

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 2 May 2001

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

### FIREWORKS

Petitions signed by 416 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House ban the personal use of fireworks with the exception of authorised public displays, was presented by Mrs Geraghty and Mr Hanna.

Petitions received.

### HEARING COURSES

A petition signed by 939 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to increase the number of courses for the deaf and hard of hearing and remove the age restriction on current courses, was presented by Ms Hurley.

Petition received.

### CONTINENCE AIDS

A petition signed by 15 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to provide funding for the purchase of continence aids for children with disabilities, was presented by Ms Stevens.

Petition received.

### HOME INVASIONS

A petition signed by 16 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the government to increase prison sentences for persons convicted of robbery with violence of residential property, was presented by Ms Stevens.

Petition received.

### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** I bring up the 16th report of the committee and move:

That the report be received and read.

Motion carried.

**Mr CONDOUS:** I bring up the 17th report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

**Mr CONDOUS:** I bring up the 18th report of the committee and move:

That the report be received and read.

Motion carried.

### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

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

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move forthwith a motion without notice regarding censure of the Treasurer.

**The SPEAKER:** I have counted the House and, as an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the House is present, I accept the motion. Is it seconded?

**An honourable member:** Yes, sir.

**The SPEAKER:** Does any honourable member wish to speak in support of the motion?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I move:

That this House censures the Treasurer of the government of South Australia for—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I bring to the attention of the House that this is a procedural motion for the suspension of standing orders. It is not the substantive motion that will follow if this motion is successful. Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motion?

**Mr McEWEN (Gordon):** What we are facing right now is dirty pool, nothing more, nothing less. The opposition wants the Premier to find solutions to the power problem. The minute he leaves this chamber to set about doing that, they want to move a motion—

**Ms HURLEY:** I rise on a point of order. I do not believe that this relates to the substance of the motion for the suspension of standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I think that the member is trying to explain the reasons why the motion should not be supported.

**Mr McEWEN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am attempting to explain to the House why I will not be supporting a motion at this time to suspend standing orders to debate the motion that has been foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition. My reason for not supporting—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services will come to order.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. I remind members of the importance of this motion and the necessity to be present later for the vote if they want to be. The member for Gordon.

**Mr McEWEN:** I see this as an attempt to deny the Premier his democratic right to participate in a fundamental debate—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

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

**Mr McEWEN:** I see this as dirty pool because I think the Premier has the right to defend his team on any such motion. He is not in the House and I think that, to some degree, this reflects on the Leader of the Opposition. I see it as very poor judgment and I wonder how the leader feels, sitting there, facing an empty seat. I thought this battle—

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

**Mr McEWEN:** The fact remains that the Premier is not in the chamber, and this is nothing more than a denial of his democratic right.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr McEWEN:** This is dirty pool, pure and simple, and I will not be part of it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question before the chair is—

**Mr LEWIS:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I can take only one speaker on the other side and it must be the mover in reply.

**Mr LEWIS:** That is where my argument comes from, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair has ruled that it can accept a second speaker. The speaker would be on my left and it would be the mover speaking in reply. If the mover does not intend to speak in reply, I will put the motion.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Yesterday, we informed the Premier's office that we would grant the Premier a pair so that he could travel to Sydney after 4.30 this afternoon to attend a gala black tie party at Westfield Shopping Centres in Sydney. Later—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

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

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

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** —I granted him that pair. Still later, we received a letter in which unspecified meetings were indicated. This parliament has not sat for three weeks. Parliament is sitting for three days out of five weeks and the Premier, in the middle of an electricity crisis, is once again no more to be seen—last tango in Sydney! We are talking today not about a no-confidence motion that would bring down the Premier or his government, but about a motion of censure and urgency with respect to the Treasurer's role in the other house.

It is quite appropriate for us to make that decision to debate this issue. The Premier has been given a pair to be absent by the Independents. They made a pledge last night that they would not bring down the government. We are not asking them to bring down the government: we are simply having a debate about the role of the Treasurer of this state, about which the Independents said they were concerned.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order. The Minister for Water Resources.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I had always understood that it was discourteous to turn one's back on the chair and play to the gallery.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the leader has finished, the question before the chair is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided on the motion:

AYES (23)

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

NOES (22)

Armitage, M. H.	Brindal, M. K.
Brokenshire, R. L.	Brown, D. C.
Buckby, M. R.	Condous, S. G.
Evans, I. F.	Gunn, G. M.
Hall, J. L.	Hamilton-Smith, M. L.
Ingerson, G. A.	Kerin, R. G. (teller)
Kotz, D. C.	Matthew, W. A.

NOES (cont.)

Maywald, K. A.	McEwen, R. J.
Meier, E. J.	Penfold, E. M.
Scalzi, G.	Venning, I. H.
Williams, M. R.	Wotton, D. C.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are 23 ayes and 22 noes. Therefore, the motion lapses through want of an absolute majority.

Motion thus negatived.

## QUESTION TIME

### ELECTRICITY, PORTFOLIO

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Does the Acting Premier have absolute confidence in the Treasurer of South Australia Rob Lucas's continued role as electricity minister, or does he agree with the member for Chaffey, who told me on the telephone the other day that the Premier would be taking over electricity from now on and that the electricity minister would soon be removed from that portfolio?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** The Leader of the Opposition was obviously counting on his motion getting up because he does not have any questions ready. Of course, I have total confidence in the Treasurer. He has done a magnificent job since he has taken over, just as he did before with education. The electricity matter has been made very hard by a whole range of things. We have basically inherited the rules of the market, and they need looking at. Through the whole sale process, the Treasurer maximised the value of that asset to pay off much of the debt with which we were left—a legacy left to us. I have total confidence in the Treasurer for the job he has done as Treasurer and how he has handled this matter of electricity.

### DEMONSTRATIONS

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** Will the Minister for Police agree with me that violent demonstrations of any kind are to be condemned, and would he update the House on the success of the police operation in response to the so-called M1 protest yesterday?

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services):** I thank the honourable member for his question—and it would be a good idea if the member for Peake actually listened to the answer. First, I congratulate the South Australia Police on their fine effort, yet again, yesterday. The short answer to the honourable member's question is that neither I nor the police condone violent protests—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE:** Just listen to the answer. I know you have not got any questions over there today because of your stunt. You should write out a few questions while we answer, because you have not got any questions ready.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Will the minister come back to the reply.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE:** The fact is that no-one in South Australia wants to see violent protests and I am proud and pleased to say that there was no violent protest in South Australia yesterday. The South Australia Police are to be congratulated for the excellent way in which they went

about the job. Once again, it shows why I am so proud to be Minister for Police in this state, because we do have a first-class police force. Members only have to look across the border at Victoria to see the problems encountered by police there and compare that with the way in which problems are managed here in South Australia.

At 6 o'clock yesterday morning, 50 police officers were briefed on how to prepare for and handle the M1 protest. As a result of that, some 65 officers actually went to the Stock Exchange in the Santos Building to look at the grounds and work with the staff in the building and with the protesters to ensure it was a fair protest. In addition, I do not believe there was any inconvenience to the staff because of the police presence.

We have a commitment to police. This government is committed to police and this government is committed to law and order. I know that the member for Elder never likes to hear that the Liberals are committed to police—but that is the way it is. As the Premier has said, we are continuing to rebuild and to grow South Australia and to get, finally, a little bit of freedom. As we rebuild the South Australian budget, priorities for the Liberal government will be police, education and health.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Elder to order.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As we rebuild this state and as we get more money, we are putting money where it should go, and policing is an example.

**Mr CLARKE:** I rise on a point of order, sir. The minister is debating the question. What the minister is now talking about bears no relationship to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** The South Australian government is now putting \$330 million into police on a recurrent basis as against \$290 million when Labor was in power. On top of that, \$40 million worth of capital works for police is allocated at the moment—\$30 million in the CBD and \$10 million at Netley. By the middle of this year, an additional 113 police will have come out into the community which means that, on top of recruitment and taking attrition into account, we will have seen 450 police officers or thereabouts going through the academy in two years.

I know the Leader of the Opposition was on the media yesterday talking about South Australia being a Third World country. I think he was talking about when he was senior cabinet minister in charge back in the early 1990s and late 1980s. That is when we were headed towards being a Third World country. We are a No.1 state in a No.1 country and I would hope that the Leader of the Opposition would not be suggesting that the South Australia Police are a Third World police force—because they are a first-class police force.

That protest was managed very well. Law and order is about balance. To answer the member for Waite's question, we have a situation in this state where the government is tough on crime, does not condone violent protests and is tough in policing them. We have today more prisoners, I understand, in the prison system serving life sentences than at any other time in the history of this state. We have truth in sentencing and initiatives such as that which have been very good for South Australia when it comes to being tough on the community. We also have to be balanced in the way we manage our law and order. Talking about protesting and

about law and order, I had a phone call the other day from a constituent of the Leader of the Opposition. The person concerned told me that when they were in government in those bad days when they created a mess for South Australia, the leader said to this constituent, 'Be very careful about voting for a Liberal Government when it comes to law and order, because they'll be into hanging people. They'd be that tough; they'll be into hanging people.'

When it comes to situations involving protests and law and order, the government has shown that it is balanced in its approach and committed to the police, and that was proven in the way that protest was managed yesterday.

## ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** Is the Deputy Premier concerned with the submission today by Business SA that price increases among South Australian businesses are in fact ranging between 30 and 90 per cent and that independent economic studies undertaken by Business SA have shown that the economic and financial impact on our state could be as high as a \$600 million reduction in gross state product as a result of electricity price increases?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** As the Premier has stated several times, we are very concerned about the price increases facing the 2 800 businesses that are up for contract at the moment. The member quotes 30 to 90 per cent, the figures that have appeared in the media. There is no doubt that a lot of the 2 800 companies are facing rises of some magnitude. Having looked at the situation involving a couple of companies that have approached me, I have found that a couple of things have not become clear in the debate. With one I was looking at the other day, certainly in the first year for on peak power the rise was of the order of 30 per cent, but for off peak there was a small decrease and when you took into account the fact that this business uses 65 per cent of its power off peak, it averaged out at a 12 per cent increase in the first year.

**Mr Foley:** They're lucky.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** They are lucky. It was 12 per cent in the first year, but when you look at years two to five, which have not been mentioned often, certainly in this contract and I believe in many others, you see that the price offered for years two, three, four and five is a significant reduction on year one. If you look at the power price over five years, yes, there is a rise and we are concerned about that. One thing that has not become publicly obvious is that, whilst the rises in the first year vary from a small increase up to, as the member said, about 90 per cent, one must take into account on peak and off peak and what is paid in the other years. Although it is still a burden on business—and many businesses will feel it harder than will others—the whole story has not always been told.

Yes, we are concerned, and that is why the Premier is where he is today. He is asking for a revisit of some of the rules. We are asking the ACCC to look at it. We are trying to talk to AGL, but of course it is not just AGL, which is the retailer: sitting behind AGL are the generators, the transmission and whatever else. It has been simplified to some extent. However, we are concerned, as 2 800 businesses is a lot of businesses, and it means that a lot do not become contestable at the moment; but we are concerned and want to work through some of those issues. The figure I have seen quoted from work done on the back of an envelope seems extremely

high, but I do not think anyone has the answer on what the total cost to the state would be.

### EMPLOYMENT

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Will the Minister for Employment and Training inform the House on the latest employment figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Employment and Training):** I thank the member for Colton for his question and for his continuing interest in employment in this state. The latest seasonally adjusted ABS figures for March 2001 showed that South Australia had an unemployment rate of 7.2 per cent. Having passed Tasmania and Queensland some months ago, this rate means that we have now caught up with Western Australia, regarded in recent years as an economic powerhouse. These are very good figures and, matched with the latest overseas exports from South Australia, which show that we have had a 40 per cent rise—the member for Hart is not here to hear 40 per cent—in our exports in the year to February as against 13 per cent nationally—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The member for Ross Smith's participation rate is certainly the highest in this chamber.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ross Smith does not need encouragement.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:**—one would think that members opposite would be talking up our state. That would indeed be a fine and bipartisan thing. Instead, we have the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hart running down the state at any and every opportunity, making outrageous claims such as that this state is akin to a Third World nation. What kind of nonsense is this, and how can the leader sit in this chamber, face the people of South Australia and say—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The honourable member says that the Leader of the Opposition turns up at question time! His seat is more characterised as being empty than being occupied, without doing his latest little stunt.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! the member for Peake will come back to order.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** Not only is the so-called leadership opposite debasing this state but also it is debasing every South Australian who is actually working hard to rebuild the place. The allegation that South Australia is akin to a Third World nation is, in fact, demeaning to countries that are really trying to do what is necessary to build to our levels. If the honourable member opposite agrees that this is a Third World nation, let her stand here and say it, and let her apologise to those countries in Africa, South America and all over the world that are trying desperately to enjoy the type of lifestyle and privileges that we in this nation enjoy. I honestly would have thought better of her: I thought that she had a social conscience.

