

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 16 May 2002

The **SPEAKER (Hon. I.P. Lewis)** took the chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.  
(Continued from 15 May. Page 220.)

**Mrs HALL (Morialta):** It has been more than a decade now since there was a well-based controversy about a state election result. The changes way back in 1970, in breaking the electoral imbalance, and the fairness provisions of post 1989 had, most of us believed, removed the impact of rorts (real or imagined) and distortions (real or imagined) from our electoral system, and anyone who cared to think about our system—and indeed many in this chamber have and do—prior to the last election on 9 February would have assumed that work of the Electoral Commission would, with a plus or minus effect by error or chance, result in the election of a government that represented the majority will of the people of this state.

We know from the electoral results published by the Electoral Commission that the Liberal Party received a majority of votes in the state, and the Labor Party received a minority of the votes, and the Attorney-General well knows it. It is not the first time it has happened. We know of the well publicised and controversial results of 1989. The will of the people has now been subverted because the calculations of the Electoral Commission, used to draw its last distribution, were thrown out of the window in the electorate of Hammond. As we all know now Labor's vote peaked in that electorate at 3 368 votes, or 17.2 per cent of the vote. The Liberal Party won 21 of the 23 booths on first preferences and won 41 per cent of the primary vote. Interestingly, as I am sure you would know, Mr Speaker, more than 80 per cent of the voters in Hammond voted against the Australian Labor Party. It is well recorded history now on radio, television and in the newspapers that the electorate of Hammond was promised one thing and it was delivered another. However, I guess it is inappropriate for me to go further on that subject at the moment because, as we all know, it is going to be settled in a court in the future.

I would like to move from the electorate of Hammond and the result across South Australia to the matter of the campaign in the electorate of Morialta. I particularly want to refer to Labor's dirty tricks and dishonest campaign that was conducted in the last few days prior to the election. It is fair to say that you could be excused, if you did not happen to have a magnifying glass in your bag or your pocket, for thinking that the distribution of a brochure in the last few days was carried out by a very independent, non-prejudiced individual, because way down on the back page it has a signature that says 'Authorised by Ian Hunter, 11 South Terrace, Adelaide. Printed by Europa Press.' We all know who Ian Hunter is, but the vast majority of the electorate have no idea who he is, because they do not know what he is the Secretary—or whatever the title is—of the Australian Labor Party.

Again, further into this session, I have no doubt there is going to be some debates on electoral honesty and the

implications of electoral dishonesty. In the future, I shall be speaking about this event and some of the activities of members opposite in trying to encourage assistance for their candidates in seats as it affects preferences. Fortunately for me the Labor campaign in the electorate of Morialta was unsuccessful, and I believe their attempt to continue to discredit me as it relates to the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium fortunately has not been rewarded by electoral success in Morialta, although it is fair to say that it has certainly damaged attendances at Hindmarsh and the game of soccer, and I have no doubt that, despite the professed partisan support for the game and sport of soccer, the Labor Party does not in any way adhere to what it says in public. This brochure was misleading, it was dishonest, and a formal complaint has been lodged with the Electoral Commission. Moving on from the electorate of Morialta—

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**Mrs HALL:** We understand your involvement, Mr Attorney, but fortunately it was most unsuccessful. Mr Speaker, the defeat of the Liberal Party in this house in March, despite its winning a majority of votes at the election has, as we know, changed the government, and presumably for the next four years we will have to live with that decision. But from the controversial beginning of the 50th parliament I believe it is appropriate to put on record a number of the very significant and major achievements of the previous government and to pay tribute to a number of the members who are no longer sitting in this chamber.

The passage of time and, I believe, the history books will clearly show and recognise the success that was generated for this state by the previous government, starting with the unprecedented growth, development and investment levels that were inherited by this incoming government. As we know, too, after nearly a century of talks and promises, the Adelaide-Darwin Railway is a reality. The reduction of the state debt has also occurred, after the debacle of the State Bank that all members opposite usually, conveniently, forget to mention at any point.

There has been, also, industrial relations reform, job creation, reduction in unemployment, industry investment in the car industry and call centres in particular. We have the success of aquaculture, food, wine and tourism. We have experienced the opening and operation of the internationally recognised Adelaide Convention Centre; magnificent sporting facilities; WorkCover reform; investment in health, education, transport, the environment, the police and water.

The previous government has left great legacies of public infrastructure, together with investment, growth and success that are, deservedly and at long last, now being enjoyed in regional South Australia, and I hope that continues. I could go on for some time about these many achievements, and each of us would have a different priority. However, I want to pay tribute to the leadership and energy of John Olsen, Graham Ingerson, David Wotton, John Oswald, Steve Condous and Michael Armitage, who were in this house prior to the last election. Some of these members, as we know, were more colourful and controversial than others, but collectively they totalled more than 100 years of service to the public and political system, as well as the Liberal Party. I know they will be remembered and recognised for their specific and individual contributions.

In another house, our colleagues Trevor Griffin, Jamie Irwin and Legh Davis made a significant contribution to this state, this parliament and to the Liberal Party over many

years, and I know we wish them well in whatever their future endeavours may involve.

I believe the list of achievements of the former government is indeed a challenge for this Labor government in the future: there were many. So many of them were far reaching and will stretch well into the future, and this government will not be able to tarnish the reputation of so many achievements: from the macro and the spin-offs of such projects as the railways; to the micro spin-offs of so many investment areas and support of our dynamic regions.

It will be interesting to see if this government is as fair and reforming across the state as was the case in the years of government since 1993. We have no doubt that a judgment will be made four years down the track, and I think March 2006 will prove to be an interesting month in the calendar, because we will see whether the public remarks and comments of the Labor Party and the Labor government are real and reforming, or just political puff.

I must say that I do not believe the early signs are good, because we have seen demonstrated over the last couple of weeks that a couple of the ministers have been a bit fast and loose with the truth. We have had the health minister in question time, time and again having different stories about timing and memory lapses over the mergers between the Repat and Flinders hospitals. The Treasurer has displayed histrionics with his version, memory and timing lapses over the dollars that were included, or not included, in forward estimates for teachers' pay rises. We all understand the theatre of this chamber but, if you add that to a dose of arrogance, I find it extraordinary that we are nearly into the third month of a Labor government and we are still seeing this in operation.

One issue is particularly frightening—it is worse than all of that—and it has the potential to affect state development. It is a very serious threat. In addition to the normal political swipe and uncalled for remarks questioning the value of our internationally acclaimed magnificent Convention Centre, and the sword of Damocles now hanging over the head of the Entertainment Centre, we have been subjected to constant rhetoric and been alerted in a very public sense to the threat and the irrational and vindictive carryings on about a possible decision to close the National Wine Centre. Those remarks are without doubt an attack on the wine industry of this state, which has had a pretty impressive score card of success over the past few years.

Members have outlined some interesting figures on previous occasions in different debates, but the wine industry directly contributed more than \$2.2 billion to the South Australian economy in 2000-01, and estimates are certainly out there to show that this will increase in future. The dramatic increase over the past few years is directly attributable in my view to not only the quality of South Australian wines and the reputation of Australian wines internationally but also to the support and encouragement it received from the previous government. We know that our wine exports have increased by 240 per cent in the past five years and we know that South Australia accounts for 65 per cent of the total exports, and the estimates are that this will increase by another \$450 million over the next five years.

Importantly, the wine industry is proud to say that more than 9 000 people are employed in grape growing and winemaking in South Australia, and that employment has increased by 4 500 since 1991. There are, importantly, another 1 700 at least employed in the local tourism industry, and nearly 3 000 in retailing and wholesaling. Of particular

interest to me are the specific links between the wine and tourism industries, both important industries for the future of this state.

The current estimates available show that \$316 million is spent in the wine tourism industries in this state, with \$135 million spent directly at wineries and \$181 million spent directly in local businesses. When we look at the way that this is providing investments for the future, it is hugely important because there is a \$6 million investment in the Jacob's Creek visitor centre. We can all know and be very proud of some of the investments happening in other areas and regions of South Australia. These figures clearly show that we cannot afford another state or territory to make in-roads or take advantage of our well deserved reputation and claim that we are the premier wine state of this country.

The Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, took great credit for the original initiative of a wine interpretive centre to be based in the Barossa Valley, which we know has finally evolved into the National Wine Centre. As I have said before, and we have all heard in this chamber, the breathtaking success of the wine industry, particularly in this state, and the much proclaimed bipartisan support for the National Wine Centre, is now threatened with closure. It is absolutely crazy and irrational and one can only think it is vindictive. Imagine what would have happened if the early leaders and legislators—

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Attorney-General is continually interjecting which is out of order and which is not helpful in the conduct of the house. I ask the honourable member immediately to refrain.

**Mrs HALL:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection but I am ignoring the honourable member. We can only imagine what would have happened if our early leaders and legislators in South Australia had adopted that sort of policy approach. We would not now have an art gallery, a library or a museum, just for starters. Some of the speeches made by members of the Labor Party, including its leader, during the debate, are very instructive regarding the wine centre, because they talk about the great bipartisan support for the National Wine Centre. They talk about the horrors of the alternative centre to be located in Melbourne with the support of Jeff Kennett and the Liberal government there, or even, 'God forbid, in Canberra.'

They talk about the fact that the centre could not have proceeded without bipartisan support. They talk about its importance as a link and connection with the wine tourism industry. They talk about its strong support. They talk about the potential to capitalise on a dynamic, growing and successful industry. *Hansard* is absolutely peppered with accolades and bipartisan support; and we are now seeing, in my view, the sheer audacity and hypocrisy of members of the Labor Party and, sadly, Labor leaders who are now attempting to blame circumstances and factors quite outside the control of the board or management to try to give themselves an excuse to close this magnificent facility.

We have had the expertise and status of prominent South Australians, such as John Pendrigh, Perry Gunner, Brian Croser, Rick Allert and their supporting directors from New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. What concerns me is that these people do not need the wine centre to be based here, in South Australia. They believe they were committed to creating a national tourism icon and a national centre from which the benefits of our wine industry could be shared around the country. I believe it is quite extraordinary,

when one looks at the history of this development, that the pronouncements of the Labor leaders and the Labor government have such long range potential to affect our state, employment and investment.

The reality is that, whether or not they like it, the factors outlined by the tourism minister, earlier this week if not last week, as to why she has instituted a review into that great Bannockburn icon, the Entertainment Centre, included two very real factors: first, the state of the Australian dollar; and, secondly, 11 September. But, in the case of the wine centre, a couple of other factors are involved: first, as we know, the year 2001 gave us the hottest summer for about 150 years, which caused the loss of nearly two working weeks of construction, not just at the wine centre but at the Convention Centre.

We then had a wet winter which affected areas that were very important to the construction program of the wine centre and which were significant factors in the delay of the opening; and that delay caused a three month loss of income in the early days. In addition to the condition of the Australian dollar and the horrors of 11 September, we had the Ansett collapse. It is all very well for members opposite to ignore that as a factor but it was real and they know it; it just does not suit their argument to factor it in. We had a petrol crisis at about the same time. I find it extraordinary that members opposite will not even acknowledge those factors.

The Premier and the Treasurer constantly refer to the \$40 million investment in this facility. What they fail to dissect is that the federal government invested \$12 million, the wine industry itself invested in cash and resources, plus on an ongoing basis more than \$5 million, and the state government put in \$14 million. Occasionally it would be really good if they were honest in that deliberation.

The constant threat of closure might be self-fulfilling if government does not back off, but maybe that is what they want. The prospect of this facility going to another state is real and I believe that, prior to these attacks by the new government, the books would show that bookings for that facility were rolling in. It would be very interesting for the government to look at the confirmed bookings pre 9 February and the confirmed bookings post 9 February because people need to know that a facility that they are booking for something important is going to be there. They ought to have a look at the explanations that have been given for the cancellations.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Unley and the Attorney are breaking the rules of the house. Every member has an opportunity to speak in the Address in Reply debate. Extend the courtesy please to the member who is currently speaking. The member for Morialta.

**Mrs HALL:** I believe that the National Wine Centre should be given a chance; it deserves a chance. Labor has constantly boasted bipartisan support. It should not join the well-known South Australian sport of knocking and tearing apart. They are experts at that, but these irrational threats are devaluing the business of the Wine Centre, they are devaluing the investment that has been made by many individuals, including two governments, and I believe it devalues our reputation as the premier wine state, which South Australia so rightly deserves. In opposition, Labor ridiculed the prospect of this facility being interstate. If they do not watch their words and their decision-making process, I believe it is a very real possibility.

My view is that the wine industry has earned the right and deserves our support to continue the working partnerships that existed pre 9 February. We know that the National Wine Centre is one of a kind but it needs time, as we understand, when we think about the factors that have affected its current operation. It is one of a kind. There is no national wine centre anywhere else in the world and I believe it is something that is important to our future.

The mission statement of the centre is to become a world-class interpretive, educational and entertainment centre representative of the whole Australian wine industry. I urge the government to support it in meeting those objectives, and it does need a couple more years. The government ought to think about and support the links that that facility and the industry that it represents have with the food industry, education, manufacturing, transport and tourism, and it should stop punishing the wine industry. It has already cancelled the Barossa Music Festival. There is huge industry concern at the cancellation of the underwrite for the hugely successful Barossa Under the Stars event. I believe it is an attack on success and investment in the future and I hope very sincerely that this government does not revert to its ideological prejudices that we have seen so much in the past.

In the last few minutes I would like to say that I am very proud to have been elected as the first member for Morialta. It is a new name, it has new boundaries and a number of new electors, and certainly a range of new issues. For those who do not know, the name Morialta comes from the Aboriginal word 'moriatta', meaning 'ever flowing', and of course it is a reference to the Morialta Falls. It covers an area of more than 80 square kilometres and comprises an interesting range of suburbs from the Hills to what is referred to as the plains. It has a magnificent range of associations, schools, sporting bodies, multicultural communities, historical groups and service clubs, and it is contained within the boundaries of three council areas.

There are three very specific issues on which I hope to be working with the government to find solutions for in the next four years. One is the Thorndon Park Recreation Reserve, a very popular regional centre, and I am pleased that the Premier has chosen to continue a working committee to look at options for its future. There is absolutely no doubt that the local community wants to see a water-focussed facility continue, but obviously the main questions in the future will be how much it will cost and who will pay it. I pay tribute to the cooperation of the Campbelltown council in trying to work within the parameters set down to reach a solution. I hope that that can be found and that the matter does not need to go to the courts.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**Mrs HALL:** They have an excellent mayor and an excellent council. Another area that needs attention is the new section in the electorate that covers the very important area of the Adelaide Hills around Montacute and Norton Summit. They have unique and historical aspects of horticultural production to resolve, and again I have no doubt that this important community issue will be the subject of much debate in the future.

The relocation of the Magill Training Centre is an issue that needs to be progressed. It is complex and naturally has involved significant funding issues in the past and no doubt will do so in the future. Sadly, the NIMBY syndrome is a factor that has been deeply involved with this issue, and I look forward to talking about it with the minister in the future.

I would like to pay a number of tributes to those in some areas of the tourism industry, but time will beat me, so I would just like to say that, apart from the magnificent people with whom I had the privilege to work over the years, I must say I was lucky to enjoy the best group of chief executives in government. I pay tribute to their professionalism and personal commitment, people such as Bill Spurr, Pieter van der Hoeven, Pamela Del Nin, Belinda Dewhirst and Andrew Daniels, and their very professional team of people. They all had talent and energy and an extraordinary commitment to the tourism industry. I know that their work will continue. Also, I say 'thank you' to the members of the boards who served all of those areas, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

There are a few congratulations I would like to run through, particularly to the new members who have joined us here. I want to offer special congratulations to my colleague the member for Hartley. If one looks at *Hansard* over the last four years, he has been subjected to the most amazing abuse, cynicism and ridicule from members opposite. He showed them quite clearly that hard work and strong campaigning over four years is rewarded, and I think he deserves extra special congratulations.

I want to thank the electors of Morialta, and I give a commitment to work tirelessly in the future for their electorate. I want to thank my electorate assistant, Angela Forgone, the work of the Liberal Party members, volunteers and supporters, my campaign team for their dedication, energy and enthusiasm, and to my many friends for their constant and unwavering support.

I would conclude my remarks by congratulating our Governor, Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, and pay tribute to her incredible community activities and energetic work over many decades. Her capacity to generate pride in personal achievement, always tempered with an amazing honesty and humility, I am sure would break all sales records if there was a way to package it up and brand it, 'South Australia: simply the best.' I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

### **BAISE MOI**

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I rise to apologise to the house for an inadvertent misleading statement made during question time on Monday.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Will the Attorney-General just withhold his remarks. The house will come to order so that we can hear the explanation.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** In answer to a question from the member for West Torrens concerning the French film *Baise Moi*, I indicated that I had sent one of my ministerial assistants on foot to deliver the decision of the Commonwealth Classification Review Board to the Palace Cinema. That statement was not correct. What happened was that I had instructed my office to send a facsimile to the Palace Cinema attaching the review board's media release notifying the result of the *Baise Moi* appeal. My office attempted to do that but had difficulty communicating with the Palace Cinema's facsimile machine. My staff informed me of this, at which time I instructed my ministerial assistant to hand deliver the media release to them. Directly after that conversation, our

facsimile went through successfully. My ministerial assistant did not consider it necessary to hand deliver the release in those circumstances. It was only this morning that my assistant saw my comments in the house on Monday and advised me of the true situation. I apologise to the house.

### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

Debate resumed.

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Social Justice):** In acknowledging Her Excellency the Governor's speech, I also mention, despite being a republican, how impressed I am with the inclusive nature that our Governor is displaying, her accessibility and also her dedication to social justice. That has shone through whenever I have met her at functions.

I want to address this house on the election campaign. I am very proud to be the first member for Ashford, and I note that for the first time in 90 years the very old electorate of Unley has been cut in half. The boundary is now Goodwood Road and the electorate of Ashford is on the western side of Goodwood Road. I also note that the electorate of the member for Unley (Mr Mark Brindal) is on the other side of Goodwood Road, and I am sure we will work together very closely to ensure that our area is well represented. We also share a number of council areas, in particular the Unley council, and I am also privileged to have the West Torrens council and the Marion council within the area that I now represent. I would like to comment on their cooperation and support with regard to services in the area for which they are responsible.

There are a number of people whom I want to acknowledge with regard to the Ashford election campaign, in particular my electorate officer Lindy McAdam, who not only ran the electorate office during the campaign and ensured that all the constituents were responded to and supported but also, in her own time, basically ran the campaign. I pay a tribute to her and her expertise in what ended up being a very successful campaign in a marginal seat.

I also acknowledge the contribution of Melissa Nicolaou, Wendy Georganas, Geoff McCaw, Michael Kustermann, and Louisa Sasopoulos, all of whom supported the campaign in their own time. I was also very much assisted by the Hon. Carolyn Pickles and the Hon. Anne Levy. I pay a tribute to Carolyn for her support during the time that I have been in this house and for her ongoing support in her retirement. I wish her well and hope that she has an opportunity perhaps to have more fun now that she is not a member of the Legislative Council.

I had a very good campaign committee. Fortunately, my friends are still my friends; they are very long suffering and have continued to come to fundraising events. In fact, some of them have paid me not to come to fundraising events, but we must have enough money to run what most members here would understand is a very expensive campaign—although maybe not by American standards. Certainly, however, fundraising is a priority for all of us.

I also thank my family—in particular my long suffering husband, Kevin Purse, who has not only to put up with the workload that I think everyone here would understand is required to support an electorate but also the even higher level of work and commitment that is needed to do the job of a minister. The rest of my family, also long suffering, supported my campaign. I was particularly grateful to my mother who unfortunately died just after the election but who

was determined to help whenever she could, even when she was in hospital. That was really beyond the call of duty, but I appreciate very much my mother and particularly my father and the rest of my brothers' and sisters' support, with their families. I have made the choice to run again as a candidate, and unfortunately they shouldered a lot of the responsibility of supporting me in the campaign.

I welcome to parliament all the new members on both sides of the house. I hope they find the next four years as rewarding as I have found the past 4½ years. I wish them well and look forward to getting to know them better, particularly some of the members on the other side, and working with them on as many projects as possible. I know that people get annoyed with the term 'bipartisan', but on many occasions there is an opportunity for members of this house to work together.

Having been a proud member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee in the last term with our Chairperson, the member for Schubert, Ivan Venning, I feel very positive about some of the collaborative work that can take place. Given some of the difficult issues that have come up within this place, I have also been very impressed with the amount of cooperation that has been shown, particularly by the women members of parliament. In particular, the Hons Diana Laidlaw and Sandra Kanck have been outstanding in the way in which they have worked with Labor women on women's issues and equal opportunity issues. It is a little known fact that the women in this place often cooperate on a range of issues and get on quite well. I thank them and certainly hope that the women in this chamber can continue that spirit of cooperation.

*Ms Bedford interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** Especially the women who are in the chamber at the moment. Yes, I must say that is very much noted. Probably because of my history in the trade union movement but also because I have managed to work with them in my other life, I am absolutely delighted that the members for Colton and Cheltenham are now on board. I also make particular mention of the Hons Gail Gago and John Gazzola and look forward to working closely with them on progressive campaigns within this government.

The election campaign was quite positive for me this time. Believe it or not, my opponent, Peter Panagaras, who was the liberal candidate, and Michelle Drummond, who was the Greens candidate, both worked to make sure that we had a very positive campaign. No negative or personal propaganda about candidates went out, and the other candidates—not exclusively, but mainly—abided by a very decent campaign. I mention that, because for me it was a very difficult time, because my mother was very ill and died after the election campaign, and I felt I was getting support from the other candidates as well, who understood the emotional situation I was in during that campaign. I thank them for that.

