsidy is paid for by the taxpayers of South Australia to the tune of \$16 million a year, I understand, so I think it is very important that taxpayers understand and have demonstrated to them that this subsidy is getting through to motorists in country areas.

After that report was completed—and, indeed, it was delayed a considerable time—I released three or four press statements calling for the report to be released, and each time there was a delay. Each time we were told that it was due out soon and then there was another delay of a month or two. When it finally was announced that the report was completed, the Treasurer also said that parliament and the people of South Australia would not get to see it. He simply assured us that everything was fine and that the report found that there

were no problems with the distribution of that subsidy. He, in fact, in his usual way, managed to find a way to blame the Labor Party for not releasing the report. He said that there were provisions in the Petroleum Act that would not allow the report to be made public because of information obtained from petrol distributors.

He did not mention in his explanation that the Liberal government had undertaken an extensive review of the Petroleum Act since it was in government—I think it was in about 1995—and made no attempt whatsoever to change those clauses. When challenged in parliament about legislation to amend those clauses so that we could see the report, the Treasurer said that we could not do that, because we would not get information we needed from petroleum explorers to operate the Petroleum Act and to ensure that the department of mines had correct information. So, the Treasurer backed away at a rate of knots when he was challenged on doing something about that legislation.

In the meantime, country people are still dissatisfied with petrol pricing. They still find that the difference in petrol prices in country areas is totally inexplicable. Federal surveys reveal that in many other areas of Australia there seem to be differences in petrol prices which cannot be explained by distance and population levels alone. Under those surveys, South Australia is one of the worst states in regard to this situation. The government is still not able to provide us with a reasonable report saying whether or not the country petrol pricing subsidy is working.

Certainly, I would be interested to be part of this select committee and to see exactly what is happening with the price of petrol in country areas. It is almost too obvious to bear repeating that country people suffer greatly from increases in petrol far more than city people. They need their cars. They need to pay for petrol to go long distances in many cases to work, shop or conduct business and they have no alternative, because public transport simply is not available. So, I do not think that people in the city begrudge that \$16 million subsidy, because public transport in city areas is subsidised to a far greater tune than that.

**Mr Venning:** Hear, hear!

**Ms HURLEY:** Absolutely. So, it is not that we begrudge the subsidy: we want to make sure that that subsidy is reaching those people whom it should be reaching to the fullest extent.

**Mr Venning:** 4¢ per litre.

**Ms HURLEY:** It is 3¢ a litre: up to 3¢ a litre subsidy. And that subsidy, for the benefit of the member for Schubert, is determined on a formula involving distance from the city and ranges from about .8¢ a litre to 3.3¢ a litre. That subsidy should be in place in order to make up for the disadvantage in public transport and infrastructure that country people suffer. So, there is ample justification for that subsidy if it is working, but the feedback I have from the country is that people do not believe that it is working effectively. The government is not able to reassure us that it is working effectively. It simply refuses to release the information or even an analysis of that report that demonstrates clearly that that subsidy is working. So, the only mechanism that we have left is something like this select committee to inquire into the petrol pricing system and to determine the best way to ensure that country people are the least disadvantaged. We know that the federal government has done its best to disadvantage them through the GST and the excise system. The Prime Minister has now backed down on that. The petrol prices will rise, anyway, because of world parity pricing.



It is still very difficult for country people to manage, and we really need a clear explanation of what is going on. The only way to do this, it seems to me, is to ask and to obtain this information ourselves as a parliament from the people involved in the distribution and retailing of petrol and from those people who suffer from the seemingly grossly inflated petrol prices in some country areas. Once you leave the city, it does not take very long before you notice very strange anomalies. You can understand how in some very remote country towns with very small populations and lack of competition among retailers the petrol prices might creep up, but you have to ask: how are the petrol companies managing this?

It does seem that they are making gross profits out of people in remote areas and perhaps subsidising city motorists by heavily discounting. When we ask ourselves whether or not this is fair, we need to have that information at our fingertips to understand exactly what is going on with petrol pricing. I must say that I have heard in talkback debates on radio over and over again how petrol pricing works between wholesalers, distributors and retailers, and I still do not understand why we get such wildly fluctuating prices and how the wholesalers decide on who does or does not get the hefty discounts. If the government is paying subsidies, we as a parliament should understand what is going on. If the Treasurer will not explain that to us, I am very pleased to take part in a process by which we discover that for ourselves.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I am fully aware that the whole issue of petrol prices is a very contentious one, and I wish this committee every success in considering the matters that have been suggested for it to examine. The examination of petrol prices is nothing new: it has been a point of contention (from my memory, anyway) since the 1970s—so for the last 30 plus years. I well remember when the Fraser government was in power and our then federal member was a gentleman called Geoff O'Halloran-Giles, and petrol prices literally went through the roof. I do not recall why, but Geoff at the Party-political meetings in the electorate of Goyder (in other words, on Yorke Peninsula) said, 'Look, I believe that in the not too distant future things such as caravans once again will be able to be used. I realise that the caravan industry has virtually collapsed, but I do believe that there will still be a future for caravans some time down the track.' We thought 'Beauty, caravans might be able to be used on the roads again.' That is how critical the petrol crisis was in the 1970s. I remember a person who bought a V8 car, and within 12 to 18 months that person saying to me 'John, the value of my car has almost dropped to nothing'. No-one wanted to own a V8 car. They were bad news because they were costing so much.

Quite a few members might recall that oil heaters were used extensively to heat people's homes. We had one at Yorketown. I recall that, by the time we left Yorketown, oil was a luxury item that we did not think we could afford and most other people could not afford.

The 1970s was a crisis period. At that stage Malcolm Fraser introduced the 10¢ rebate to oil companies to equate the price differential between country and city. Did the 10¢ rebate solve the problem? No, it did not. In fact, petrol prices did not improve between city and country. City was still that much cheaper than country. They had all gone up considerably. In fact, it was the Hawke government that dispensed with the 10¢ levy that was given to petrol companies because the petrol companies were accused of misusing that 10¢ allowance.

It was also in the Fraser era that the excise rate was introduced. I remember that as a Liberal member I was very upset that a Liberal government had introduced the excise. The arguments at that time, if I remember correctly, were that it would encourage our own Australian petroleum industry and that it would be worth their while to explore for oil. I dare say it did help, but it certainly drove up the price of petrol in no uncertain terms. The argument was also put then that Australia had relatively cheap petrol compared with other countries of the world. That argument is still being put today and I say, 'Rubbish!' When compared with a similarly sized country such as the United States of America, our petrol prices are enormously expensive. They are very high indeed and it is because of our high excise. That excise came in under a Liberal Government.

The Hawke Labor government decided to have the automatic increase with the CPI. It was a guaranteed revenue collector, and it has been that way ever since; that is, until a few weeks ago, when John Howard made what I regard as a momentous decision, saying, 'We will scrap the automatic CPI increase of the excise.' I say 'Hooray, and thank goodness it has finally been abolished,' because Labor certainly would not abolish it if it ever got back into power again. We see how that excise has increased since February 1990 from 24.124¢ per litre to a maximum of 44.137¢ per litre on 1 February 2000. Since then we have seen it decrease significantly because of the GST factor.

Most members would be aware that, to offset the effect of the GST on petrol prices, on 22 June 2000 the government announced that it would reduce excise by around 6.7¢ per litre, and it also indicated that the tax reform should result in an estimated cost saving of 1.5¢ per litre, bringing the total fall in the price of a litre of petrol to 8.2¢. In other words, we have had the equivalent of an 8.2¢ drop in the cost of a litre of petrol since about June 2000. Since then we have had another 1.5¢ taken off. So we have had close to a 10¢ drop in the price of fuel. Therefore, everyone is saying, 'Hang on, it has skyrocketed: why has it gone up?' Again, most of us are well aware that it has increased because of the increase in crude oil prices over the last year or two.

The fuel price went from around \$12 per barrel to as high as \$35 per barrel but it has dropped back somewhat now. It was a massive increase and it certainly ensured that the price of petrol went up in this state. At the same time, our dollar has decreased in value. At the end of 1999, it was worth just over US66¢—nearly 67¢. It is now about 49¢. So, there has been about a 25 per cent drop in the value of our dollar, so it costs us much more to import the oil and, as a result, our cost has increased significantly.

I have continually been told over the 10 or 15 years that I have taken up the issue on behalf of my constituents concerning why we pay higher prices in the country than the city that it all comes down to competition. I have had figures put to me time after time. It was only when Woolworths set up at Kadina about two years ago or less and started selling their petrol that I suddenly saw that competition did bring the price down, because for a period—it was either earlier this year or at the end of last year—Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo had cheaper prices than Adelaide. That is saying something, but it was only due to the fact that Woolworths was setting the price and all other petrol retailers had to follow suit if they wanted to survive. I am sure that life has been a little tough on them. The rest of Yorke Peninsula has suffered and, in fact, there have been price variations involving a difference, I believe, of up to 15¢ between the top and bottom of

Yorke Peninsula. It shows how distance and lack of competition are major factors.