The Leader of the Opposition last week gave an extensive interview on 5CK in Port Pirie. I do not know whether it was the location, but he clearly suffered a selective memory loss. The Leader of the Opposition walked down memory lane, and said that he came to South Australia to be Don Dunstan's—

**Mr CLARKE:** On a point of order, I refer to standing order 98, in so far as the minister is not answering the question that was directed to him. He is supposed to answer the substance of the question and not engage in argument, as he has been doing for about the last five minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair does not agree that he has been engaged in it for that length of time, but I would bring the minister back to the substance of his reply now. Has the minister completed his answer?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I was actually expanding on the point that we have an unemployment rate of 7.2 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition said this:

Don taught me one thing I think more important than anything: that a small state like ours can aspire to lead rather than follow.

In that, Don Dunstan was correct. The problem is that there are not enough South Australians who aspire to make this state different and to lead us down the track of continuing employment. The Leader of the Opposition certainly has not learnt from his political master. Since he has been here he has done nothing to help the unemployment rate. All he has done is publish a veritable forest of media releases. He has certainly helped the newspaper industry. He has certainly helped the pulp mill industry in the South-East, but that is about his sole contribution to employment.

**Mr CLARKE:** On a point of order, sir, you allowed the minister some latitude, but this is beyond the pale. I would like to purchase the long bow on which he is drawing this one!

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

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** Especially important in the trend for continuing employment are, of course, our education records. The Leader of the Opposition told 5CK, 'In 1992, when I was Minister for Further Education, 93 per cent of kids completed year 12.' What he did not tell 5CK listeners was that he was also minister for unemployment. He gave kids no option but to remain at school because the unemployment rate for youth was then 43 per cent.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, you are now starting to stray into political debate. I bring you back to the substance of your reply.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I will get right back to the point. The jobless rate for youth as we speak is 22 per cent, and that is one of the lowest in the nation. Ten years ago, John Dawkins took somebody to task for holding up federal funds for training unemployed young people. The person taken to task by the Labor minister John Dawkins 10 years ago was the Leader of the Opposition.

In fact, South Australian businesses are creating jobs and reflecting an air of renewed confidence in the way the government is running the state. I want to give a few examples. For the member for Finnis, the Langhorne Creek Grape Wine Growers Association has forecast that another 600 employees will be required in his electorate over the next few months. I am still waiting for the member for Mitchell to thank this government for the fact that last month Mitsubishi announced that it will begin hiring 300 employees as it gears up for the 5 500 Diamantina-badged Magnas in the US deal worth—

**Mr CLARKE:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Under standing order 98, this is a complete travesty of question time. He has strayed well past the point of answering the nub of the question which is the point behind standing order 98.

It is either enforced or it is not, and if it is not, let everyone know that it is—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member well knows that the chair cannot put words into the minister's mouth. As long as the minister keeps providing facts to the House, the chair is powerless to pull him up. I can say to the minister and others that ministerial statements are available to them, but as far as a point of order and an interpretation of the standing order go, the minister is master of his own words. The minister.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** With respect to the member for Giles, there are 160 extra jobs coming out of the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. As to the member for Flinders, another 100 jobs have been created in the oyster growing industry, and in the Premier's electorate, Jurlique (a cosmetics manufacturer, for the benefit of the member for Ross Smith—and I would recommend the products to him) is expanding from 140 to 200. I could go on but I will not, in view of the fact that the Opposition verges on discourtesy to the chair.

### ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Given the government's strong support for electricity privatisation, was the government's own electricity industry regulator, Lew Owens, wrong to say that privatisation had actually reduced the state's ability to cushion customers against price volatility in the national market?

Mr Owens stated in a media interview that New South Wales had cushioned customers because 'they own both the generators and the retailers and have set up a de facto scheme.' Mr Owens went on to say that 'New South Wales has more options than South Australia as it continues to own its electricity system.' Of course, it was this government that welcomed the decision to end talks over Riverlink.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The leader is now starting to comment.

*The Hon. M.H. Armitage interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Government Enterprises will come back to order.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition because, as with the last question, there are some myths floating around about what is happening interstate and what is happening here. Certainly, what people are led to believe about what is happening in New South Wales and other eastern states as to prices is just not correct. There is not just anecdotal evidence but real evidence of price rises in New South Wales.

Two examples that we have come across over the last couple of days are, first, a New South Wales utility company that has a 100 per cent price increase on peak and, secondly, a food company with a 62 per cent price increase on peak. Not only are these companies government owned: it is a Labor government as well. In Victoria we also see a 97 per cent increase for a manufacturing company and a 59 per cent increase for a transport company.

The basis of the Leader of the Opposition's question involved privatisation and how that provides an opportunity to cushion against price rises. With government ownership, the only way to provide a cushion is to subsidise. It is basically to use—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Elder a second time, and I warn the member for Hartley.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The issue comes down to the fact that, in a national electricity market which is commercially driven, what has been claimed about New South Wales and price rises is incorrect. If a government wants to use the fact that it owns the electricity utility to bring prices down, that is a cost to that utility, which is a cost to the owner of that utility, namely, the government. The other issue relevant to this matter is that what we have seen in New South Wales and Queensland—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** —and the member ought to listen instead of shaking his head—are substantial losses made by the government owned electricity utilities—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** This means that not only is there is a risk of subsidisation, but there is also the risk of massive losses. So, to say that government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hart has already been warned once. I caution the direction he is taking.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** There has been a lot of confusion between the issues of privatisation and the issues of the market, and I think that people ought to understand that they are separate issues and, despite the efforts of the opposition to cloud the two, people should differentiate and look at what the real power of government is and the risks that the government in New South Wales actually bears.

### EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Can the minister provide an update on advances made by this government in key areas of education and the opportunities these have given South Australians?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I thank the member for Hartley for this question. I know of his deep interest not only as an ex-teacher but also in the education areas of his electorate. I am pleased to be able to talk about the successes of education because clearly the Leader of the Opposition is still confused.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a point of order. The member for Taylor.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to a question from the Hon. Mr Wotton on 5 April which was, 'Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise the House of some of the many achievements made by his department in public education?', etc. It is exactly the same question.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair will have a look at that question and I will come back to it if necessary. I call the honourable member for Hart.

### ELECTRICITY, PRICE

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** My question is again directed to the Deputy Premier. Is the Deputy Premier aware of the views of the Independent Electricity Regulator, Mr Lew Owens, that the Premier's attempts to convince AGL to defer electricity price rises from 1 July this year would be likely to place the government at risk of legal action by the private generators? What legal advice did the government receive on this matter prior to the Premier jetting off to Sydney this morning?

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I think there is a bit of misinterpretation of what the Premier is doing. Of course—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Well, AGL are not going to defer the price until later and not take into account what they can do with the generators. They are a commercial company. So, that will look after itself.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** The question is somewhat misleading, and it is not the first misleading thing that has been said here today. I think everyone would agree with me that the member for Hart said earlier that Business SA said it would cost up to \$600 million a year. I was pretty sure that is what he said. What Business SA actually said was \$200 million a year. Based on what Business SA was saying—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:**—there were average price rises of 10 per cent to 30 per cent. The member for Hart said that it is up to 90 per cent and, if that is extrapolated, suddenly it is \$600 million.

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr FOLEY:** I would not want the Deputy Premier to inadvertently mislead parliament. I ask that he read the transcript of the Economic and Finance Committee.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat immediately. That is a frivolous point of order. He is perilously close to being named for making a frivolous point of order.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Business SA was saying \$200 million a year, the member for Hart was saying \$600 million, and the General Manager of Policy for Business SA has been on radio correcting what the member for Hart is saying: basically that the member for Hart and the committee have seized on the 90 per cent and extrapolated from what he said to come up with the \$600 million figure. As I said at the time, the \$600 million is way ahead of any of the figures that have been put to me, and even the \$200 million, we believe, might be at the upper end of the range. Once again, the member for Hart has got it wrong.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! As to the question asked by the member for Hartley, I have examined the record and I am of the belief that it is the same question. I pass the call to the member for MacKillop.

## HOSPITALS, COUNTRY

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** Will the Minister for Human Services inform the House whether the government has made a commitment not to close any publicly funded hospitals in country South Australia?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** Yes, this government has made a commitment. In fact, it was a commitment that I gave as Leader of the Opposition in 1993. We have upheld that commitment throughout. We have diversified our 65 country hospitals from being just acute care services very much into nursing home accommodation, hostel accommodation, day care for aged people within the community, and community care.

Because of that diversification and enlargement of our country hospitals, we have been able to maintain, and actually increase, the number of local GPs within those country communities. If ever there was something that has helped glue those country communities together, it is the fact that the local hospital has remained with this broader range of services.

I contrast that to what Labor did prior to the Liberals coming to government at the end of 1993. It closed the Minlaton Hospital and the Blyth Hospital. It also closed the acute care services at the Tailem Bend and Laura hospitals. So, it was Labor that closed country hospitals.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I would like to know whether there is a commitment from Labor not to close country hospitals in South Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the members for Stuart and Schubert.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I would like a commitment from the Labor Party that it will not close any of the 65 country hospitals in South Australia. I highlight that because I read a transcript of what the Leader of the Opposition said on 5CK on 24 April and no commitment at all was given by him not to close country hospitals in South Australia. He said that he would not privatise any country hospitals—

**The Hon. G.A. Ingerson:** What does that mean?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** That does not mean much at all. If you are going to close them you are going to close them. Labor's previous record, effectively, was to close four hospitals. I would like to have a clear statement for the people of South Australia, particularly people living in country South Australia, as to whether or not Labor will close any country hospitals. I also noticed in the same transcript that the Leader of the Opposition believes that health care in South Australia is that of a Third World country. I point out that when one compares South Australia's health care with respect to issues such as five year survival rates from breast, colon and lung cancers with the survival rates from the best countries around the world, we come out—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Elizabeth and I warn the member for Bragg for the second time.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** When one does an international comparison on such issues one discovers that the South Australian health care system is regarded, probably, as leading that of many countries in the world. Our standards of health care are particularly high. They certainly are not Third World, as claimed by the Leader of the Opposition.

## TAFE RENTAL

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Under the government's plans to corporatise our TAFE system, how much rental will the government force TAFE institutes to pay to the government, and what effect will this have on TAFE fees, given that they are already so very high? Documents on the Department of Education's web site state that the TAFE institutes will be corporatised in the name of national competition policy and to eliminate any 'resource distortions arising out of public ownership of TAFE institutes'. The web site also states that those institutes will be required to lease their publicly owned land and buildings from the government.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Education and Children's Services.

**Ms Stevens:** Answer this one.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I am very happy to answer this question because this drive for corporatisation has come from TAFE institute directors themselves. In fact, when the proposal was released, the member for Taylor knew nothing about it, so how much does she keep in contact, I ask members, with her TAFE institutes? This initiative follows on from the success of Partnerships 21. The flexibility that our TAFE institutes are now asking for is the same as that given to our schools with P21. They want the decisions to be made at the local level. They want to be able to adapt to their marketplace and to construct their particular programs with reference to their own marketplace. They are driving this.

This bill is now available for public consultation until 11 May. The public is invited to make submissions and I invite the member for Taylor to make a submission as part of that consultation process.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Taylor.

*Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Taylor.

**Ms WHITE:** I asked: how much rental will the government ask those institutes to pay?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member knows full well that there is no point of order. The Minister for Education.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The directors of all TAFE institutes are in favour of this direction of corporatisation. They recognise the benefits of being able to make their own decisions at their own local institute base. They can ensure that they meet the demand of their own markets, without being directed by the bureaucracy, and make their own decisions as corporate bodies. As I have said, the matter is now open to public submissions on this bill, and I invite the public to make those submissions. It is open until 11 May, and the government will, of course, assess those submissions prior to a bill coming into this House.

## SCHOOLS, MANAGEMENT

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise the House on the participation rates in schools and the acceptance rates of local schools management?

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I refer to standing order 400, referring to 'Motion for suspension with notice', which provides:

When a motion for the suspension of any standing or sessional order or orders appears on the *Notice Paper*, that motion may be carried by the majority of voices.

It does not provide for an absolute majority. I contend that the motion for suspension of standing orders to debate a motion for which the leader gave notice does not require an absolute majority to be successful.

**Mr Scalzi:** What's that got to do with my question?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair will make two points. First, the honourable member had an opportunity at the time to take a point of order.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Is the member for Spence reflecting on the chair? I caution him. Secondly, the green paper is just a daily notice: it is not the official *Notice Paper*. There is a vast difference between the green paper which is given to members as a guide and the official *Notice Paper* that comes out as a publication.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr CONLON:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. So that one does not make a mistake in future, Mr Speaker, can you explain how under the standing orders it is necessary to take the point of order absolutely immediately upon a ruling of the chair? I am confused by that, and I would seek your guidance on it.

**The SPEAKER:** I refer the honourable member to Erskine May, the document which has been the reference point for this chamber for many years. It has been a practice of the House that a point of order be taken at the time. I have used my words. If the member checks *Hansard*, he will see that the member may have taken a point of order there. The green sheet is only a daily guide, whereas the *Notice Paper* is quite different. I call the Minister for Education and Children's Services.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I thank the member for Hartley again for his question. It has given me some extra time to think about it. Indeed, we could repeat the same question, because the achievements in education over a long period, the last seven years, are so great that it would take two question times to be able to get all those achievements across. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition is still confused about education, as a recent radio interview revealed. He asked listeners of that radio station to judge how Labor had handled education in 1993 and how it is now. Let me tell the House how it is now. As I said, this government has been one of rapid step change. We have achieved massive success in seven short years. We have had significant monuments to mark our progress, unlike Labor, which was in office during the 1980s—indeed, for 11 years—a period concerning which one might ask: what monuments came out of that? I would say 'None.'