The State Electoral Office was also very cooperative. We had to ask a number of questions about the operation of the campaign, and it was very helpful and speedy in its replies, so I thank it for that. I have come to know a number of organisations within the Ashford community, particularly in the new part of the electorate, and I must say that I am very impressed with the commitment from the different community organisations, centres, sporting clubs, Neighbourhood Watch groups—and so the list goes on.

I am very pleased to say that Ashford distinguishes itself by having a number of environmentalists to ensure that I understand the issues that they see as important; and being a

long-time environmentalist myself, I am very pleased to know there are quite a few others in the electorate. We have equal opportunity campaigners and people who are trying to look at infrastructure issues in the electorate, not the least of which are public education and transport. There are a number of inquiries at the electorate office in relation to these areas.

I also receive a lot of correspondence from constituents on issues to do with asylum seekers and refugees. I am very proud of the position and the views that have been coming forward from the electorate. Another lobby group within the electorate is for drug law reform. Again, I see this as a very positive aspect in the new electorate of Ashford.

Ashford is still a marginal seat, so the positive thing about that for me is that it will ensure that my attention will be very much on the ball. I want to be the member for Ashford for not only this term but also the next term. I think this will be ensured not only because of my commitment but also because this is not a seat to be taken for granted. I think a number of members in marginal seats see it as a badge of honour rather than a negative position. Although, when the state electoral boundaries are considered, I would prefer not having too much cut off, which is what happened to me last time when I was the member for Hanson—despite the fact that I had a positive win last time.

The issue about which I wish to talk in the Address in Reply is one which is being raised as a major issue, that is, disruptive and anti-social tenants, as they are quite often referred to. People in this house would know there has been a fair bit of media coverage recently noting the issue of anti-social behaviour by some trust tenants. Unfortunately, there have been negative comments about the trust's handling of such tenancies. The Hon. Nick Xenophon in the other place has asked the Statutory Authorities Review Committee to look into the trust's handling of complaints of disruptive and anti-social tenants. I do not have a problem with that, and I was delighted to be advised that the new chairperson of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee is the Hon. Bob Sneath—again, another distinguished ex-trade unionist—who will be enthusiastic to ensure that the committee not only looks at the issue but also comes up with recommendations, which I would be very pleased to hear about because this is such a difficult problem.

As I said, I do not have a problem with the committee's looking at this issue because living next door to a neighbour who makes your life a misery is not something one would wish on anyone—even your political enemies. I think that anything the trust can do to improve this situation would be a positive measure. As I said earlier, I am concerned that there has been undue focus on the practices of how the Housing Trust deals with disruptive tenants. I think that the media coverage, certainly recently, has reflected unduly on people who live in trust accommodation.

I have met a lot of trust tenants in my time. When I was on the Housing Trust board, I had a lot to do with this issue, which is not an easy issue to resolve. I think that everyone needs to remember that just because someone is a so-called disruptive or anti-social tenant does not necessarily mean they live in Housing Trust accommodation. As most members would know, one does not have to live in trust accommodation to be the neighbour from hell. That is not a prerequisite: many people in private tenancies and also people who own their own properties are difficult neighbours.

Antisocial behaviour is a whole of community issue that occurs, as I said, across tenancies—public and private, owner and rental. It is a complex issue and one that the trust cannot

resolve in isolation; hence the fact that the Statutory Authorities Committee will look into this issue is a positive step. What we need to do is develop sustainable solutions to change the attitudes and assumptions of people who engage in antisocial behaviour. The underlying causes of antisocial behaviour are complex and can take many different forms. There is evidence to suggest that antisocial behaviour is a consequence of broader issues such as social exclusion and marginalisation from economic and social activity arising from, for example, long-term unemployment, health problems, substance abuse and so on.

Unfortunately, the policies of the federal government have not been helpful in this area and have created added pressures for the state housing authorities, in my view. The implementation of housing reforms in 2000 and the consequential targeting of social housing to people in greatest need has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for Housing Trust services by people with complex or multiple needs who constantly encounter social exclusion. What I am really saying is that often the Housing Trust has had to pick up the responsibilities associated with a whole lot of other systems and policy mismanagement. That is, if you have a problem in South Australia, where do you go? You go to the Housing Trust and the Housing Trust officers, despite having the responsibility for shelter and accommodation, also end up having to sort out a whole lot of other—what these days is termed very nicely—complex needs, complex issues.

In the trust's experience, difficult and disruptive tenancy complaints fall into three main categories: first, minor disruption, which includes TV, stereo noise and the one-off neighbourhood dispute such as parties; secondly, more frequent repeated disruption such as unabated domestic disputes and harassment, regular bizarre or frightening behaviour and repeated disruptive parties; and, thirdly, serious or extreme disruption. This is defined as situations where there is actual physical danger or risk to safety and health. I know that as members of this house we have received complaints about all those issues. In fact, I would be surprised if there is any member in this house who has not received at least one of those categories of complaint.

The point we need to remember is that the number of trust tenants engaging in antisocial behaviour at any one time is relatively small, but their activities have a disproportionate effect on the quality of other tenants' lives. While accurate data on the number of serious disputes at any one time is not currently available, a recent internal study over a two-week period on how Housing Trust managers spend their time indicated that around 200 disruptive tenancy complaints are handled around the state each week. With around 50 000 ongoing tenancies, this translates to 0.4 per cent of all tenancies. It should be noted that some of these 200 would be repeat complaints.

When dealing with neighbourhood disputes and antisocial behaviour, the Housing Trust works in accordance with its difficult and disruptive tenancies policies and procedures. Where the trust is aware of disputes arising, or there is an ongoing dispute between tenants or between a tenant and member of the public, every effort is made by the trust to have the matter resolved through negotiation between the parties. In more serious cases of continuing conflict or dispute, consideration can be given to transferring tenants to alternative accommodation as an alternative to eviction. There is a general presumption that it is not appropriate to deal with problems of antisocial behaviour by moving the perpetrator. However, this strategy can diffuse the immediate

tensions and give all a fresh start. The trust recognises that the transfer may not always be successful, hence where a disruption of a serious or extreme nature subsequently occurs, eviction proceedings may be initiated by the trust.

As members would know, the trust is subject to the jurisdiction of the Residential Tenancies Act 1995. The trust considers eviction as a last resort and will generally only raise an action for eviction where all other attempts have failed. In 2000-01, 17 actions for eviction for difficult and disruptive behaviour were raised by the trust. All 17 were upheld and there were evictions.

The trust does not necessarily wish to promote an increase in the use of eviction to tackle antisocial behaviour. The trust recognises that the effective use of procedures and preventative action can and does stop antisocial behaviour. However, the trust is aware of the stress imposed on neighbourhoods by serious or persistent antisocial behaviour. In these circumstances, and where the perpetrators refuse to change their behaviour, eviction is seen as the most appropriate response. While the trust uses eviction as the last resort, an interested person may make an application under section 90 of the act for termination of a tenancy direct to the tribunal. Eviction proceedings initiated by tenants or private individuals have averaged around 25 per annum. However, this financial year this number has shown an increase, with approximately 50 cases being taken to the tribunal.

As one responds to the issues arising from housing's more complex needs, especially with regard to disruptive and antisocial behaviour, the trust has been developing a range of prevention and early intervention demonstration projects and strategies to address the issues. Through these projects, the trust, in conjunction with a range of other agencies, has been working intensively with high risk tenancies to address antisocial behaviour. These intensive management models have had a dramatic effect on reducing some of the major issues regarding difficult and disruptive behaviour.

The government, through the trust, is also looking at having an internal review of the Difficult and Disruptive Tenants Policy and Procedures. A steering group has been set up, which includes tenant representation, and has been formed to develop strategies and recommendations to address both those tenancies at 'risk' and issues impacting on neighbours affected by antisocial behaviour.

We believe that the most effective way to address antisocial behaviour may well be controversial, and therefore there is considerable debate within the housing arena to work out the best way to proceed. As part of the trust review, the government is looking at different strategies, things that have worked in the past, preventative strategies and, as I said, early intervention and enforcement strategies designed to encourage and enforce good behaviour. Briefly, I will outline some of the strategies the government is looking at. Some of them make good sense and have been in place for a while but I guess the emphasis has changed slightly. They are as follows:

- Appropriate allocation of tenancies including pre-allocation interviews. This practice is already in place for walkup flat groups and category 1 applicants and will be progressively extended to other property types, subject to resource constraints.
- Development of further training for staff to ensure that trust staff are able to respond effectively to report antisocial behaviour by quickly and formally acknowledging and investigating the complaint and initiating appropriate responses.

- Encouraging the use of independent mediation services where appropriate and considering strategies to increase community understanding and acceptance of the role that those community mediators can play.
- Engaging external bodies to support difficult and antisocial tenancies.
- Requiring the provision of evidence of a successful tenancy in the private rental market, for example, a reference from a previous landlord when considering applications for rehousing for tenants previously evicted for antisocial behaviour.
- Linking tenancies at risk wherever possible to supported tenancy projects where appropriate, intensive support is received.
- Rehousing of tenants previously evicted for antisocial behaviour to be conditional on participating in case management and linking with other support service providers, together with limited tenure duration and regular review.

The emphasis has really been, probably unfairly, on Housing Trust tenants in the traditional way in which we understand them. I think we also need to think about the fact that new forms of housing have now been negotiated, one of them being the very successful community housing area and also the fact that we now have a separate aboriginal housing authority, which is trying to deal with issues for indigenous people and make sure that the appropriate supports and types of housing are available. We also have now a number of organisations that get their support and impetus from non-government areas.

So, a mixture of housing is available, although there is certainly not enough. We know that there are at least 7000 people sleeping rough each night in the state, and I think that is a disgraceful statistic. Also, we have more and more people who are being deinstitutionalised, and I believe quite rightly, but we do not have enough support in place to make sure that those people do have the sort of supervision or support and organisational skills to enable them actually to operate as independent people.

This is a serious issue: disruptive tenancies are something that I view as important. However, we need to put the whole issue into context. When we look at the number of known disruptive tenancies just in the housing area itself, I think the media is over-exaggerating the contribution of Housing Trust or social housing people in that statistic.

The fact remains that evicting people is a solution in the short term, but where are those people supposed to get accommodation from after that? From my point of view, as the housing minister, we also have a responsibility as a government of making sure that we do not have people sleeping rough and that we do not continue to have people sleeping in the West Terrace Cemetery. Last night, for example, there would have been probably about 60 people sleeping in the cemetery—I do not know how they went because the rains have started to come in now—and we also have a number of people who sleep in the streets of Adelaide, not to mention the parkland area.

So, this is a big issue. Disruptive tenants are not acceptable. I do not want to see people suffering from antisocial behaviour by their neighbours, but we must put the issue into context. I want to make sure that members in this house bear in mind the comments I have made.

The other initiative that I should mention in closing is that I will be introducing seminars for House of Assembly members particularly, but also for their electorate staff.

Obviously, members of the Legislative Council will be invited also. I have asked the housing portfolio staff to put together a package to assist electorate officers in particular when they have people ringing or coming in with housing problems, so that we can make sure that at least all House of Assembly members (and, as I said, I am not excluding the Legislative Council from this) have information at their fingertips about how they can get immediate support and information.

Certainly, if members are in the same situation that I have been in a number of times where someone has been sleeping in their car for two weeks because they have had nowhere to go, we can try to have an immediate response available to the front-line people in our electorate offices, and also the members themselves. This is something that will be introduced shortly, and I hope that members of this house, in particular, take up that invitation and, as the housing minister, I can make sure that your staff in your electorate offices and you as members not only have that information but have that support.

**Mr McEWEN (Mount Gambier):** I rise to support the motion to adopt the Address in Reply. In so doing, I think I will do something quite novel: I will actually refer to the Address in Reply. I know that members in this place might be surprised—I doubt whether many of them have referred to the speech of Her Excellency Marjorie Jackson-Nelson. In referring to the speech of the Governor, I guess I can say, on behalf of all South Australians, that we have another great Governor. In recent times we have been blessed with our governors, who have managed to combine their official duties with their personalities and bring to the job something special. Certainly, our present Governor ('just call me Marj', as she said when she recently toured the hospital in my seat) endeared herself immediately to the people of my electorate, as I know she has to the whole state.

I return to the Governor's speech to open the second session of the 50th parliament. It talked about a state free of national nuclear waste dumps. I know we all have a vision that we must look after our own waste and that we do not wish to look after someone else's. When we consider that question, we ought to ask ourselves: who are we; could we take that same position, as local councils, and say that we wish to look after only our own waste and not that of the state? It would be an interesting approach if the people of Coober Pedy took that view of the world. Equally, as a state government, we say: we will look after our own waste and not the national waste. It is a view of the world.

If we take that view, we might also like to ask ourselves: what should we do if waste is generated as a consequence of something else we do? We mine significant amounts of uranium in this state, and I hope that during the debate we ask ourselves: will we accept back some of the waste that is created because of a product we provide to the rest of the world? I think there will be some interesting debate around that issue that is on the agenda for this 50th parliament.

Equally obviously, the Murray River is on the agenda. The Murray is a significant issue for us all, and I know that some progress is being made—or I thought that some progress was being made until I saw the federal budget on Tuesday. We talk about better hospitals and, again, health is a significant issue. Honesty and accountability in government is alluded to, and we have already seen the bills that relate to those issues. I hope that no-one, in looking at the honesty and accountability bills, thinks that previously governments have

been dishonest. I hope that they read more into it—the fact that we need to write tighter guidelines around our responsibilities in this place and the protections we need for ourselves and the assurances we need to give the state when we deliberate on matters. None of us should ever be placed in the position of having to compromise ourselves when deliberating on matters that are in the best interests of the state.

Certainly, economic development was referred to in the speech, and the success of Mitsubishi, in particular, and it was good to see the Premier of the day acknowledging in a bipartisan way the good work that the Olsen government had done in the lead-up to that successful outcome for all South Australians.

The speech refers to the extension of the role of the Ombudsman. There are a number of questions there—and, Mr Acting Speaker, I know that you in this chamber in the past have spent some time on that very issue. You and I will both look forward to the legislation that underpins that promise and see whether it stands up to scrutiny. Disclosure of family trusts, being an essential part of the disclosures not only of ministers but of all members, might pose a challenge for some people who have arranged their affairs in such a way that the way in which they do business is not immediately obvious to all concerned.

The speech goes on to talk about the appointment of the mining businessman Robert Champion de Crespigny. What a good selection that was, along with a number of others. It was interesting to see that Stephen Baker has been given a role by the present government. Again, that is a good choice. The government has looked beyond its immediate ideological background to choose people best able to assist it to provide advice on a number of fronts.

The speech talks about an essential services commission to protect the long-term interests of South Australian consumers with regard to price, quality and reliability of electricity. What an interesting challenge for us all. In privatising our assets, along with adopting the national electricity market—the second decision we had no choice in and the first was, to my mind, a spurious decision of the 49th Parliament—we created a private monopoly. And we now find that we need to look carefully to an essential services commission to protect ourselves from a private monopoly providing an essential service.

It was great in theory, but in practice all you end up doing is capitalising the profits and socialising the losses. So we do have a challenge in front of us, and the challenge will become immediately obvious to all of us on 1 January next year when the last tranche of contestability in the electricity market faces the mum and dad consumers, because from that point on they are going to be exposed to the full forces of a private monopoly. I am delighted to see that we are to put in place some checks and balances through an essential services commission.

Other matters in the speech refer to reducing energy costs across the state. In having this debate we all have to recognise that there are supply-side and demand-side issues with electricity. I notice that was done when somebody suggested a lot of money could be saved through looking at power usage in government buildings. We all need to look at both the supply-side and the demand-side as we now move into a totally contestable market for electricity; so there are some good issues there.

I love the generational review. Everybody is doing them now. We have just had federal generational reviews and we are having a generational review in relation to the health

system. The branding might just be part of the times, but what underlines it is that it is something that we must do. We do need to step further back and ask some more fundamental questions about health provision before we move forward in again debating solutions.

I often think that when we come to a difficult problem we tend either to keep on running into it or to try to find ways to just climb over it, rather than reversing far enough and asking ourselves: what is the blockage? What actually is the challenge? Hopefully a generational review of the health system will do that. The health and community services ombudsman was an issue in the last parliament—certainly the then shadow minister for human services was very keen on an ombudsman who might address a number of issues in the health area. I notice now that that concept has been somewhat expanded.

We know that there will be amendments to the Education Act 1972 to increase the school leaving age to 16. Again, we have to make sure when we delve into this that we know what we are talking about and are not just trying to claim some populist moral high ground. There are over 20 000 15-year-olds in South Australia and over 95 per cent of them are in school—or 97 per cent, the shadow minister tells me, although the department that he previously presided over said 95; we might have that debate later. But the important figure is that there are only something like 300 or 400 15 to 16-year-olds in South Australia who are not in school or TAFE or work.

So, when we start addressing this bill, we need to understand that, although it is important, and we need to have some options within schools or in some other way, we are dealing with a very small number of people. We could almost look at applying an individual analysis to the issue, rather than claiming some moral high ground and saying that everybody should be in school until they are 16 and we are going to make that compulsory. Most people choose, anyway, to be in school, in TAFE or some other training program or in work.

As to other matters, we talk about a tough stance on law and order, and it was great to see the stance taken in relation to overturning a Parole Board recommendation. People still do not understand sentencing generally. When they see someone fined a significant amount of money for sneezing on a policeman and on the same day read about two young people getting a slap on the wrist for burning down a church, 'On the surface', they say, 'it doesn't seem right.' If we go back and read the judgments we might find that there are circumstances behind what we see on the surface, but people do not go back and read the judgments.

People make assumptions from what they read in the generic daily press and, from what people read this morning, they would again have said 'There's something rotten: it doesn't seem to be consistent.' So, it will be great if not only do we have guidelines for sentencing but also that people are aware of the guidelines and how they are to be applied. I can see that there is a use for what is referred to in the speech, and I look forward to seeing more about it.

I was delighted that the Governor told us that her government will not privatise any more South Australian government assets. There is a very good reason why it will not do that: there ain't none left! That is a pretty easy one to honour. Nor do I think that the government will be actually nationalising any of them in the short term. But we will need to ask some time in the future whether or not essential services can be delivered in private monopoly situations.



This will be a challenge around the world, because what we tend to do is overcompensate, and this whole debate in recent times (around the world, I believe) has moved too far in one direction and we will again need to find some acceptable middle ground. There is a combination of private enterprise and government services in a truly balanced economy, and we have to keep on trying to find where that point is, the key word of course being 'balanced'. Talking about balance, it is great to see that we will have an international film festival and WOMAD, because we do need to bring some culture into our lives. I am often told that I need to bring a lot of culture into my life.

I am a little concerned about some of the comments that have been made about the Office of Regional Development and a lack of understanding, I think, about the present partnership between state and local government in regional development boards. I recently heard a member of the government saying that he wished to consult local government in terms of regional development boards and their strategic plans.

The fact of the matter is that local government, in partnership with state government, funds regional development boards and is very much part, proactively, of the process of writing their strategic plans. They actually own them, and the service provider, on behalf of the partnership, is the regional development boards and economic development boards. So, let us not try to rewrite history and suggest that these boards have taken on a life of their own and are not consulting the key stakeholders. They are consulting their key stakeholders and, what is more, are accountable to them through regular reporting and through annual reports.

I am pleased to see that community cabinets have been embraced by the Rann government. More than that, I am delighted to be able to welcome the community cabinet to Mount Gambier on the 24th of this month. On the next morning, the 25th, they will journey to Penola to have their cabinet meeting. I am delighted that they will be spending their time in meetings in Penola, because I much prefer having access to them when they are in Mount Gambier.

Importantly, when we visit communities like this, we must be accessible. You do not go into a community to go behind closed doors to have a meeting, and they are certainly not doing that. I think that a lot of planning has gone into this. The grant council, the City of Mount Gambier and I have enthusiastically embraced the fact that we have most of the cabinet ministers in Mount Gambier and can put suggestions to them as to the constructive things we might be able to do while they are there.

Unfortunately, because of other commitments, a couple of ministers will not be able to make the journey at that time so, equally, I have been able to say to them, 'We would like you to come at another time, sooner rather than later, and here are some of the things we would like to do.' And I have been very impressed with the way the ministers have taken that on—as did, I might add, the Olsen government. It actually moved around the state and did that part of its job very well. We must be free and open in terms of regular contact.

Under 'Agriculture, Food and Fisheries', the Governor talked about a number of issues, particularly the Aquaculture Bill, which is long overdue. We must put a legislative framework around that emerging industry. Without it, we will not necessarily move forward in a sustainable way, and equally we will frustrate present business investment. I have been working with an individual who has committed over \$1 million to aquaculture, but he still has not got his pens in

his patch of ground in the ocean because he is being held up. Decisions should be made, and we need to move on.

In relation to bovine Johne's disease (BJD), I have already had the opportunity to talk to the minister. BJD is a significant challenge, and we need to totally change our policy settings in relation to it. The days of dreaming that it can be eradicated are absolutely crazy, and a department that sets about eradicating it does no more than impact significantly on the social and economic lives of individuals caught in the trap. It does nothing in terms of a cross-industry disease management strategy. The way we have addressed that issue is appalling. It has been sad to see the families destroyed. I look forward to the present minister going beyond the chief vet in terms of setting what is a sensible policy framework. I am looking forward to that challenge.

I would like to raise a couple of other matters to do with environment protection. I like the notion of a whole-of-government approach to environment protection. It is great to see that we will have the River Murray act. Finally, the Governor's speech refers to minimising the harmful effects of gambling. The key word is 'gambling'. Everybody seems to use the words 'gambling' and 'poker machines' synonymously. There are many forms of gambling, and we have to learn to manage the downside of gambling which, to many people, is a legitimate form of recreation.