As I said initially, I trust that it will be possible to get some answers to the questions posed in this particular motion, and if it can assist country users of petrol, in particular, I will be delighted; if it can assist users overall, likewise I will be delighted. I say to members that we should not forget that a federal inquiry into petrol prices was announced at the end of last year by the federal Labor Party. It has looked into a range of issues, but I believe it has been done for purely political motives. I am sure that the Labor Party was not too happy when John Howard announced that excise increases would no longer be automatically indexed according to the CPI. In fact, we have heard so much criticism from Labor members but we have not heard them come up with any solutions. With those comments, I support the member in his endeavours to have this issue further explored—and may the committee have success in its exploration.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I rise to support the member for Gordon. I think this the first time that I can say unequivocally that I support him wholeheartedly. He has been in this place for three years and we have differed on many issues, but in this instance I believe he is right. This is not the first time I have moved or approved a select committee on this subject.

As a country member, I can say that petrol, diesel and gas prices affect my electorate very dramatically. Members do not have to be reminded of how reliant country people are on their motor vehicles and, therefore, the fuel on which those vehicles run. Most country families have no option but to use their car. There are no bus or train services and long distance makes taxis unaffordable and not practical. Therefore, most country people rely on petrol to run their vehicles.

Diesel fuel is the most common fuel used by farmers in their farm machinery and trucks and some of their utes and cars. Country people rely on carriers to freight goods to and from their communities, and those trucks of course use diesel fuel. The dearer diesel gets, the more farmers turn to chemicals to minimum till and zero till. That is a good move in some areas but it is concerning in other areas because it results in chemical residues in the soil. Fuel prices do cause other things to happen; they impact and impinge on so many other things we do and the environment in which we live.

In isolated country regions, diesel is used to generate electricity for light and power—a basic commodity for us all—yet the people concerned do not get any rebate as primary producers are able to do. LPG is a vital fuel for country people in their homes, where it is used for heating, cooking, hot water services and so on. There is no doubt about the importance of all three fuel options to country constituents. The sum of \$2 million per week extra is paid by country people for this fuel. As other members have said, country people do not have the market power to command a better deal from the oil companies.

It is really annoying to leave the metropolitan area, as I do every week, and to see the fuel prices as I drive along Main North Road. It is only 75 kilometres to the Barossa Valley, where fuel is up to 8¢ or 9¢ dearer per litre. In the 60 litre tank of an average size car that is \$5.40 for every fill. What happened to the 3¢ per litre differential that is supposed to subsidise country prices? One wonders whether it was there at all. As the deputy leader reminds us, it costs \$16 million per annum to subsidise rural users.

The federal government deducted 1.5¢ excise from the fuel. Did any member in this House see it or recognise it? Did any member see the impact? I certainly did not, and neither did my constituents. The 1.5¢ is nothing because of the extra built into the prices by the fuel companies. It is high time the whole situation was opened up for discussion, and I welcome and support the motion to set up a select committee.

It also annoys me that gas is much dearer in country regions than in the city. How can gas be dearer in Port Pirie than it is in Adelaide? The gas goes past Port Pirie to get to Adelaide. There is extra cost to get it to Adelaide yet people in country regions are paying more for gas than people pay in the city. If that is not an anomaly, a nonsense, what is? I try to support business. I try to support companies but when they come up with situations such as that I cannot support them, because such practices are arrogant and unfair.

I support the retention of our own refinery but I realise it is vulnerable. We need to assess the impact of imported petrol from Asia. Is the petrol as good as our own? What will its increased use do to our refining capacity and our facility? I also note the ongoing dispute between company and individually owned fuel outlets. The Environment, Resources and Development Committee did a reference on the dangerous gases emitted by petrol. Benzene, in particular, is said to be carcinogenic.

My former colleague, Colin Caudell, did much work in this area. The fuel companies put a 3¢ levy on leaded fuel. They have now taken out the lead. The fuel in question is LRP—lead replacement petrol. They put a 3¢ levy on super petrol, but now that we have LRP why is the 3¢ still there? I believe they think the consumer will not notice, but we certainly do. Now that we have lead replacement petrol, why are we still paying the 3¢ levy?

I am often asked, 'Who can go to a refinery to buy fuel?' Why the huge parody between prices across different companies and different regions? Who actually gets what of the 95¢ per litre we are currently paying for fuel? We all have seen illustrations which graphically describe who gets what in a litre of fuel and what percentage goes to whom. Each body accuses the other of an unfair take. Colin Caudell made a speech in this House on 11 August 1994, as follows:

... I will ask the Premier to call a conference of all state governments to ensure the following: first, transparency of petrol pricing; secondly, implementation of terminal gate pricing in Australia (and in South Australia we would have terminal gate pricing in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Mount Gambier); and, thirdly, the ability of service stations to contract a legally qualified vehicle to pick up the product, which would effectively reduce petrol cost to all consumers immediately.

He moved to set up a select committee on 26 October the same year. He then noted the select committee's report as follows:

Since August 1995, some elements of the oil industry have been negotiating with the existing franchisees to terminate their franchise agreements so that multiple service stations can be grouped together under one single franchise. The committee was concerned, especially with only four major oil companies, that multisite franchises as proposed by the oil industry could lead to higher prices in the longer term.

What prophetic words they are! Given what has happened, Mr Caudell was a man of great foresight. It is just a shame he is no longer in the parliament, because he was absolutely right. Competition is the only way to get the best deal, and we need to examine fully the whole aspect of this industry. I say again that I agree with the member for Gordon in this instance. I am pleased that I have been asked to sit on this

select committee, and I do so with much expectation. I will find it most interesting. I support the motion.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** I rise briefly to support the member for Gordon's motion. I congratulate him on moving it; it is certainly an important issue. The points made by the previous speaker about concerns felt by people in the country are also felt by many people living in the city. In my electorate, which is on the edge of the city, many of my constituents are dependent on the motor car for getting to work, going to school and for doing their day-to-day business. I know that in the Aldinga and the Sellicks Beach area, where public transport is very poor, often families require two for three cars to be able to achieve these goals. So when the price of petrol, LPG or diesel goes up, it affects families in the area very much indeed. I know from the angry phone calls and letters that have been coming to my office that people are upset about the dramatic rise in the cost of petrol.

They do not believe it is to do completely with international fuel cartels putting up prices and reducing production; nor do they believe it is to do totally with the Australian dollar. They have a sneaking suspicion that a fair amount of the increase in prices is to do with the GST and government policy generally. It is really appropriate that we have a mechanism to explore all those feelings and views, and give ordinary members of the public an opportunity to make submissions and to be heard on this issue.

I certainly hope that the select committee, when it is established, will travel to regions and parts of Adelaide and listen to what people have to say. I am not sure who is chairing the committee, but I would certainly say to the committee, 'I would like you to come into my electorate and talk to the residents of my electorate about their concerns and listen to their views on this issue, because I am sure they will give you quite an ear full.'

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** I, too, like most members, intend to support this motion. However, I am somewhat cynical about what the select committee might achieve, although I know there is a lot of angst, particularly in rural communities, about fuel prices. I want to bring to the attention of the House some of the things that have occurred with regard to fuel prices in my electorate and in the neighbouring electorate of Gordon.

Mount Gambier probably suffers some of the highest fuel prices of any of what we call the settled parts of the state. In recent times, more often than not the price there hovered around \$1. What I cannot fathom is the variation between outlets that are not very far apart, and that is what has prompted the member Gordon to raise this matter in this way. I travel up and down the Dukes Highway on a regular basis, and I have found that Coonalpyn is invariably one of the cheapest places to buy petrol as I head out of Adelaide to the South-East or to the Victorian border. I cannot for the life of me understand why Coonalpyn would be cheaper than places only a few miles down the road in either direction. However, that seems to be case.

In the last year or two, one interesting thing has happened. A company called South Australian Farmers Fuel has been set up and has taken over some fuel outlets. In fact, it has about 23 outlets around the state at present, including outlets at places such as Tailem Bend and Bordertown. There is one between Millicent and Mount Gambier, and there is another one at Nangwarry in the South-East. So I know of four in the South-East.

The fuel is sold under the Liberty banner, and that fuel is sold considerably cheaper than that sold from the other big company named outlets in those towns, particularly in the first instance. The Liberty fuel outlets have brought down the price from the other major retailers to their price point in the market. By way of illustration, I was in Bordertown some time ago but was not aware that the Liberty outlet had opened in that town at that stage. I filled up my vehicle in Bordertown, drove out the road a little and saw the price board up on the side of the road. I noted that there was an 11¢ a litre difference between that price and what I had paid, and that was probably within half a kilometre. I am pleased to say that, in the ensuing period, the other fuel outlets in that town have reduced prices, so the price difference is only marginal at this stage.