The member for Hartley raised the matter of participation rates in South Australia. The House may not be aware that 95 per cent of our 17 year olds are either in schools or undertaking tertiary education, or they are employed. Vocational education has grown significantly. As I have mentioned in this House before, in 1997 there were some 1 500 students involved, and that demonstrates a 900 per cent growth between 1997 and 2000. Now over 15 000 students undertake vocational education training.

Let us look a little closer at participation rates because the opposition conveniently forgets to give the public all the facts about participation rates. The Australian Bureau of Statistics does not take into account in its calculation of retention rates the fact that students who do not attend full-time are not included in the figures. The fact is that 24 per cent of our students in South Australia attend school on a part-time basis, so they are not included in the calculation of a retention rate. The Leader of the Opposition conveniently forgets that in 1992 (as the Minister for Employment said just a few minutes ago) youth unemployment sat at 43 per cent: it is now 22 per cent. Is it any wonder that our young people are leaving school to go out to get jobs that are actually there? The leader also conveniently forgets that in 1992 there was a change to the South Australian Certificate of Education. Following 1992, a student could undertake the SACE

certificate over two years. Because of the high youth unemployment rates under the Labor government, under the Leader of the Opposition at that time, many students obviously chose to come back for the second year to increase their chances of getting into tertiary education by improving their score in the year 12 certificate.

One day soon I will bring into this House for insertion in *Hansard* the graph that was produced by the ABS showing a very sharp apex in 1992, when 90-odd per cent of our students were retained in year 12. After 1992 that graph significantly decreases at a very sharp rate back to around the level that it is now and that it was before 1992. The opposition is very selective about retention rates, but the important fact is that 95 per cent of our 17 year olds are either at school, a tertiary education or TAFE institute, or in employment. I suggest that that is a very good record. Labor gave these young people no choices. The fact is that there was 43 per cent youth unemployment. The only choice was to stay at school. There was not a job, so why leave school? It is fairly obvious to me.

In addition, one of the things that is helping our education system is Partnerships 21. It is tailor-made for each school to be able to improve the outcomes for the students at those schools. That, along with vocational education training, is ensuring that our young people will stay at school, that they will stay connected. Prior to leaving school they will be able to get some skills, which will be recognised by their employers down the track, and to get skills in the area of vocation in which they are interested. They do not have to follow the strict academic line that was offered to them under Labor.

We must remember that it was the Labor government in 1991 that closed Goodwood Technical High School and allowed no options for young people to move elsewhere. Is it any wonder that the graph went up to 91 or 92 per cent at the end of 1991? Young people had no choice but to stay at school because they could not go to a trades school to learn some trades to get themselves involved in industry. This, by its success, is showing that young people are taking this up with fervour. Local school management is ensuring that the flexibility that our schools desire is being kept there and ensuring that schools can work with employers, with industry and their community to get the best outcomes for the young people in their community. In addition, we have reviewed the Education Act after 25 years. This was a 1972 act and one could ask what the Labor Party was doing for 25 years.

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

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** It does: it goes back to Don Dunstan's years. What was the Labor Party doing for 20 years in not opening up this act, actually modernising it and ensuring that our education system moved forward?

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

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** They were doing nothing, absolutely. We have made major change. The leader's only consultation in all of this was to phone a friend in New Zealand. He should have asked his audience, like we did. He might even have done better had he done a 50-50 split and seen what the best choice was. With only one lifeline left, he will never make the winner's chair.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** Once again South Australia is leading the nation in the development of new and better ways to provide the services and outcomes expected by our community. This has been recognised by the commonwealth government with the announcement by the federal Minister for Local Government, Senior Ian Macdonald, of a grant from the local government incentive program for South Australia's state and local government partnerships program. The \$100 000 grant will contribute to improved planning, coordination and delivery of services in South Australia. Both the National Office of Local Government and the federal minister have recognised the South Australian partnerships program to be of national significance.

The \$100 000 grant will go towards three major projects under the auspices of the state and local government partnerships program. First, a roads infrastructure database is to be established to enable local government to maximise roads funding, utilising reliable strategic information. The project recognises the importance of reliable strategic data to enable early detection of changing traffic patterns so that local communities and the state can plan accordingly and maximise road funding to its greatest economic potential. In the immediate future the project will enhance the effective and strategic allocation by councils of the Roads to Recovery funding and help in the coordination of links with other road funding sources.

The second partnerships project to benefit from this federal grant relates to finding solutions to work force accommodation in our state's rural areas. Work undertaken by the Office of Regional Development last year highlighted a failure by the housing market to provide affordable work force housing in many of our regional areas. These areas of our state are experiencing rapid economic and employment growth, but the supply of adequate housing stock has not kept up with the demand. This partnership project will explore and document best practice examples in which local government has taken a leadership role, in partnership with state and federal governments, business and their communities, to develop work force housing in those areas where demand is outpacing supply.

The project is to identify ways to attract private sector involvement, the style and type of work force accommodation options and innovative solutions to overcome the impediments to regional economic and employment growth caused by insufficient housing. The third of the partnership projects to benefit from the federal grant is geared to improving local government outcomes for Aboriginal people. This is an important initiative within the reconciliation process and was identified within the 'Local councils belong to Aboriginal people too' report compiled by the Local Government Association with the support of the state government.

The project aims to increase awareness about local government and its election processes specifically among Aboriginal people and communities. In the longer term it will seek to increase Aboriginal voter turnout and attract and inform potential candidates in local government. All three of these projects are under the framework of the State and Local Government Partnerships Program, which is the third phase of the reform process initiated by this Liberal government.



I am pleased to acknowledge the strong support and assistance of the Local Government Association and its President Brian Hurn, our partners in this program. Nationally recognised for its significance, the State and Local Government Partnerships Program is the ideal vehicle to coordinate and improve service provision and outcomes for the people of South Australia.

### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Today we saw an extraordinary move by the government to gag the opposition on an issue of central importance to businesses and the people of this state. It was very interesting to see that two of the Independents, the member for Chaffey and the member for Gordon, despite all their weasel words last week (when they said that the Treasurer had to go, in terms of his job as electricity minister), were not even prepared to allow a debate of censure.

Let me point out a few constitutional niceties to the government, which obviously believes that its Deputy Premier, its acting Premier, is not competent enough to manage a censure motion in this House.

**Mr VENNING:** On a point of order, is the member reflecting on a vote of the House?

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

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** We advised the government two hours before, within the necessary time of a censure motion. It knew that there was no no-confidence motion. We would not move a no-confidence motion in the government while the Premier was not here. We would not do that. We would not move a no-confidence motion in a minister; we would not move a no-confidence motion that would bring down the government and cause an election. Today there were two opportunities for a debate on an issue that is serious for this state.

The first is an urgency motion, which requires one hour's notice. Secondly, there is a censure motion that does not, if passed, cause the resignation or the fall of the government, the fall of the Premier or the fall of the minister. It is a way of expressing concern. Yet the two members for the Riverland and the South-East, who trumpeted their concerns about electricity and the damage it was causing to irrigators and their families in their electorate, decided to break the precedent and not even allow the debate to occur.

What a sign of a government that cannot cope under pressure—a government that will not even allow a debate on an issue of importance to this state! It is interesting that this government does not like parliament to sit. This government does not like to be accountable. This government does not like to have scrutiny or to answer questions. This government prefers to cover up, dodge and weave.

Yesterday, the Premier of this state was granted a pair to be out of this House from 4.30 onwards today to attend a champagne party for Westfield in Sydney. He was granted the pair because it was implicit that he would be here for Question Time. But then they briefed the media that he would not be allowed to go and have these important talks with AGL.

I am signalling these things today. When we put on the table that COAG should deal with electricity as its number one issue, about pricing and about interconnection, only after we raised that idea did the Premier decide to agree to support it and write to the Prime Minister. Then we raised the idea of a standing ministerial council on electricity to supervise the

national electricity market and, of course, the Premier then decided to support it.

Well, we ask the government today to immediately enter into negotiations with the Premier of New South Wales and the New South Wales electricity minister to start talks about interconnection. That is what is crucial to this state. That is why the national electricity market is not working: because this government chose to stop interconnection in preference to privatisation.

I will say this today. We will be moving the same motion tomorrow and again putting the acid on the member for Chaffey and the member for Gordon. Unless the normal traditions and forms of this House are observed, there will be no more pairs for ministers until the election.

#### **The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education and Children's Services):**

Time and again I hear my colleagues on this side of the House despairingly exclaim, 'Wrong, wrong, wrong,' and they are forced to do this in response to often ill-advised, poorly informed, and sometimes half-baked utterances heard in this place. A classic example of this inadequacy occurred in this place only recently, because two weeks ago the member for Giles alleged that I condoned and promoted discrimination and racism. I take great personal umbrage at this and other comments made by the honourable member. In those comments, the member stated:

This Minister for Education and Children's Services condones and promotes some of the worst racism and discrimination I have seen.

The member asserts that racism is alive and well and that I preside over it—that I somehow encourage and allow its continuation. Because I apparently do not build multimillion dollar facilities at every location across the state when the member wants them, she alleges that I allow racism. Because there are in South Australia communities that do have less than adequate facilities, she concludes that I am behaving in a racist manner.

If the member believes that I am unmoved by students who are already isolated by vast distance, studying and learning in inadequate conditions, then she has badly misjudged my absolute commitment to the welfare and learning of our young people. The member for Giles asserts that she has asked questions about Oak Valley and has not been given replies, but the member knows full well that quick answers are different from finding an enduring solution. She seems to think that all I have to do is put my hand in the money jar, pull out a couple of hundred thousand dollars—or in this case over \$1 million—of taxpayers' money, and all will be well with the world. I wish that it was so easy.

The member should know the extraordinary difficulties involved in addressing the Oak Valley solution. As minister, I know that the community desperately needs a new school, and we committed \$1.2 million required four years ago in the 1998-99 budget. The honourable member also knows that we will build it as soon as the community gives its permission. But simply, this is not about the dollar. It is about putting the students of Oak Valley first. It is about making well established and transparent business practices work for the needs of the Oak Valley community.

Instead of putting me in the box labelled 'Racist Education Minister', the member should perhaps first look closely at the facts and support the negotiation process to ensure that staff and students benefit from a timely resolution. It is true to say that the school is in need of urgent and immediate attention and, as the honourable member has already acknowledged,

departmental staff not only work hard but they also fret and battle under dreadful conditions. Yes, they tear out their hair over the situation in those lands because they care about their students and their families.

So, what has the member for Giles really achieved by her unjust and pernicious outburst? She has achieved absolutely nothing for the community she purports to represent. She has achieved absolutely nothing for the children of the school. She has achieved absolutely nothing for the dedicated teachers working there. It is a case of a member using the plight of a section of the community for her own cheap political gain at their expense. I believe that is deplorable and extremely disappointing.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** Today I rise to call for an independent inquiry into the placement of boat harbours and boat ramps in South Australia and their environmental and financial impact. Before I get into the detail of my argument, I want to make it plain that I believe that we do need good facilities for boat owners. There are many people who use boats, who like to go out fishing and use boats for other recreational purposes on our waters. I know that there need to be good boat harbours and ramps. I want to make it absolutely plain that I am not opposed to boat ramps and am not opposed to the boating industry, recreational or commercial. We do need good facilities. There is a question mark, though, over the boat harbours and ramps being provided and those currently being considered. I would point out that in my own electorate at O'Sullivan Beach there is a good boat harbour which is well used and patronised, and does not appear to cause any damage to the local environment. It has been there for a long time and I do not believe it has high maintenance costs.

I want an inquiry to look at the processes used to determine where boat harbours are placed. I want an inquiry that looks at the effect of the boat levy money, how it is applied for and how it is utilised. I want an inquiry that looks at the pressures placed on local councils to have development in local areas, come what may, regardless of the consequences to the environment. And I also want an inquiry that looks at the impact on the local environment, particularly on seagrass and fish breeding, and at the ongoing financial costs associated with the installation of boat harbours and ramps, particularly in relation to sand management issues.

This House is well aware of a number of the problems associated with the West Beach boat harbour. I indicated to the House some time ago that the total annual cost predicted for sand management at Glenelg and West Beach will be in the order of \$1.5 million of taxpayers' money. I am indebted to a member of one of the local community groups there, Mr Jim Douglas, for information obtained under freedom of information legislation, which indicates to me that the cost of dredging from the West Beach harbour alone, between 6 December 2000 and 12 March 2001, was \$243 000 excluding GST, of which \$184 700 was for works inside the harbour. That is an extraordinary amount of money for three months just to clean out the harbour at that site.

Members would also be aware of concerns at Victor Harbor about the local council's proposal to build a boat ramp and car park. I understand that the member for the area, the Hon. Dean Brown, is opposed to this. The council is gung ho and is pushing very hard to have this proceed. Many local residents have contacted or written to me; I have been to visit them on a couple of occasions to talk about their concerns.