One matter which was not mentioned in the speech but which has been widely canvassed is the Drugs Summit. That will be a very useful stepping off point for a broad-ranging debate on issues relating to drugs, the community, society, the economy, and so on. This morning I was interviewed on radio, and I felt that the two people interviewing me were being somewhat flippant about this whole matter. I described the stepping off point for this debate as dropping a pebble into a pond and allowing it to ripple out. That is the approach we must take.

The Premier has chosen amphetamines as the pebble in the pond, the starting point. That will allow this to ripple and cascade out as we build on issues around that. It does not allow any particular groups to bring a strident, preconceived position to the debate. It is a much better way to go. As long as we do not then manipulate the debate but genuinely allow it to ripple out, we will pool the collective wisdom of so many people who are directly or indirectly affected by the issue, and we will have a good outcome. However, when I tried to describe it like that, I got some smart-arse remark about Jonathan Livingstone Seagull. I said to the two people concerned, 'Please be more serious about this.' This is not an issue to be flippant about. This is a very important issue for all South Australians. The Governor talked about a vision for South Australia, and a key plank in that vision will be the way we deal with drugs.

I want to touch briefly on my electorate. As I said in my nomination for the position of Speaker, we come to this place having one collective role. The 47 of us have a collective responsibility in terms of the stewardship of the state. Equally, the 47 of us have specific responsibilities in terms of the electorates we are privileged to serve. One of the key issues in my electorate is being accessible. So I can tell the house that spending four days in this place and three nights away from my family does not make me accessible. I want us to rethink the 69 days or whatever other number we have dreamt up. Quite frankly, the stepping off point is: why are we here? We are here for a number of very good reasons. One is to scrutinise the government of the day on a regular basis, to put the blow torch to their bums regularly, and also to

deal with legislation as required; but not to sit around here wasting day and night away from our electorates and our families. Please rethink the question back from the first principles. The first question is: why we are here? The next question is: how long do we need to be here? We then have to design a program around that—not dream up some number and then come and sit here, wasting our time and the state's resources to satisfy some sit-in.

We would need clearly to articulate the role, function, service profile and source of funding for hospitals. One of my delights with the present government is that, administratively, they have made some good decisions quickly: they have got on with the job. They do not seem yet to have some of the baggage that comes with being in government for some time. Minister Stevens has moved quickly in recognising that the Mount Gambier Hospital must be a regional hospital, rewriting the service profiles around that function and putting in place the author of the report to steer the necessary changes. What a great thing to do—to say to the author of the report, 'Now, go and put the rubber on the road.' I will be looking forward to Tom Neilsen taking up his regional CEO's job and implementing that report.

I mentioned escalating public risk insurance, and I do not believe that, as yet, we have found answers to this problem, but we must do so soon, because more and more small businesses, community groups and voluntary recreational bodies will collapse by the end of next month because they will not be able to pay the public risk insurance for the next 12 months.

The Limestone Coast rail group is faced with a bill of well over \$20 000 next year just to run their small tourist train. However, they cannot do it. Others are now receiving letters stating, 'We have been your insurer. We are just advising you in advance that'—and I think the language of the insurance company is 'we have reviewed our indemnity profile and will no longer be offering this service.' So, there are those in the marketplace now who will not even be provided with a service at all. It will be difficult.

I said I would look at either gaining government support or introducing a private member's bill on third party property for motor vehicles. I am seeing too many examples now where one party is being unduly affected by another damaging their property in some way, and they are unable to seek any damages or support to make good the damage.

I would like us to move forward on the Select Committee on Petrol, Diesel and LPG Pricing. The Premier early on in this government made a couple of observations about the Western Australian situation. So, I took the opportunity to brief him on the findings of the select committee to date and also to provide to him a draft bill which I had prepared and which I will introduce in my own name if I cannot convince the government to do so. The biggest problem with petrol is not the price we pay: without tax, we have the cheapest petrol price in the OECD, and with tax it is the second cheapest price of petrol in the OECD. So, the stepping-off point is to recognise that our fuel costs are not high compared to others.

But the thing that gets up everybody's nose is the enormous fluctuations in the price cycle. There is discounting at some times in the cycle below wholesale price, and it is picked up somewhere else in the price cycle, or it is cross-discounted between country and city, and country people are cross-subsidising the bottom end of the discounting cycle in the city. Legislation needs to be brought in to achieve two things: there must be a clear separation within vertically integrated industries, and there must be a point at which there

is a fair entry for people at the retail and distribution end. Now, call it a terminal gate price, call it anything else you like, but it must be a fair, open price. Downstream profits or downstream losses should not be cross-subsidised.

In addition, discounting below the wholesale price should not be permitted. Although the ACCC may say such legislation is not possible, the Taxation Commissioner will say that it is not a legitimate business; if you are setting out to make a loss, it is not a legitimate business. So, I think there is a vehicle to achieve that objective.

I mentioned BJD earlier, and that was one of my promises. We need to fix that up. I mentioned also our Catchment Management Board. We need to address a number of issues with regard to water allocation, and then move on in terms of catchment boards. Again, I have had productive discussions with Minister Hill about that, and I am delighted with the way in which he is moving.

Something that is more a federal issue—and again I am disgusted that it has not been picked up in the federal budget—is that a two-tiered society is being created by denying the children of many country families the opportunity to enter tertiary education simply because it is no longer affordable. If you have to relocate a child away from home to provide them with the opportunity to access tertiary education it will cost you about \$1 000 a month; if you have two children it will cost \$2 000 a month. Many country families cannot possibly afford \$2 000 a month. I have people in their 50s remortgaging their homes to try to find the money to educate their children or saying to the second and subsequent children, 'Sorry, but until the first child who is at university has completed their studies, you will have to stay at home.' It is a significant issue. We must find ways to support our young people who need to move away from home to take tertiary education opportunities.

I talked about my continued responsibility to maintain relationships with local government. I see as a key part of my responsibility as a state member of parliament the need to work closely with local government, as constructive outcomes come by working closely with it and meeting regularly. All members need to re-engage local government if they have lost contact. A lot can be gained by working more closely with it.

The last thing I said was that I wished to move cautiously on marine protected areas. Sometimes what looks like a good idea can have a lot of unintended consequences, and I want to move cautiously on it.

*The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:*

**Mr McEWEN:** I have been very impressed with the new minister in that he is seeking first to understand. I laughed when I read my maiden speech of four years ago: talk about high on ideology and low on practice! I am delighted with many of the new ministers. The Minister for Local Government has taken the opportunity with me, as I will bet he has with many others, to seek first to understand, to gather facts around the environment before he moves forward. I am delighted to see the way he has done that.

A couple of issues are yet to be addressed. One is the sad decision that we may be denied a gas pipeline from Victoria into Adelaide through the South-East, because there seems to be the opportunity now for the Duke Energy proposal to bring a gas pipeline to the South-East. An open access pipeline has been lost. I have asked present minister Wright to, please, once and for all, make a decision about the rail issue. My community is at the point where it does not care what decision is made and it is now saying that any decision

is better than no decision. This decision has been left up in the air for too long. We standardise to the north, to the east, we do both or we do nothing, but, please, make a decision so we can move on because those assets have other uses if we are not going to use them for rail. Leaving them idle is just continually denying growth opportunities for the community. Please make a decision.

I have also raised issues to do with heavy vehicle movements and freight vehicle studies and I know the minister will take them up. We have a ridiculous situation where we have seven families whose only residence is what is called a 'shack' and people are saying that they must vacate the shacks. What to some people is a shack to other people is their only home, and we will not start evicting people from their homes. We need to make a decision at Cape Douglas about giving life tenancy to the present residents and after that asking the question, 'What do we now wish to do with these assets?' That is a matter I started raising 2½ years ago and to date I have not had a single response. I do not say that I have not had an acceptable response—I have not had any response on how we will deal with the issue.

The last issue I raise is that of neighbourhood development officers. I am delighted that the previous government acknowledged that we need to work with communities so they can describe their own richly imagined futures. To do that in the east end of Mount Gambier, a Housing Trust area, we have been able to gain the funding of a neighbourhood development officer, who will now put in a local school, because the school is the hub of the community.

The Education Department has a lot of difficulty because it thinks the school belongs to it, but it belongs to all of us, as do all the assets. Do you know what we are going to do? We are going to reclaim the school! We will not reclaim it from the local staff, as they understand the responsibility, but we will reclaim it from the bureaucracy and rebadge it, because not only do kids come to schools but also the mums and dads come in the mornings and afternoons and they want to not only contribute to the educational growth of their children but also there may be some spin off for themselves, so we will reclaim the school as a way to build a new community. It will be a great challenge, and I know that the minister intends to make an announcement when he visits Mount Gambier next week.

Time expired.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hanna):** Before calling the Hon. Jay Weatherill, Minister for Local Government, I remind members that this is the minister's first speech, and I would therefore ask, as is the custom of the house, that he be heard in silence. The Minister for Local Government.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Urban Development and Planning):** I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to Her Excellency's speech opening the second session of the 50th parliament. We are well served by a Governor who is distinguished by her friendly and approachable nature. I was fortunate enough to be present at the state dinner celebrating her appointment and observed the moving tribute that she paid to those who were important in her life. It was also good to see the Governor's staff there and their obvious pleasure in serving her. I note the passing of the Queen Mother, former members of this chamber and I honour their service.

I particularly note the passing of Ralph Jacobi, the former federal member for Hawker. Of particular note is Ralph's long and distinguished service as an official, then secretary,

of the Australian Government Workers' Association, a role in which he was supported by my grandfather, Mervyn Coad. I congratulate the Speaker on his election to high office, and I note his commitment to the restoration of standards in this house. If this can contribute to some restoration of faith in the political process, he will have done a great service to this state. I also congratulate the Deputy Speaker and thank him for his kind words of advice.

I congratulate all newly elected members, especially those sitting on this side of the house, the member for Adelaide, the member for Enfield and the member for Colton; and my friends and colleagues in another place, the Hon. Gail Gago and the Hon. John Gazzola. I particularly thank the electors of Cheltenham for choosing the ALP to represent them again in that district. To my campaign team—my campaign manager Colleen Ross, Julie Duncan, Tolly Wasylenko, Mike Petrovski, Sharon Howe, Colin Brett, Shaughan Abbott, Sue Balde and Peter Feind, and so many others who worked so hard to ensure that Labor was returned to Cheltenham—I extend my heartfelt thanks.

I also extend my gratitude to the Australian Labor Party for choosing me as its representative. I honour the service of the former member for Price, Murray Delaine, who represented the district diligently for the last 16 years. I thank my colleagues for their support for my becoming a minister in this new government, and I am humbled by their confidence in me. I am pleased—and, Mr Acting Speaker, you will appreciate this—to join another select group in this house, namely, the Henley High School Old Scholars. Members include you, Mr Acting Speaker, the member for Enfield, the member for Colton and, interestingly, the member for Bright.

In fact, the member for Colton was my football coach at high school. To this day he will be heard to say that he has never seen a slower footballer. I also form part of a less select group, certainly less popular, if one believes the press and the propaganda, and that is the group of lawyers. In fact, the member for Heysen and I once worked together in a law firm, and I hope that we can find ways of working together in this place.

My values have been shaped by many influences. The first and most significant is my mother, who is a devout Christian of the Anglican faith. She taught me the Christian value of treating others as you would want them to treat you. My father had a religion of a different sort: the trade union movement. He taught me to listen to people. I remember travelling on country trips in school holidays. We would call in at country hospitals and we would sit for hours, chatting to the ladies. They would come in and serve us tea and cake and, just before it was over, dad would go through his usual ritual of saying, 'Well, are you prepared to join the union this time?' They would all shake their heads and we would be on our way.

He explained to me later that these were the wives of farmers and that it would take some time to persuade them to join the union. Another time we visited an EWS depot, and we sat there for what seemed like an age. The man we talked to did not seem to be saying anything of substance for what seemed like forever. Eventually, he started talking and, after we left, I asked my father, 'Why did you we have to sit there for so long?' He explained to me that these people have not seen anyone for months and that we had to give them time to think about what is worrying them.

Another important influence on my career was John Lewin. John was a senior industrial officer at the Australian Workers Union, where I began work experience. John shaped

my early development as an advocate. He also taught me many political lessons. His most important was to show me the power of ideas and how they shape events. He taught me that there was never any disadvantage to be suffered by advocating good public policy. Even if it is unpopular, people will still return to it.

Penny Wong, a recently elected senator for South Australia, taught me that, for women, difference is often turned into disadvantage and that men have to understand the role they play in this. I also mention Mark Butler, the Secretary of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, a union of which I am proud to be a member. Mark possesses both intelligence and honour. He and his union, the union for which my father worked, are entitled to be treated with more respect than they receive in the popular press and certainly more respect than they have received in recent contributions to this house. Our government will respect that union and other unions, not because they are affiliated to the Labor Party, but because they are democratic institutions committed to the protection of the welfare of tens of thousands of South Australian workers.

I turn now to Patrick Conlon. Many in this house have come to appreciate (perhaps that is the wrong word) or certainly have come to know, his prodigious talents. He has taught me an important political lesson: he has taught me to have the courage to be honest. Senator Nick Bolkus has been a source of wise guidance, advice and support. I also note Stephen Lieschke, my legal partner, with whom I am proud to have established a Labor law firm. I am very proud of that firm, its work and its commitment to working for less fortunate South Australians. I miss those with whom I worked there, especially my secretary Pat, who had the difficult task of juggling the balance between my being a lawyer and a candidate over the last few years. My greatest regret is that I will no longer be working as closely with Stephen. Stephen represents the very best the legal profession has to offer. He is intelligent and gentle but a fierce advocate for his clients.

One person I wish to mention is no longer with us, a former industrial officer with the Australian Workers Union, Andrew Knox. Andrew died in the World Trade Centre on 11 September. He was destined for a career in politics. He had an unshakeable optimism. In one of his last communications with me he spoke of his high hopes for me in parliament. I hope that I live up to his expectations. Finally, I would like to mention my wife Melissa. Without her, all of this would mean very little.

The privilege each of us enjoys through our election to this office can be contrasted with the hardships of many of those who live in the state district of Cheltenham. Many speak little or no English; 28.6 per cent of them were born overseas; 25 per cent of household incomes earn less than \$400 per week; many have limited schooling; and 79 per cent have no tertiary qualifications. Disturbingly, of those aged over 15 years, 22 per cent either have had no schooling or left school by the time they were 14 years of age. That is nearly double the state average. Approximately 14 per cent are unemployed—more than double the state average—many rely on public transport, and many experience poor health and rely heavily on health services. In fact, deaths from lung cancer for men are 136 per cent higher than for the whole of South Australia, a statistic that is not simply explained by smoking.

I must also say that, despite and perhaps because of these disadvantages, the people of Cheltenham retain a strong sense of community. It is perhaps more accurate to describe the

state seat of Cheltenham as a group of communities. The suburbs of Pennington, Woodville Park and Athol Park form part of what has become known as The Parks. The suburbs of Alberton, Cheltenham, Queenstown and Rosewater regard themselves as part of the Port.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** God's country.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** God's country, as the member for Elder reminds us. The suburbs of Woodville, Woodville South, Woodville West and Findon have historically held a closer association with the old, separate and distinct village of Woodville. The suburbs of Royal Park, Seaton, Hendon and Albert Park also have their own character. Industrial Labor has not only shaped the physical features of these suburbs, it has also shaped the values of its people. Those values include looking after one another, believing that you are better than no-one but just as good as anyone, knowing the difference between right and wrong, and being straight with yourself and those around you. These are values that are passed down through families and are shared by the community, and they are good values.

But the old certainties of industrial life are no longer available. A job is no longer for the asking. The jobs that are available bear little resemblance to the jobs that were formerly available. The new jobs are not necessarily as secure as the old jobs. It must be said that many people in the electorate of Cheltenham are inadequately equipped to take up the opportunities presented by a post industrial economy. We in the Labor Party have always understood the crucial role that finding a job plays in someone's life. More than sustaining a family, it restores dignity to an individual and helps shape, build and maintain communities.

Our central public policy objective remains the provision of secure work for all who are able to work. It is fair to say that over the years no clear vision has been articulated for the people who live in the suburbs which comprise the electorate of Cheltenham. Certainly a solution does not lie in waste dumps or carving up what little open space exists and using it for further industrial development. The transition from suburbs dominated by the industrial past to suburbs reflecting a post industrial character is under way, but it will not be effective without the guidance of good public policy. This is a fundamental challenge for good urban planning and development, and I am pleased that my portfolio responsibilities will afford me the opportunity to tackle these issues, not only in Cheltenham but in other areas of need in South Australia.

In my view, Cheltenham has a vibrant and productive future, but only if we address a number of key areas. First, we must build a stronger connection between it and the historical port and peninsula and the wonderful natural environment that it offers, recognising that tourist and service industry opportunities must be developed in those precincts. The redevelopment of the north-west transport corridor provides an exciting opportunity to open up the port and regenerate surrounding suburbs.

Secondly, we must recognise and develop the enormous employment generating potential of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the associated health care industry, both as a direct provider of primary through to tertiary care and all of the allied industries that support that work. The hospital has nearly 2 000 employees, and countless others are involved in allied roles in the health care sector. It is the largest western suburbs employer.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital provides a well-established focus for health care services in the western suburbs. Its

redevelopment is long overdue. It is disappointing that in government we have discovered that insufficient provisioning in the forward estimates has been made for the completion of the redevelopment, yet the QEH is one of the centrepieces of our health care system.

The hospital services an area from Glenelg to the Le Fevre Peninsula and provides a range of services to country regions. For the year 2000-01, emergency service attendances totalled 32 462 and outpatient attendances totalled 221 020. There were 42 450 patient admissions with total occupied bed days of 149 764. There were 995 births and 13 190 operations. The overwhelming majority of these services was provided to patients living within the locale of the hospital. Given the heavy reliance on public transport, the location of the hospital within the community it serves is crucial.

The men and women who work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital provide service of the highest quality, but they have not been assisted by the resources at their disposal in the past. The hospital staff are committed to the people in the western suburbs. Their dedication is reflected by their work during the difficult years when the future of the hospital was in doubt. I welcome the generational review of the health care system announced by the Minister for Health. I expect this review to confirm the central role of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the health care needs of the residents of the western suburbs, and finally supply some certainty to both the staff and residents in that area.

The third and related opportunity relies on the research and development work performed by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital supported by the research foundation. I am proud to serve on the board of that foundation, and more than 40 000 South Australians, community groups and businesses support the foundation through regular donations. The Basil Hetzel Institute, which provides a physical centrepiece for the foundation and the research work, houses 12 laboratories.

By 2001 more than \$12 million will have been expended on research efforts in areas such as cardiology, the Centre for Sleep Research, clinical pharmacology, diabetes, gastroenterology, haematology, oncology and dermatology. The neurology unit, through its extensive research and involvement in clinical trials over the past decade, has gained national and international recognition as a centre of excellence.

However, there is a crucial relationship between maintaining a critical mass of experienced and high profile surgeons in an area to maintain a major teaching hospital and this research and development effort. Moreover, the fact that we have clinicians who are practising in cutting edge research enhances the quality of care. It also allows them to interpret the research that emerges from around the world and apply it to our circumstances. This aspect of the health industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world economy. This type of industry clearly suits the natural advantages of our state. It suits our relatively well educated work force, our public hospital system, our enterprising culture and our innovative public sector, which is well placed to explore and commercialise ideas and to guide new industries.

My vision for the Woodville Road area is as a health precinct that harnesses and develops these opportunities. The jobs produced by these new industries will often demand new skills, and a commitment to training and education will be central to their success. We must remember those who cannot be found opportunities—whether they cannot take on new skills or they are too unwell or elderly. We cannot hope to continue to enjoy a harmonious society if we are simply

content to allow those who slip behind to remain there. I entered politics to make a real difference to the lives of working people. I cannot accept that the current distribution of resources and opportunities, so unevenly distributed as they are, is fair. In recent years I have only seen these inequalities grow. We have sufficient resources within our community to remedy all our injustices. All that we require is a generosity of spirit and a clarity of vision.

We must be aware that while industrial endeavour (which our society rewards) unleashes a great deal of energy, it also unleashes something else, and that is a great degree of selfishness. It is this selfishness which limits us. Selfishness is not a natural state; it is as learned as generosity. We know as individuals that all the wonderful things that are worth living for—the love that we share with our family and friends—flow from generosity, but we must ensure that this generosity of spirit infuses our public affairs and is not just left at home.

Unfortunately, there has been a noticeable lack of generosity of spirit evident of late in our community, and I invite all members to reserve some generosity for those in our society who have been traditionally marginalised. Perhaps we could also reserve a small portion of generosity of spirit towards those who come from overseas seeking asylum in our country.

It is hardly surprising that there is such a well documented cynicism in the political process. I believe this cynicism is deeply rooted in forces extending beyond the borders of our state. It flows from a lack of faith in citizens in government's being able to address issues which are important to them. The need for global competitiveness is frequently cited as a barrier to progressive local measures that address the needs of local communities. Of course, we must not isolate ourselves but, surely, we are entitled to define the terms on which we engage with the international community.

We should be confident in our insistence that business is conducted according to our values. One of our great assets is that at heart we are a caring and compassionate community that respects its environment and allows its citizens to freely express themselves. Indeed, my interstate colleagues in the legal profession find South Australia a peculiar place, because we are so ready and willing to cooperate with one another, which certainly seems a foreign concept in other areas. This cooperative culture is in my view one of South Australia's great strengths. We should recognise and promote it. It is not surprising that those who leave our shores achieve so much in the world; good communities with good values produce successful people, but we should value and build on those strengths.