I must admit that I tend to patronise the Liberty outlets, because they have done a great thing for fuel prices in those regions—and they have outlets right throughout the state. Last night I drove to Adelaide from Bordertown. The Coonalpyn service station was closed when I went through there, as it was fairly late. So I travelled on and got fuel at Tailem Bend. The Liberty station was also closed, as was the BP station at the other end of Tailem Bend. However, the Shell station, which used to be one of the dearest places to buy petrol, was selling petrol at 89¢ a litre last night—I noted that it was a cent or two cheaper than the price in the city. It happens quite regularly that you can buy fuel at Tailem Bend cheaper than you can buy it in the metropolitan area. It would be most interesting if the select committee could find out why on earth that occurs.

We are traditionally told that it is not just the freight cost but the volume going through. A lot of traffic goes through Tailem Bend, but it has at least four large service stations in that small town. Notwithstanding the amount of interstate traffic and regional traffic going through there, I would not think the volumes would get to anywhere near those of the large outlets in the metropolitan area.

With regard to South Australian Farmers Fuel and its Liberty outlets, I want to highlight that my understanding is that we do not have competition at the wholesale end of the market. It is not at the retail end of the market where we have a problem. If the problem is solved at the wholesale end of the market, competition within the retail sector—certainly in rural areas—will solve the problem for us, and that is what has happened with South Australian Farmers Fuel delivering fuel and giving us much cheaper prices in those country towns to which I have referred throughout the state.

Another player in the fuel retail market has also moved into the South-East and other regions is Woolworths, which is using fuel as a loss leader to attract people into their stores. At least that is what I am led to believe. That is what the media are saying. Within the past week, I read something from the Motor Trade Association which suggested that Woolworths was using fuel as a loss leader. However, probably 12 months ago a Woolworths fuel outlet opened in Naracoorte, and one of the interesting things was that it came back to me that Woolworths' price in Naracoorte was substantially different from that of Woolworths outlets in other regional towns. In either Port Pirie or Port Augusta the Woolworths' price was considerably less than it was in Naracoorte, and I do not think it reflected the difference in transport costs at all. I think it reflected the difference in what the market would bear in those towns. That is something else that I hope the select committee can look into. I should have thought that, if Woolworths was using fuel prices to get

people into its stores, it would charge the same price throughout the state. My information is that at that stage it was not doing so.

Quite a few issues are therefore involved. I return to the point that if we have the wholesale sector of the market set such that anyone can hire a fuel freight company to pick up fuel for them at the fuel terminals and know that they can do that in a competitive way, the retail end of the market will look after itself.

There are other fuel issues. We did know a couple of years ago that diesel fuel used to be much cheaper than petrol, and now it seems to be more expensive. From inquiries that I have made, I understand that much of the reason why petrol is cheaper than diesel in Australia is that we import from South-East Asia petrol which is basically a by-product of its diesel production, and its transport relies much more heavily on diesel. So we can buy cheap petrol but we cannot buy cheap diesel. However, that is something else into which the committee might be able to look and confirm.

Notwithstanding my cynicism about doing anything to lower prices or achieving anything with regard to the disparity between fuel prices in regional centres/towns and the metropolitan area, one of the things I think the select committee will be able to achieve some good on is to cut through all the hype and nonsense and get some facts on the table. I was listening to talk-back radio a couple of weeks ago. This was the flavour of the month then, certainly in metropolitan Adelaide, and absolute nonsense was being talked about as to the cause of fuel prices and where they should have been.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**Mr WILLIAMS:** A huge amount of nonsense came from a lot of the people who were on talk-back radio. Basically they were city-based people who did not travel all that far and they were suggesting that we should have substantially cheaper fuel than that in Europe or England because over there they did not travel great distances. These comments came from city-based people who obviously had no greater distance to travel to and from work as people would have in any of the cities or the countryside in Europe.

If the select committee can overcome these sorts of things and get back to the facts of the matter I think it will have achieved some good. I will support the motion. I did show a little interest in going on the select committee but I am sure that those members of this party who are on it will look into the matters that I have raised.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** There are some interesting elements in this debate. The one thing that I would ask the select committee to look into—and it is obvious to me and everybody else in this chamber that the motion will pass, and it will have my support—is the way in which the Australian so-called world parity price is arrived at. It is not really world parity price at all: that is pure hot, green, steamy bovine excrement of a masculine gender. It is fiction to call it world parity price. Those proclaiming it to be world parity price take a spot price in Singapore and add to it the cost of delivering the fuel to the place in Australia from which it can be sold to distributors. That has absolutely 'B' all to do with what it really costs to get it there.

For instance, the world parity price for LPG should be the FOB price across the wharf at Port Bonython in South Australia because we export the stuff. In fact, what happens is that the LPG price for wholesaling is multiplied on factorially down the line to the motorist and is determined by

the substitution cost effect of using LPG as compared with what we call petrol. Let us face it, there is no excise on LPG: the companies selling it are deliberately pricing it at a figure which will ensure that there is a slight, steady increase in demand for the commodity as compared with what we call petrol. If we took the LPG price across the wharf at Port Bonython we would currently be able to buy LPG in South Australia for less than 20¢ a litre. That is the literal situation.

However, it does not occur simply because of the cartel between the oil companies. Why should Adelaide get it cheaper than Sydney? It would not need to be all that much cheaper because there is already a pipeline that could carry it across to Sydney. It is not big enough to carry everything the motorists, along with industry and householders, would want but you can reintegrate it and segregate it again at the other end, the same as happens now. It is segregated and cleaned up at the Santos installation at the Big Lake, Moomba, and then reintegrated and sent down the pipeline to market in Adelaide where it is segregated again into the components for which there is a market—that is, the gas that comes out of the Cooper Basin and associated geophysical—

**Ms Breuer:** It's no cheaper in Whyalla.

**Mr LEWIS:** It's no cheaper in Whyalla, and that's sad because it ought to be. Santos is selling the stuff across the wharf for less than 8 per cent of the price that is being paid by Whyalla motorists for the same product. In my judgment, that is as crook as hell. If it is world parity price then let it be and let us prosecute the companies that are profiteering. I hope the select committee looks into that with some care and diligence. That is what we are asking it to do with the proposition we are putting before it—and it should not let itself get snowed by smart alec marketing reps from oil companies.

I also wanted to help members understand the relationship between the molecular sizes and energy output per unit of each of these fuel types. Many people do not understand that methane is one carbon atom with four hydrogens floating around it, hooked up on the four bonds that are available. Next up the list in molecular size is ethane, which is two carbon atoms with six hydrogens floating around in the molecule. Next is propane, which is three carbon atoms with eight hydrogens floating around. Butane is next up the list and has four carbon atoms with 10 hydrogens hanging off it.

Then comes pentane, hexane, heptane, octane—and most people have heard about octane which has eight carbon atoms with 18 hydrogen atoms hanging off it—nonane and xenane. Octane ratings are used to measure the combustibility rate of a particular fuel type. The lower the octane rating the more likely it is to ping because it will burn more quickly in reciprocating a piston engine before the piston has the time to move down the cylinder after the initial ignition. Hence, the need to put in some heavier molecules to slow down the rate of combustion so you eliminate the pinging, especially in high compression motors. However, I do not think I need to go into that because it is not germane to what this committee will be looking at.

I thought members might like to understand that methane—and there is no mystery in all this, it is pretty simple stuff—comes from underground reserves—and so does propane which also is a by-product of refining petroleum because it is there and it just comes out of solution. By the way, compressed natural gas per American gallon (unit volume) has 29 000 BTUs in it whereas ethanol has 80 400-odd BTUs per gallon. Ethanol is an alcohol (CH<sub>3</sub>C.OH) which has two carbon atoms and instead of there being six

hydrogens hanging off it one of the hydrogens has been knocked out and replaced with an OH (hydroxyl), which makes it alcohol.

Anyway, liquefied natural gas is methane that has been cooled to just over minus 143°C. Because it is denser as a result of its lower temperature at the time it was so made it has 73 500 BTUs per unit volume in its pure form. The liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG as we know it, as I said, is propane and that has 84 000 BTUs in it. Methanol, or wood alcohol, is ordinary methane that has had one of the hydrogen molecules knocked off it to make it CH<sub>3</sub> and an OH added in there, where the hydrogen was taken out, to make it alcohol, and that is white lightning, the stuff that will send you blind when you drink it—unless you are already blind, and I wonder sometimes whether some of the government ministers have not been on methanol, the sort of things they do, from time to time. They have certainly been on political methanol, anyway. But I will come back to the subject, Mr Deputy Speaker, if there is anything I can do to help.

I wanted that on the record so that members of the committee would take the trouble to work out just exactly what it is that is being put on sale and why the prices are being fixed in the way that they are. It is a sham and federal ministers that continue to cover up for the oil companies should be ashamed of themselves and, equally, so should journalists who fail to reveal the truth to the public, either because they can't or don't bother to try and understand it.