There is a third boat harbour which I am aware is also causing considerable concern, and that is the Beachport boat ramp. I have been approached by locals who are most concerned about the placement. It has been decided on by a local committee, I have been told, some of the members of which have obvious vested interests in having a boat harbour at that particular location. The planning authority was told that the harbour was going to be on a limestone reef; in fact, it is on a seagrass sandbar. I understand there was no proper analysis of alternative sites and yet there is a better site available at Glens Point which is on limestone and would require minimal dredging and would cause minimal loss of seagrass.

I understand there have been no costings of the ongoing maintenance costs associated with this particular harbour. That is of concern because of the vast amount of dredging which is required to set the thing up. I understand that 4 000 tonnes of rock will be required to be removed. I have also been told that the council has ignored expert advice from a whole range of consultants, such as B.C. Tonkin and Associates, Doug Fotheringham from the coastal advisory section, Dr Gordon Mills who is a botanist, John Chappell who is a marine engineer, and Steve Hooper who is a planning consultant. I also understand that there has been inadequate public consultation and informed open debate about this harbour.

This is just one of many. I had the pleasure of visiting the electorate of Giles a couple of weeks ago and looked at the Whyalla boat harbour. I was surprised to see the extraordinary build-up of sand adjacent to that boat harbour. What was once a pleasant swimming beach now has approximately a couple of hundred metres of sand that one would have to cross to get into the water. There is no dredging system there, no state government funded system to move the sand from one side of that boat harbour to the other. So, effectively, that beach has been ruined for recreational purposes. This is just another of many beaches. I think there are something like half a dozen systems that are under construction.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I was very pleased to note recently that, after considerable lobbying, an exceptionally important tourist sign has been erected, leading the way to Yorke Peninsula. That sign, as probably many members would already know, is just north of Gepps Cross. In fact, it is about 100 metres north. It is an extremely large sign, pointing the direction towards Yorke Peninsula and, in fairness, it also points to the Flinders Ranges, Eyre Peninsula and the Outback.

It may seem a simple thing to some people but I have been lobbying for this for some years. Transport SA put forward the argument from time to time that too much signage could distract motorists from attention to the road and it could become a safety problem. At long last all those things were overcome and the sign is in a position where it is easily visible. I say a very sincere thank you to the Minister for Transport because I know that she did a lot of lobbying, particularly in the latter six to 12 months, to make sure that sign got there.

I refer not only to the sign at Gepps Cross because, last Friday, I think, when I was heading back to Yorke Peninsula, I was delighted to go past another sign just north of Port Wakefield, identifying Yorke Peninsula as a tourist destination. Again I give thanks to the Minister for Transport because, as many members would appreciate, an increasing number of South Australians and Australians are beginning

to appreciate that Yorke Peninsula is becoming the place to visit.

A recent *Yorke Peninsula Country Times* highlighted on page 1 that Easter 2001 has been heralded as one of Yorke Peninsula's busiest on record. It identifies the fact that some 1 200 people were listed as having entered the Innes National Park and that all camp grounds in the park were overflowing. That speaks for itself. I have mentioned in this House on previous occasions that Innes National Park is the most visited national park outside the metropolitan area. It is a wonderful park and it has so much to see. I advise people who are going down there to spend a minimum of two days at the park, rather than one day. If they have three or more days, they will certainly find plenty to do in the Innes National Park, let alone in the surrounding countryside.

It is heartening that the sign work has been undertaken and that tourists are increasingly recognising Yorke Peninsula as a place to go to enjoy themselves. In that respect I say a particular thank you to the Minister for Tourism, who has worked very hard over the last few months in ensuring that information signs will be erected on Yorke Peninsula shortly, and I look forward to that. There will be five signs altogether, because Yorke Peninsula has various entrances, and they likewise will help to convey that instant impression of an area that is open to tourism and has virtually everything to offer to a tourist.

Similarly, I give particular thanks to the Minister for Transport for having allocated money in the last budget, and work has started on the road between Port Wakefield and Kulpara. It is creating some hold-ups in traffic, but the net result in the next year or two will be excellent. It will be a great entrance to Yorke Peninsula, so I say a sincere thank you to the minister. Things are coming to fruition in so many areas in tourism and general infrastructure on Yorke Peninsula and I thank the government as a whole because, without this government, Yorke Peninsula would not be nearly as advanced as it is, not only for the people who live there but also for the people who visit.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** I was pleased today to hear the Minister for Education respond to my statements last week that he is guilty of racism and discrimination in relation to the Aboriginal schools in this state. He also expressed his compassion today for the teachers who work at Oak Valley, which is a rather different story from his comments yesterday. I stand by what I said on the last occasion and I also now include the CEO of the Department of Education and Children's Services, Mr Geoff Spring. Mr Spring made statements in the media on 17 April in reply to my comments, saying:

The Pitjantjatjara lands are a harsh desert climate. You can put down a new school and then in three years you'll think it's, you know, 20 years old because of the effect of the harsh daily temperature regime in those areas, which plays hell with the paintwork. And the other factor, to be honest, is the level of vandalism, not in all communities, but some communities, where schools are virtually wrecked.

That was his explanation for why schools are not being fixed in those areas. Does that mean that the two schools in Adelaide that were burnt down in the same week will not have those sections replaced because of vandalism, or does a separate rule apply in the south?

What is the difference in the climatic conditions in the north and west of the state and Roxby Downs, which has a state-of-the-art school, built to benefit the children of the

workers for Western Mining, which is one of the biggest revenue raisers for this state? They are ridiculous statements, and he would not dare to utter them in relation to metropolitan schools, but it reflects exactly what I said—racism and discrimination.

Yesterday the minister made another of his dastardly attacks on the AEU and its teachers—his employees—who work in some of the most difficult and isolated conditions in this state and country. Again, he showed his contempt for those people who give up their lives to work in these Third World conditions. He said:

Of course, the department provides schooling for all our children regardless of the site's whereabouts and the circumstances that exist. . .

He also said it was important for the situation to be clarified. Today the department has had to close the Oak Valley school, but it was not an unheralded decision. On 23 April this year, the organiser of the North West Office of the AEU wrote to the Director, Country Schools, following a letter to the District Superintendent on 5 April, to which there was no response. The organiser wrote:

In your capacity as Director, Country Schools you have responsibility for Oak Valley Aboriginal School and, as a result, you have a legal duty of care to the staff and students of this school.

Under section 19 of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986, you have a responsibility to ensure that staff at Oak Valley school are provided with a safe working environment. . .

It is clear that the Oak Valley school's building and resulting work practices pose a risk to the health and safety of the staff who work there. The letter continued:

Staff have discussed with me anxiety, stress, nausea and sleeplessness when attempting to organise an effective curriculum at Oak Valley in an inappropriate physical learning environment. The junior primary teacher cannot fit all her class in the classroom and three children have to sit on the floor. The teacher of the senior class, which comprises students in years 6 to 11, has had to organise excursions to overcome the overcrowding in the classroom.

The work environment is affecting those staff. Since December 1993, senior DETE officials have been promising that a school will be built at Oak Valley, but it still has not happened. The school consists of two campuses a few kilometres apart. The primary and junior primary students are housed in two caravans outside the community and the secondary students are housed at a different location in an old ATCO hut, which was abandoned by the health services. The classrooms are of a poor standard. There is no staff toilet within 1.5 kilometres of one of the caravans and there is no water.

The staff and students are being treated worse than animals, which at least have water provided for them. The minister said last year that he was aware there was no water, but he failed to act. The minister asked today what I have achieved in my reaction to what is happening there, and it was interesting to learn that the department is going to put a transportable building into the community. If that is true, what sort of transportable is it, when will it arrive, and why has it not been done before? It makes me very angry that the department can act so quickly now because of my stand, because of the stand of the AEU and because the media is now aware of what is happening up there. Suddenly it is possible to take this sort of action.

That is the activity we have achieved. This community has been waiting for a new school for eight years. On 6 April 2000 I asked a question and the minister said that he would seek a report. In response, the minister said that money for

this project had been allocated in the budget and that the delays had been caused by an extensive consultation process.

Time expired.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I want to draw attention to a couple of matters today. It had been my wish, of course, to ask the Minister for Emergency Services a question about the matter. That is normal parliamentary practice but, of course, the arrangements which the government makes for me for questions are pretty unsatisfactory, so I do not get them. The waffle and garbage that I hear oozed around the floor of the chamber by ministers answering questions leave me wondering just how much they understand about parliament and its purpose. However, that is a distraction from the main point I wish to make.

The emergency services in this state are not well coordinated. There is not a consistent policy right across the portfolio, and it is about time there was. For instance, the very fundamental thing that all emergency services ought to be able to do is to find their way around the area for which they have the responsibility of providing a service. The volunteers can do that all right in the CFS because, as I know and you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, the CFS and the SES have a grid reference mechanism which enables them to find where they have to go on a map very easily. They get there. But the so-called professional service that drove out the volunteers, the Ambulance Service, does not know how to find its way around.

It has adopted administrative procedures in the handling of inquiries which mock its responsibilities and capacity to perform as an emergency service in rural areas. Those practices and procedures are ridiculous where they have directed telephone calls from localities in one district council area to what appear to be convenient, in administrative terms, in another. Let me give the House an example: someone living in the district council area of the Mid Murray, near Mannum (it used to be in the council of Mannum before those forced amalgamations occurred), contacted the Mannum ambulance telephone number to get an ambulance, but the call was automatically redirected to a professional in Berri who had no idea of the geography in Mannum.

Despite the efforts of the person who has written to me drawing my attention to this concern, and others who have mentioned the problem to me before, ambulances have become lost for 3½ hours, for God sake, down back roads in the Mallee and not reported the fact because the government radio network does not yet work where they were trying to operate; and they have been unable to get to their destination. I believe that all the minister has to do is understand what is going on in his portfolio and tell the ambulance to use the same service that the volunteers of the CFS and the SES have established, that is, the grid reference mechanism that will enable them to find the place immediately.

Every telephone in every home in my electorate has the grid reference attached to it as a sticker on either the hand-piece or some other immediately obvious place, and you would know that, Mr Deputy Speaker, as someone who comes from a rural area. Why can that not be used by the so-called professionals in the ambulance service? It seems to me that they are more interested in their careers and administrative expediency than they are in getting the job done. It is a bit like the hospital in that comedy series that one hears on the BBC. The hospital ran very efficiently for over a year because everyone knew what their jobs were and everything was in its place.

All the stores and reports of what was there, and so on, were in on time, every week or every month. Everything balanced in the budget. Problems occurred only when they tried to admit a patient. They could not do so, so they never had any patients; it was administratively inconvenient. That is the kind of thing that we will end up with unless the minister steps in and sorts out this mess fairly quickly. Someone will die if they have not already. That is a sorry state of affairs for a party in the government that says that it cares and listens and that it has the interests of the people in regional and rural Australia at heart.

I have yet to find too much evidence of that, and this is yet another example of where that failure on the part of the government is evident. I do not know that things would be any better if it involved the Labor Party, but I would like to think that they would be.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: BIONOMICS LIMITED**

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

That the 150th report of the committee, on the Bionomics Limited New Research Laboratory and Office Facilities, be noted.

The Public Works Committee has considered a proposal to facilitate the construction of a purpose-built research laboratory and office facilities for Bionomics Limited, which is an Adelaide-based company—and a biotechnology company at that—created as a commercial spin-off from the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Hanson Centre for Cancer Research. It was incorporated in 1996, publicly floated in December 1999 and currently employs 28 people.

Bionomics is a knowledge-based company concerned with the isolation and further study of genes involved in the onset and progression of disease. These genes and the proteins they encode are known as validated drug targets. In other words, they have not only been identified but they are also proved and valid as targets for drugs to be used to fix them up. Let me explain that in another way. Specifically, Bionomics focuses its validated drug target research and development efforts in the areas of epilepsy and breast cancer. Bionomics intends to sell or license such validated drug development gene therapy and diagnostic development procedures. It is therefore, I think, a massive income earning enterprise in prospect for that particular sphere of its market and service for the health and welfare of people.

It is even bigger than that because it could extend well beyond epilepsy and breast cancer to other disorders. The Industrial and Commercial Premises Corporation proposes to facilitate the provision of the building under the Industrial Premises Development Scheme via a deferred purchase agreement. Under the terms, the capital cost of the project will be funded by a loan that will be repaid in full to the government over a 10-year period by scheduled quarterly repayments of principal and interest.

The proposal involves the construction of a purpose-built research laboratory and office facility for Bionomics in the Thebarton Bioscience Precinct (down by the river, across the other side of the Port Road) on land that the ICPC will purchase from the Minister for Industry and Trade.

The committee was told that extremely tight time lines are associated with this project and that it could not be delivered on time prior to the expiry of Bionomics' existing lease arrangements unless, as a matter of urgency, the committee tabled a final report in order to satisfy the requirements of section 16A(2) of the Parliamentary Committees Act.

Given this advice, I as Chairman of the committee, and the committee itself supporting me, quickly undertook an inspection of the site and examined written and oral evidence. The committee also received an assurance from DAIS in relation to the proposal that acquittals have been received from the departments of Treasury and Finance, Premier and Cabinet and the Attorney-General, that the works and procedures are lawful. Based on the evidence we received and the assurances we have been given, the committee adopted the final report as a matter of urgency. A full summary of the proposal and the committee's findings will be provided in a subsequent status report within a quarter—that means within three months.