At this stage I will take the opportunity to comment on elements of constitutional reform which are a current topic of debate. The system of preferential voting in the lower house, supported by compulsory voting, means that governments must be broadly preferred by South Australians. The strength of this system of voting is that it encourages the formation of major parties with comprehensive political platforms. It is supported by the Hare-Clark system of proportional voting in the Legislative Council. This ensures that different views are heard but are subject to the will of the majority of South Australians as expressed through the lower house. I believe that this is a good system and that we should take great care with constitutional reform in circumstances where we have a system that other jurisdictions are seeking to copy. So, it is a word of caution in some respects, and I suppose I take on the mantle of a conservative in this respect.

I offer one way in which I believe the system could be improved. I believe that a bill of rights should be introduced to further protect the rights of citizens. We are one of the few western democracies that does not have a bill of rights. Even Britain, which informs much of our constitutional system, has recently adopted a bill of rights. While I support a push for Australia to become a republic, I cannot understand why so much effort would be put into changing the symbols of our nation when there is so much substantive change that could be necessary to modernise Australian constitutions. A bill of rights may not be as necessary under a Labor government, as we have traditionally been the keepers of measures that protect individual rights; however, sadly, we will not govern forever.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** No! No!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** The honourable member is distressed by that proposition, but I must assure him that even this government will not continue for eternity. The upper house does not provide sufficient protection against the erosion of fundamental human rights. While it does reflect some views, it cannot by its nature reflect all views.

During my brief observation of politics I have seen a constant erosion of basic rights, especially the rights of citizens as employees. The forces that have caused these changes will continue unless we act to protect the rights of citizens. The most recent debate generated by the insurance industry is a sufficient example. A crisis in the insurance industry has been caused by imprudent management in that sector. The solution promoted by the business sector is tort reform; in other words, the erosion of the rights of citizens—that right to recover when somebody negligently causes loss to them. Now is not the best time to set out all my views on this topic, but I believe that a bill of rights would present a wonderful opportunity to express our national identity with a shared set of values.

In many ways I have had a fortunate life, but I will not forget the reasons for taking on this new challenge as a member of parliament. As I stand here I will not forget the families in my electorate who sit down to dinner tonight after a long and tiring day. I will not forget those who will work long into the night struggling to make ends meet. I will not forget those who spend their days looking for work. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not forget where I came from, nor the people who put me here.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** I rise to support the motion and, in so doing, I add my compliments to those already given by earlier speakers to the Governor for the way in which she carries out her role in South Australia. Unfortunately, on the only occasion so far that the Governor has had to visit my electorate in the South-East, I was out of the electorate on a family matter so was unable to join her on that visit. I certainly look forward to her coming to my electorate again. I might say that the former governor and his wife were always very welcome in my electorate, and on many pleasurable occasions I experienced their company in my electorate. I am sure that will happen in the future with our Governor, who asks everyone to call her Marj.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the new members in the chamber, those on both sides of the chamber, and I welcome them to this place. I especially welcome the four new members on this side of the chamber—the members for Bragg, Heysen, Kavel and Mawson. In so doing, I express my delight with their contributions to this motion in their

maiden speeches. It is always refreshing to hear the new members as they bring their ideals, ideas and passions to the attention of the house for the first time. I was impressed with the collective vision for this state of members on this side, founded on strong Liberal philosophy, that belief in the individual over the state and the rights and freedoms of the individual to pursue their own destiny.

I wish to spend a little time today referring to the election in MacKillop, and in so doing I acknowledge the invaluable help given by so many to my campaign. They are not only members of branches of the Liberal Party, members of my SEC, my campaign manager and family, but also all those in the seat of MacKillop who are supporters of that Liberal philosophy.

I came to this place following the 1997 election as an Independent Liberal. My subsequent realignment with the Liberal Party was of course the subject of a deal of discussion, and indeed some disappointment among some of my constituents. I took the opportunity during the campaign to highlight my strong ties to the Liberal Party, which I openly displayed at the time of the 1997 poll. I reminded those who falsely tried to infer that in some way I let down my electorate that in 1997 I letterboxed every address in the electorate on no fewer than two occasions, indicating those strong links. I pointed out in the flyers distributed at that time that I not only promised to support a Liberal government but even went as far as referring to myself as 'a listening Liberal'.

True to my word I remain the same today. During the last parliament I quickly became convinced that my ability to represent my constituents would be enhanced by my being a part of the Liberal team, and I am delighted that the electors of MacKillop vindicated my decision to rejoin the Liberal Party in December 1999 by increasing my primary vote from 28 per cent in the 1997 election to 52 per cent on 9 February.

There is one aspect of this matter which I wish to clarify and put on the public record; even though the time has probably passed, I think it is important to have this on the public record. Both the Premier and Deputy Premier have tried to impute that the Leader of the Opposition was actively involved and worked tirelessly to lure me back into the Liberal Party at that time. I absolutely deny those accusations, and I tell the house that no member of the former government was involved in my decision at the time; it was taken entirely of my own volition for the right reasons and without any deals being asked for or offered, other than my desire for the party to have the preselection process conducted during the recess. Any inferences to the contrary are a complete fabrication and merely reflect the disregard that those making them have for the truth.

The voting public of South Australia on 9 February this year said to Mike Rann, 'No thanks; we don't like what you offer. We don't believe in your sophistry and rhetoric. You don't have a vision and you don't have any policies.' This was expressed by the electorate in the two-party preferred vote of 51 per cent for the Liberal Party—for the Liberal Party and those who were believed by their electorates to support the Liberal Party.

Notwithstanding this, the Labor Party has found itself in government. That being the fate of South Australians, I implore the government now to get on with the job. The governance of South Australia is not about window-dressing, doubletalk, or smoke and mirrors: it is about ensuring that the daily lives of the people we represent are enriched and their loads are lessened by the implementation of policies to maximise the individual and collective good. In fact, it is

about applying a little grease to the wheels of society. In a similar vein, leadership is not about following meekly behind public opinion: it is about being bold enough to develop a vision, enunciate that vision and to take public opinion with you on the strength of that vision.

The Premier is quite open in his admiration of Labor hero Don Dunstan and I am sure he would love to be seen as being Dunstanesque in his premiership. Although my admiration of Dunstan is limited to his skill as a politician and not to his policy stances of the time, I freely admit that he was a leader. He had a vision and he led from the front. He was not captured by populist politics: he actually started the debate on many of the issues of the day. The now Premier, unfortunately, is from a different mould and we can expect a four-year diet of puerile subservience to popular opinion served up in the guise of leadership from this man.

This is why all the government's energies are currently applied to the con job being done on the South Australian public. The Premier and his ministers have delighted in claiming to be open, honest and accountable; and the Premier in particular cannot refrain from claiming to be bipartisan. The hypocrisy of this is astounding, when I and other members during the last parliament witnessed the now Premier as an opposition leader who actively sought to be as divisive and disruptive of government as he could possibly be. We well remember his credo in opposition—maximum mayhem. While he and his cohorts are using this period to attempt to rewrite the recent history of South Australia, we on the opposition benches will continue in a responsible manner to remind the people of the state of the facts.

This government, in spite of the Premier's claim prior to the election to hit the ground running, has done nothing other than announce reviews and appointments and endeavour to convince the South Australian public that they are the team to right all the wrongs of the past—illusory though those claimed wrongs are. My experience of human nature has been that it is the man who feels obliged to tell you that he is honest whom you need to distrust. This government knows and understands in its own heart that, if it is judged on its merits, it will fail; thus the concerted effort to create the perception that every aspect of the state's management was in crisis and then to seek to claim the benefit of supposedly averting such impending disasters.

If the government spent a little of its time and effort on governing in lieu of its hysterical drive to rewrite history, then maybe some decisions would have now been made; business would not be subject to the paralysis which is dogging the public sector because of the concentration on perception building instead of getting on with the job. For example, many rural businesses of recent time were left in limbo for weeks—probably months—by the failure of the relevant minister giving delegated authority for the transfer of crown leases. This is not rocket science, and I am sure the bureaucrats involved in the new administration urge the new administration to get on with the job, but the priorities of this government have been elsewhere.

The problems with the Treasurer's reviewing the Home-Start loan facility that had been made available to hospitals in rural areas as the only way of their obtaining funding to build aged care beds to take up the licences which had been granted from the commonwealth government were raised in the house this week. The Treasurer was at pains (I think yesterday in the house) to say that this was just a review and tried to give the impression that it will not go on for very long. My understanding is that at least one hospital, on being

told that the line of funding was no longer available, was also told that it would be a considerable length of time before the matter would be resolved and it was suggested that it seek other forms of funding.

In its bid to rewrite history the opposition has forgotten about the compassion that it tells us it has. It does not realise that if the bricks and mortar are not in place within a certain period of time the bed licences will be revoked by the commonwealth government and the opportunity to create these places for elderly citizens in country South Australia will be lost.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** I haven't heard you criticise the federal government yet.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Over the last five or six years the current federal government has made great leaps forward in putting funds into aged care and providing aged care packages to communities. Indemnity insurance is one of the other glaring examples of where this government has got its priorities incredibly wrong. Public indemnity insurance has been bubbling away for some time now. The former government had a group looking into that and working on solutions to that problem. We now have the failure of a major medical insurance scheme, which has created huge problems with regard to professional indemnity insurance in the medical field. Now, of course, we have the building industry about to be forced to its knees by the lack of action by this government.

This new administration is out there every day appointing someone new and setting up a new review. This government which was going to walk away from consultancies is spending money on more reviews and is not getting on with the job. The Treasurer is at the forefront of this charade. If he is serious about openness and accountability he would stop his game of name calling and admit that his claims are based on selected quotes and supposition. I support this view with a quote from the budget update released by the Treasurer on 14 March 2002. In a minute to the update released by the Treasurer on that date, we read this little gem:

In preparing an assessment of the budget outlook we have used the same methodology as the mid year budget review for the revenue estimates and interest expenses. On the expenditure side we have included additional amounts in respect to a number of known risks to the budget. The amounts included are necessarily a matter of judgment. However, the cost pressures identified are very real ones. The potential outcomes presented in this minute are a very real possibility unless some difficult decisions are taken.

The very point I am making is that this government is not about taking the necessary difficult decisions. It would rather name call. It would rather misquote other people and use selected documentation from the Under Treasurer to try to create an impression which bears no resemblance to the facts. The Treasurer must now explain the difference between the advice from the Under Treasurer to the former treasurer on 16 January, released by the Hon. Rob Lucas last week, and his outrageous claims of late. As per usual the Treasurer has come into the house and selectively quoted from a document. Again, as usual, his argument is entirely reliant on him quoting only part of the document. This is his normal modus operandi and does nothing to either improve the standard of debate in this chamber or cultivate the confidence of the public in our deliberations. It is certainly at variance with his leader's wish to be seen at least as leading an open, honest and accountable government.

I suggest that members acquaint themselves with the whole of the document where the former Treasurer's

notations indicate that the whole of the amount—some \$170 million, as recommended by Treasury—would be put aside. Further, members should study the minute of the following day—16 January this year—in which the Under Treasurer confirms the Treasurer's understanding of the fact that all contingencies are indeed accounted for to give basically balanced budgets for this and the forward estimate years. It is high time the Treasurer came clean with the house and the community on this matter and explained how we went from a position of a \$96 million underlying surplus on 16 January to a supposed deficit of \$26 million on 14 March, a turnaround of \$122 million, according to the Treasurer's figuring. It is worth noting the caretaker state of the government between 15 January and 5 March. Where has this \$122 million disappeared to in those nine days of this new government? When will the public of South Australia receive the truth from this self-proclaimed open, honest, accountable government, the key word there being 'self-proclaimed'?

On a more positive note, may I congratulate the new government for successfully concluding the negotiations with Mitsubishi, securing at least the mid-term future of that company and the associated industries in South Australia. Over the past few years Mitsubishi Adelaide has had a fairly rough ride, with many forecasting its demise. In fact, the previous government was often dismayed by the Leader of the Opposition in fuelling such negativity through his wont to score a few political points, potentially at the expense of the livelihoods and welfare of thousands of Mitsubishi workers and other industry workers and their families.

The former government was eminently aware of the importance of Mitsubishi to South Australia and had worked long and hard towards the eventual outcome which has now been achieved. I recall the Treasurer saying that his meetings with the federal minister were tough: I hope that he has learnt from the experience and in future negotiations is able to cut a better deal for South Australia. The fact that South Australia's contribution to the package is around 60 per cent, and the commonwealth got away with 40 per cent, is not necessarily the best deal that South Australia could have made.

The other thing that I hope about that deal is that the funds for the state's contribution to Mitsubishi were not obtained at the expense of that other project of great importance to South Australia and which has also been the subject of much work by the previous government: the SAMAG project at Port Pirie.

Sir, I will now turn to Her Excellency the Governor's speech in—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** On a point of order, Mr—Madam—Acting Speaker (I think we have both made the same mistake)—

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ciccarello):** You did.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I would just address the speaker's mind to your gender.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I am not sure, Madam Acting Speaker, whether or not you made a ruling on that point of order, but certainly to me it was not a point of order. I will, with your indulgence, continue. I turn to the Governor's speech, a speech which is long on the Premier's agenda: his attempt to be seen to be open and honest. However, I feel that the subsequent debate on the bills to back up the rhetoric of the Governor's speech will be quite interesting. I feel they will largely be of little consequence, and certainly on the initial perusal that I have had of the bills already before the house it would appear that they are again largely smoke and mirrors.

But let us get to some of the meat in the Governor's speech. Perhaps we may be able to see where this government might go. I have already mentioned the fact that this government has spent a lot of its energies in appointing reviews, boards and so on. Talkfests are handy; it is good to get all the facts and information on the table, but I really do not think that is what we need in South Australia right at the moment. What we do need is a government that is out there getting on with things. Talkfests could occur on such things as the essential services commission, which will 'protect the long-term interest of South Australian consumers with regard to price, quality and reliability of electricity'. Despite the bleatings of the then opposition over the last 12 months, I do not recall the lights in South Australia going out this summer. I do not recall that at all.

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The minister chuckles on the other side of the chamber. I think it is time the minister actually came clean about a lot of things he said with regard to electricity. It is time he told the people of South Australia the truth about what the SNI or Riverlink project is going to bring to South Australia. It will bring a little more electricity. Indeed, it will provide security of electricity supply to the Riverland, but it is going to have absolutely no effect on the price of electricity in South Australia. It would be good if the minister read the latest report from the Independent Regulator—

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Yes, I have. He writes a lot of reports, doesn't he? Do you agree with them all?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will refrain from interjecting.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** At this stage I am just talking about the one with regard to the SNI project. He states quite clearly that the economic modelling that has been undertaken with regard to that project shows that it will have absolute minimal effect on the price of electricity in South Australia.

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The statement on health is quite interesting. Again, we know that the government, when in opposition, made a lot of play of the health portfolio area and again put fear into many South Australian communities with their misguided belief that the health system was failing and falling down. Nothing could be further from the truth. As many people have said, if one was anywhere in the world and had the unfortunate need of a health system, where would one rather be than in South Australia?

What I do fear about the health system is what may happen with respect to regional health in our country hospitals in the near future. I was delighted that the minister, in answer to a question only yesterday, said that the government had no intention of closing any country hospitals. I noted that the minister would not rule out the amalgamation of country hospitals. We will see what happens. It is also worth noting that the minister has not ruled out the scaling back of country hospitals. I have seen that happen, where government services are scaled back to the point where the community says, 'What is the point of going on?', and all of a sudden the minister can stand behind the community's call for the closure of a hospital. I suspect that that might be the agenda of the minister in this government.

With respect to education, the government talks about school retention rates—and that argument has been had many times in this chamber. If school retention rates are such a big issue I would love the minister, now that her party is in government, to claim that she will get the year 12 retention



rate to 92 per cent, which is the figure that she keeps quoting, and which is where we were some 10 years ago. Of course, the reality is that at that time our young people had virtually no other option than to stay at school, because the opportunity for further training for work or, indeed, finding work was absolutely zip.

Raising the school leaving age to 16, again, is smoke and mirrors and will do nothing to increase the level of education of the people of South Australia. As you would know, sir, from the evidence that we took on the select committee that you chaired, 94 per cent of our 17 year olds in South Australia are either in an educational institution or in employment. So, I think increasing the school leaving age will have no positive effect whatsoever.

I refer to the law and order statements and the government's tough stance on law and order. I have very serious concerns about cabinet taking over the role that should rightfully be held by the Parole Board.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** You would have let them out would you, Mitch? Put that out in your electorate.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I never said that I would let them out. I think the member will find that I will be as tough as anyone on sentencing, but I dislike the process that took place.

I am pleased to see that the government is moving ahead with the process of taking DNA samples from all prisoners held in South Australian gaols. That is something that I fully support. In fact, when I was in England a few years ago I looked at this topic, and I thought that we should adopt the same policy; that DNA samples be obtained from every person who is arrested and, if the arrest is subsequently overturned and the person concerned is acquitted of any crime or wrongdoing, the DNA samples should then be destroyed. But that debate will be for another day.

I also fully support the government's move to legislate to remove the defence of self-induced intoxication. I raised that issue in this place in my maiden speech (and there is the now famous Nadruku case). I fully support that move, although it is a very complicated issue. I will certainly be interested in the bill that the Attorney brings before us.

There are some other small matters in the statement: the regional affairs statements concern me. The government, I think, has indicated that it will not honour the funds set up by the previous government for the regional infrastructure fund. My understanding is that those moneys will not be spent on regional infrastructure—some \$16 million, from memory, over the next three years, and I think that is a great shame. There are many industries that could benefit. By way of example, I was recently at the opening of the Kreglinga Winery, a \$20 million project, at Cape Jaffa in my electorate. One of the things that helped get this project off the ground was an amount of \$200 000 from the regional infrastructure fund to enable a three-phase electricity supply to be connected and upgraded to allow for that particular project.

The nuclear radioactivity protection statement: obviously this government does not understand that the best place to put the waste that is created, whether in South Australia or interstate, is indeed in that geologically stable area in the north of our state, and it will be interesting when that bill comes before the house because I do not think the government will get its way on the particular matter.

The statement is important for some of the things omitted. It had no statement on transport. Indeed, the government did not even release its transport policy until a fortnight after the election; no statement on tourism; no statement on sport and recreation. Much has been said about parliamentary reform

in recent times. One of the so-called reforms that we have already seen is that of sitting times. It is, in my opinion, a disaster. It is very difficult for country members. Why on earth is parliament called together on Mondays for four hours, for question time, a grievance debate and two and a half hours of debate on matters before the house—

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Too hard for country members? They manage it in Canberra.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** In Canberra they don't sit for only four hours and then the city members can run off to their homes.

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Police is out of order.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Thank you, sir, for your protection. In Canberra, when the parliament is called, the parliament actually does some work. But this is merely a sop. Again, it is populist politics for those who think that politicians only work when they are in the parliament. It is merely a sop to those and it is populist politics at its absolute worst. I also bring to the attention—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Indeed, most of my working life has been taken up with seven-day weeks. That is something that the member opposite would not understand and would know little about. It was with interest some weeks ago that I read a copy of the Speaker's Compact for Good Government and noted various points in the document which he obviously sees as being integral to good government and beneficial to the efficient workings of the house.

I noted his condition that the government undertake certain actions within six months of the commencement of the 50th Parliament to improve the democratic operation of the parliament. I was particularly gratified to read paragraph 2.5A of that document, which says that we should revise standing orders of parliament to allow for a requirement that ministers actually answer questions during question time. Such a revision of the standing orders would obviously be most welcomed by this side of the house and the Speaker will have my full support for such a move.

Might I respectfully say that it would be most conducive to the workings of the parliament if we could achieve that much needed reform to question time immediately, rather than waiting for up to six months. I am also quite certain that the Premier in his new persona would also welcome such changes. It is indeed curious that, in his desire to be seen as leading a government committed to openness and accountability, such a standing order should even be necessary. Unfortunately, the disgraceful disregard that he and his ministers have already shown to answering questions put by members of the opposition on behalf of their electors points to the need for a measure such as the Speaker has demanded and highlights the sophistry and rhetorical nature of the Premier's utterances on this matter with regard to openness, honesty and accountability.

Time expired.

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

*[Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2 p.m.]*

### GAWLER TRAFFIC PLAN

In reply to **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY** (7 May).

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** As was announced by the Premier prior to the election, this government does support the Gawler traffic plan essentially encompassing three components, namely:

- the reclassification of Murray Street to local road status;
- the establishment of the Julian Terrace—Reid Street—Cowan Street route as a bypass for heavy vehicles; and
- the upgrading of High Street.

Whilst this government does support the plan in principle, this does not translate into a \$2.5 million commitment.

Transport SA currently is negotiating the extent of the reclassification, and hence the timing of the transfer will be subject to the outcome of those negotiations. Transport SA also is collecting traffic information to determine the impact on heavy vehicle volumes through Gawler as a result of the opening of Gomersal Road.

### HAMMILL HOUSE

In reply to **Hon. DEAN BROWN** (7 May).

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** Hammill House is an aged care facility of 32 beds managed by the Port Pirie Hospital. The facility is provided in 4-6 bed wards. Hammill House has not undergone commonwealth accreditation, but a recent review, which addressed the areas covered by the commonwealth's accreditation process, reports that Hammill House would not meet Commonwealth standards. The review noted that a major facility upgrade would be required.

Two million dollars has been approved to upgrade the facilities but it has been estimated that this amount may not provide the required upgrade.

Whilst, aged care is a very important service provided in the smaller country hospitals, Port Pirie Hospital is a regional facility with a focus on acute care. It is the only regional hospital in South Australia providing aged care.

The Department of Human Services has been negotiating with the Hospital Board, the Regional Board and local aged care providers to consider the provision of the aged care service from a non-government provider who specialises in aged care. The current proposal would result in the recurrent costs of the aged care beds being met from commonwealth funds. The state funds currently used to provide the aged care in the hospital will be maintained in the Mid North Region for services to the aged. These could be used for services including home assistance, community based care and home aids.