Time expired.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** I support a lot of the comments that have been made here today, particularly by my country colleagues, because it has been a real problem for us for many years, forever I guess: the cost of our fuel, the importance of our fuel to us and the fact that we are paying so much for it. I actually get an opportunity to study petrol prices because of the amount of travel that I do on the highways, particularly between here and Whyalla. It is interesting to note the difference in prices. As you go from Whyalla to Adelaide you do notice a lot of difference in prices. Even once you get to around about Two Wells, from there on there is a difference in prices at different service stations. They chop and change; some are higher and then further on they are lower, and so on. It is interesting to note those disparities.

Of course, when you go further north from Port Augusta or over to the west from Port Augusta there are incredible differences in the fuel prices in those areas. Whyalla at the moment is having a particularly rosy situation and a lot of local residents have talked about this considerably, because for the first time ever we are actually paying quite reasonable prices for our fuel, compared to the rest of the nation. In fact, a couple of weeks ago we were about 3¢ or 4¢ cheaper than Sydney prices, and we regularly seem to be 2¢ or 3¢ lower than Adelaide prices. So while everybody else is complaining about fuel prices we are actually very happy there at the moment because of the fact that we are paying a cheaper price than other people. We believe it is because of Liberty and also Woolworths that have moved in there and given the town some competition.

However, in the past we have always paid between about 5¢ and 10¢ more for our fuel, so we are not really expecting that this situation will last terribly much longer. In January I was over on the West Coast and I was shocked there to pay at one stage some 20¢ or more per litre for unleaded fuel than I had paid in Adelaide in the same week. So for people in those areas it is just a ridiculous situation for them. It is a real

issue for country people, as I said, and I know that it has started to restrict social life in a lot of those areas, because people cannot afford the fuel prices to travel the distances to see friends, sometimes 50 or 60 kilometres away. They really believe that they cannot do this as regularly as they have done in the past.

I know it has certainly become an issue for many of the volunteer organisations in those areas, where people volunteer their time and service, but it is at some cost to them and for those people who have very limited incomes they really now have to look very carefully at the volunteer work they are doing and the costs of that volunteer work if there is travel involved. Similarly with employment, it is restricting some employment opportunities for people who cannot afford to pay the fuel to go to their place of employment, whether it be just in the first instance or as an ongoing cost. So it is a major issue for people in country regions.

I have for a long time been interested in petrol prices and the variation in petrol prices because, as I said, once upon a time in Whyalla we were certainly paying between 5¢ and 10¢ a litre more than other places. It has been an ongoing problem for many years, this disparity in fuel prices. I would point out, though, that I know one of the issues that particularly affects country retailers is the volume of petrol that is sold, and they cannot possibly compete with those high flow service stations such as operate in Adelaide. That has to be taken into account when you look at the prices that are paid in country regions. Most of them do not go anywhere near the volume of fuel that is sold in a city outlet, and they cannot rely just on their petrol to make any money. They certainly have to look at other ways of making money from their service station. So I think that the committee really needs to keep that in mind when it is looking at this also, because there a huge disparity in volumes of petrol that are sold.

Freight costs have been mentioned. We have talked about freight costs. When you look at an average tanker, it carries about 50 000 litres. If you look at 1¢, 2¢ or 3¢ on that 50 000 litres, and some of the prices that are quoted, it just could not possibly be freight that is causing those increases in many of the country areas. I recently spoke to a researcher from the AAA in New South Wales, when there were a lot of reports about petrol prices and disparity in petrol prices, and I actually rang the AAA to see whether they had any idea what the reason for this was, why there was so much disparity in these prices. I spoke to a researcher who had done a considerable amount of work on this and he said he really had no idea what this disparity was all about. He certainly was not happy to venture any theories on this, although in reading between the lines I know he certainly felt that there were problems.

So I think the whole issue needs to be sorted out. I think that this committee will probably not make petrol prices any cheaper for a lot of us in the country and in the bush, but we may get some answers and we might be able to get some sanity into this issue.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I rise briefly to comment on this motion and to support it. A hung parliament is a wonderful thing, and perhaps that is why we are here supporting this motion. But I sincerely hope that some good will come of it. I note that the member for Gordon has selected the terms of reference fairly carefully. I am sure it will be an interesting exploration of the issues associated with fuel pricing. But I want to make a few commonsense points to the House before we proceed with a vote on the motion. We should all remind ourselves constantly that government

taxes are not the only cause for the high cost of fuel. Indeed, we are all aware that the price of crude oil, the exchange rate of the Australian dollar and refining, distribution and retailing margins go together with taxation in causing the price of fuel to be at the level it is at any given point in time.

There is this thing called OPEC and, as we know, OPEC controls over 40 per cent of the fuel market globally, and by constraining the supply of fuel it can simply cause the price to rise exponentially. Nothing that we can do as a government can really alter that absolute fact. Indeed, it has been perplexing governments around the globe for years. The reality is that we are at the mercy of the global market in respect of fuel, and that is the prime determinant of the price of fuel. Having recently returned from overseas, I remind the House that in the UK the price of fuel to the motorist is roughly three times, in real terms, greater than that to the Australian motorist. In fact, the price of fuel in most parts of the world is proportionately much higher than it is in Australia. Globally speaking, we are pretty well served by our fuel price: that does not help you if you are a farmer or if your livelihood depends on affordable fuel, and I am not suggesting for a moment that we should take that as cause not to do anything about the price of fuel. However, we should remind ourselves that governments alone will not be able to save the day totally for fuel consumers.

I am sure that the honourable gentleman who has moved this motion will not allow the inquiry to be used as a political tool by the Australian Labor Party with which to beat the state or federal governments. I am sure that the honourable gentleman will be very wary of advertisements such as the one that appeared in the *Advertiser* on 18 November placed by Senator Cook on behalf of the Australian Labor Party indicating that the ALP would be looking into petrol prices, and I note that the terms 'GST' and 'the impact of the GST' appear most liberally in the advertisement. I expect that the honourable gentleman will be ensuring that his well-intentioned motion does not simply result in a select committee with the purely political agenda of bashing the government around the ears. I know that he will ensure that the committee remains true to the primary focus of revealing to South Australians the machinations of how fuel price is derived, for their benefit and in the better interests of the state.

I am also surprised by the contribution of the member for Kaurua, who is opposition spokesperson on the environment, in that he failed to note one of the important costs associated with fuel usage, and that is the cost to the environment. I hope that the honourable gentleman who has proposed the motion will ensure that the committee considers that issue as one of the key issues in its terms of reference, because there is a significant cost to the environment from the use of fuel. It seems that Australians want two things: we want our environment protected and we want cheap fuel. Of course, the two are at loggerheads. I think that, ultimately, Australians, along with the rest of the global community, will need to recognise that there will be a use-by date on fossil fuels and that there will come a time when we, as a world community, can no longer afford to countenance the unbridled use of fossil fuels and that we must find alternative means of energy: our farms, factories and citizens will need to consider other ways to get about and do business. Fuel cell technology offers one prospect for the future but I also point to greater use of rail and sea as one way of reducing the heavy reliance in this country on interstate road travel and road freight, which not only causes considerable fuel demand but also leads to fatalities and considerable cost in terms of investment

in infrastructure. We need to start looking at alternatives to the petrol engine. I am very surprised that the opposition spokesperson for the environment did not at least mention that issue in his speech.

As I said, I hope that some good will come of this select committee and that it will not simply become a browbeating exercise in which the opposition leads the honourable member who has proposed the select committee by his ear down the road of bashing the government on the GST and its possible impact on fuel prices. This matter is far too important. People need to understand the machinations of how fuel prices are derived but, in doing so, we need to appreciate, in a commonsense way, that we are not badly off at the moment compared with some of our global partners in the world economy and that, although things could always be better, they are not as bad as they may seem.

The Prime Minister recently made a very brave decision to alter federal taxation in relation to fuel excise—an extremely brave decision. Of course, we know that the Prime Minister—and particularly the current Prime Minister—is always right in what he does. It was a very sound decision. I wonder, if I were Prime Minister, whether I would have been brave enough to make that decision, considering that the resultant loss in revenue to the taxpayers of Australia has been so substantial and that the benefits that would otherwise have been enabled in terms of road maintenance and infrastructure development will now probably no longer be possible, or certainly not be possible to the same extent. Our roads will now suffer and taxpayers' resources to address some key issues have been diminished. Again, it seems that Australians have a lot of ideas on how the money ought to be spent. We all want the money spent on our pet projects but, when it comes to paying taxes, whether it be fuel excise or some other form of tax, we do not want to pay tax. We cannot have our cake and eat it too.

I hope some good comes of the select committee and I entrust to the honourable member the important mission of ensuring that that good occurs and that the opposition does not abuse the select committee and make it a sham.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Gordon. If the member speaks, he closes the debate.

**Mr McEWEN (Gordon):** I reassure the member for Waite that I do not seek to cause the honourable member to be discombobulated. I thank all other members who have supported the motion for their support. I think it was captured most succinctly by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who simply said that the purpose is to seek a clear explanation of what is going on. We all deserve to know what is going on, and let us hope that this select committee casts some light on that.