With the concurrence of the House, the committee will provide a more comprehensive array of details in a status report speech which I will move that the House can respond to when it notes that status report at the time it is tabled. I personally am well satisfied that the building, though built to serve the specific purposes of Bionomics, is nonetheless one which is readily saleable and will not, therefore—in my opinion—expose the government to any risk in that, should Bionomics, in the unlikely event that it fails commercially, be unable to make its payments, the government will easily and quickly be able to find a sale that will enable it to obtain full cost recovery.

Pursuant to section 12(c) of the Parliamentary Committee Act, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed works. We all wish it godspeed, for those two conditions, epilepsy and breast cancer, are two conditions that cause great distress to the people who suffer them, premature death and most certainly anxiety in the extreme to members of the families of sufferers and their close friends. I am sure that many other members besides me in this place have first-hand experience of that. Where such advanced research and treatment are readily to hand as have been developed by this South Australian company—which has the potential to generate tens of millions of dollars of income for the state and itself annually, and hundreds of millions of dollars in the medium to longer term—is it any wonder that we feel it is time we got on with it?

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** As the member for Hammond has pointed out, this report on Bionomics does not contain the normal amount of information provided in a report from the Public Works Committee. The committee sought to facilitate matters in view of the urgency that the project proponents expressed to us. However, this did not in any way minimise the level of scrutiny that was afforded to the project. The committee was aware that several aspects of the project were a little unusual, so it made inquiries to satisfy itself that all was being done with due probity. The fact that it was a project from the Industrial and Commercial Premises Corporation is not unusual but it does mean that there are some different things about it. In this case, one of the different things was that at the time the project came to the committee, several approvals were still outstanding. So we have since satisfied ourselves that those approvals were duly obtained. We did entrust the secretary and the chair to examine them before the report was signed, but we have since been able to have a comprehensive look at those papers. This morning we noted our satisfaction with the amount of information that was provided.

Another unusual aspect was that the project did not go to open tender, as Bionomics had already entered into some tender arrangements with Resource Development Pty Ltd.

The fact that government funds were being expended without going to tender was an unusual factor. However, we scrutinised the level of inquiry that had been made by DIT and ICPC to ensure that a proper deal was being obtained for the government, and we also asked a series of questions about that matter ourselves in terms of the vetting of the costing, etc., and we were able to satisfy ourselves that although this process was unusual it did seem that the government was getting a good deal.

Resource Development Pty Ltd had built the building that Bionomics currently occupies and was, therefore, well aware of some of the requirements in relation to laboratories and the manufacturing facilities required in biotechnology. This meant that the amount of investigative work that had to be done was minimised. There was a good understanding of the clients' needs by Resource Development, and that looked as though it was going to save money for ICPC and, accordingly, for the government and the people of South Australia.

I would like to commend the way in which the various members of the team presented to us. They did so in a completely open and forthright manner and although some of them were not used to the idea of coming before the Public Works Committee, they were nevertheless very helpful and fulsome in the way they presented. I would like to commend Dr Deborah Rathjen, the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Bionomics Limited who, in her approach to the committee, demonstrated why she is the Chief Executive Officer of such an important organisation at a relatively young age. She was very thorough, knowledgeable and open in what she did. I look forward to speaking more about the details of this project when the status report is available. At this stage, I would like to say that I am happy with the way things happened. It would have been preferable for there not to have been the rush. However, all the i's have been dotted and the t's crossed, and I am happy to support the recommendation.

The reason for some of my concerns about whether the i's would be dotted and t's crossed was that on other occasions when the committee has facilitated an expeditious hearing, the follow-up has not always been adequate. I refer to the situation with the Salisbury industrial park. The committee approved that without all the clearances and development approvals, and so on, having been obtained. The committee's recommendation to the House was provisional on their being obtained. It is now over six months, and we have not yet seen those approvals despite attempts by the secretary to follow them up with the Department of Industry and Trade. The fact that the law is not always regarded very seriously by some proponents makes us tread cautiously when we are asked to do things expeditiously. However, in the Bionomics case, everything has been done well. I hope that other proponents deliver as well on past obligations and on future commitments.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** May I say to the House in closing this debate that, since no other member—it strikes me—wishes to contribute to it, I am flabbergasted. This is probably one of the most exciting businesses to have started in South Australia in the past 25 to 30 years.

**Ms Thompson:** I am going to talk about that later.

**Mr LEWIS:** I am reassured by the member for Reynell that there is interest in the matter that extends beyond this motion, but other members ought to notice that it is uniquely South Australian and that it is the kind of thing which the

parliament in a multi-party manner has been trying to foster in this state for years.

The business happens to address two of the most—not necessarily ‘the most’, but two of the most—distressing conditions medically from which our society suffers. The market for the cure is huge. The rest of the world applauds the technology which it has developed and which it owns, even to the extent that some of the big drug companies that are worth billions of dollars have tried to snatch it, or nick it and have had to be beaten off. Yet the quaint thing is that no other member of the parliament seems interested enough to comment upon the good work the government has done in enabling this business to get going and develop those explicit technical skills (to which I referred in my earlier remarks) that are high tech in this emerging area of science, involving the molecular structure of life itself, and identify where the aberrations come from that cause disease and knock them out without pain to the patient or great cost to the taxpayer.

It is so revolutionary, so amazing and such a good news story that I am disappointed that not one other member of the parliament, women included, have commented. Many women would know friends who have suffered from breast cancer and they themselves may yet suffer from breast cancer and find that this treatment will immediately knock out the disease without great distress. I again express my amazement that other members did not wish to commend the people in the Public Service, and more particularly congratulate the nucleus of brilliance in the staff of Bionomics, for what has now been achieved. The Public Works Committee did not achieve anything except deal with the matter in a sensible, lawful and expeditious way to facilitate it.

The last thing I want to say is that the fact that we note these reports and say the things we are able to say in so doing, at least ventilates, as I am able to and as the member for Reynell has been able to, those good aspects of what is being done when they arise, as has happened in this instance. The government itself, that is, the cabinet, as well as the people in the bureaucracy, are to be congratulated. I say to members of the government: thank you for what you are doing in enabling this to happen.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: GLENELG  
WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT—  
ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

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

That the 149th report of the committee, on the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant—Environment Improvement Project, be noted.

I point out that the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant was built in 1933 and has expanded several times. It now serves a population of 200 000 people. It was one of the last major public works to be constructed early in the depression and, as I understand it, if the government of the day had made the decision to build the pipeline on Eyre Peninsula to serve all the land which it had subdivided for farming development to supply water to those farms instead of building this waste water treatment plant, as the government indeed did promise, then I might not be here today, because my parents were living on Eyre Peninsula and failed to get the water, which I understand was not provided because the pipeline was not built in view of the decision taken by the government to use the limited resources at its disposal to build the Glenelg waste

water treatment plant instead of that pipeline. My parents would have stayed at Warrambooboo.

The plant’s licence under the Environment Protection Act enables it to discharge to the marine environment and it requires SA Water to commit to an environment improvement project approved by the EPA to minimise environmental harm. The estimated cost of the proposed works is \$31.7 million and the scope includes:

- reconfiguration of the B and C plant reactor tanks to convert them to an integrated fixed film activated sludge process for biological nutrient removal;
- construction of a new D plant reactor based on conventional biological nutrient configuration;
- modifications to the B and C plant clarifiers to increase the capacity of the sludge recycle system to return activated sludge to the reactors to enable biological nitrogen reduction;
- construction of new D plant clarifiers for removal of the biological mass to produce a well clarified treated waste water;
- sludge thickening facilities to process the increased sludge volume which results from greater nitrogen reduction from the waste water. These facilities will allow the existing sludge digestion system to be retained without augmentation and will incorporate odour control processes;
- modification of the aeration system to provide the additional air, that is, oxygen, required for the biological nutrient removal processes and plant odour control including blower building and two new duty blowers to be located adjacent to the reactors;
- further extensions and modifications to the plant process control system;
- additions and modifications to the electrical power supply and distribution system;
- provision for carbon dosing facilities to enhance nitrogen reduction if required;
- feasibility studies, BNR pilot plant investigations, concept design work, trials of the IFAS process and marine survey work.

The total nitrogen discharged will fall from the current annual average of about 25 to 30 milligrams per litre to 10 milligrams per litre by the end of 2002, with significant reductions to be achieved by the end of December this year. As well as that, odour emissions from the plant will be reduced very significantly.

The proposal is expected to reduce the potential environmental impact of the nitrogen and in particular as a contributory factor to the loss of the seagrass meadows in coastal waters adjacent to the discharge. These seagrasses provide habitat and breeding grounds for a variety of commercial and non-commercial fish species. Estimates of the value of the seagrasses range as high as \$30 000 per hectare per year, and monitoring along the coast has indicated the regression of the seagrass meadows in Gulf St Vincent adjacent to the metropolitan area.

This probably arises as a consequence of the rapid discharge of stormwater containing high levels of suspended colloidal dimension material, as well as organic matter which includes nitrogen. The end result of that material being rapidly discharged in that form is that it will be precipitated in the seawater and settle on the leaves of the seagrasses, as does the sludge which was coming from the Glenelg and other waste water treatment plants discharging into Gulf St Vincent.

Other factors of lesser consequence have also made a contribution, but those two are the principal reasons which have caused the denudation of the seagrasses from the foreshore. We have lost the razor fish beds, the cockles and the scallops which used to be found in abundance in my childhood and could still be found by scuba divers (of which I am one) as recently as 25 years ago, but which have now gone. They have been destroyed not by over-exploitation but rather by the destruction of their habitat in the manner to which I have just referred.

Returning specifically to the benefits of the Glenelg waste water treatment plant, I point out that the reduced odour from the plant will increase amenity value for local residents and businesses. This and the reduced nitrogen discharge are expected to enhance the state's image as being environmentally responsible.

The committee understands that there is no clear direct connection between the nitrogen load in the waste water treatment plant discharge and changes in seagrasses or other benthic communities—or at least that is what the committee was told. However, I disagree with that view.

I have watched what has happened, and noted why it happens. There is no question about the fact that the algal bloom which occurs in those higher nutrient regimes resulting from the factors to which I have referred prevent the sunlight from getting through that algae on the sludge on the leaves of the seagrass to the chlorophyll in the chloroplasts of those leaves of the seagrass, thereby starving them to death. Indeed, if—as I have noted—you clean off the sludge and go back a week later to look at it, before those plants have died, they recover their health.

However, such simple tests have not been carried out by anyone sitting behind a desk in the E&WS Department, as it used to be known, the department which had responsibility for waste water as well as stormwater, so I am not in the least bit surprised that its engineers, like the tobacco industry, disclaim or attempt to divert attention from the responsibilities it has for the problems which have resulted from the practices it has endorsed in the past.

However, you cannot do everything at once and we are now dealing with this problem in this way at this time. Significant seagrass loss has occurred along the metropolitan coastline due to the combined effects of these factors: the treated waste water and the stormwater, along with sand dune alienation and other coastal processes. I have to say that recent work by the University of Adelaide at Christies Beach indicates chronic disturbances to benthic infaunal communities since the outfall there was commissioned. I have not dived there. Maybe the member for Reynell and/or friends she has in her constituency can comment upon that. I commend the University of Adelaide for the good sense its community has displayed in examining the ecology of the marine environment and equally commend the work being done by students at Flinders in that regard. However, the committee did not get any evidence from Flinders. We were only told about what the University of Adelaide has been doing in that regard.

We understand that the EPA is about to commence a three year Adelaide coastal waters study and, although the study findings cannot be predicted, it may justify a future review of discharge arrangements to reduce contaminant load by way of further improvement of treated waste water enhancing its quality and/or by the extension of discharge outfalls and/or—in my judgment the most important factor—increasing reuse, where we can use, maybe in hot weather when there are lots

of photons coming from the sun, photovoltaics to drive pumps to shift the water back from the waste water treatment plants near the coast to those areas of green in our suburbs and around our city.

This proposal complements any future work that may be required and should proceed irrespective of the study. The committee understands that in order to meet the EPA requirements SA Water must implement significant environmental improvements for the proposed project by December 2001. Complete construction of the upgrade to B and C plants is to be completed by that time in order to achieve the first stage of nitrogen reduction. The new D plant will be completed by December 2002. The new process plant and associated works will incur an additional operating cost of \$1.6 million a year when compared with the existing plant, due mainly to three factors: firstly, the increased power costs arising from the increased aeration and pumping associated with the biological nutrient removal process; secondly, the increased operating and power costs for the sludge thickening plant; and, thirdly, the additional cost to maintain new assets and periodically replace or make up damage to the IFAS medium.

The financial evaluation indicates a net present value loss of \$30.2 million, using the primitive methodology of SA Water (and it ought to pull its finger out and fix that). The corresponding economic evaluation indicates a net present loss of \$24.6 million. After considering evidence presented to it, the committee accepts that the proposed work will achieve a 70 per cent reduction in the nitrogen load discharge, make the treated waste water more suitable for a wider range of potential reuse opportunities and reduce the level of odours emitted by the plant by at least 50 per cent. Pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed work.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** This project, when we examined it, looked reasonably straightforward. However, a couple of matters were raised this morning in the press that proposed some questions in relation to it. In general I have to say that I very much support the efforts to minimise the discharge into the environment. There is no doubt that the nitrogen load has been damaging the seagrasses, although the evidence in some ways is suggested to be a little confusing. I guess 'confusing' is the kindest description for most of the evidence we have had in relation to anything regarding the area surrounding the Glenelg waste water treatment plant. Holdfast Shores, the Adelaide boat ramp, the Barcoo Outlet: the environmental evidence about all these developments is confusing.