The proposal will maintain the same number of beds in Port Pirie whilst at the same time freeing up additional funds for community based services.

I support this proposal subject to negotiation with the key stakeholders.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORTS

**The SPEAKER:** Pursuant to section 131 of the Local Government Act 1999, I lay on the table the annual reports for 2000-01 for the District Council of Barunga West, Light Regional Council and Port Pirie Regional Council.

### MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Last week I introduced a package of legislative amendments known as the honesty and accountability in government series of bills. That package, which is currently before the house, is just one of a number of measures being taken to ensure the highest standards of honesty, accountability and transparency in government in this state. Today I am pleased to announce the introduction of a tough, comprehensive new code of conduct for ministers.

The new ministerial code of conduct recognises that ministers are in a position of trust, bestowed on them by the people and parliament of South Australia. It recognises that

ministers are responsible for decisions that can have a marked impact on individuals and groups in this state. For these reasons it emphasises that ministers must accept standards of conduct of the highest order and I hope it will have positive bipartisan support. The new code of conduct for ministers is one of the toughest codes of conduct applying to ministers in this country. Unlike the previous code of conduct that existed in this state, the new code prevents ministers from actively acquiring shareholdings and other financial interests in companies during their term of office and prevents ministers from trading, that is, buying or selling any shares that were held by them before taking up office. Ministers can only retain those shares that do not conflict with their portfolio responsibilities and, if there is a conflict, they must divest.

The code requires ministers to disclose to cabinet office details of any private interests of their spouse, domestic partner, children or business associates that might conflict with their duty as a minister. The code requires ministers to disclose to cabinet office the content of family trusts. The code prevents ministers from acting as consultants or advisers to companies and organisations during their term in office, except in their official capacity as minister. The code places a two year restriction on the type of employment activities, consultancies and directorships that ministers can take up after they have ceased to be a minister. The code prevents ministers from employing members of their immediate families or close business associates to positions in their own offices. The code sets out specific obligations in relation to cabinet confidentiality and details procedures for the disclosure of conflicts of interest in respect of matters going before cabinet.

In addition, the new code defines more clearly the type of action that the Premier or cabinet may take against ministers who are in breach of the code, whether it be a reprimand, requiring an apology or asking the minister to stand aside or resign. The code will come into effect on 1 July and be made available on a government website. It represents the fulfilment in part of another promise made before the last state election to introduce the toughest and most comprehensive honesty and accountability measures and standards of conduct. Setting the highest standards and meeting them will contribute to a renewed public confidence in the standing of government and, indeed, of parliament, and that is what our community in South Australia expects and deserves. I now table the ministerial code of conduct.

### TAXI COUNCIL

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier):** I seek leave to make another ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Members will be aware of the horrific attack on an Adelaide taxi driver in the early hours of last Sunday morning. Reports describe how two men and a boy he had taken to Wingfield put a rope around his neck, robbed him, poured petrol over his head and threatened to set him on fire. After the driver escaped, his attackers burned his taxi. This shocking incident, though particularly vicious, is not isolated. There have been a number of violent attacks or robberies on taxi drivers in South Australia this year and before. The police are of course pursuing the individuals responsible for Sunday morning's appalling attack and this government is also responding with urgency. The Minister for Transport met earlier this week with taxi driver represen-

tatives to hear their concerns and discuss remedies. He will meet again with those representatives next Tuesday.

Security for taxi drivers is but one of the serious issues confronting the industry. This government recognises the very difficult economic conditions faced by taxi operators with increasing costs, reports of declining patronage and low returns for drivers. We also recognise the critical importance of the industry to this state. Not only do a whole range of people in a range of circumstances rely on taxis to carry out vital everyday tasks, but also taxis are the front line of our tourism industry. They are often the first and last experience interstate and international visitors have of South Australia.

Before the election, the Labor Party promised to establish the Premier's Taxi Council. Today we deliver on that promise. In recognition of the importance of the taxi industry and the issues it faces, cabinet this morning approved the creation of the council. There are just over 1 000 licensed taxis in the Adelaide metropolitan area. At the end of March, there were 4 824 drivers and 1 181 operators, according to my advice. These operate through three centralised booking services: Yellow Cabs, Adelaide Independent and Suburban Taxis.

The current industry body, the Taxi Industry Advisory Panel, currently represents only a part of the industry. The proposed membership of the Premier's Taxi Council has been designed to provide a more broadly representative yet workable group. These include:

- one nominee each from Yellow Taxis, Adelaide Independent Taxis and Suburban Taxis;
- one elected representative of drivers from the metropolitan services;
- one elected representative of owner-operators from the metropolitan services;
- one elected representative of wheelchair accessible taxi owner-operators;
- one elected representative of country owner-operators;
- one representative of consumers;
- one nominee of the tourism industry;
- one taxi industry liaison officer from the Passenger Transport Board; and
- one representative from the South Australian Taxi Association.

The council will be co-chaired by me as Premier and by the Minister for Transport. The council will agree on its own terms of reference but, broadly, it will represent and promote the interests of the industry, provide advice to government and help to ensure efficient, high quality service to passengers.

#### BEVERLEY URANIUM MINE

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.  
Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Today I am pleased to present to the parliament the final report of the high level investigative team which visited the Beverley uranium mine on 10 May. The team concentrated on three issues: assessment of operating procedures at the mine; worker safety; and actual environmental harm. The report, which I will table in a minute, recommends changes be made in the areas of operational procedures, spill management and reporting, including increased involvement of the EPA in monitoring and evaluation, and I advised the house of the details of these recommendations on Monday.

I stress that the report found no evidence that licence conditions have been breached or that workers were exposed to unacceptable risks, and I make it clear, furthermore, that there is nothing in the report to suggest that the mine should be shut down. I commend the cooperative efforts of the investigative team, brought together at short notice from several government departments. I am pleased to table the report.

#### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Urban Development and Planning):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Today I wish to advise the house of an issue that serves to demonstrate the very difference between this government and the former Liberal government, namely, Labor's commitment to openness, accountability and transparency. I refer to the suppression by the previous government of a vital report entitled 'Population Projections for South Australia (1996-2026) and Statistical Divisions (1996-2016)' dated September 2000.

Planning SA produces population projections for the state's statistical divisions and statistical local areas about every five years. On the last three occasions this report has been prepared, it has been released without any significant delay, and it is widely acknowledged as an essential tool for policy makers as well as the private sector. In 1999, Planning SA commenced its five yearly revision of population projections for the state and statistical divisions. A report was completed in late 2000 containing the updated population projections. This report was prepared in consultation with a group called the Interdepartmental Forecasting Committee, which comprised membership from the ABS, Adelaide University and several state agencies. These organisations were key stakeholders that rely upon and use these population projections. The population projections made the following key observations:

... there are established patterns of internal migration that are driving further urban development in the Outer Adelaide Statistical Division. The rapid population growth in urban areas such as the south coast has implications for a wide range of services and needs careful management to avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

... the increasing concentration of people in and around Adelaide implies more state electorates within and near the Adelaide metropolitan area in the long term and less in the rest of the state.

... the projected decline from the regional areas is the result of migration losses coupled with negative natural increases.

This basically means a projected loss of young people from the regions. The report makes further observations:

... a slow growing and ageing population. . .

... regional population declines especially in the Northern Statistical Division raise social and economic development issues.

The foreword of the report provides an incisive summary:

... the demographic changes foreshadowed in these projections provide challenges and opportunities. They can be used to identify issues in advance and develop strategies to deal appropriately with them. For its part Planning SA will be assessing these demographic trends and working with the public and private sector towards strategies that meet the social, economic and physical needs of South Australians.

These projections were clearly too much reality for the former Liberal government. The report had potentially catastrophic implications for the government on two fronts. The first is that the projections demonstrated a less than rosy outlook for regional South Australia, despite claims that

regional South Australia was rejuvenated under the Liberal government; and, secondly, on an electoral front the population projections implied potentially fewer seats in the Liberals' heartland areas. This was not information they wished to have in the public sphere.

However, the projections, which were dated September 2000, were finally presented to cabinet in January 2001 by the previous minister for planning (Hon. Diana Laidlaw). But what did the government then do? Instead of ensuring that this report received the serious consideration it deserved, the former deputy premier (Hon. Rob Kerin), who was also the minister for regional development, requested that the report be referred back to the minister for planning. Indeed, the government was so concerned about the impact of the projections that it commissioned a consultant who cost \$45 000 to prepare a separate report to challenge the projections, even though the projections closely matched the ABS figures. Obviously, the then deputy premier thought the ABS estimates were wrong. Accordingly, the report was suppressed. At the same time, public sector—

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I think the minister is going very close to imputing improper motives to me.

**The SPEAKER:** I am coming to the same conclusion myself and, without waiting for the conclusion of the statement, if that is what it can be called, I tell the minister that it goes way beyond the bounds of what a ministerial statement is supposed to contain. It should be restricted to factual information.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I will rephrase that last remark. Accordingly, the report was not released. At the same time, public sector—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am trying to hear the minister's statement.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Mr Speaker, the point I am about to make is one you would be well aware of. Public sector agencies were being criticised by the Public Works Standing Committee for using old projections in their funding submissions. In the meantime, metropolitan population projections, which were never in question, also remained unreleased. The government and public sector were therefore deprived of the basic tools for the development of good public policy.

In the spirit of the government's commitment to openness and accountability, I table population directions which will inform and guide the future direction of good public policy. As a minister in the new government it is my intention to base policy and decisions on the best information available. The suppression—or the non release—of this vital report provides no clearer example of the difference between our government and the former government.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

## QUESTION TIME

### YEAR OF THE OUTBACK

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** In this Year of the Outback, can the Minister for Tourism advise the house how many projects have received funding under the three year \$6.7 million Outback Infrastructure Program established by the former Liberal Government, and will she

commit to honouring the funding commitments made by the former Liberal Government under this scheme?

In the 2001-02 state budget the former Liberal government announced a funding package to assist in the development of outback tourism infrastructure. The total funding commitment allocated by the former government amounted to \$6.7 million over three years. During the election campaign the Treasurer indicated that he would be honouring the funding commitments made by the former government in the last state budget. The opposition is aware that a number of regional tourist operations have expressed concern that funding under the scheme has been delayed or suspended under the Labor government.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism):** Those funding packages will be dealt with during the budgetary process, but at the moment we are still in the process of negotiation.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Labor government be withdrawing the former Liberal government's commitment to funding the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund for \$16.5 million over three years? From 1999 to June this year, \$11.5 million of funding, made available through the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund, would have been spent on regional projects across the state. The fund has allowed for investment in infrastructure such as electricity, water, waste treatment, telecommunications, roadworks and marine facilities, all of which are vital to key regional growth industries such as wine, aquaculture and meat processing. By June this year 45 regional businesses had received funding for projects which have led to the creation or retention of approximately 2 611 regional jobs and new investment in regional South Australia worth more than \$497 million.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier):** In the lead-up to the budget a number of programs are under review. The program, which comes under my portfolio as Minister for Industry, Investment and Trade, is one of a number of projects in my portfolio that we are reviewing. That is not in any way to reflect on the success or otherwise on the program, but when facing a budget deficit next year approaching \$100 million, and rising to \$169 million over the next few years, unfortunately a number of government programs have to be reviewed, and that is the only way in which we will be able to successfully balance the budget. It will be a very difficult task.

I know this program is highly regarded by many rural members—yourself, sir, included—and I know the member for Chaffey has written to me about this particular program, but we are facing tough decisions as a new government. We are facing up to \$100 million potentially as a deficit next financial year. We have to put certain programs under review, and this is one of those programs. I am not in any way suggesting that it will cut, modified, or otherwise, but it is simply under review as part of the budget process.

### TAB

**Mr SNELLING (Playford):** Will the Treasurer explain to the house the process of the sale of the TAB and the ramifications for the state and the budget, both this year and

in the forward estimates? The TAB has traditionally returned a dividend to the government that has contributed to government spending on such things as hospitals. Recent media reports have indicated that the state would be worse off as a result of the sale of the TAB.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier):** The sale of the TAB has been well documented in this house, and I give particular credit to my colleague the Minister for Racing for his handling of this matter during the years in opposition. Since becoming the Minister for Racing, he has made a number of comments on the way the TAB was privatised. Ultimately, as Treasurer, my concern is the bottom line budget impact.

I acknowledge a former TAB board member, the member for Bragg, who I understand did a very good job as a board member. I would even be bold enough to suggest that there may be some agreement to what I am about to say from the member or Bragg, but I would understand why she would not necessarily want to be seen to overtly agree with me. It was a very poorly handled sale process and, in the end, it has had a significant impact on the budget bottom line. As I said earlier, when dealing with a budget deficit approaching \$100 million next year and rising to \$169 million, this is the last thing we needed on the budget bottom line.

The sale price of the TAB was \$43.5 million. I am advised that offset payments of \$792 000, received in February 2002, took the sale to a total of \$44.3 million. I am further advised that expenses taken from the sale totalled some \$45.1 million, which could indeed increase the total to \$56.1 million if product fee payments to the TABCorp Queensland reach their capped maximum of \$6 million per annum over the next three years. That is, these costs will exceed the total sale proceeds received by the government from the sale of the TAB. I am sure that the member for Bragg, as a former board member, would have difficulty, like I, in understanding how you would sell something—in effect, a negative sale—and actually lose in the process.

I know, of course, that the former board was prohibited from having any role in the sale. I remember the resignation of the former chair of the TAB, Mr Philip Pledge, and I understand that the whole board was effectively frozen out. I am advised that also included in that \$45.1 million is an estimated \$9.1 million paid to consultants, as well as payments for lawyers, probity inquiries and the like. I understand that up to \$15.5 million in redundancy payments and a significant \$15.7 million up-front payment to the racing industry was part of those expenses that I alluded to earlier. So, the government will be worse off by around \$6 million per year and, because there was no debt reduction, there are no interest savings to be had from this privatisation.

I am advised that the cash budget impact of the sale on the non-commercial sector is \$24.6 million over the next three financial years. This is a budget blow-out of \$11.4 million over that time. The former treasurer knew that this was a negative sale, but he had to factor in a deterioration to the budget bottom line. The former treasurer had allocated a \$13.2 million—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** The previous government had allocated a \$13.2 million deterioration over three years in its budget bottom line. I am advised that, unfortunately, that was \$11.4 million short of what that allocation should have been. So, we have seen a further significant deterioration in the budget bottom line. The TAB sale was a bad deal for

taxpayers. The former minister, the former member for Adelaide, Dr Michael Armitage, really did make one significant mess with this sale. The ultimate losers are the taxpayers, because it has had a significant hit on the budget bottom line.

## HOMESTART FINANCE

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Will the Minister for Housing confirm whether the \$20 million HomeStart regional housing scheme developed by the former government has been scrapped by the present government and, if so, what is the Labor government doing to provide low cost housing in regional areas where there is a critical shortage of housing? Last year the Liberal government developed a \$20 million regional housing program using HomeStart as the funding agency. The scheme was designed to provide housing in regional towns with a shortage of housing—towns such as Naracoorte, Bordertown, Clare, Pinnaroo and Port Lincoln, to name just a few. People are currently being bused very large distances to meet the demand for jobs in these towns. The scheme was designed to maintain the development boom occurring in many regional areas.

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Housing):** I would like to make two points in answering the question. First, we heard what the Minister for Urban Development and Planning said today with regard to the statistical and demographic information that has not been released by the previous government. Surely this would be information—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:**—that would be needed not only in the urban development and planning area but it is also important information with regard to all the services provided through the state government, whether directly or through other programs in which the state government has been involved. As a person who is interested in demography, and I have studied that, I am very concerned that some of the services that we may have provided in the past and some of the priorities that we might have had in the past are not based on up-to-date and accurate information.

To answer your question more specifically, deputy leader: a number of times in the last two weeks you have asked questions about the accommodation and also the needs of people in regional areas, and I think that that is an important thing to do, but in connection with HomeStart I think the answer has been given to the opposition a number of times by the Treasurer, and also by the Minister for Health, that this is an area that is under review in connection with the budget bilaterals, and we are reviewing all these areas at the moment.

## RADIOACTIVE WASTE

**Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood):** Will the Minister for Environment and Conservation indicate whether recent claims by the member for Davenport over the cost of a proposed statewide referendum on radioactive waste dumps in South Australia were accurate? The state government has proposed that a referendum be held if the commonwealth pushes ahead with its plans to use South Australia as the dumping ground for radioactive waste. The member for Davenport recently criticised the referendum proposal on the basis of cost. In media interviews the honourable member claimed that the cost of the referendum could be as high as

\$10 million. On Wednesday 8 May this year, the member for Davenport said in an interview with Channel 10:

I don't think they should be wasting \$10 million.

The honourable member made similar statements on the same day to Channel 7 and to the ABC.

**The SPEAKER:** Will the member for Norwood please repeat the question?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Norwood.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** Will the Minister for Environment and Conservation indicate whether recent claims by the member for Davenport over the cost of a proposed statewide referendum on radioactive waste dumps in South Australia were accurate?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, that is in order.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I can indicate that the estimates given by the member for Davenport were, indeed, inaccurate. I am happy to share with the house what the accurate estimates are, because my office took the time to contact the State Electoral Office and ask the State Electoral Officer, Mr Steve Tully, what the actual costs are. I have a document here (which I will happily provide to the house and to which I now refer) which gives the estimates from that gentleman.

In fact, there are a couple of options that the government could choose from if it undertook to have a referendum. The cheaper option, which is by postal ballot, would cost \$4.65 million. The more expensive option, which would be the more novel way of having a referendum—that is, people turning up to a polling place—would cost \$5.67 million. That is considerably less than \$10 million that the member for Davenport indicated in the media on a number of occasions. I do not mind having a debate on this issue but it should be on the basis of factual information.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Unley will come to order. I do not think the member for Unley is that hard of hearing. When I call for order, I believe that members will do themselves a great service if they come to order. I thought we were doing fairly well until the necessity for the call to order.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The cost is considerably lower than the \$10 million indicated by the member for Davenport, and indeed if one looks at the schedule of figures given by Mr Tully one finds that they could be reduced even further if one were to have less publicity, and so on, associated with the referendum. The estimates given by Mr Tully include preparation of materials and sending them out to households, and so on.

I am happy to have this document tabled, but I say to the member for Davenport that, rather than his attacking the government over this issue of referendum, why do not the members of his party and he work with us because after all—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will address his remarks through the chair.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Mr Speaker, I apologise. I say to the member for Davenport that, rather than argue with us over the cost of these issues, why does not he and members of his party work with us to defend the position which his party, when in government, put through this parliament by way of legislation? If they are fair dinkum, sir, they should be working with us to stop the federal government building a nuclear reactor in this state.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

## POLICY COMMITMENT

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):**

Will the Minister for Government Enterprises ensure that any action taken to realise the policy commitment to achieve \$10 million efficiency targets in ForestrySA and SA Water will not lead to the loss of jobs in rural and regional South Australia within SA Water, and has the minister issued a directive to SA Water to inform them of the government's efficiency targets?

The policy costings document released by the now Treasurer during the election campaign included a provision to further increase efficiencies and returns on government equity within SA Water and ForestrySA without price increases to the public above CPI. The document went on to state that the Minister for Government Enterprises would issue a directive to SA Water and ForestrySA to achieve these efficiencies. The document sets a target of an additional \$10 million per annum to be returned from these organisations.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises):** What I will not be doing for the Leader of the Opposition is giving him an insight into the bilateral budget preparation process, because that is not what the former government would have done for us, and no government does it. I will say, as any competent minister would, that we do wish SA Water to run as efficiently as possible and return to government the maximum dividends possible. I cannot tell him any more than that. But I do not apologise for that and I will add this: the former minister—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I do take a responsibility that the former minister, in my view, didn't. He was very much a hands-off minister when it came to his agencies, and I can assure you that I will be addressing my attention and my responsibilities to making sure that SA water operates efficiently for the people who own it, that is, the taxpayers of South Australia, and I make no apology for that.

As to the second part of the question, I cannot guarantee to the Leader of the Opposition that there will be no separation packages—I think that was the question—and that is for one very good reason: SA Water has a chronic problem that was left by the former government in terms of the age of its work force. The average age of its work force is too old, and we have agreed on a program to replace some older workers with younger workers.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I cannot guarantee—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I stress that I have been advised by the board, by the chief executive officer, that not only is this the best thing in the interests of the taxpayer in delivering efficiencies from SA Water but it is also what those older workers in the work force themselves want. So, I do not apologise for that, either, and I do not apologise for, for the first time in many years, running SA Water on a proper basis and actually paying attention to what it does. The short answer is that I cannot give the honourable member a guarantee that there will be no voluntary separation packages in rural areas.

### COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

**Mr CAICA (Colton):** Has the Minister for Emergency Services made an attempt to discover the minute referred to yesterday by the member for Mawson?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services):** I thank the honourable member for his question: it is a serious issue. Yesterday I outlined to the house structural and chronic problems with the budget of the Country Fire Service, including structural deficits that have now been running for some three years. In response to some of the answers I gave, the member for Mawson came into the house and made what I would consider an intemperate grievance speech. During that intemperate grievance speech the member for Mawson indicated to the house that he was not aware, when asked last year, that the budget of the CFS was in deficit, because he had received a minute advising him that it was not.

I was very concerned about this: first, because such a minute would be contrary to the three-year paper trail and I was concerned that any officer could have written it in the circumstances. Therefore, yesterday after question time I asked the chief executive of the Attorney-General's Department, the responsible chief executive, to search for such a minute. As a result of an exhaustive search we have been unable to find such a minute.