Motion carried.

The House appointed a select committee consisting of Ms Breuer and Ms Hurley, and Messrs McEwen, Meier and Venning; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on Wednesday 25 July.

#### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 15 March. Page 1089.)

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** My position in relation to this bill introduced by the member for Fisher is that it is not strictly necessary. We need an improvement in the way that the Freedom of Information Act is administered, and I will give a couple of pertinent examples. The first that I can think of relates to a freedom of information request which I lodged concerning documents about an earlier freedom of information request which had been refused.

By that mechanism I got to see the correspondence between departments and officers concerning the original refusal. I have documentary proof that the freedom of information officer (as designated by law) was subject to political interference by the minister's office. I have that in black and white. That is what is happening at the moment: that is the way in which the act is being administered.

In another example I spoke personally to a freedom of information officer who was truly distraught that this person was not able to do her job properly, once again because her view of the matter, where she would have released documents, had, at a minister's request, gone to the minister's office and the message coming back from the minister's office was that this was unacceptable and that the determination should be altered in accordance with the wishes of the minister, as specified by the minister's chief of staff. In other words, it was a ruthlessly political demolition of the principles underpinning the Freedom of Information Act. That is the way in which the act is being used. When we have problems getting information, it is generally because of this political interference. The best thing we can do to make our Freedom of Information Act work is to keep to the principles concerned.

Another aspect concerns the resources of the Ombudsman's office in that some of the problems I have mentioned could, in theory, be remedied by the Ombudsman's office, but the fact is that the staff who particularly handle external reviews of freedom of information requests are absolutely snowed under. So, even though ultimately I will get the answers that I want to some questions I have of government agencies and ministers, the government ensures that, through lack of resources, the Ombudsman cannot do his office's job properly and so the opposition of the day is left in the dark.

In summary, the best thing we could do to get the FOI laws working is not so much to change them but to change the way in which they are being administered. I do not believe that will happen with the current government. Its track record shows the political ruthlessness with which it has used the FOI legislation to block information from being revealed to the public, and the only way to ensure that the act will be properly administered within the spirit from which it stemmed is to have a change of government, and I look forward to that.

**Mr MEIER** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### **WALSH, Mr CHARLIE**

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I move:

That this House congratulates Charlie Walsh OAM for his 20 years of service as national coach of the Australian track cycling team and thanks him for his work in Adelaide as head coach of the cycling program at the Australian Institute of Sport.

It is with great pleasure that I move this motion on behalf of the opposition. The motion is a very straightforward motion. In fact, it is so long ago that I gave notice of this motion to the House that I forget what I was going to say about it.

Nonetheless, I am sure that it was to be a very researched and considered speech.

The reason why I have moved this motion in respect of Charlie Walsh, in addition to his outstanding achievements over a 20 year period as national coach of the Australian track cycling team, and singled him out for special commendation, is quite clear cut. Even before the Olympic Games, Charlie Walsh foreshadowed that he would be retiring as Australian national coach of the track cycling team, and beyond the Sydney Olympics we have seen his retirement. All members of this House would share a great warmth for the outstanding work that Charlie Walsh has done for cycling and the enormous amount of effort that he has put into the Australian track cycling team as our national coach. The fact that cycling has been based in South Australia only but adds to our admiration for Charlie Walsh.

However, perhaps we should go back a step or two. I do not need to hold the House for a long period with this motion; I hope that it will get bipartisan support. A few members might like to make a few comments about Charlie Walsh, but I think we can deal with this motion relatively quickly today and move on. I draw the House's attention to a few significant events with respect to Charlie Walsh. Of course, we should not forget that he was a state cyclist. In fact, he was an allrounder, a very well reputed cyclist, who was not only successful in a couple of events but also well known for winning many state titles covering a broad range of track events. He was an allrounder, to say the least.

I think in the early 1960s Charlie Walsh turned professional. Cycling in those days was considerably different from what it is now. Today it does not matter whether one is a professional or an amateur with respect to representing Australia at the Commonwealth Games or Olympic Games, but back in the early 1960s it did make a significant difference. Suffice to say that Charlie was a very successful athlete in his own right. To the best of my knowledge, I do not think that he ever represented Australia, but I am not certain of that fact. I am sure that he was a state cyclist who had great success winning a range of titles in South Australia.

He had an attitude which he took into his coaching, particularly in his formative years as a coach, about the critical need for fitness and dedication or for applying every ounce of energy to compete at the highest level. We saw his development as a coach, which culminated in his becoming national coach in about 1983—maybe a little earlier. Certainly, he has been a coach of the Australian track cycling team for the past five Olympics. He has been enormously successful.

We should not underestimate the value that Charlie Walsh has brought to Australian cycling. He had one thing in his mind when he became the coach of the Australian national track cycling team and that was to make Australia the best in the world. That was his goal; that was his picture; and that is what he achieved. Charlie Walsh's one ambition in cycling was to make Australia the best in the world. I think there is little doubt that over a long time Australia has achieved that result. We are talking about a sport in Australia which has had to compete against nations such as France and Italy where cycling is the premier sport.

Obviously, we are seeing the boom times of cycling, but we have other sports in Australia which are readily identifiable as our national sports. Some people may have differing views on that, but we all know that sports such as Australian Rules Football, cricket, tennis, netball and basketball in latter years are more identifiable sports. Cycling has become a

sport with which we also identify very strongly. We have had to compete against great cycling nations such as France, Germany, Italy and various other cycling nations which have huge numbers of athletes and where huge amounts of expenditure are put into the sport. It has been no small task for us to become the best in the world, competing against great cycling nations of that magnitude.

Charlie Walsh was able to achieve Australia's becoming the best in the world. Under Charlie's tutelage we have achieved four gold medals while he has been coach of the Australian track cycling team. I think that members on both sides of the House and others beyond this House, not only in Australia but also internationally, would readily agree that Australia could have won many more gold models if it were not for the impact of drugs. Unfortunately, there has been the odd exception but, by and large, Australian track cycling has been clean of drugs. The same cannot be said for other nations. As I said, unfortunately, we have had the odd exception, but something which has been very much a part of Charlie Walsh's program is that drugs would not be a part of it—unlike what has occurred in other countries around the world.

In other sports where Australians have won silver or bronze, they have been knocked over by countries where drugs have been proven to be a major part of their program—not so in Australian track cycling. Charlie Walsh has made sure that Australian track cycling has been clean of drugs—and he is to be commended for that. We can be very proud of the cycling team. We can be very proud of the performances that Charlie Walsh has been able to bring to Australian track cycling. I think he has proven himself to be one most successful coaches in any sport world wide. He has been able to achieve very high standards and to lift the performance of Australian track cycling to make it the best in the world over a long time. When one looks at the really great coaches, no matter the sport, that is what they have been able to achieve. They have been able to put together a program which brings the athlete to the highest level and they have been able to sustain the program over a period of time.

In no small way we can be thankful for Charlie Walsh's efforts in cycling. At times I think he has been unfairly treated by his own sport. At times there has been controversy about his methods and some lack of recognition at an administrative level of some of the ways in which Charlie Walsh has gone about coaching at the highest level. We in South Australia should be very proud of Charlie Walsh who, as a South Australian, has taken cycling to the highest level not only in Australia but also world wide. He has been successful at the past five Olympic Games. Whether or not the team has won gold medals, it has been performing at the highest level and winning silver and bronze medals on a regular basis.

Our athletes have been able to achieve fantastic results while Charlie Walsh has been successful. Mike Turtur won a gold medal in 1984; I think in the Madison we won gold at the last Olympics; and Brett Aitken and Scott McGrory are also successful medallists. Charlie Walsh has been very much involved with another South Australian, Stewart O'Grady, of whom we all are proud.

As Charlie Walsh steps down from his chosen position as head coach of the Australian track cycling team, having achieved continuing and outstanding success over a long time, we should recognise that he made sure that cycling in South Australia was a part of the Australian Institute of Sport. We have seen the great success of that. We have seen a boom

in cycling Australia wide, but in South Australia it is recognised as a clean sport. We see cyclists regularly competing at the elite level and on a recreational basis, and we are the better for it as a state because of the efforts of Charlie Walsh.

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Bragg):** It is with pleasure that I rise to support the motion from the member for Lee. Charlie Walsh was a very special South Australian. He not only gave of his own life during his 20 years as coach but also encouraged a lot of young men and women to achieve at world class level. I think he also should be recognised as being a great South Australian in other areas. The sort of leadership that he gave to the sport of cycling spread right through all the other sports with which he was indirectly associated. He was a great coach at both the national and international level. As the member for Lee has said, the results at Olympic level speak for themselves.

One of the things that very few people know is that Charlie was also an excellent speaker, a marvellous raconteur and a person who was able in his presentations to tell his own life story and some of the things that happened during to him during races. He was a very interesting and marvellous speaker to have. As Minister for Recreation and Sport, I had dealings with him at a personal level, and he did nothing but encourage me to continue to make money available for our sports institute. When I was minister, he was always espousing to me, 'If you encourage people to work and perform at their best, a whole lot of other attributes come out with that achievement.'