Here, although there is a general belief that discharge of effluent into the sea is damaging to the environment—and indeed the Environmental Protection Agency is requiring SA Water to make environmental improvements—we are also told that there is no real evidence that seagrasses have been damaged by the nitrogen load, yet we are told there is beginning to be evidence in relation to the Christies Beach outfall. We are saying that it is difficult to get a handle on the environmental evidence in relation to just too many issues in that Holdfast Shores development area. In the case of the outfall from the Glenelg waste water treatment plant, we can apply the beliefs that there are in relation to all waste water treatment plants and say that the fact that they do not think photos show there is a problem does not mean anything.

However, I was interested to note that one of the major benefits is the increase in property values in the immediate areas. The residents of Glenelg's north shore are just as entitled to clean air as are the residents of Salisbury, Paralowie and the areas around Bolivar, and I support that happening. Beginning to worry me is the fact that there has been no progress in finding a reuse for the water that comes from the Glenelg waste water treatment plant. At Christies the water is reused in the Willunga Basin. One of the issues explored in relation to Glenelg was whether it would be possible to close the plant and transfer waste water to a new plant at a southern location for treatment and possible reuse. We are told that the preliminary cost estimate of \$200 million was prohibitive and a new outfall would be required. Another option considered was to pump treated waste water from Glenelg to the Willunga Basin for reuse. This cost was prohibitive and would probably require nitrogen reduction as per the current proposal for sustainable reuse as well as new outfall for winter discharge.

We questioned the proponents about this issue when we were taking evidence and at the time I was satisfied that, although it was unfortunate, it did not seem possible to undertake one of those options. However, this morning I heard on the ABC the Mayor of Holdfast Bay, Brian Nadilo, talking about a new option, which was to pump it all down to Bolivar. This was a little surprising to both me listening in my office and to the ABC interviewer, who said, 'Well, aren't they just spending some \$20 million to upgrade Glenelg?' In fact they are spending \$31 million to upgrade Glenelg, yet it seems that already there are plans afoot for a pipeline to Bolivar. If there is any means of reusing the waste water from Glenelg I support it wholly. However, it would have been useful to have all these options and their implications considered before spending \$31 million.

Since I have been in this place I think that I have become a little more cynical about anything to do with Holdfast Shores, and I am now very concerned that one of the hidden agendas of this program might have been improving the odour for the Holdfast Shores development, and that this might have skewed some of the consideration of issues in relation to the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant.

It is my experiences, since being on the Public Works Committee, with this Holdfast Shores development that have led to this great cynicism. I do not criticise at all the need to upgrade all the wastewater treatment plants and to minimise the nitrogen load going out to sea. This is imperative, and the Environment Protection Agency considers it so and has made conditions in relation to the licence. However, I am starting to be cynical about just what all the factors were in determining the priority that was accorded to this particular upgrade in this particular way.

I would also like to point out to the House another issue in relation to this, and that is the increased costs of operating the plant as a result of the upgrade. At the time of the evidence, we were told that there would be an additional operating cost of \$1.6 million per year when compared with the existing plant. This is due mainly to the increased power cost as a result of increased aeration and pumping associated with the biological nutrient removal process, the increased operating and power costs for the sludge thickening plant, and the additional cost to maintain new assets and periodically replace or make up damaged IFAS media.

In relation to the Christies Beach upgrade, we were also told that there would be increased costs because of the increased power. At that time we were concerned only about

the adequacy of the power supply and the impact this might have on neighbours if the plant was draining so much power. However, in view of recent events, I wish to alert the House to the fact that, with electricity prices increasing so rapidly, there could well be much more than an increased cost of \$1.6 million per year to service the upgrade of the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant, and we then need to take into account the additional costs at other wastewater treatment plants.

In summary, I support the report: upgrading wastewater treatment plants is very important. However, I will be actively pursuing through the committee a number of issues in the quarterly reports, and they relate to the options that are available for water reuse; any other plans there might be in relation to the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant; and continual monitoring of the impact of the electricity crisis on sewage treatment.

We cannot afford to have our power problems also causing problems in relation to our sewage treatment plants. We have already had one problem, as the residents of the northern suburbs know. Fortunately, in the southern suburbs we did not experience too much of that problem, which related to a failure of the treatment process. We know that this is really critical for our wellbeing and we hope that this government's ineptitude has not caused yet another problem in this area. I support the report and signal that I will be scrutinising progress very carefully.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** I came down from my office to contribute to this debate and support the report of the committee only after hearing the comments of the previous speaker regarding the Holdfast Shores development. I think that she herself suggested that she was being cynical in suggesting that the reason behind the upgrade of this treatment plant was the Holdfast Shores development.

The honourable member knows full well that this is one of a whole raft of improvements to our wastewater treatment plants throughout the metropolitan area. That environmental improvement program is drawing to a close, and I do not want the House to think that the decision for this project was influenced in any way by matters referred to by the honourable member. In fact, in excess of \$200 million is being spent on the environmental improvement program that has seen an 80 per cent reduction in the nitrogen pollutants entering Gulf St Vincent, which have been principally blamed for being the pollutants that have caused the degradation of the sea grass beds in Gulf St Vincent.

This environmental improvement program (carried out by this government) is one of the biggest, most expensive and most important environmental programs carried out in this state probably in the state's history. For the first time we have seen significant improvement in the amount of pollutants entering our marine environment off the coast of Adelaide. We have seen reuse, and I concur in what the honourable member was saying about seeing additional reuse. We have seen reuse both from the Bolivar treatment plant north of Adelaide and from the Christies treatment plant south of Adelaide, and I agree with the honourable member that I would like to see that extended and much more of our wastewater being reused. In the not too distant future we will see the diversion of all outflows of wastewater into the Port River, which water will all be transferred to the Bolivar treatment plant, so I want to emphasise to the House that this is part of a major environmental improvement program.



Notwithstanding the interjections a moment ago, I think that this is one of the most important projects carried out in this state in a long time. I think that the government deserves to be congratulated for it and does not deserve petty nitpicking of the sort that the honourable member implied in some of her comments. Having said that, I think that the member was saying it somewhat tongue in cheek, but if she was saying that tongue in cheek I would like it on the record so that members or those reading *Hansard* in the future were aware of it. I thoroughly recommend the report to the House.

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

#### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES**

**The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism):** I move:

That the time for bringing up the report of the committee be extended until Wednesday 25 July.

Motion carried.

#### **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: RURAL HEALTH**

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.B. Such:

That the 13th report of the committee, on rural health, be noted. (Continued from 28 March. Page 1217.)

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I am pleased to be able to comment on this report. To tackle a topic such as rural health is quite an ask. It is a very complex issue, and what the committee has produced is, I think, a reasonable overview of the issues, and it has come up with a set of recommendations that are worth considering. There are 34 of those under a number of different headings, and I will concentrate on a few of those in a moment.

Before doing so, I noted in the background to the report a comment made by the committee that Aboriginal health was not going to be part of this inquiry and that it should be considered in its own right because 'many of the health issues related specifically to Aboriginal people and individual communities could not be properly canvassed by the committee as part of this inquiry.' It went on further to say that to do justice to Aboriginal health as part of this inquiry, more resources and time would be required than were available. Although I accept their statement, I do hope that the committee may consider taking a reference to continue this inquiry in terms of Aboriginal health because, as people would know, it is a major area for health service provision in this state, and indeed in the entire country.

I acknowledge that a number of excellent initiatives are occurring, and I congratulate the Aboriginal Health Services Division of the Department of Human Services. In fact, in my travels around the place as shadow minister for health, that is the one division in the Department of Human Services about which I hear many positive comments, and I would encourage the Social Development Committee to undertake a reference and to have a look at Aboriginal health in the near future. I think it is so very easy for committees, governments or whatever to dismiss Aboriginal health and issues simply by saying that they are too hard and that there is no time to deal with it. Well, we do need to deal with it, and governments of any persuasion could probably do with any help they can get. So, as I said before, I encourage the committee to take that further.

In relation to the report itself, there are 34 recommendations, and these are grouped together under a number of headings, namely, General Practitioners, Education and Training, Nurses, Recruiting and Retaining Allied Health Professionals, Communication and Information, Transport and Travel, Insurance, Mental Health and General. I was interested to read very close to the front of the report the following comment:

Mental health was the only area in current rural health services that all respondents saw as being inadequate throughout the state and in need of a major overhaul and system-wide improvements.

I would have to say that this absolutely concurs with all the information that I have received in travelling in country South Australia. That issue is seen consistently as the most serious issue confronting this state in terms of health care.

A number of recommendations were made by the committee in relation to that. They included establishing in a number of hospitals within each region appropriately trained support staff and a designated room or a room that could be adapted safely and quickly to care for a person suffering from an acute mental episode. It talked about GPs and nursing staff receiving more training in the psychiatric care and counselling of people with a mental illness. It recommended changes to the Medicare schedule of payments. It talked about regular respite services being developed for carers of people with a mental illness. Other recommendations were also made.

One of the things that did surprise me, though, was that none of the recommendations in relation to mental health services mentioned anything in relation to lifestyle supports for people with a mental illness. When I have been in country areas talking about this issue, the issues broke down into two major categories. There are particularly the health issues, but then there are also the lifestyle issues—things such as supported accommodation, having activities to participate in during the day or support to enable persons to enter the work force. Those lifestyle issues absolutely impact on a person's health and on the health system if they are not in place; and they are certainly not in place.

The next subject that I would like to discuss is staff shortages, and I will group them because there are three categories, although the issues are similar. The committee looked at general practitioners, nurses and allied health workers. Interestingly, I was in Roxby Downs and Andamooka last week, and the same issues were raised with me in relation to GPs, for instance, at Roxby Downs. One of the GPs, who has worked for several years in Roxby Downs, has a partner living in Adelaide and has now decided that she wants to live with her partner in the one place, in Adelaide, so she is leaving Roxby Downs. However, there is no replacement for that GP.

The nurses at that health service showed me the brand-new operating theatre that has just been built at Roxby Downs, but it cannot be used because there is no-one with the skills and experience in anaesthesiology to allow them to operate that theatre. We have essentially wasted the money because that brand-new theatre cannot be used.

One of the nurses I spoke to is a midwife. Because no-one is trained in anaesthetics, that midwife will probably leave Roxby Downs. She wants to deliver babies and, quite clearly, without the proper skills on deck, they are not going to be able to do it. That is the situation that confronts country South Australia right across the board, and it really needs a concerted effort.

The committee made a number of recommendations which are great. There needs to be a coordinated strategy between federal and state governments and local communities. When I read the committee's recommendations and when I read through the appendix, which contains other sets of recommendations in relation to making changes to work force issues in country areas, it seemed that, although there is a whole array of suggestions, somehow they do not come together. In this regard the best hope for the future will lie with Labor federal and state governments, because it is the Labor Party that has undertaken that there will be a Medicare alliance, pooling of funding and a cooperative approach to stop the stand-off so we can solve some of these problems.

Rather than have federal and state ministers taking pot shots at each other, with a new deal, federal and state ministers will work together with local communities in country areas to try to get some changes so that we can retain and attract professionals—doctors, nurses and allied professionals—to country areas to provide the services that are needed. Transport was another major issue that was raised. Regionalisation was mentioned briefly, and the committee recommended that the effectiveness of regionalisation be subject to continuous review, and I agree.

Time expired.

Motion carried.

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COOPERATIVE AND COMMUNITY HOUSING (ASSOCIATED LAND OWNERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services)** obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the South Australian Cooperative and Community Housing Act 1991. Read a first time.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

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

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

Leave granted.

The purpose of this Bill is to enable the implementation of the partnership agreement between the Minister for Human Services (on behalf of the South Australian Government) and the Inter Church Housing Unit (on behalf of the South Australian Council of Churches).

The Human Services portfolio is working to enhance the capacity of the community to better respond to those in need of assistance, through a diverse range of service activities. There is a partnership agreement between the Minister for Human Services on behalf of the South Australian Government and the Inter Church Housing Unit on behalf of the South Australian Council of Churches for the Church to provide land, free of cost and unencumbered, and the Government to provide capital for housing development. The agreement allows for the transfer of ownership of joint venture developments, including all improvements, to the Church following an agreed period of time (30 years).

Property management, including tenant selection, is the responsibility of community housing organisations, which are accountable to the South Australian Community Housing Authority (SACHA) for all administrative and financial procedures for the duration of the lease agreement between the Church and the community housing organisation. Government, through SACHA, will retain control over allocation and pricing policy. Churches will be responsible for the provision of appropriate support to the tenant households. Each partnership proposal will be evaluated on its own merits before being accepted and implemented. In addition, the Bill does not restrict the Minister from forming similar partnerships with community organisations, at his discretion.

Following the agreed period of time (30 years), the Church or community organisation will be sole owner of the land, including all dwellings and other improvements. The Government and any other party will relinquish all rights and interests associated with the

dwellings established through the joint venture. The land and household support component of the program comprises a considerable percentage of the value of the complete housing package to targeted high needs households.