I have been advised by the chief executive of the Attorney-General's Department that she cannot find it on any file or any of the agency's files, and she indicates further that she cannot understand why such a minute would exist, because such a minute would have been contrary to a number of letters sent to the then minister in September last year advising him of the budget deficit, and would have been inconsistent with her verbal advice to the then minister at her weekly meetings with him last year when, on a number of occasions, she raised the budget deficit with him.

She does not understand how such a minute could exist and certainly cannot find one. In an abundance of fairness to the member for Mawson, I am prepared to accept that he believes that he saw a minute and I am prepared also to take his advice on what that minute looked like, who it was from and roughly when it came to him. However, if such a minute exists, I am concerned to know why it no longer exists on any government files.

There is of course a third explanation, and that is that the minute never existed, which would be more consistent with the three years of paper trail on this issue. What I do say is this: we are prepared for a little longer to give the member for Mawson the benefit of what is I think a very big doubt and I have instructed the chief executive officer to keep looking for that minute. I would like the help of the member for Mawson to help identify it. If he has it himself I would like to see it, but that would raise a further question of what he is doing with it when I cannot find it.

In the interim, perhaps the member for Mawson would like to reconsider his answer about whether he was aware of the budget deficit in the Country Fire Service, and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition would like to talk to one of his front benchers about the standard of answers and the standard of comments made in the previous parliament and in the current parliament.

**Mr BRINDAL:** On a point of order, the leader of the house's business was quoting rather extensively from a head of department and from a series of instructions about issues and things that had been requested by us. I ask you to find out

whether they were verbal communications or whether there is any paperwork and, in accordance with your ruling yesterday, to require the paperwork to be examined by you.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, were you or were you not quoting from a departmental—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The bulk of the answer I gave was an oral briefing. If the house would like that reduced to writing from the chief executive, I will ask her to do that. Secondly, there is a long paper trail, and an answer to a subsequent question here today may set the mind at ease about the availability of that paper.

### BUILDING INDUSTRY

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Is the Treasurer aware of the widespread problems in the building industry as a result of the current building indemnity problems, including workers being laid off, hundreds of houses being delayed, builders having to sell their own homes and a slow down in building supplies, and when—and I put that more as a plea—will the government act to solve these problems?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier):** I thank the deputy leader for his question because I know he has had a significant interest in this issue over recent months and has written to me and raised the issue with me on a number of occasions. This is an issue on which we are looking for options, alternatives and ways in which we can minimise disruption to the building industry. As I said last week, the advice to me from the Housing Industry Association and from insurance company Sun Alliance is that it has capacity to insure 100 per cent of the market. That is the advice it has given me.

**Mr Williams:** Have you spoken to anybody else?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I will give you an answer, if you will please listen. You can take issue with me at the end of question time, but please give me the courtesy of listening to my answer. The Housing Industry Association and Sun Alliance have indicated and advised me formally that it has capacity to take up 100 per cent of builders who meet the financial criteria that any company would expect.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Well, that is the advice they have given me.

**An honourable member:** Do you believe it?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** That is what I will get to, if you will please let me answer the question. I then went to the Master Builders Association and advised it on what HIA had said—and I appreciate the competitive tension between the two building associations. I acknowledge that there are many builders involved, but in terms of the percentage of houses being constructed, it is a small number. I said last week that I would be prepared to facilitate discussions between the MBA, its clients and members who are having difficulty with HIA Insurance. The MBA wrote back to me declining that offer.

I have said consistently that I am not prepared to put the solution on the table (and I hope members opposite would agree), namely, the solution that has been adopted in other states, that is, the state accepting the risk; that is, that we take on the liability of a certain percentage of the building industry. At the height of the building boom in this country it is the wrong time (if there ever is a right time—and I say

there is not) for state governments to be taking on significant liability in the building industry.

My colleague the Minister for Consumer Affairs I understand will be making some decisions over the course of the next week about other measures that we can offer the industry to help deal with this issue. I restate my offer to the Master Builders Association and its membership: for those builders experiencing difficulty, I offer the services of government to help facilitate dialogue with one insurance company that has said it can cover 100 per cent.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** I am still waiting for a reply to the letters I sent.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Yes, and I have signed a number of letters. The reason I have delayed replying is that we have been trying to find solutions. The advice I am given is that once the market stabilises in New South Wales and Victoria in particular, particularly from 1 July, given the enormous share of the insurance market that they hold, it is expected that a number of new entrants will enter the market. With new entrants we have seen more insurance companies coming back in and, hopefully, some degree of normality will return to the market. I do not run away from the fact that we have a problem. It is a problem that is very difficult to deal with. I would be quite happy if the Leader of the Opposition was prepared to provide me with his views on what solutions the government should be undertaking. My invitation to the deputy leader is to provide me with his ideas of what I, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Minister for Housing should be doing.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** I have addressed that in some of my letters.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I would be happy to sit down—  
*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Sure. Let us sit down and talk about the options. Some of your ideas are already under consideration, but exempting a retirement village does not necessarily in itself deal with the problem of a small builder who cannot get insurance. Unless you want me to take on the risk—

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I do not disagree with that.

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Absolutely. I think that the deputy leader has some very valid points and we are working through them at present. My non-negotiable point is that I do not want to take on risk and I think that you would appreciate why governments do not want to and should not take on risk. However, I am happy to have further dialogue and I hope to have some answers over the course of the next week.

### COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

**Mr RAU (Enfield):** Has the Minister for Emergency Services taken any steps to address the problems with the CFS budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services):** I thank the honourable member for his question, because I have taken steps. One of the things that I found astonishing about the budget for the Country Fire Service was that, while it was running a structural deficit on recurrent funding year after year, the minister had set aside \$1.1 million each year for what I could only describe as pork barrel grants. The grants system established by the minister on 5 October 1999 committed \$1.1 million out of our very difficult to find emergency services funding for grants, the

vast bulk of which went to the Country Fire Service. That is despite the fact that, some time before the 2001 budget, he had been advised by the Chief Executive Officer of the Attorney-General's Department that the system itself offered very little in advantage to the emergency services and was not a wise use of funds.

I have suspended the operation of the \$1.1 million grants system because I have to say that, if there is a recurrent deficit in recurrent funding of over \$2 million or \$3 million, then you cannot give a million dollars away in grants: you have to fix the hole in the budget first. The former minister is shaking his head. I want to know whether or not he thinks there is a hole in the budget. We have not got clear about that yet. If he does not think there is a hole in the budget, I will give him the three years of documents, and we are going to give the three years of documents to someone else in due course.

The problem is that we have had an operating deficit year after year and a million dollars going in pork-barrelling grants. When I suspended the operation of the grants, I advised the Volunteer Fire Brigades Association, and it had no difficulty with it, because everyone out there knew what they were: they were another method for this former minister to run an election campaign through the CFS budget. That no longer happens with this government. The grants have been suspended. One of the reasons that the grants were suspended is that I found a litany of cases where the grants were given for one thing and then spent on another, and I find that an extraordinary thing to do.

**Mr Brokenshire:** Tell the truth.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** If the former minister wants to say that, if he wants to raise that and take it on, I will bring in the documents. Let me say this, too, that the grants system was a matter of considerable confusion for the former government and some of its ministers, and I refer in particular to the former minister for tourism, the member for Waite. On 22 February this year, he wrote to the Boating Industry Association to tell it that it could have \$22 000 out of the fund. I point out a couple of things. On 22 February, the former minister was well and truly the former minister and he should not have been doing things like that. I can also say that the grant that he was talking about had not been to any minister yet and I assume that, unfortunately, he had to write to the Boating Industry Association and state that he was labouring under a misapprehension. He was probably relying on the advice of the former minister for emergency services.

It was nothing but a scandalous pork-barrelling exercise by the former minister while he presided over deficit after deficit. It has been stopped and I can guarantee the house that it will not be coming back, certainly not in its present form.

### AIR SERVICES, REGIONAL

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Will the minister advise the house of any plans which that he has to ensure the continuation of air services to regional South Australia and any emergency plan that he has should another airline route be withdrawn from regional South Australia? It has been recently reported that the government has withdrawn any assistance to Australia-wide Airlines, the preferred bidder for Kendell Airlines and Hazelton Airlines, and I am concerned that this action now places the continuation of regional air services at risk. I therefore seek information on the plan that



the minister has to ensure that regional South Australians have access to air travel.

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport):** I thank the member for Light for his question. As I indicated to the house on 13 May 2002, my office was approached on that day by Australia-wide consortia, which is the preferred bidder nominated by the administrator for the purchase of Hazelton Airlines and Kendell Airlines. I understand that was the first contact by the consortia with my office. However, on the administrator declaring Australia Wide as the preferred bidder, I am also advised by my department that contact was made with the administrator, Australia Wide and the commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services to establish if there were any expectations of the South Australian government by the bidder.

The advice obtained was that it appeared that conditions applied only to the New South Wales and commonwealth governments. My office also had discussions on the night of the initial contact with the office of the commonwealth Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Hon. John Anderson. Notwithstanding this late approach, I arranged for both myself and the Deputy Premier, along with officials from the Department of Industry and Trade and Transport SA, to meet with the consortia just over 24 hours after their approach. We met with the consortia representative who confirmed that: first, they had been negotiating with the New South Wales government since February; secondly, they were the administrator's preferred bidder; thirdly, the administrator had given them a deadline of this Friday, 17 May, to resolve any conditions associated with its bid; fourthly, they were seeking a government guarantee of a \$15 million loan which had recently been refused by the New South Wales government despite three months of negotiations and analysis; and, finally, they were seeking direct financial assistance of \$5 million from the South Australian government.

The Deputy Premier advised the consortia representative that the South Australian government was not able to provide the level of financial assistance that was being sought. We consider it our duty as a responsible government not to lead on the consortia with any false expectations of what may be possible following any more detailed analysis of their request. It would not have served anyone's interest to have sought further time to look at the detail of their proposal. In fact, another bidder who had approached the government for assistance actually thanked the Deputy Premier and myself for providing them with certainty as to what our position would be and for our decisiveness. They drew a direct contrast with the previous government.

This government is certainly very concerned as to the outcome of this process of administration for Kendell Airlines. However, it will not simply pour very significant amounts of money into a venture that the financial markets have identified as a venture that they themselves will not independently support. The government is certainly examining all possible outcomes from the current administration process and will do whatever it can as a responsible government to assist in the maintenance of airline services to regional areas.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES BUDGET

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Could the minister indicate to the house the level of his concern in

regard to government processes concerning the emergency services budget?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services):** I am concerned about the paper trail I have seen regarding what has occurred, particularly in the Country Fire Service budget, over the past three years. I have too much material to bring in and table in this place, but what I will be—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I would not dare do it. I am happy to release it publicly—all of it, all the information I sent to the Treasurer. I announce to the house that I am concerned that over three years a minister could be so warned by so many chief executives of problems accumulating in his portfolio yet do nothing about them. I am amazed that a minister can be allowed within government processes to preside over a service that unilaterally increases its own budget and a minister then hides it from the Treasurer. Government structures allow such a thing to occur. I know for a fact that the former treasurer did not know what was going on with the CFS budget and that he was very unhappy when he found out.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** This is a structural issue, and I will be writing to the new Treasurer. I will be delivering to him a large number of documents and asking him to forward them to Auditor-General for him to consider in his current audit of the Country Fire Service budget and its activities. The paper trail—that large amount of documents which I am happy to give to any member in this house who wants to see them—is very sorry reading for the former government. I will ask the Treasurer to forward them to the Auditor-General.

One of the documents, I will add, is a document which somehow has been distributed to the press gallery and which is a government minute from emergency services.

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** Is this the one that clears him?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Apparently, it has been distributed by Liberals to explain the member for Mawson's answer yesterday. In the grievance debate yesterday, the member for Mawson said that the answer he gave on 26 October last year was accurate because it relied on a minute—and he has distributed the minute. It does not do what he purports. But it has a more important flaw.

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** What's that?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is dated 13 November 2001. Unless the former minister is in possession of a time machine, I do not understand how in answering a question on 26 October 2001 he could rely on a minute printed and noted by him on 13 November. I am at a loss to understand it.

#### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** Does the Minister for Local Government believe that the population projections in the report tabled today give accurate data available for government agencies to use for service planning purposes over the next year? The minister has today tabled population projections for South Australia and regional areas.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer will come to order. I am having difficulty hearing the leader.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** These figures show the South-East statistical region losing 10 per cent of males aged between 20 and 34 between 1996 and 2001 during a time of

greatly increased employment in the area, particularly in the wine and meat processing areas. The figures also show a loss of 20 per cent of males aged between 20 and 34 between 1996 and 2001 during a period when there was a large increase in employment, which has been shown in all surveys and which is obvious to anyone who goes there. The figures are based on ABS figures done on the desks in Canberra and do not take into account what is really going on out there.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Local Government):** The new government will address the special needs of regional South Australia, but it will do it on a particular basis. It will do it on an informed basis: it will not lick its finger, stick it in the air and make a guess.

### DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** Can the Minister for Social Justice advise the house what changes the commonwealth government proposes regarding the assessment criteria for the disability support pension and what impact they will have on disability pensioners in South Australia?

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Social Justice):** As a consequence of the federal budget announced on Tuesday night, recipients of the commonwealth disability support pension will face additional hardships and difficulties. Those currently receiving the pension usually suffer from a range of physical and/or mental disabilities. As a result of the measures announced in the budget, the assessment for the disability support pension will be tightened so that people with a very restricted capacity to work will be the only ones guaranteed of receiving the pension.

This will apply whether or not the people concerned can obtain employment: it is a matter of whether they can be assessed to work for 15 hours per week at award wages. Currently, the assessment is based on the capacity to work for 30 hours per week, and this has caused some problems about which I am sure members have received complaints. The changes, admittedly, for new recipients will not commence until 1 July 2003, so it will be important for activists and advocates in the disability area to analyse the potential for people with these types of disabilities to be eligible for the disability support pension. As far as existing recipients of the DSP are concerned, the changes will apply from the time of their next review. Progressively over the next five years, all recipients will be affected by the changed arrangements. So, everyone receiving a disability support pension over the next five years will need to fit into this new capacity assessment criteria.

The only people who will be excluded from these new arrangements will be those with the most severe and profound disabilities and clearly have no capacity to do paid work or those who are within five years of age pension entitlement. The commonwealth expects to claw back \$28.2 million over four years from existing pensioners and to make further savings as a result of making it more difficult for future applicants to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

Those most likely to be excluded from the disability support pension are among the most vulnerable in the community and include the mature aged, the unskilled, the long-term unemployed, people with health problems and those with drug and alcohol problems. There is little likelihood of these individuals obtaining secure employment in the current economic climate and a strong likelihood of financial penalties (known as 'breaching') resulting from failure to

comply with the participation requirements under the Job Search and New Start allowances.

The shift of these vulnerable people from the disability support pension to the New Start allowance places them in the precarious position of running the risk of being breached because their access cab does not arrive on time to take them to an interview. Not only do they run the risk of financial penalties but also the actual payments under the New Start allowance cuts their fortnightly income by \$52.80.

As those vulnerable people lose their commonwealth entitlement, there will be an increased impact on the demand for our state's services, particularly for the Family and Youth Services/Community Services anti-poverty programs and also in the areas of housing and health. In the short term, the commonwealth has targeted one of the most disadvantaged groups of people to achieve commonwealth savings, while at the same time engaging in cost shifting to the South Australian taxpayer.

### LONZAR'S LODGE

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport):** Prior to making his decision to demolish Lonzar's Lodge on Kangaroo Island, was the Minister for Environment and Conservation or his staff aware that Friends of Parks members had written to his department approximately four weeks prior to the minister's visit to the island, and approximately eight weeks prior to the demolition of Lonzar's Lodge, strongly opposing any demolition of the lodge? Yesterday, the minister advised the house that he did not consult with the Friends of Parks members about his decision to demolish Lonzar's Lodge. The minister indicated to the house that he did not take time to consult the Friends of Parks about his decision to demolish Lonzar's Lodge because they had not made any representations to him on the matter. The department received written representation opposing the demolition approximately eight weeks prior to the minister's decision to demolish the lodge.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I thank the member for his second question. It is obviously a pretty desperate opposition if on two consecutive days—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will answer the question.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Thank you, sir. I am not aware of any correspondence to which the member refers. I will check with my—

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Hang on; just a second. I will answer the question. I will check with the staff in my office to see whether correspondence has been received.

### DRINKS, SPIKING

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** Does the Attorney-General regard the current law, including penalties, relating to the spiking of non-alcoholic drinks as being adequate? I have been approached by the parents of a person who has been fined and disqualified from driving as a result of exceeding the BAC level of .05 due to the now admitted actions of a person deliberately putting alcohol in what was stated to be a non-alcoholic drink, i.e., orange juice. I have also been informed by young women of their suspicion that their drinks had been spiked in clubs, hotels and at parties.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** The short answer to the question is yes. The relevant offence will

depend on the circumstances, including the substance used to spike the drink. Section 27 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act provides:

Any person who unlawfully and maliciously administers to, or causes to be administered to or taken by, any other person any poison or other destructive or noxious thing with intent to injure, aggrieve or annoy that other person shall be guilty of an offence and liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three years.

'Malicious' means intentionally or deliberately in this context. That would seem to be an appropriate maximum penalty. It will be up to the court in every case to determine whether this offence has been committed, including whether the substance used was a poison or other destructive or noxious thing, and what was the intent of the defendant. Section 25 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act provides:

Any person who, with intent to enable himself or any other person to commit any indictable offence or to assist any other person in committing any indictable offence applies or administers, or attempts to apply or administer, to any person, or causes to be taken by any person, any chloroform, laudanum or other stupefying or overpowering drug, matter or thing, is guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for life.

As to the situation described by the honourable member, it is my understanding that that matter is currently before the Supreme Court on appeal, and for that reason I would prefer not to comment on the matter. Placing alcohol in someone else's soft drink is not a joke: it is conduct that could have serious consequences for the person drinking. The person who does the spiking may be committing a criminal offence.

#### SOUTH-EAST RAIL PROJECT

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** Can the Minister for Transport advise the house whether the government plans to progress or cancel the South-East rail project that would see the standardisation of the rail line between Mount Gambier and Wolseley? The work and planning that goes into a project like this was undertaken and completed by the previous Liberal government. Costings have been done, negotiations with key stakeholders completed and \$10 million over two financial years has been committed in the budget. In fact, the South-East rail project had been identified as the first project to benefit from the newly formed rail facilitation fund.

The Rann Labor government now contends that this regional infrastructure initiative requires review and, to date, South-Easteners and other stakeholders have been left in limbo. The Minister for Transport has refused to rule out the axing of the project and we do not know whether, once again, regional South Australia will be abandoned.

**The SPEAKER:** Can I tell the member for MacKillop that the kind of explanation he gave was not necessary for the question to be understood. It was plainly a statement. If that is to be continued, leave to make an explanation will be withdrawn.

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport):** The member for MacKillop correctly identifies the rail facilitation fund. What the incoming government did, and I did on behalf of the government as the Minister for Transport, was to ask for an overall picture of South Australia with regard to rail and rail freight. I have asked for that advice subject to my making a recommendation to cabinet on behalf of the government with regard to the South-East rail—

**An honourable member:** A sort of review?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** No review. Sir, I will not allow them to bait me, because I know you would not want me to. Any incoming government has the right and the

responsibility to examine any decision that a previous government has made, particularly a government like this. This government is a responsible government, and what I have requested from the Department of Transport is an assessment of the rail and rail freight across South Australia. The member for Mount Gambier has spoken to me about the project identified by the member for MacKillop and, as a result of that, I have organised a briefing for him. I am happy to do that for the member for MacKillop as well, although he has not been as forthright in coming to me as the member for Mount Gambier has. The South-East rail project that the member for MacKillop has identified today is the most mature of those particular projects that have been identified to me across South Australia. As soon as this government is in a position to announce whether the South-East rail project is going ahead, and/or any other projects, we will do so.

#### STOCK STEALING

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** I direct my question to the Minister for Police.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** It's your day, Patrick; it's your day. Will the minister give the house an assurance that extra police resources will be made available to assist local police officers in their difficult task of apprehending those involved in stock stealing?

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** If you haven't heard of the problem, if you're a little patient I will explain it to you. This is a very serious matter. Of recent months there have been a great number of reports to local police in the northern parts of the state and on Yorke Peninsula of an ongoing process of sheep stealing. It is beyond the capacity of the local police to put in sufficient time to ensure that those people are apprehended. I therefore bring it to the minister's attention and seek his assistance.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Police):** I commend the member for Stuart: he does regularly in this place raise matters of interest to his electorate, which is something that many other people might think about. I am sure that the member for Stuart would appreciate this answer, because it is the same one the minister in the previous government would have given: the addressing of patrols and police resources is primarily an operational matter and one for the commissioner. What I will do—and I do not ignore the honourable member's question—is undertake to raise the issue with the commissioner at an early date. I will take his question from *Hansard* and raise it with the commissioner, because it is my view that police services should be addressed where they are needed, which I am sure is also the view of the commissioner. We will be in a better position in the term of this government to address police resources, because we have made a commitment to recruit against attrition throughout the term of this government, which is something the previous government failed to do and which placed an enormous strain on our police resources.

**Mr Brokenshire:** Rubbish!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The former minister says 'Rubbish!' I can give him the facts and figures. The simple truth is that the former minister, the member for Mawson—who has had a very bad couple of days and really should be pulling his head in—is in denial. His government persistently failed to recruit against attrition, and anyone out there can tell him that that is why we have a legacy of so many inexperi-

enced police officers in the job together, because when they finally got to crisis point they did recruit before an election, which is also precisely what happened before 1997, if people remember. We will not allow those peaks and troughs to damage the police. We will recruit against attrition through the period of this government, which will allow us to do the sorts of things that the member for Stuart is asking for.