As most members would be aware, the Australian Institute of Sport cycling division was located here in South Australia. That was entirely due—in my view, in any case—to the efforts of Charlie Walsh, and we as South Australians benefited significantly by having the National Institute of Sport in South Australia and, of course, that is also obvious in the area of cricket. To have the national institute in any state is very important. Charlie himself was a state and international rider. Whilst he was not deemed internationally to be of the very best, he was an excellent performer in the national arena.

A couple of areas were very special. Along with Neil Craig, he totally revolutionised the level of fitness required of cyclists when they competed at the national and international levels. It was not only in this area of fitness that he was able to lift our standard in Australia. There is absolutely no doubt that, because of the regimes that he and Neil Craig set, they lifted the fitness standards around the world. We could justifiably say that international cyclists are probably one of the fittest groups of athletes in any sport around the world. The efforts of both Charlie Walsh and Neil Craig lifted that level.

Charlie was also a disciplinarian, and that was one of the significant areas on which he worked with his athletes. On many occasions I remember his telling me that, if you aim to be the best, you have to work hard to achieve that. That is something that does not always happen with the best athletes: some of them have great goals, and they get there on a bit of natural ability. However, Charlie was able to take not only those who had natural ability to be the best but also those who were good athletes and make them the best in the world. It was because of this discipline and work ethic that he was able to get those results from athletes that few other super coaches would have been able to achieve.



The member for Lee also mentioned the issue of drugs. Charlie was totally opposed to drugs and complained to me—and I know he would complain to anyone else who wished to listen—that in sport at the international level the drug testing systems were nowhere near as good as they ought to be. He argued strongly that as an Australian group we ought to make sure that we get all our sports as drug free as possible. As I said earlier, he changed the attitude not only in cycling but also, again with Neil Craig, in many other sports, particularly football. There is no doubt that, when Neil Craig went to the Adelaide Crows as one of their sports directors, he took into the game of football a whole range of training regimes that cycling had experimented with and perfected.

Another person who was involved at the same time was Mick Nunan. He has now taken into horse racing those similar training regimes that they had tested and perfected at the cycling level. As I said earlier, because of Charlie Walsh's influence in insisting in getting the best training mechanisms, with the support of Neil Craig he has now been able to translate those training systems to at least two other sports—but in my view he has done so for many others.

There is no doubt that Charlie Walsh had an influence in the Tour Down Under. Whilst the Tour Down Under was specifically put together by Mike Turtur, the influence and support to encourage us as a state—and in particular Mike Turtur—to be part of the international touring system through our Tour Down Under came from the support of Charlie Walsh. As I said, he was a great South Australian. He is a personal friend of mine, and he is someone whom I am proud to say was a personal friend. I wish him well in his retirement as the national coach. I know that he will enjoy very much stepping back from the rigours of international coaching. On behalf of the Liberal party, and in particular the government, I wish him well. I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting this motion, because Charlie Walsh was a great South Australian.

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** I would also like to speak in support of this motion. Charlie and I raced together as cyclists, and fought out many sprint races over many years. Charlie was the best all-round track cyclist in South Australia—in fact, I would say in Australia. He won at least 50 or 60 state championships—no national titles that I can remember—as an amateur. As the member for Lee said, after Charlie turned professional in the early 1960s he won every professional championship in South Australia and many in Australia.

Charlie and I both coached together at state level, and we then parted company when I decided to come into this place as a member of Parliament. Charlie chose the other direction and continued coaching, and we all now know that he became the best coach in the world. In the early stages of coaching, Charlie was not a particularly technical person, but he was an extremely good motivator. I used to liken him to Ron Barassi from the Victorian Football League. He was a Ron Barassi/Neil Kerley type of person. He was a fabulous motivator, and that was his strength.

Over the years, Charlie progressed and, as the member for Bragg said, in cooperation with Neil Craig, Charlie became an absolutely complete coach on technical aspects and fitness—indeed the whole thing. He maintained his terrific attributes as a motivator. He has done a terrific job under very difficult circumstances. As members can imagine, it is a difficult job to discipline fit people who are the top of their sporting groups. Some of those people are prima donnas with

egos to satisfy, as well, and Charlie had that difficult task to perform, and he did it well.

As the member for Lee has outlined, Charlie's riders won an unprecedented number of medals at national, world, commonwealth and Olympic levels, and I doubt whether any coach in future will equal that record which Charlie holds. As I said, for some years now he has been recognised as the best track coach in the world. He played a major part in the development of young Stuart O'Grady, who was originally a track rider. He has progressed onto the road and now is a top Tour de France rider. At one stage, several years ago for about four months he was rated at No. 1 cyclist in the world.

Charlie had many chances to leave Australia and go overseas to coach other countries' cyclists. He was offered extremely big inducements, but Charlie remained loyal to Australia. He loved Australia, loved the cycling here and, above all, he loved living in Adelaide. He loves Adelaide, so he resisted all those chances to make a lot of money. He was fanatical in his approach. He demanded commitment and dedication, and was involved in several games selection issues—two of which went to the courts, I am disappointed to say. I think that this is an aspect that needs to be cleaned out of sport, where disputes in selection can be taken to the courts. One case I remember involved Kathy Watt, the Victorian Olympic cyclist. Kathy was a terrific cyclist who won gold medals in both road racing and pursuit racing on the track. She was a top rider in both, but her mistake was insisting on being selected to ride in both events at the one games.

Dawn Fraser entered into the dispute and she said that Kathy was right. With all due respect to Dawn Fraser, who was a fabulous swimmer—probably the best the country has ever produced—she knew nothing about cycling. Road and track cycling are altogether different: different machines are used and cyclists train differently. They cannot be done at the same time. If you train for the road then you race on the road: if you train for the track then you race on the track. Kathy had been training for the road and therefore did not have the speed in her legs for the track event. Charlie argued that she should be selected for the road event, which she was, but not for the pursuit because she would be some nine seconds off the pace over the pursuit distance.

The case was won in court. Kathy rode in the pursuit and was exactly nine seconds off the pace, as Charlie had said. Charlie was right and he should have been listened to. Charlie was a very tough and hard taskmaster and sometimes was controversial, which is quite often the case with top coaches. But, he got results. As I say, he became the best coach in the world. As has been mentioned by the member for Lee and the member for Bragg, he was very much anti drugs. Charlie disciplined his cyclists to train their bodies and get the best out of themselves without the use of drugs.

Charlie Walsh should be congratulated for his 20 years of service as National Coaching Director of the Australian Cycling Team. I thank him for that enormous contribution. It is a big loss to cycling and to the country, but our loss is possibly someone else's gain because it has been rumoured that he may be tempted to assist a developing country to raise their cycling standards. If Charlie does decide to do that I wish him well. I congratulate him on a job well done.

Motion carried.

## AMERICAN BOULEVARD

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I move:

That this House condemns the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs for inaction and failure to deal with the fraud perpetrated by the owner/entrepreneur known as American Boulevard for defrauding hundreds of young South Australians of the money they paid for his advertised concert featuring Xzibit, Likwit Crew and the Alkaholiks.

I thank the House for its indulgence in facilitating the debate of this matter at this time. I commend the government for using the time available today in a more constructive way than just to simply call it quits and go home when there are so many matters similar to this one which are causing angst in the wider community. It is not just the individuals in this instance that are at a loss but also the principle of what is involved that compels me to draw it to the attention of the House.

Mr Speaker, with your indulgence and that of the House I seek to amend the motion by adding:

'and calls on the commissioner to deal with the matter forthwith and, with the help of the South Australian Police, collect the relevant evidence, bring any relevant charges against the proprietor and procure a refund for the holders of any tickets to the said concert which did not occur'.

Leave granted.

**Mr LEWIS:** Today I rang officers in the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs not knowing that the opportunity to debate the matter would come on this evening. I was helped with an update by Margaret Phelps who pointed out to me that, notwithstanding the inquiries the commissioner's office had made, nothing had been done. Apparently the commissioner, she said, wrote a letter to the proprietor of American Boulevard and had had no reply. That is not just two, three, four or five months ago but is something over six months ago, and nothing has been done.

These kids—and I can call them that advisedly; they are not really kids they are young adults—saved their pocket money in many instances—and some are over the age of 18 and some are under—and paid \$35 to attend a concert which was to have been held in the St Pauls centre in Adelaide in January last year. The concert was never held and several of them have sent me their tickets—some of them known to each other and others not known to anybody else.

They had heard one of their number complain on talk-back radio that they had been ripped off by the proprietor of American Boulevard: he took their money, he promised the concert and did not deliver. As I understand it, when they confronted him he used as his excuse for not putting on the concert the fact that he had put on the back of the tickets—not on his advertising material I hasten to point out—that 'the ticket is sold on behalf of the organisation responsible for presenting this activity and subject to the conditions applicable to that activity and for the venue where presented'—and that is St Pauls. He also had on the back of the ticket, 'This ticket is valid only where purchased through an authorised agent. This ticket of admission is reserved. The right is reserved to vary/advertise artists and programs.' That is the sticking point.