Consultations have been held by the South Australian Community Housing Authority with the South Australian Council of Churches, the Inter Church Housing Unit, and the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Churches, who are all in agreement with the initiative.

Turning to the main features of the Bill:

The Bill allows for land to be owned by a body other than a registered housing association, but funds still provided to the community housing organisation for the provision of housing for population groups with high needs. The Bill is primarily targeted at Churches as associated land owners, but does not restrict the Minister from forming such agreements with other community organisations.

The Bill's *Associated Land Owners* Schedule contains the following sections.

#### **Financial Transactions**

Transactions between the South Australian Community Housing Authority and a registered community housing organisation, which involve a Church or other community organisation in the development of housing programs, may be the subject of an agreement between all three parties. Such agreements will cover, amongst other things, provisions about the expiry of the charge after thirty years.

#### **Creation of Statutory Charge**

To enable the enforcement of such an agreement, SACHA may impose a statutory charge on the land of the associated land owner, which restricts any other use of that property.

#### **Enforcement of Statutory Charge**

This charge may be enforced if the conditions of the agreement are breached. The community housing organisation (housing association) and the Church or community organisation will be given one month to remedy this breach. Should the breach not be remedied within this time, SACHA must appoint an independent investigator to report on the matter. Should it be necessary, SACHA will apply to the Minister for an order in relation to the property subject to the charge, which would see the property transferred to an appropriate alternative body for management. In this case the agreement would be rescinded. The interests of the tenants and creditors of the affected community housing organisation are to be protected in such an event.

#### **Creation of Option**

Statutory charges over properties include SACHA's right to purchase such properties, should they be the subjects of proposed sales.

#### **Appeals**

Associated land owners have the right to appeal should SACHA apply to the Minister for an order to enforce the charge.

#### **Remission from Taxes**

This Bill also proposes to extend to community housing organisations (housing associations) and associated land owners the taxation remissions currently being enjoyed by housing co-operatives.

In summary, this Bill and the associated agreement with the Inter Church Housing Unit will provide a significant incentive to Churches to contribute land and tenancy support in joint community housing ventures for households in greatest need of assistance.

I commend the bill to the House.

#### **Explanation of clauses**

##### *Clause 1: Short title*

##### *Clause 2: Commencement*

These clauses are formal.

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

The definition of associated land owner provides the central concept for the new scheme. Land may be owned by a person other than a registered housing association but funds still provided to the housing association for the provision of housing.

New subclause (6) is a technical amendment to ensure that, for ease of reference, property owned by an associated land owner will be considered to be property of the registered housing association concerned. See especially section 63(4)(b).

##### *Clause 4: Amendment of s. 97—Service on registered housing co-operatives*

This amendment is included to adjust the service provisions for registered housing co-operatives to reflect the service provisions proposed in Sched. 2 for associated land owners. Facsimiles and e-mail are contemplated.

##### *Clause 5: Amendment of Sched. 1—Housing Associations*

The amendment to clause 4 is designed to ensure that there is reporting in respect of the housing association if the associated land owner breaches an agreement with the Authority.

The amendment to clause 8 is consequential. It enables transfer of land to an associated land owner in a case where a charge on land of a registered housing association is being enforced.

The amendment to clause 10 is designed to ensure that there can be intervention in respect of the housing association if the associated land owner breaches an agreement with the Authority.

*Clause 6: Insertion of Sched. 2—Associated Land Owners*

*1. Financial transactions*

This provision contemplates an agreement with an associated land owner. The regulations may set out matters that must be included in the agreement. The agreement would cover, amongst other things, provisions about the expiry of the charge after 30 years.

*2. Creation of statutory charge*

*3. Enforcement of statutory charge*

*4. Creation of option*

*5. Powers of investigation*

These provisions are included in full because of the difficulties of incorporating and modifying Division 4 of Part 7 of the Act in order to enable the enforcement of the charge for breach of either the associated land owner's agreement or the registered housing association's agreement.

*6. Appeals*

This provision is designed to provide an avenue for appeal against a decision of the Authority to apply to the Minister for an order to enforce the charge.

*7. Service on associated land owners*

This provision modifies the service provisions and provides for service by facsimile or e-mail.

*8. Remission from taxes, etc.*

This provision provides for remission from taxes for associated land owners and is necessary to avoid confusion between converting the reference to a co-operative to a reference to the associated land owner and the reference to a tenant-member of the co-operative to a reference to a tenant of the housing association.

*9. Misrepresentation as to being associated land owner*

This provision provides an equivalent to section 91 of the Act.

*10. Miscellaneous*

This provision applies machinery provisions of the Act to associated land owners.

*11. Regulations*

This provision contemplates the making of regulations about returns to be furnished by associated land owners to the Authority and the form or content of any agreement between the Authority and associated land owners.

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

### STATUTES AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 1 May. Page 1375.)

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** The bill has its origins in the work of criminal lawyer, Mr David Peek. Mr Peek, through a committee of the Law Society, sought to give prominence to difficulties with the conduct of prosecutions for exceeding the prescribed content of alcohol in the blood, whether that be under the Road Traffic Act or the Harbors and Navigation Act. In 1998 or 1999, I forget which, Mr Peek published a highly technical but pertinent article in the Law Society bulletin about this topic. It received front page billing. I do not know whether David Peek agrees with all the elements of the bill, but he can certainly take credit for its introduction, if credit it be. The opposition thinks it is credit because we are supporting the bill.

In contributing to this debate, I ask for the indulgence of the House, because I have never been a licensed motorist. I ride a bicycle and catch public transport, as is well known.

**Mr Venning:** Isn't that a little strange; a bit different?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Spence.

**Mr ATKINSON:** I am not sure what point the member for Schubert is making. I am just disclosing to the House that I have not undergone breath analysis in my lifetime, so I might not understand some of the basics about it. The bill states that a breath analysis test must be commenced within two hours of the driver being stopped, as distinct from the act saying it must be performed within two hours. I take it that the change is designed to stop a defence lawyer arguing that, although the test was started within two hours, its results would not be admissible because all elements of the analysis were not completed within two hours.

The South Australian Supreme Court, in *Delurant v. Macklin*, decided that the statutory presumption that the alcohol concentration as measured was the same as at the time of the alleged offence only allowed the Crown to assert that the legislatively prescribed maximum concentration of alcohol was present, not the concentration as found by the test. The actual concentration might be higher and might attract a greater penalty.

The bill allows the presumption to operate so as to allow the Crown to assert the actual concentration for the entire two hours preceding the test. The bill will now require police to explain to a motorist his or her right to a blood test and the legal consequences of refusing both a breath and a blood test, and this seems sensible. The bill also provides for taking two samples of breath and the lower one is to be used for legal purposes. I know that Labor's Hon. R.R. Roberts believes that these two breath tests ought to be analysed by separate machines, but the minister will not do this because she says that each breath analysis machine costs \$18 000 and she does not think it is reasonable to expect the police to deploy two machines at each testing site.

The bill continues the current Attorney-General's policy of removing divisional penalties, which can be adjusted for the consumer price index through an amendment to one act, namely, the Acts Interpretation Act, and substituting in lieu fixed monetary amounts for each penalty section in each act in the corpus of the state's statutory law. This folly will be reversed should I have the good fortune to become the Attorney-General. Lastly, the bill provides for the nominal defendant, in running down cases, to be a body corporate instead of an individual. The nominal defendant is needed in cases in which the motorist, who is alleged to have caused the damage, is not identified and the compulsory third party insurer is defending the case.

In the past, the name of a senior officer from the insurer has been used. It is a sad reflection on the human condition that some plaintiffs have threatened or harassed the nominal defendant and we must now substitute a body corporate. I should add that the bill contains a provision to try to equate blood results with breath results, and I understand that, for the purposes of maintaining the same numbers, namely, 0.05 and 0.08, 100 millilitres of blood will be comparable to 210 litres of breath.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I understand that this bill seeks to amend the current legislation concerning matters relating to drink driving and/or operating a motor bike while under the influence of alcohol. I also note that the bill is quite technical, and the member for Spence has just dealt with some of those technical aspects which I will not cover. The bill deals with issues such as time limits for commencement of breath analysis, consequences of not having a blood test,

testing procedures to be prescribed, clarification of the concentration of alcohol in a person's blood, and other related matters. Another matter is raised in this bill, that is, where vehicles that have been technically written off cannot be registered in South Australia—and that racket has been going on for some time.

I do not intend to talk on every aspect of this bill because I think that they have been covered by the member for Spence and others, but I will address some aspects. Both the Road Traffic Act 1961 and the Harbors and Navigation Act 1993 provide that, in certain circumstances, a member of the police may require a person to submit to an alcotest, breath analysis or both. Currently, the testing must be carried out within two hours of the event. Consequently, any delays in completing the test may result in non-compliance with that provision. The proposed amendment removes this uncertainty by stipulating that the testing must be commenced within two hours.

Also, an anomaly exists in the Road Traffic Act that no time period is stipulated for the conduct of a breath test at an RBT station. We know that motor vehicles at an RBT station usually move through fairly quickly, so I cannot understand why the police would delay someone for more than two hours before testing them. But there is an anomaly in the law, and this proposes that the same two hour requirement apply to breath tests at an RBT station. The bill also seeks to amend legislation to ensure that people understand their rights as they relate to a blood test in circumstances where a person cannot provide a breath sample as a result of either a medical or a physical condition.

In certain circumstances a person could well forgo their right to a blood test and be charged with failing to provide a breath sample. The penalties for this offence are quite severe. The proposed amendment will ensure that police fully explain that a blood test can be taken in place of the breath test. Police will also be required to explain that failure to adopt this approach could lead to a charge of failing to provide a breath or blood sample. People obviously need to know exactly where they stand if faced with a situation such as this, and the bill seeks to clarify that.

The bill also proposes that the regulations providing for the taking of two samples of breath, when a breath test is conducted, is a fairer testing procedure—taking the lower reading of the two as the final result. The ERD Committee, of which I am the Presiding Member (as members are aware), extensively studied the serious matter of rural road safety and, from the committee's work on this, tabled the 13th report of the committee (entitled South Australian Rural Road Safety Strategy) on 8 December 1998. The committee took evidence from many witnesses on numerous topics concerning this reference, with section 6 (entitled 'Enforcement') reporting on drink driving and mobile random breath testing.

The committee received submissions from representatives of the South Australian police and the RAA on this particular matter who gave some very chilling statistics concerning drink driving in rural areas. One suggestion that emerged from these submissions was to introduce mobile random breath testing: police could stop any vehicle at random and subject the driver to a preliminary breath test. No reasonable grounds of belief need to exist in the mind of the police officer to carry out the test. As a result of taking this evidence, the committee made the following recommendation:

The committee recommends that careful consideration should be given to the implementation of mobile random breath testing, taking note of the public's concerns regarding the potential infringement of civil liberties.

I commend this report to all members and encourage them again to read this report because it deals very thoroughly with the most important issue with which every South Australian is faced, that is, the issue of road safety. The final aspect of the bill relates to the issue of classes of vehicles that may be ineligible for registration. I understand that an amendment will ensure that vehicles defined as 'written off' will not be registered in South Australia. As I said, that has been a racket for years. Identification plates from wrecked and written-off vehicles purchased at auction are taken away. The identification plates are drilled out and then placed in a stolen vehicle of the same make and model, thus we have the re-birthing of a so-called wrecked vehicle to take to the road as a legitimate vehicle thereby hiding a stolen vehicle behind these plates. Statistics show that every year in Australia 20 000 vehicles vanish into thin air never to be seen again, with an estimated 5 000 on-sold as whole, legitimate vehicles to unsuspecting consumers. South Australia and New South Wales are currently the only states that operate a 'written off' vehicle register. South Australia commenced recording details of wrecked and written-off vehicles in January 1991 and this legislation supports the operation of this register.

That would, of course, have been under a Labor Government—it did do something right! The regulations relating to written-off vehicles will be amended to ensure that the categories of wrecked vehicles in New South Wales that are precluded from being registered in that state are also precluded from registration in South Australia. This aims to ensure that South Australia does not become a dumping ground for such vehicles from New South Wales, as has obviously been the case for many years.

The amendment also covers the eventuality that other states and territories may introduce similar legislation. I only hope that they certainly see the advantage of this as soon as possible, because to have a deal between New South Wales and South Australia would be great, but unless it is Australia-wide, it certainly would lose much of its effect.

As I said earlier, the bill is quite technical in nature, but nevertheless quite timely. We need to correct anomalies that appear on the statutes, always keeping in mind issues of law and order, to ensure that our state continues to be both a safe and fair society in which to live.

I congratulate minister Laidlaw as a very diligent Minister of Transport. Her policy committee, of which I am honoured to be a member, works very well. This bill is yet another piece of legislation that has come through that committee.

*Ms Key interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** The member raises the matter of the southern O-Bahn. It is a living issue but I believe she is correct. I certainly support the bill.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I just want to thank members for their contribution to this debate. I think both speakers have acknowledged the importance of the legislation and the change that has taken place, so it should go through the House without delay. There are amendments to be passed, and I would urge the House to support them.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 10 passed.

New clause 10A.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

Page 5, after line 11—Insert new clause 10A.