### HEALTH, SOUTH-EAST BUDGET

**Mr McEWEN (Mount Gambier):** I would like to ask the Minister for Health a question that will be of great interest to my electorate. Will the minister tell the house what action is being taken to manage the South-East regional health budget, and can she guarantee that the community will be consulted before any action is taken to implement this matter?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I appreciate the honourable member's constructive and proactive approach so far in relation to solving the problems with the health services in the South-East. This question relates to yet another budget blowout that the former Minister for Human Services failed to deal with over a number of years. From 1998-99 to 2000-01 the Mount Gambier and District Health Service ran up cumulative deficits of \$4.4 million dollars, and this year the deficit is forecast to increase by a further \$2.2 million.

After three years of apparent inaction by the former minister, the Neilsen report was finally commissioned in October 2001 to examine the delivery of services in the South-East region. This report highlights the need for regional and local financial management strategies to reflect clinical planning. I have written to the chairman of the board of the South-East Regional Health Service and invited the board to provide me with advice on the findings and recommendations of the report. I believe that it is vital that all interests be consulted, and I certainly undertake to the member for Mount Gambier that that will occur.

The board has agreed that a unified approach is needed to ensure that quality services are delivered efficiently and cost effectively. I want to acknowledge the cooperation I have received from the chairman of the board, Mr Bill de Garis, and the board's willingness to address these issues. I will also continue to take advice from the member for Mount Gambier and also the member for MacKillop. I plan to visit the South-East in the second week of June for further discussions with the local members and to meet the health boards, hospital executives, clinicians and other interested parties.

The goal is to improve health services in the South-East and to ensure sustainability in the delivery of quality health care, something that the former minister failed to do. I look forward to the continuing support of the honourable member and also that of the member for MacKillop in this task.

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## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

### COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

**Mr BROKENSHERE (Mawson):** Yesterday there were questions in the house regarding a question that the then shadow minister asked me when I was a minister, during the

audit report questioning. When the shadow minister asked me that question, I clarified the question with the shadow minister: was the question whether there were any problems with the budget of which I am aware for the CFS for this year? When he confirmed the question, my answer then was, 'I am not aware there will be any problem with the budget at the end of the year.'

There was discussion between agencies regarding possible cost pressures and aspects of the budget, and I received verbal briefing regarding the issues. I advised during these discussions on this verbal briefing that I would not be going back to cabinet or the Treasurer for more money, given the record budget, and that, if the cost pressure matter was confirmed to be accurate, they would need to adjust their existing budget. That is proper and responsible management from a minister of the day.

I was advised that they would be able to balance the global CFS budget, hence my answer to that question. I did request, however, to be advised of further developments regarding budget issues. On 13 November last year, approximately three weeks after the question, I received a minute from the fund manager, the person responsible for the overall fund. I pointed out to the house that if, subsequently, I was advised that there would be a blowout in the global budget, then I would have come back and advised the house. However, the response from the fund manager was:

Re update on forecast outcome for the CFS budget.

You recently sought updated information about the expected outcome for the CFS budget for the current year, following our recent discussions on this subject. The amount budgeted to be paid to the CFS from the Community Emergency Services Fund for this financial year is \$40.3 million, a significant increase on the previous year's budget. The latest monthly financial reports in respect of the CFS (which have been discussed with CFS and ESAU staff) indicate that the total outlays by the CFS to date [that is, three weeks after the question] are less than budgeted. In this regard, CFS recorded an operating surplus for the first quarter of this financial year of \$582 000. In addition, capital spending for the first quarter was \$548 000 below budget.

A review of the total CFS operating and capital forecasts for the remainder of the year indicate that the total outlays from the fund will not exceed the amount that is budgeted to be paid the CFS. The only factor that might be expected to affect that outcome is the incurrence of extraordinary costs that may stem from a major bushfire.

It was signed by the General Manager, Business Advisory Services, Justice Portfolio Services Division, on 13 November.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** That makes the minister look a goose.

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I do not know if it makes the minister look a goose, but I know that if ministers are going to make allegations in the house they should do it with all the facts and let them put all the facts forward. Twice this week we have seen ministers trying to rewrite history or manipulate the facts for what I believe to be blatant political purposes. Some of the documents that I understand were highlighted for you in the house yesterday were never addressed to me in my capacity as minister. Again, I reinforce that I was not aware of any budget problem in the CFS by the end of this financial year. That was confirmed. I told them that they had to work within their budgets and I believe to this day you will find the global budget for the CFS is on track, as advised to me on 13 November.

### TOURISM CONFERENCE

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism):** I rise in this grievance debate to express my astonishment at the member for Waite. I have expected in this chamber to see a low standard of behaviour, but on this occasion he even failed to meet that. In his comments last night the member managed to speak about matters which are both inaccurate and misleading and which misrepresented me extensively. He pointed out at one stage that I had not attended a conference and, of course, he is able to make any assertion he wishes because he is not in possession of the facts.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** The ATEC conference held in South Australia at the beginning of May was a most important event. It brought together the inward bound operators and package providers from South Australia at a huge convention, which allowed us to market our product to both interstate and overseas operators. It was especially important for the tourism industry in South Australia, and it was significant that I played a part in this event.

The week prior to the major conference I made it my business to meet 50 of the operators who would be presenting their packages at this conference and spoke to them about the importance of their operations to industry development in South Australia. Furthermore, in the week of the conference I met the tourism task force, which was in Adelaide as well. I spoke to the CEO of the Australian Tourist Commission. I met airline operators and spent some seven hours in meetings with people involved in that conference.

On the opening evening, I was fortunate to give the opening address and, I believe, played a significant part in that event. In being involved in that conference, I played a part that was necessary for the Minister of Tourism. The problem, of course, is (and this is possibly one of the problems he had) that the member for Waite did not realise that he is no longer in government, and that is why he was not aware of all the tourist minister's appointments, why he was not aware of the speeches I gave, and why he was not aware of the personal meetings I held during the week. He was not in government and therefore not aware of what the Minister for Tourism was doing.

It is fair to say that the honourable member also criticised my office arrangements. Again, he was not in possession of the facts. He claimed, quite wrongly, that I suggested my office was in the basement of the Education Department building. The member clearly had not done his research very well. The article to which he referred quotes quite clearly 'her first floor ministerial office'. If I did not occupy his old office, which he asserts very clearly was rather plush, it was because I chose less opulent offices out of those available and put the plush office that the former minister occupied on the open market. It has never been occupied by me.

In terms of the credentials of this Minister for Tourism to operate in this area, it is worth remembering that I have been involved in actors' operations for over a decade. I have been involved in bids for special events, sporting events and conferences and in bringing them to the state. I have been a convenor of the Governor's business ambassadors group which has brought many conventions to South Australia, and I have opened and been a keynote speaker at over 200 international conferences in Adelaide. I have also been involved in setting a marketing strategy for tourism in the capital city. When you compare my credentials to the parvenu

of the previous minister, who occupied the office for a mere few weeks, as the fifth Liberal minister in one term, I must say that I think he has a nerve. Admittedly, he brought a certain style to the office and admittedly he was not brought into disrepute as some of the former ministers were, but frankly I think he has a chutzpah.

### BUILDING INDUSTRY

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright):** Today, 16 May, is a date by which in all previous parliaments considerable legislation would have been debated. I have been conversing with my colleague, the member for Stuart, who has been a member of this place for some 32 years. In those 32 years, he advises me, that as of 16 May governments have always debated legislation before the parliament. Certainly this opposition was prepared to debate legislation much earlier than this, and we still wait for the first legislation to be debated.

The relevance and importance of stating that is that it has taken this government a long time to start addressing matters of state. Even in the absence of debating legislation, they have had matters of state that they could be addressing but have failed to do so.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** I have been asked to name one and I am happy to do that. The housing indemnity insurance issue is one that this government is failing to address. It is failing to address it, and simply coming into this house and, in long rhetorical answers to questions, believes that that is enough to satisfy the housing industry. They have failed because they have not consulted and failed to understand the import of this issue and, for that matter, the threat to our building industry. Small and medium sized builders are at a point today where their businesses are in crisis.

I have had representations from 28 such businesses to date, and those representations continue to pour in. I will share with the house extracts from some of the letters I have received over the past few days. They make worrying reading indeed. The first letter reads in part:

We have signed three contracts to the value of \$374 000 with plans, engineers' reports and deposits which cannot be continued until insurance policies are issued for each job, which we need immediately. Four pending contracts, which have been in negotiation for some time, are to the value of \$950 000. We have already had plans designed to clients' specifications and cannot pursue until insurance issues are rectified.

Another company says in part:

We are unable to commence any new work and, as our present jobs are near completion, this now puts our cash flow at a standstill and subsequently we are unable to pay our trade creditors and tradesmen.

The same writer puts to me:

Our current position is that we have to place our family home, which we built ourselves nine years ago for our children's future, on the market so we can create funds to pay our trade accounts whilst we wait for this issue to be resolved.

Another writer puts to me:

We have contracts signed with clients for three major residential projects, which are each in the \$300 000 to \$500 000 range, but are unable to commence work until we can ascertain that we are able to obtain indemnity cover. If we are prevented from commencing construction for a number of weeks, this will stifle our cash flow and cause considerable financial difficulty, not only for us personally but also for the large number of tradesmen we employ on a subcontract basis.

Another writer puts to me that they have a \$300 000 per contract approval but HIH Insurance approved only \$50 000 per contract. Another writer states:

We hold a builders and supervisors licence which allows us to do domestic and commercial additions, renovations, alterations and repairs up to the value of \$350 000, yet our existing insurance cover, which runs out in two days, has a limit of \$75 000 imposed on it by our insurance company for home building indemnity insurance. Where is the fairness in this? Why should insurance companies be allowed to impose these lower limits on a policy that by legislation we have to take out on behalf of the client and yet at the same time severely limit our ability to earn income for our family?

So the list of letters go on, companies telling me that they are in danger of closing their doors, they cannot pay their bills, they cannot pay for their contractors; yet all we have is the Treasurer coming into this place and saying in answer to questions that it is his understanding that there is sufficient insurance in the market to cover building activity. That is not the case. He must act.

Time expired.

### BUSINESS VISION 2010

**Mr O'BRIEN (Napier):** This week South Australian Business Vision 2010 released its indicators of the state of South Australia 2002. This is the fourth annual publication of this indicator report. The report uses a range of indicators against benchmarks to track the state's economic performance. The findings of the report are of some concern and reflect poorly on the previous government.

The first indicator of the report, gross state product, describes the level of income generated by economic activity to support living standards. Between 1992-93 and 2000-01, per capita gross state product, measured at constant prices, increased at a slower rate in South Australia than in the rest of Australia. Over the same period, South Australia has fallen from about \$3 500 or 13 per cent to about \$5 500 or 17 per cent below Australian per capita product.

An analysis of income distribution in South Australia is of equal concern. It shows that the poorest 20 per cent of South Australian households are comparable with the rest of Australia. However, for higher income groups, incomes are lower than for the rest of Australia. A more egalitarian society perhaps, but, according to the report, the lower median income of higher income groups in South Australia reflects limited success in attracting and retaining high income opportunities. It also reflects the emigration to other states of upwardly mobile young people with marketable skills.

Business Vision 2010 also reported that, in August 2001, average weekly total earnings in all industries in South Australia was \$644.50, about \$28 per week less than for Australia as a whole. The report makes the observation that higher average weekly earnings on average indicate better quality jobs requiring more complex skills. On the crucial issue of employment trends, the report states that over the past decade employment has grown by 19.2 per cent throughout Australia but by only 7.6 per cent in South Australia. This period covers most of the time of stewardship of previous Liberal governments.

Demographic indicators were also of concern for South Australian Business Vision 2010. The report states that population growth reflects optimism and attractiveness of economic conditions and renewal of the labour force. In the face of this observation, the report found that South Australia has a lower rate of population growth than seven major

OECD countries and is losing its share of population in Australia. On some projections, the population of South Australia is expected to stop growing in the year 2020. There are a number of other benchmark indicators that reflect equally poorly on the economic performance of the previous Liberal government.

The only high spot in the report was exports, where in 2001 South Australian exports exceeded the national level as a percentage of gross domestic product. However, for the previous 10 years, exports had lagged below the national level and the report is cautious in treating the 2001 result as anything more than a one-off. In fact, the report says:

Overall, trade has a lower share of gross state product in South Australia compared with other states.

All in all, the 2002 indicators report of Business Vision 2010 points to a Liberal government that over the past eight years never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity in promoting the economic development of the state. The report is also timely in that it gives even greater credence to the bold strokes that have been made by this government in the area of state economic development.

### BAROSSA MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** As the member for the electorate of Schubert, which includes the Barossa Valley, I was shocked and appalled at the Premier's decision of 30 April to cut government funding to one of South Australia's best known regional art events, the Barossa Music Festival. The festival has achieved national and international fame. This untimely and detrimental decision has stunned, saddened and angered members of the Barossa community, arts enthusiasts, the wider community, business leaders and winery and tourism operators.

The previous government was not going to shut it down but was looking at improving and refocusing the event to make it more successful and more user friendly, and to say that the previous minister (Hon. Diana Laidlaw) was going to cancel it is not true and is unfair because twice it was brought up as a matter of concern and twice we asked the operators to refocus the festival. In the last six months, much had been done to do just that, and the sad part is that the festival will not now be able to show that it has got its house in order, because it would appear that the Premier is not going to give it a chance to prove itself, and its funding has been cut.

The problem is that, if we were to have another festival similar to this with a different name, we would lose so much because the Barossa Music Festival's name is worth a fortune. The festival, by that name, is known the world over, and is particularly well known throughout Australia, and it is an arts and cultural event that many people know about and attend. For the Premier to say that he will create another event I think would be a gross waste because it would take 10 years to get up such an event—where would he have it, where would he focus it and how would he market it? I believe that the Barossa Music Festival was well marketed and well targeted but it needed to be finely tuned to make it more user friendly. I am very concerned that this has happened, and I have spoken to the Premier about the decision.

I can recall with great clarity that, last year, the Premier came to the opening night and he and I both stood behind the platform and discussed the festival. Maybe that particular concert was not our cup of tea, and we agreed that the music was a bit heavy, but that does not mean we should chuck the

whole thing out. It is an international festival and it was unique because it was affordable and because most of the venues were in the wineries and the churches of the Barossa which, as we all know, are most unique venues. It had a special place in the hearts of a lot of people, particularly arts and music enthusiasts all around the world.

Many of the people who put on acts came from all parts of the world as well. We know what it costs to run these sorts of events. It would take years to get a new festival up and running. The funding, apparently, was cut on Tuesday 30 April. I believe that 12 years of taxpayers' money has been wasted, because it was spent promoting the festival, which is now gone. The sum of money involved is minimal, especially when compared to the hundreds of thousands of dollars allocated for other South Australian arts and cultural events, particularly the Adelaide Festival of Arts. It is nothing, and compares more than favourably with the losses made by the Festival. I do not think that we expect our arts festivals to make money, but we at least expect them to be somewhere near the mark or not too far behind. I think it is very foolish indeed to make the Barossa Music Festival the scapegoat.

Of course, the Barossa Music Festival brings a lot of money to the Barossa and its region and helps our state economy. This was a Philistine and incomprehensible decision, personally endorsed by the Premier, who is also the arts minister. It is quite shocking timing. I would have appreciated the Premier's bringing up the subject and saying, 'We will await the next festival and, if things are not done, we will reassess.' However, to cut it right in the middle of a changing period I think is very sad indeed.

The Australian wine industry has experienced a boom time and this festival has been part of the culture that is the Barossa, that is, wine, food, culture and music. Somebody just turned out some of the lights, and this was a critical part of that. I am very sad. If this government was reviewing everything why did it not review this, too? It was done too quickly, and the damage, which was too harsh, could be terminal. It is not too late to reverse the decision, and I plead with the Premier and to the members of the government to give it another go.

#### WHITEGOODS REPAIRERS

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Over recent times a number of people have come into my electoral office with complaints about what they believe to be misleading advertising by some whitegoods repairers in and around our local area. These operators advertise their services with a special mention of the fact that they charge no call-out fee, and you will often see a little circle where that is highlighted. In fact, that is true, and it seems to be a practice that is adopted by many similar operators. However, these advertisements do not mention that an average charge of about \$15 for the first 15 minutes is charged for any repairer visiting the home to assess what repairs may need to be done. This means that when a repairer comes to a person's home, before any work is done, a charge of \$50 on average is incurred. Whilst, technically, this may not amount to a call-out fee, it appears to have the effect of one. Arguably, it is a service. However, an additional fee is charged on top of anything beyond the initial period of visitation and diagnosis.

The constituents who have come into my office have expressed concern that they have experienced a great deal of frustration when dealing with these repairers because the operators' practice led them to believe something which, in reality, is quite different. One way of avoiding the call-out fee

of a repairer is to drop the whitegoods at the repairer's workshop, so we have been told, but, in the main, those people who have complained to me are pensioners, and for them it is a matter of some difficulty for example, to negotiate a refrigerator through their home and onto a trailer.

Having made some inquiries, I found that section 58 of this state's Fair Trading Act 1987 provides:

A person must not, in trade or commerce, in connection with the supply or possible supply of goods or services or in connection with the promotion by any means of the supply or use of goods or services—

(g) make a false or misleading representation with respect to the price of goods or services.

Perhaps that could be put in some plainer language. In the experience of my constituents and, in fact, even independently of their experience, it would appear that this behaviour conforms to that set out in the act. Whilst a technicality may allow for such advertising as earlier mentioned, it seems an unconscionable way of doing business, especially with those who are elderly and those who quite often have severely limited incomes.

I urge our ministers and the Office of Consumer Affairs to examine this matter because, on the face of it, it appears that this type of advertising allows operators to make representations which appear to be misleading and which generate a great deal of frustration and certainly ill will among my constituents and others who, upon seeing the advertisements, expect one thing and, upon making inquiries, find out that the service is something entirely different. In fact, I have had two more calls in a similar vein this week, and I am seeing somebody on Friday about it. Certainly, it is of concern to our community.

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#### COURTS, SENTENCING

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Yesterday in the other place the Hon. R.D. Lawson (the shadow attorney-general) made a short speech concerning my public comments in response to the decision in the District Court of His Honour Judge Lee in the Nguyen case. The shadow attorney-general said:

Attorney-General Atkinson was on radio tut-tutting about the apparent leniency of the sentence and muttering about an appeal against that sentence.

He went on to say:

The attorney is there suggesting that the courts were unreasonably rejecting the appeals of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He is also undermining the judicial process by implying criticism of the judge for being lenient in that particular case.

The shadow attorney-general concluded:

The Attorney-General, by criticising individual cases on public radio, is undermining public confidence in the judicial system, something that he is sworn to uphold.

There are two misrepresentations there. The first is that I expressed the view that the sentence was lenient, and the second is that I suggested that the courts were unreasonably rejecting the appeals of the DPP.

My interventions on talk-back radio regarding sentencing in our criminal courts is educative rather than polemical. I have in front of me the South Australian Government Media

Monitoring Service radio talk-back summary, which states (these are my remarks on the Leon Byner program on 12 April):

... Judge Christopher Lee is in the best position to do the sentencing.

Later I said:

... prosecution authorities are concerned about the level of sentencing for cause death by reckless and dangerous driving generally.

Later I said:

In this case the judge has accepted the defence's submission on sentencing. . . as you read the judgment it's pretty clear that Judge Lee feels that Mr Nguyen says he's presently studying a building and construction course at TAFE and supporting himself with part-time tiling and paving work. . . I guess Judge Lee's reasoning is that cause death by reckless driving is unusual in the criminal law in that it is not something that is done deliberately or intentionally. . . by gross negligence. . . therefore, the offender didn't intend to kill Mr Anderson. . . therefore might be good to avoid sending him to prison which wouldn't do him any good. . . personal development is concerned. . . keep out of prison in the hope he wouldn't use drugs. . . earn an honest living and not be a further cost to the taxpayer.

I took the opportunity to expand on Judge Lee's sentencing remarks and to tell the public of South Australia his reasoning for sentencing in the Nguyen case.

On the second point regarding rejecting the appeals of the DPP, I refer to a further interview on the Leon Byner program on Radio 5AA where I said:

The DPP, whose decision it is, it's not my decision. . . will not be appealing but he's written letters to people who've written to him about this case explaining his decision. He says the courts have laid down extremely high thresholds for the prosecution to get leave to appeal. . . he says it'll only institute an appeal if it's got a reasonable prospect of succeeding. . . he's carefully reviewed the case and doesn't think there's any prospect of getting the sentence overturned on appeal. . . that although Nguyen's behaviour after the offence was an aggravating consideration, it wasn't in the worst category of death by dangerous driving because there was no alcohol, no excessive speed and no evidence of previous dangerous driving.

Later I said:

So he [the DPP] says that in the 10 years that he's been the DPP he's instituted more than a dozen appeals against apparently inadequate sentences for causing death by dangerous driving and he says he's succeeded in only two cases.

The confusion of the shadow attorney-general (Hon. R.D. Lawson) is that I was not saying those things regarding the DPP's not appealing on my own account: I was in fact quoting from a letter which the DPP sent to citizens who had written to him about the Nguyen matter. Those words were the words of the DPP. I think it is entirely in order for the Attorney-General of the state to amplify the reasons which our judges give for their sentencing and to explain to the public of South Australia why the DPP has not appealed a particular sentence, using the DPP's own words.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 240.)

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to the opening speech of Her Excellency the Governor. Marjorie Jackson-Nelson is doing a fine job as our Governor and it has been a pleasure to be involved with Her Excellency. She has always been very popular with South Australians, but since taking

on her new role has shown a great capacity to handle the new and considerable responsibilities involved. I congratulate her and look forward, with all other members, to working with her into the future.