The sod sticks it on his ticket but it was not on any of the advertisements nor was it disclosed at the point of sale: it is on the fine print on the back of the ticket. I am not that bad of eyesight, but by God you have to have good eyesight to be able to read this without a magnifying set of spectacles or a magnifying glass.

I am strongly of the view that the man needs to be tracked down and prosecuted, hence the reason for my desire—and I thank the House for its indulgence—to amend the proposition and include in that the recommendation from the

Consumer Affairs Commissioner and a reference from him to the South Australian Police to go and collect the relevant evidence and bring the relevant charges against the sod.

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs received a complaint. It was not I who first complained to him; it was some of these young people who went there, and they were told, 'Oh, too bad.' Well, I think that is outrageous. That is a straight out abuse of trust. We in South Australia believe that there has to be honesty and fair trading and that, if there is not, the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs is there to protect each of us little people from those who would otherwise unfairly exploit us, albeit perhaps within the law. My continued inquiries on this matter, though, bring me to the belief that it is probably against the law.

I will not prejudice a fair trial for the sod from American Boulevard, and whoever else aided and abetted him in this, by stating my strong opinion that he is guilty of a crime, but God you would need to be very forgiving in a situation such that he has taken the money, undertaken to put on a concert, has then never done so, and turned away the young people who bought those tickets, having pocketed the \$15 000 to \$18 000 that he collected. The tickets that I have number up to almost 500, so there have probably been 500 sold, and they are scattered through that range. I have tickets here from young people who live all over the suburbs of this city of Adelaide and some of them from the country.

This fellow has taken their money, undertaken to put on a concert and never put on that concert and, indeed, probably never had a contract with the American bands to which he drew attention when he advertised the show and which are mentioned on the tickets themselves, the names of which I have already given to the House: Xzibit, Likwit Crew and the Alkaholiks. He did say at some point last year that he would bring in a group and provide them with the opportunity to give the entertainment. Well, the group that came, apparently, were the Loonies. That is pretty much a down-market outfit. They were drunk at the time, if they were not high on other drugs, and nobody could understand them. Notwithstanding that fact, it was not the concert that was advertised and nor was it exclusive of the kind that the advertised concert was intended to be—in other words, you could get in even if you did not have a pre-paid ticket. However, on this occasion St Paul's was simply opened up to members of the general public who wanted to come that night, and it was a pretty weak show.

Altogether, I commend the proposition to the House. Surely no member of this chamber can stand by and see young people ripped off in this way and have nothing done to bring the perpetrator or perpetrators to book and make them accountable through the justice system for what has happened to the young people whose money has gone, wherever it has gone. If it can be recovered it ought to be recovered and paid back to them but, most important of all, we in this chamber should send out a strong message to the wider community and tell the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs not to allow this kind of thing to happen again, and in this instance to have the police investigate as well and prosecute the fellow, to prevent him from getting away with it as he has to date.

I hope all members note that I am not having a shot at ministers, either collectively or individually. I am simply saying as members of parliament please send the message to the law enforcement agencies that we have in our state, and a better message, even, to the young people who trust us to stand up for them when no-one else seems to.

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** I would like briefly to support the motion moved by the member for Hammond. I will not go into the aspects of it, because the member has done that quite well, except to say that it is an appalling situation that people should be allowed to get away with this sort of thing. The person should be brought to book, made to refund all that money to the young people and the people who have bought those tickets in good faith and, added to that, a gaol sentence, as far as I am concerned. And that should be done.

I have several times had extreme reservations about the job that those in Consumer Affairs do in this state. They do not seem to want to do a lot of things that, in my view, they are there to do, and I have had to push them sometimes to get some sort of action taken on things that come under their jurisdiction. I will not delay the House any further, except to say that the member for Hammond is right and I fully support his motion.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### LEGAL ASSISTANCE (RESTRAINED PROPERTY) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** I rise tonight to alert the House to problems confronting our Adelaide coastline and, in particular, the inadequacy of the government response to the problems that we are facing on our coastline. I was recently advised by the City of Onkaparinga that only \$65 000 is available from the Coastal Protection Board to councils for council initiated works, other than sand replenishment, for the whole of the metropolitan area. That is \$65 000 for all of the Adelaide coastline over a 12 month period. It is a pathetic and miserable amount. As I understand it, the formula is supposed to be on an 80/20 basis; that is, for every \$20 the council puts in to repair coastal areas, \$80 should be put in by the Coastal Protection Board.

Recently, the Onkaparinga council approached the board regarding two areas in my electorate that need urgent attention. They are coastline areas at Aldinga Beach and Witton Bluff at Port Noarlunga. The need at Witton Bluff is so great that the council has been told that, unless it takes action before winter to stop erosion, there could be a major collapse at that site. The cost of the repairs is estimated to be something of the order of \$500 000. The council has been searching desperately for the money and, in the meantime, has placed a three tonne limit on vehicles using the Esplanade at the point. The council approached the Coast Protection Board and was told that no funding was available for the current year and, although the council is facing a potential calamity—the coast might drop off at that point, the road at the Esplanade would be damaged and houses would be under threat—there is no money from the government to fix it. To make matters worse, of course, the government wants to cut council revenue to assist the Port Stanvac Oil Refinery, thus making it even more difficult for the council to find money

for this urgent work. There is no money for protection of this coast.

However, according to Minister Laidlaw on 13 March, the government was able to find \$2.2 million for sand management at Holdfast Shores and Adelaide beaches in the 2000-01 financial year and that includes a one-off cost of \$600 000 for sand transfer from Glenelg to West Beach, as was deemed necessary by the Coast Protection Board. Minister Laidlaw also said that an annual cost of \$1.5 million is likely to be necessary to maintain the artificial harbours created by the development at Glenelg and West Beach. That is a cost of \$1.5 million a year to transfer sand for two artificial harbours at Glenelg and West Beach, yet only a miserable \$65 000 is available for the rest of the coastline. I believe that indicates the incredibly poor priorities of this government. The coastline of Adelaide is one of our icons. Along with the River Torrens and the Adelaide Hills, the coastline is one of the major three natural icons that this great city of ours has, yet there is only a miserable \$65 000 to maintain it.

Unfortunately, no details of Coast Protection Board expenditure are contained in either the budget papers or the department's annual report. I received the information only from a letter from the Onkaparinga council. Recently, I inspected the West Beach area with the Labor candidate for Colton, Paul Caica, and the President of the Henley and Grange Residents Association, Mr Jim Douglas. We looked at a number of issues along that piece of coast, in particular, the state of the Barcoo Outlet, sand management in general, the West Beach harbour and the Glenelg harbour. All of these issues involve considerable difficulties and costs and have many associated unanswered questions.

The Barcoo Outlet, as members would know, is under construction at the moment, albeit facing some difficulties as a result of recent storm action. I understand that the Development Assessment Commission recommended that, before the pipeline was constructed, the Heathfield sewage treatment works should be upgraded and a number of downstream wetlands made operational so that, when the Barcoo Outlet is functioning, effluent from the Heathfield sewerage treatment works would not go out to sea. The wetlands at Morphettville Racecourse and Oaklands Park, in particular, are referred to. In the case of Oaklands Park, I understand that the matter has stalled because Minister Laidlaw is holding back access to this government-owned land hoping for a profitable sale to the private sector.

I understand that the Patawalonga Catchment Board is also keen to proceed but is hamstrung by a lack of resources and uncertainty about ownership. As members would know, the pipeline being constructed is shorter than originally intended but I assume it still costs \$16 million as first advised. Concerns have been expressed to me about the length of that pipeline and also about the channel that the pipeline will use. It has been alleged to me that that channel is being backfilled with soil dredged from the Patawalonga Lake, which is full of sulphates. I understand that this soil was dredged from the Patawalonga in about 1995 and piped into a holding pond on airport land, with a promise that it would be gone in about 12 months' time. I understand that it is still there and leaching into the Patawalonga Creek and also into the aquifer and is now being used as backfill for the pipe construction.

The remaining question in relation to the outlet is: what will happen to the outflow materials? There is a fear that, as the outlet is only 200 metres from the rock wall, the material as it flows through the Barcoo Outlet will move back into shore with the high tide. This is of particular concern to

residents, given the fact that the Heathfield sewage treatment works have not been upgraded and relatively poor quality water will go through that pipeline. There is great concern in the local community that beaches will be affected by this material which will make it unsafe for swimming. I am sure members know that that outflow from the Glenelg sewage treatment works pipeline has destroyed seagrass 1 500 metres or so offshore causing algal bloom and that there is concern that this extra pipeline will add to that misery.