Amendment of s. 81A—Provisional licences

10A. Section 81A of the principal act is amended by striking out from subsection (1)(c) (as substituted by section 50(b) of the Motor Vehicles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 1999) "committing an offence" and substituting "and offence committed or allegedly committed".

New clause inserted.

New clause 10B.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

After clause 10A—Insert new clause 10B.

Amendment of s. 81B—Consequences of holder of learner's permit, provisional licence or probationary licence contravening conditions, etc.

10B. Section 81B of the principal act is amended—

(a) by striking out paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and substituting the following paragraphs:

(ab) a person expiates an offence of contravening a prescribed condition allegedly committed while the holder of a learner's permit, probationary licence or provisional licence; or

(b) demerit points are incurred by a person and, in consequence, the total number of demerit points recorded against the person in respect of offences committed or allegedly committed while the holder of a learner's permit or a provisional licence equals or exceeds four;.

(b) by inserting in subsection (4) "or allegedly committed" after "committed";

(c) by inserting in subsection (9)(b) (as substituted by section 52(e) of the Motor Vehicles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 1999) "or allegedly committed" after "committed" wherever it occurs.

New clause inserted.

New clause 10C.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

After clause 10B—Insert new clause 10C.

Insertion of s.98AB

10C. The following section is inserted in Part 3B of the principal act before section 98B:

Interpretation

98AB. (1) In this Part, a reference to an offence committed by a person includes a reference to an offence allegedly committed by a person that the person has expiated.

(2) In this Part—

"expiate" includes pay the amount payable in connection with an infringement notice or penalty notice issued under a law of another state or territory of the commonwealth in respect of an alleged offence.

New clause inserted.

Clauses 11 and 12 passed.

New clause 12A.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

Page 5, after line 21—Insert new clause 12A as follows:

Amendment of s. 33—Road closing and exemptions for road events

12A. Section 33 of the principal act is amended by striking out from subsection (3) 'advertise a copy of the order in two newspapers, one being a newspaper circulating generally in the state' and substituting 'cause the order to be advertised in the prescribed manner'.

Amendment carried; new clause inserted.

Clauses 13 to 19 passed.

New clause 19A.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I move:

Page 7, after line 28—Insert new clause as follows:

Amendment of s. 160—Defect notices

19A. Section 160 of the principal act (as amended by section 96 of the Motor Vehicles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 1999) is amended—

(a) by striking out from subsection (4a) 'motor';

(b) by striking out from subsection (4b) 'motor';

(c) by striking out from subsection (4c)(c) 'motor';

(d) by striking out from subsection (5) 'motor';

(e) by striking out from subsection (5a) 'motor';

(f) by striking out from subsection (5b) 'motor';

(g) by striking out from subsection (5c)(c) 'motor';

(h) by striking out subparagraph (ii) of subsection (5c)(g) and substituting the following subparagraph:

(ii) a certificate (a 'clearance certificate') has been issued by a member of the police force, an inspector or a vehicle registration authority certifying that the repairs required by the notice have been made; and

(i) by striking out from subsection (5d) 'motor';

(j) by striking out from subsection (5f) 'motor';

(k) by striking out from subsection (5g) 'motor';

(l) by striking out from subsection (7)(a)(ii) 'motor';

(m) by inserting after subsection (14) the following subsection:

(15) Where a copy of a defect notice or clearance certificate is required to be sent to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, the notice or certificate may be sent in electronic form.

New clause inserted.

Remaining clauses (20 and 21) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** This afternoon I want to talk a little about the issue of getting people from non-traditional university backgrounds into university. I choose this time to do so because we are starting a school term in which many young people will be making decisions about what they do next year. They will make decisions that will determine whether they have a wide or narrow range of career options. In an environment where there is not employment for everyone and where labour force participation rates are sometimes low, particularly in this state, it is really important that young people equip themselves to have the best chance in life. If we look at information available about unemployment rates and rates of participation in the labour force, we find that the unemployment rate for people who have a higher degree is 4.6 per cent, with a participation rate of 91.9 per cent. For those with a postgraduate diploma, which is often an employment related qualification, the unemployment rate is only 2.3 per cent, with a high participation rate of 90.3 per cent. For those who did not complete upper secondary school, the unemployment rate is 11.3 per cent, with a participation rate of only 66.6 per cent. Those figures are for 1998.

Although I do not have the figures in front of me, we know the more education one has, the more one's earnings increase. It is summed up easily by saying, 'The more you learn, the more you earn.' It is really important that we ensure that children from all areas are able to maximise their chances of getting good jobs and experience as few periods of unemployment as possible. We must also ensure that they are able to participate in the work force and not drop out of it because they are totally discouraged and do not see that a job is available for them. In addition, we must ensure that they can contribute to an economy which is increasingly demanding higher levels of education. When I got my degree, about 3 per cent of the community had university qualifications. Now about 16.9 per cent of the Adelaide community has a university degree.

However, in the electorate of Reynell we find that this is just not the case, and not many people have university

experience. For instance, in Morphet Vale only 5.8 per cent of the community has a university qualification, compared with, as I said, the Adelaide average of 16.9 per cent. In Hackham West, it is only 3.1 per cent; in Reynella, it is 6.2 per cent. This indicates that at present the people of Reynell are not getting their fair share of access to jobs with the most security and income earnings.

I do not want anything I say to be taken as meaning that people with trade qualifications or without qualifications are not vital to our community. They simply are, but the world is changing and the jobs of the future will demand increasing levels of education. In fact, some estimates say that by 2020, 40 per cent of jobs in the community will require university education. That means that we will have to get a move on to ensure that a lot of our young people, and some of the older people who are looking for a new career, will have a chance to participate in the economy that will exist in 2020.

One of the things I really enjoy about my job is attending year seven graduations. At those graduations, the children normally introduce each other, and they tell us where their friend is going to school and their career aspirations. I hear all sorts of interesting career aspirations. One year, I was impressed by the work that one teacher must have been doing in educating children about the importance of the marine ecology, because about a quarter of the class wanted to be marine biologists of some form. I did not know whether we would need 25 per cent of the population to be marine biologists, but I encouraged them to achieve in whatever they did. Generally, I find that well over half the students indicate that they want jobs that involve going to university.

Given the figures I provided about the number of people in the local community who have university qualifications, it is pretty clear that most of those children will not have parents who have been to university. They may not have parents who know anyone other than teachers who have been to university. Yet a lot of the research demonstrates that people who attend university are most likely to have a father who has also attended university. About 50 per cent of people who attend university are the children of fathers who attended university. This does not allow much scope for the children of Reynell unless we do something. I was fortunate enough to secure the services of a parliamentary intern, Eleanor Marsh, who conducted an extensive study into low participation rates in universities, focussing particularly on factors that might be present in the electorate of Reynell. Those findings are included in a report entitled, 'The value of higher education—risks and opportunities for residents of Reynell.' That report is lodged in the parliamentary library, and I have provided copies of it to the high schools in my area and to Flinders University.

The methodology used was to research the matter from the books and then to conduct some focus groups and surveys in Christies Beach High School where the Principal, Di Garwood, and many teachers very generously cooperated in the study because they too want to know what they can do to improve the career aspirations of the children and their likely career outcomes. The findings certainly indicated that the issue is as much aspiration as opportunity.

Certainly, there are problems in terms of young people from the Reynell area where there is a lot of poverty and where a number of children are required to work to supplement the family's income. The barriers to going to university, however, were not necessarily financial. Although HECS was the biggest barrier, it did not represent a majority reason. Things such as not being likely to get to year 12; education

being too hard; not knowing what it meant; not knowing what the outcome would be; not being certain there would be a job at the end of it; and not thinking that university would be an enjoyable experience were all factors concerning why some students and their parents who were surveyed thought these young people would not be going to university.

Ms Marsh came up with 35 recommendations about action to improve the outcomes for students, including mature age students, in Reynell. Her recommendations include measures to provide extra support in some key subject areas required for university but, in particular, they focus on the need to work with parents and students to give them a better understanding of what happens at university and to let them know that it really can be fun. There is a general understanding, but not a clear understanding, that it is probably better in terms of jobs. There needs to be the opportunity for parents and students alike, well before the children get to year 12, to understand that university does improve their options—important jobs that will be available to them as a result of going to university; a shrinking number of jobs that will be available to them if they do not go to university; some idea of what it is like to go to university; and how successful they can be in life with the help of a university education.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** In the first instance I want to draw attention to a matter about which I have already had something to say. I refer to what is going on in the area of people who are owners of residential properties and therefore subject to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal and the law associated with its operations. I am referring to and complaining about the problem we have under the present law with the tenants from hell who wreck a property in no time and walk away with impunity. Unless we fix that problem, we will not attract capital and people with their life savings to invest in real estate in this state and thereby provide the quantity of rental accommodation that is needed to meet the demands in the market.

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** The member for MacKillop knows what I am talking about, and I am sure that other members likewise have had constituents come to them with the same problem. People who have saved a small nest egg from one quarter or another, or who have set out diligently to buy a property to provide accommodation for their children, if they are people who live in the country with children in their early adult years for whom they wish to provide accommodation in the city as they study and develop their professional abilities, thereafter have properties available for rental but there are fewer of them now because such people as may have the money or who are willing otherwise to make the effort to set aside the funds to service the mortgage debt that they incur are now deciding not to do it because they have insufficient control over the kinds of tenants who will get into those premises and the damage that can be done by those tenants before they can be removed.

The law at present is unbalanced and heavily weighted in favour of these tenants from hell as opposed to the interests of the landlord. It was a problem previously where landlords exploited the tenants. That is no longer the case. If members talk to someone like Mr John George, who runs Whittles, he can give you chapter and verse on score upon score of such instances to which I refer that have caused his clients who own property (which his firm manages for them) great cost. Now it is costing us—you and I, and other members in this place and South Australians—higher household insurance

premiums where those properties are insured. We share the cost of the risk that is borne across the board by the industry when the insurance industry underwrites that risk of the rental premises. Tenants from hell come along, wreck the premises, refuse to make any payment and do a runner and disappear into the night leaving the damage behind them.

I want to hear from the Premier what he has written in response to the letter (which he would have received) from Mr Ross Koster of Wakefield Street, Kent Town, who is a person who has written to the Premier about one such problem. He has had a hell of a difficulty—indeed, has failed—to get satisfaction under the law. We need to tell the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, too, that it ought to make some subjective interpretations of the law, where it exercises discretion where the law is ambiguous, which is more in favour and in keeping with the interests of the landlord, than it has been prepared to do in the past. It is not there to screw the interests of the landlord—the owner of the property—and the provision of rental property is as much in our interests (as members of parliament) as it is in the interests of the tenant, the person who seeks to live in the premises. There needs to be proper balance between the interests of the person who is making the investment to provide the rental accommodation, with those in need of it.

I await the Premier's response to Mr Koster so that I can see it when Mr Koster receives it. He wrote on 26 January and has not yet received a response. The 26 February is one month; 26 March, two months; 26 April, three months; and then some: that is a bit longwinded.

The next matter I wish to address is that of the inadequacy of the exchange lines available in some country areas. Now days, more people wish to go on the internet, and have purchased computers enabling them to do so, theoretically. However, they find that the numbers of lines available as compared with the need are insufficient because of two factors. Firstly, the average time on the internet is half an hour. Certainly many people take more time than if they were using it as a medium of conversational communication by using it for the computer to search information and engage in the other multitude of activities that are possible.

The worst thing for country people in that context is that the copper wire is a very slow medium for the conduct of the signals from the computer to the service provider and then out to the source of information in the world where it comes back

through the service provider to that exchange, down the wire again, and the wire acts as a bit of a choke. Things are slow if you are travelling on wire hardware. So, that takes up more time. People on their computers at home take up more lines and they are held for longer. That matter needs to be addressed, because now we have the situation to which I referred in the grievance I had earlier in the day where, when you try to ring for an ambulance or other emergency services if you live in the country, you cannot get through because all the lines are constantly engaged. That is an inadequacy which must be addressed as a matter of urgency. Telstra has the technology to address it; it also has the social obligation to do so and we need to ensure that it meets its social obligation.

In my electorate in particular the person responsible is a very reasonable and diligent, hard-working person trying to deliver the services, but it is not possible for the hardware to cope. Management higher up in Telstra must make a commitment immediately to provide that additional number of lines required and/or speed up the process by installing such other alternative technology as necessary to replace the old-fashioned now redundant copper wire type transmissions. If it were in the city we would hear plenty of it: it would be on the front of the paper and on all the gripe sessions and soap box programs on radio and television. However, because it is out in the country it is too far to go to collect the evidence. It is high time something was done.

The other matter I wish to mention is that of the necessity for us as a parliament to provide a grandfather clause for those people who are providing professional services, but did not have the means of getting the adequate qualifications to provide them, in town planning. The way in which Mr Michael Penhall in my electorate has been treated in that respect is inadequate. We need a grandfather clause that enables Mr Penhall to continue. What previous ministers did to give him limited professional status was ripped off him by a public servant on 20 April this year, and in my opinion that is not fair; nor is it in the public interest, because Mr Penhall cannot get access to the internet to do his studies to get his diploma to enable him to continue working for the council that employs him, and that is crook.

Time expired.

Motion carried.

At 5.28 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 3 May at 10.30 a.m.