At the Glenelg development itself I understand dredging has been going on continuously since July 1997 at a cost of millions of dollars. I gather, also, that sand build-up has been so great that it has been affecting access to car parking at the Holdfast Shores development. I am told that before Christmas something like 100 000 cubic metres of sand was moved by truck from south of the Glenelg groyne to north of the West Beach harbour and that half of this has already disappeared as a result of tidal movements, even though there was no storm in the period to some weeks ago when I met with the two gentlemen to whom I referred. The West Beach harbour itself has been dredged six to seven days a week since early December and I gather that something like 150 000 cubic metres of dredged material has been shifted at a cost of \$400 000 from 6 December to towards the end of February. Members will be aware of a recent problem with rotting seaweed and that the dredging operation was closed down for a number of days.

So, every aspect of that beach has problems. Silting and sand build-up occur at the Glenelg development itself. There is a bad smell of rotting material. In fact, the water is so stale that it has to be artificially aerated to get oxygen into it. At the Barcoo Outlet construction site there is concern about the material being used for backfill. There is concern that the effluent going through that pipeline will affect the beach, and we know that the harbour at West Beach silts up and has to be continually dredged to allow boats to use it. As I have said, Minister Laidlaw says that the ongoing cost will be something like \$1.5 million a year to maintain these facilities yet, on the other hand, there is only \$65 000 a year for the management of other coastal problems, including collapsing of cliffs in my electorate.

However, in addition to all these concerns, I have been contacted by the Adelaide Sailing Club and members have expressed a number of concerns about what is going on at West Beach and the local surrounds. They say that seaweed is a particular problem; there is a problem with the amount and persistence of seaweed, which impacts on the ability of sailors to get boats to the water. They have complained about the compaction of seaweed covered by sand, which is usually soft and poses difficulties getting boats in and out of the water, especially TS 16s, which are heavier boats.

There has been damage to the ramp at the end of the concrete slab caused by heavy earthmoving equipment used to relocate and cart sand. There has been damage to the lawned rigging area adjacent to the concrete slab and there is consequent pooling of water from rain run-off and washing down boats. There has been damage to the northern lawn through spillage from pipes and from the dredge as it removes sand from the basin. There has been damage to the bitumen roadway between the Sea Rescue Squadron and Adelaide Sailing Club. The club says that they are watching with interest the depth and useable width of the northern boat ramp on the western end, particularly at low tide. The inflow of seaweed and sand because of the basin size being reduced through lack of dredging in the vicinity of the northern sea

wall is a concern. They are also concerned about the current size of the pool of the basin that is navigable.

Time expired.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services):** I rise in this debate to congratulate the people and organisations involved in a project in part of my electorate following an event that I was privileged to attend only last Friday. I talk of the McLaren Vale Heritage Trail. The McLaren Vale Heritage Trail is a project that was funded to the tune of around \$55 000 by the federal government under its Federation Fund Project for the Centenary of Federation from 1901 to the year 2001. This heritage trail is a very important project because, through the Fleurieu Peninsula and the City of Onkaparinga, we have an opportunity to highlight what has happened over the previous 100 or 150 years in the way of growth and opportunities in the area in which we live and also an opportunity to register that history for future tourism growth.

Whilst the wine industry is an integral part of economic growth in our region, one thing that the government, local business, tourism associations, the City of Onkaparinga and, indeed, I as the local member have been trying to do—and I believe results in recent times show that we have been successful—is finding opportunities that can dovetail with the wine industry to create jobs and increase tourism growth.

I would like particularly to acknowledge some of the people who were involved in this project, because, as with most projects, they are successful as there is a huge element of volunteer support. I would like particularly to highlight the efforts of the McLaren Vale Main Street and Business Association and name some of the people who were on the subcommittee, namely, Ruth Baxendale, the local historian; Sandra Sharp, the local councillor; Luke Ritchie, who was also on the Prime Minister's round table and who is a great example of the sort of young people we have who are absolutely committed to our state and region; Rod Easling; Mike Pridham; Trevor Sharp; Jean Christie; Bill Hardy; Digby Pridmore; and Jim and John Ellis. Many other people were also involved in this project, and the support that the City of Onkaparinga had in the development of this project is to be commended. I know that the City of Onkaparinga, particularly since it has had an economic arm, is very focused on economic growth and tourism.

I, along with the federal member, David Cox, attended the occasion. To see what this heritage trail has come up with is something that really needs a lot of commendation by the community, and I would encourage colleagues in this House to look at what this trail has to offer. McLaren Vale was originally two towns and was founded about the time that my own ancestors came to South Australia in the 1840s, but really was developed properly in the 1850s. In fact, two of the traditional farming families, the Hewitt and Colton families from Devonshire, were the first settlers in about 1839. It is interesting to see the transition from mills and breweries to the situation now where cereal growing has almost gone for the whole of the Willunga basin and we are seeing a very intensive and world renowned wine region.

The other part of this heritage trail that is unique is the CD self-guided audio tour, which, hopefully, will be available in the visitors' centre at McLaren Vale in the near future and which will give people the opportunity to receive an education regarding the history of the trail as they walk through the township of McLaren Vale. I believe that there is an oppor-

tunity for this project to be expanded in the future to enable us to capitalise on a lot of other history not only in my own electorate—places such as Willunga and its history particularly involving slate dating back to the late 1830s—but also in the coastal towns such as Port Noarlunga—something with which I know my colleague the member for Kaurna would agree. Hopefully, in a bipartisan way, we can see some growth and opportunity for this concept develop as a feature for the whole of the city of the Onkaparinga and indeed into the greater Fleurieu Peninsula.

Given that grievance time for members is always short and precious, I will finish my comments on the McLaren Vale Heritage Trail, but again congratulate all those people for their efforts and support. I know that they will see lots of benefits for our immediate community, especially our young people (it is important that they understand the history of our region), and, as I said, for interstate, intrastate and overseas tourists.

The other issue on which I want to touch concerns young people and involves the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble. Last night a few members of parliament from the southern areas were able to attend the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble. I know that many members of this House have watched the growth of that theatre ensemble for some time. Last night, during the reporting processes of the AGM, it was superb to be advised that 100 young people from the south are involved in the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble, and that there is now a waiting list of people wanting to be involved.

One of the other important aspects highlighted last night was the fact that young people are taking their theatre productions from the southern region to Adelaide, so that they can broaden their opportunities and give people in the city of Adelaide the opportunity of understanding more about the arts, theatre and particularly about the calibre of young people whom we have in our region and who are heavily committed to theatre.

Of course, we all know how important theatre is to South Australia. Although we can look at the quality of the wine, things such as the Fleurieu Gold Food Trail which is being developed at the moment, the boutique bed and breakfast industry and the magnificent artists that we have in the south, we also need to highlight the opportunities for further development of theatre in the south. We should not have to come to Adelaide every time we want to see good theatre productions. I encourage all those involved in the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble to continue their great work and also encourage those who have been heavily involved for a long time in the development of the theatre concept at Port Noarlunga to continue to support and work with the young people.

It was also fantastic to have a young lady, Alyson Brown, an energetic and committed artistic director, highlight what she is doing to help bring out the best in young people involved in theatre and drama. The list of volunteers involved in the board of management goes on and on, but clearly you must have staff fully integrated and supported by the board of management, which was ably led by Neville Taylor last year. I encourage the new board to continue to grow those opportunities for not only those who want to be involved in the theatre but also for those of us who, when we get a chance, enjoy the odd night out in our own area and enjoy some great local productions.

Of course, talking about theatre, there is also an opportunity for those of us who may not be so young but who are interested in the arts and the theatre in the south, and in this respect I refer to the Southern Theatre and Arts Supporters and the chairperson in particular, Olive Reader, from Willunga, who has worked tirelessly to grow opportunities for all age groups in theatre and arts in the south. One of the great coups for that organisation was the opportunity for them to occupy Waverley Homestead, which, prior to the formation of the City of Onkaparinga, was the home of the Willunga council. I have attended some of their meetings as well, and it is fantastic to see the great diversity of events that they are holding at Waverley Homestead: they are looking at theatre and arts and are becoming heavily involved in art exhibitions and concerts.

I highlight a couple of examples such as the Gipsy Night and the Christmas concert with the Tea Rose Duo, as well as the soprano, Gaynor Meyer, who came along to support that function. It is also interesting to note the attendance at Waverley Homestead in the year 2000-01. Some solid growth has occurred in the number of people who are capitalising on the opportunity of getting behind this organisation to enjoy some of the great theatre and arts that are available in our region.

When members look at the work that the state government has been doing with people such as David Dridan and the Fleurieu biennale and the exposure which that is giving our region not only statewide and nationally but also internationally, it demonstrates that those types of events can underpin what so many people have to offer in our region.

Of course, whilst work, economic growth and generating a general strength in our region is still the most paramount thing we need to do as a government, council or anyone associated with economic growth, we also need to be able to enjoy the wonderful opportunities which we are so fortunate to have in our southern region, including its ambience and landscape.

Motion carried.

At 6.18 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 28 March at 2 p.m.