Today is also an opportunity to congratulate all members on their election to this parliament. I knew that we on this side had a good intake of new members, and I certainly get the impression that the parliament has done well with the new members entering after this election. I congratulate the Premier and ministers on their swearing in, and I will work with them to ensure that South Australia keeps improving.

Earlier this year we had one of South Australia's closest and hardest fought elections. Behind this election was an enormous amount of effort by a wide range of people. Certainly for candidates and their families an election is a hectic experience. We all are supported by an enormous number of very dedicated and hardworking people. Both sides have many people who believe in the cause and who work hard to get their candidates and party elected.

I place on the record my thanks to all those terrific and dedicated people who helped me and the Liberal candidates in the election. I record a huge thank you from the whole parliamentary team to Graham Jaeschke, Rosemary Craddock and the Liberal Party organisation. Their tireless efforts are greatly appreciated. I thank my colleagues and those hardworking candidates who are less fortunate for their support and efforts in their electorates. Every candidate was supported by family and a group of people who worked tirelessly to maximise the Liberal vote. I thank each and every one of those people.

I take this opportunity to thank those people who helped me in the electorate of Frome, mainly in my absence due to my broader responsibilities. Terry Boylan, Vicky Manner and others did a great job. The 8 per cent swing achieved in Frome is an absolute credit to their efforts, not just with a largely absent member but against considerable effort from Ron Rohde, Ron Roberts and the Labor Party. Perhaps it says something about the member when the less he is there, the higher the vote. I thank the people of Frome for their continued support and understanding.

At the election we saw the departure from this parliament of some very talented people who have made an enormous contribution to this parliament and to South Australia. Former premier, John Olsen, has spent most of his life serving the South Australian community. His long service culminated in his five years as premier. His premiership coincided with a period in which we saw an improvement in South Australia's economic performance. John was always a fierce advocate for South Australia. While his outstanding legacy will always be the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, we never should forget his championing of the cause of our car industry; his successful export push; the focus on the defence industry; and his achievement of getting the Murray River finally onto the national agenda. These are but a few of his achievements in a long and distinguished career. As his deputy premier and a minister, I appreciated his support and the fact that he was willing to back me and others with initiatives such as Food for the Future and bio-innovation. He was willing to have a go at doing things differently.

Graham Ingerson served this state as a deputy premier and minister. Graham was a determined minister who believed that you had to make things happen. He was determined to make a difference and to help South Australia develop. He was always supportive of other members and willing to discuss issues and problems with them.



David Wotton was one of the most highly respected men in the South Australian parliament. David's efforts as a minister spanned a long time and he was a member of great integrity and wise counsel. John Oswald, whether as Speaker or a minister, served the state with great dignity. Like David, he was highly respected across the political spectrum. Michael Armitage spent eight years as a minister. After the 1993 election Michael took on a very difficult task as health minister. He took the challenge head-on and remoulded the health system in this state, removing much inefficiency along the way. His efforts in this and other portfolios were a great contribution to South Australia. Steve Condous had an illustrious career as Lord Mayor of Adelaide before entering parliament in 1993. His eight years in parliament capped off Steve's enormous contribution to the South Australian community, and Steve championed many causes during his parliamentary career.

We also saw the departure of three outstanding members of our Legislative Council team. Trevor Griffin has been one of South Australia's outstanding politicians over the past couple of decades. His work as Attorney-General has been exceptional; he was always dignified, caring and totally honest. Jamie Irwin, a president of the Legislative Council, was always a great supporter of regional and rural South Australia and a big help to new and younger members. Legh Davis was a long-serving a member of the Legislative Council and brought to the parliament a high level of understanding about financial markets and business in South Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I note the support from across the house. I thank these members for their contributions to the state and congratulate them and other departing members on their efforts over many years for other South Australians.

I also make brief mention of Murray DeLaine and Ralph Clarke who were two very true blue Labor MPs. Murray, a very hardworking member, was well respected and popular; and Ralph was always a colourful member who worked very hard. I do not intend dwelling for long on the election outcome. The Liberal Party was the choice of the majority of South Australians, and for that I am grateful. This government has a very special responsibility and should be quite humble, because it is an appointed rather than an elected government.

Much has been said and written about the intent of the people of Hammond. They overwhelmingly voted for a Liberal government, the Liberal candidate receiving the highest primary vote, and the candidates who declared that they would support a Liberal government received overwhelming support. Their right to have a say in who governs in South Australia for the next four years was taken from them—but that is now history. As we look at reform, we must address the manner in which this happened. If candidates declare support for a particular party, the voters should be able to expect that their vote is respected.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Acting Speaker. The election in the seat of the state district of Hammond is currently before a court of disputed returns, which Justice Besanko is presiding over. I ask your ruling on whether the leader's comments prejudice that matter.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thompson):** I ask that the leader be mindful of matters that are before the courts.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Generally speaking, if candidates declare support for a particular party, voters should be

able to expect that their vote is respected. I feel that a dangerous precedent may have been set where, in the wash-up of a close election, in future we will see a bidding war where offers are made and deals done which will basically change the result as arrived at by the South Australian constituency. This must be addressed as a priority in constitutional reform as a basic building block of our democracy.

The Labor government takes the reins at a very fortunate time for them. This contrasts enormously with the mess that the Liberal government inherited in 1993. We now have a strong and growing economy and a strong budget position. What a contrast to the debt and deficit of 1993 and the unemployment, the enormous uncertainty, and even despair, in the South Australian economy. Much has been achieved since 1993. It was not without pain and required many tough decisions, but that is what government is about. It is about recognising the problem and if unpopular decisions are required then government has the responsibility to act. South Australians realised the depth of the problems caused by the mismanagement in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Much of what has been achieved has been a true partnership between government, business and the community.

Let us look at how South Australia has changed under a Liberal government. Unemployment was 12 per cent in 1992. It is now 7.1 per cent in 2002, with 45 000 jobs created. We see jobs going begging in regional areas, and what a contrast that is to what we saw in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Debt was a massive \$9.6 billion, which was \$6 593 per capita. Now it is \$3.27 billion or \$2 176 per capita—a massive reduction. As a result, there has been massive savings in interest payments. The budget deficit was \$300 million per annum. We now have balanced budgets. Export growth was just not happening back in 1993, but we have seen a magnificent effort by South Australia exporters and government has been right in there working with them. I will speak further about exports when I speak of the areas which, if supported by government, can grow this economy and give South Australia a great future. We finally achieved what no other government could: the Adelaide-Darwin railway will be completed.

Having taken government at a time when South Australia's economy is performing so well, it was very disappointing to hear the continuing talking down of the economic position by the Premier, by the Treasurer and by a couple of the media commentators. Comments such as 'having to turn the economy around' and 'rust belt state' are absolute rubbish and an insult to the many South Australians who have resurrected this economy over the last eight years. Many entrepreneurial South Australians showed their faith in this state who invested, employed and achieved. To have their achievements discounted and ignored by government is both insulting and unfair. This is obviously a concerted effort to rewrite history—something the ALP does in a whole range of areas.

While deputy premier and then premier, I had regular meetings with leaders of the major industry organisations and many leading business people. It has been increasingly evident, particularly over the last 18 months to two years, that the South Australian economy has strengthened considerably. This has been acknowledged in comparisons with the other states and national averages and indicators. Whether it be exports, retail sales, unemployment rates, housing commencements, CBD office vacancies, capital expenditure growth, or a whole range of other indicators, it cannot be denied that this economy is in a better position than it has

been for a long time. If we add to this the two fantastic agricultural seasons just experienced and with that money now flowing into the economy, we should be looking at continued growth into the future. In one of the grievance contributions today we heard a comment that the 2001 export figures are a one-off. If you look at the amount of grain that will be exported later this year and the way the wine industry is going, that is absolute rubbish. The export figures are not a one-off, and they will continue to grow.

Having watched the new government closely, I have several concerns about the negative impact some of its actions—or lack of action—will have on the economy. First, there is the government's attitude to the current state of the economy. As I have said, they are talking the economy down, giving no acknowledgment to our true achievers and, quite frankly, talking as though government needs to dictate the direction. The government shows no confidence in South Australian business. Business needs facilitation, support and staying out of their way. Business is not looking to government to tell them they are getting it wrong, and it is going to be very important for the Economic Development Board and government to acknowledge the efforts of business and show confidence in what is currently working well for South Australia.

Secondly, there is some risk of uncertainty slowing growth due to a lack of decisions right across government. Much uncertainty within government is brought about because portfolio allocations to ministers are so far out of line with the current structure of government. I do not question the Premier's right to allocate portfolios as he wishes. However, 10 weeks later there are many unanswered questions as to the structure and the roles within government. Flowing from this uncertainty are delays in many service delivery areas which are creating annoyance and inconvenience for many in the business and general community. I am also aware that many sections of government departments are working at well below capacity while awaiting decisions on future roles and structures. I am told of increasing frustration in many sections of government.

Thirdly, there is growing concern in many circles about the lack of decision on the future of some programs which have been so successful in not only government working with industry but also in achieving terrific cooperation between companies. The Food for the Future program is a good example of how industry has worked together with government to strongly outperform the rest of Australia. The opposition will be closely monitoring the range of successful programs to ensure that this government does not put at risk the mechanisms whereby South Australia is achieving, across a range of industries.

Another concern of many watching the new government is the lack of government wanting to get involved in the hard issues. Much has been said about many appointments and reviews being announced without a real decision being made on structure. However, more concerning is the government's obvious reluctance to get involved in facilitating solutions to the big and difficult issues. The two outstanding examples are the motor industry dispute and the escalating public liability problems.

The illegal strike at Walkers threatened not only the future and the reputation of our vital motor vehicle industry but also caused tens of millions of dollars of losses. It was frustrating to see the state government not willing to get involved in getting the dispute sorted out quickly. We heard that it was a federal issue; we heard the Premier refer it to the minister;

we heard him talk about 'no jurisdiction'. Jurisdiction is not needed to play a role in trying to broker a solution—and the Labor Party is the party with all the union connections. One wonders what the AMWU was saying to the government. One would hope that South Australia did not suffer these losses and the dent to our reputation to help the AMWU with its national agenda—I suspect so. I found it incredible that, while the industry and its enormous work force was at risk, there appeared very little effort to get involved.

In February 2001, when I was acting premier, there was a dispute between the same two parties. When I was briefed, I invited both parties to my office to meet. Despite considerable acrimony for some time, the meeting gradually worked towards a solution. A worker had been sacked. A compromise was reached whereby the worker was reinstated in return for the union's ceasing industrial action. I quote from the *Advertiser* of 6 February 2001, as follows:

AMWU State President Ian Curry was pleased with the outcome. He hailed Mr Kerin's help as 'constructive and timely'.

This intervention was no more than should be expected in any similar situation, but in this case, for some reason, it just did not happen. It was ironic how this latest dispute coincided with the tremendous news about Mitsubishi. The government, rightly, made the most of that great news, but it was most disappointing to see it go missing when help was needed to solve the dispute, which caused much anxiety and considerable financial loss.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** Actually, more loss than the government put into Mitsubishi—

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Yes. The other major current issue is that of public liability in the building industry, the health system and in general for business and the community. Whilst I acknowledge that it is a difficult issue, I am also aware of growing frustration that this government is not showing an understanding or enough willingness to become involved. The Premier refers to the issue as being national, yet last week we saw New South Wales and Queensland move to find solutions in several areas. Those who have approached the government have certainly not been thrilled by the lack of response. These issues are vital to this state. This matter should now become a major priority for this government before we lose builders and jobs, doctors and health care (particularly in regional areas), and before we see small businesses and community groups greatly disadvantaged or even destroyed. The state government cannot hide from the difficult issues: they must be tackled.

We hear much from the Treasurer regarding budget honesty. He has been selective and theatrical in trying to paint a picture that he has inherited a major problem. How short some memories must be! This budget is incredibly better than what was left to us in 1993—there is just no comparison whatsoever. And I suspect very few members of the public believe the Treasurer's claims. His latest gaffe of not knowing of the \$205 million in the budget for teachers' pay rises shows how ill-informed his comments have been. One would have to ask if all his statements were, therefore, at least \$200 million wide of the true situation.

There were always doubts about the ALP's promises. However, any thoughts of a budget strategy totally disappeared when the thought of luring the member for Hammond became possible. Promises were made with total disregard for their cost, their sensibleness or any of the consequences. The government has constantly given the weak excuse that we

agreed to the same. No way in the world! We did not, and would not, and if anyone thinks that we did they were tricked.

Three promises stand out as particularly costly and ill-conceived. First, the fumigation of broomrape is predicted to cost \$50 million. So much for the ALP's so-called priorities of health and education. Not only is \$50 million very expensive but also very few agree that this is the right strategy. Did they check the cost or the credibility of the proposition? No, they did not. They just agreed to anything in a bid for power. Secondly, the buy-out—

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** You signed the same document.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** No. The Attorney-General interjects yet again that we signed the same document. I repeat that, if he believes that, he was tricked because that just never happened. But it does not surprise me that he would be.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** You were too cunning. That's why I'm the Attorney-General.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** We are far too cunning. Secondly, the buy-out of the river fishery—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Let's move on boys. Secondly, the buy-out of the river fishery: whilst many want this to happen, the ALP showed absolutely no regard for the 30 families who, with a quick and slick deal, had their livelihood removed. Obviously, it was not just a case of no consultation, but they also had no idea of how they would do it. These 30 families currently feel as though they have become totally expendable in the wake of a political deal, and it really does appear as if this government could not care less. Fisheries have been closed before, and there are recognised means for compensation.

Initially, we thought that this was a \$3 million or \$4 million decision taken without consultation. However, it is far worse than that. We found out on the ABC that a new method has been struck in the deal done. The member for Hammond outlined that the agreed method was that the buy-out would be based on the net present value of the rest of life earnings of the fishermen. He claimed that the cost would be a six figure sum in total. Later that day, the Premier claimed that it would total only a couple of hundred thousand dollars. We could be excused for asking: who has done the arithmetic? This says so much—

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Well, it shows how much thought went into the deal. And, yes, the Treasurer may well have been responsible for the arithmetic. I think we have seen a fair few examples of the Treasurer's ability to add up. Even being generous with the definition, the Premier's statement would mean a maximum of \$300 000. That is \$10 000, on average, per fisherman. It is an incredible insult to suggest that the rest of life earnings at net present value would be \$10 000—a one-off payment. No wonder these families are very upset—and the government had, until at least last week, refused to talk to them. Imagine how they feel—betrayed completely. The Premier said that an announcement would be made at budget time. That is after they have lost their livelihoods. We are told that the decision regarding compensation has not been made, yet they already have been informed that they are losing their licences.

The third commitment that the government did not understand was the requirement to levy irrigators. The components of this proposal are extremely expensive for anyone who understands what is in it. It is unclear whether

this represents a complete break of the 'no new taxes' policy, as put down by the Labor Party and us (if they are not going to break that policy), or yet another massive blow to the budget if they are going to put the money up instead of raising the levy. These promises and others blow the whole budget strategy, if there ever really was one.

The fact that Labor was prepared to do these deals without knowing the cost or repercussions is in stark contrast to their bleatings about budget honesty. There is absolutely no doubt that these commitments will have to come at the expense of either health or education, or probably both. The cost is almost certainly well in excess of \$100 million. Having gained office by agreeing to these outrageous asks, it is obviously now beyond question that the government will proceed with these deals, at great cost to other Australians. As I pointed out during the election campaign, health and education are the priorities of all governments. It is all about having the money to afford better services. The ALP has knocked off over \$100 million from health and education to get into government.

There is no doubt that regional South Australia was disappointed with the appointment of the Labor government. Regional South Australia has had a remarkable turnaround in the last few years. Initially, the wine industry started to turn the fortunes of several regions. This has continued, and many areas have boomed as a result of this industry, the other activity it creates and the tourism which inevitably follows.

Much has been said about the success and impact of the wine industry. South Australia owes much to the wine industry. The constant attacks on the National Wine Centre by the ALP demonstrate its naivety of what this industry and its people have done. It is vital that we get the Wine Centre working well. A total lack of business nous was shown when the ALP threatened that it may not continue later in the year. The resulting cancellation of those statements has certainly not helped those who are working hard to make self funding what is a major asset for this state.

The example of the wine industry has given confidence to others. Our Food for the Future strategy was, in part, based on the successful target setting of the wine industry. I have totally enjoyed working with the food industry over the last 6½ years. As is the case with the wine industry, it is a major reason why exports have doubled since 1995.

Last financial year, food exports out of South Australia increased by a massive 40 per cent. This has been largely because not only are government and industry working together, but industry is working together in overseas markets. The significant success of Food Adelaide in the Japanese and Taiwan markets and the Australian Pavilion in Singapore show what can be achieved when we all work together. The seafood, grain and meat industries have all put in sensational performances in the last few years.

Importantly, regional South Australia has, through new developments, been made far less reliant on rainfall. Aquaculture, irrigated viticulture and horticulture, and a major rise in value adding have significantly drought-proofed the South Australian economy if not individual farmers. Aquaculture has made an enormous difference to Eyre Peninsula. Coastal towns and Port Lincoln have had a major revival—and I will come back to that when I comment on the Minister for Local Government's ministerial statement today.

This sense of government and industry teamwork has extended to the rural members of parliament. Whether it be the member for Flinders helping developers in the seafood industry or the other members with their various regional

strengths, I commend them on their efforts. It has been an exciting time in regional South Australia, with tourism also on the sharp increase. As a government we asked the Regional Development Task Force to identify the issues in regional South Australia. We then worked very hard to meet the recommendations. A major initiative has been the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund. This has been used very strategically to help create development across the state.

I hear mumblings that this will disappear and would argue that this would be a major setback for regional areas. This fund has been strategically used to remove impediments to development occurring. The regional development revival has created major infrastructure challenges in rural areas, and the previous government has worked hard to prioritise and provide infrastructure.

A major improvement has occurred in the regional road network. I use the example of Brinkworth in the Mid North—coincidentally in Frome. Prior to 1993, Brinkworth had only one bitumen connection to the sealed network, and that was an easterly road joining it to the Clare-Gladstone Road. They now have a sealed southern link to Blyth, a sealed western link to Snowtown and a soon to be completed northern link to Koolunga. And that is very important from a social justice point of view, particularly for the schoolchildren, the businesses and, in general, road safety in that particular area.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw MLC has championed the strategy to seal the state government's regional road network. As I mentioned earlier, the Liberal government achieved the Alice Springs-Darwin rail link. John Olsen will be remembered as a premier who delivered on the railway and I can assure all members that he really was the driving force. Without John Olsen's drive I really doubt that the railway would ever have been built. The construction has been a boost for employment in Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie and for many South Australian businesses. The link will be a major boost for our growing food industry and I feel certain will result in far more tourism than has been generally expected.

As a state, South Australia must concentrate on its strengths. The growth of the food and wine industries is a perfect example of making better use of our pristine waters, good soils and our innovative work force. When comparing states, the major advantage of South Australia is our research and development community. We really are leaders and have a great human and infrastructure resource which we have only started to better utilise in recent years. We must have a focus on commercialising the great finds of our scientists, and doing so right here in South Australia.

Cabinet agreed to the setting up of Bio-Innovation South Australia a couple of years ago. By having a dedicated group working on biotechnology, we were able to gather the support and cooperation of our bioscience companies, our universities and other research institutions. This is one innovative area that I plead with the new government to give priority to and keep the momentum to ensure that South Australia becomes a real leader in this field.

Last Friday we had the announcement of the Plant Genome Centre at the Waite Institute. This is not only a vital development for our cereal growers but an important step in ensuring that South Australia has the critical bioscience mass to stay at the forefront and grow a major industry. There has certainly been enormous growth in the industry over the last 12 months, and they are to be congratulated on that.

I am aware that there was a great anxiety throughout the bioscience community as the government revisited whether or not to contribute funds to the Plant Genome Centre, but I am appreciative of the fact that the new government is stuck with the previous commitment.

Growth in bioscience has been sensational, and more opportunities beckon. It is a great industry to keep our cleverest young people, to attract others back and to bring in talents from elsewhere. It is a very smart industry and will in time be recognised as a great strength of South Australia. Pivotal to that development is the Thebarton bioscience precinct, and I urge the new government to ensure that the land for the precinct is secured as soon as possible.

I must admit to being somewhat bemused by the headline on the Premier's press release on Friday. It said, 'Rann launches South Australian bioscience industry.' I thought we had the industry up and going already! Good work has been done by many, and I have greatly appreciated the cooperation between the university and all the other players. We in South Australia have the intellectual power, the infrastructure and the entrepreneurial will to create a major bioscience industry, and it is vital that the new government fully supports the bioscience community, as it plays a major role in making this state a smart state, capitalising on our significant research and development capacity.

The state's new Economic Development Board has been charged with charting government priorities for economic development. I suggest that South Australian business has done a good job in recent times in focusing on our strengths. There is no doubt that we need to maximise the sustainable development from our natural resources and to integrate new industries with our strong traditional industries. It is vital that a priority be placed on continuing our exceptional growth in exports. This sensational performance has funnelled much money into the South Australian economy, a factor that has contributed enormously to the current strength of that economy.

The state's mineral and resources wealth is still very under-utilised. I hope that this government continues the programs and the commitment of the previous government to ensure that the employment and wealth potential of this important industry is unlocked. The policy direction of this government on mining is somewhat confusing, and from comments made publicly by the member for Hammond we may well have an ALP friendlier to mining than previous Labor governments. If this correction to pre-election policy is delivered in an even-handed and sustainable fashion, then we welcome this more mining-friendly approach.

Having seen certain comments in this week's media, I look forward to seeing how the government handles the issues surrounding the Gammon Ranges. I urge the government to give priority to the SAMAG magnesium project near Port Pirie. This project is of the utmost importance to this region and the state. The project has evolved somewhat in recent months, and I urge the government to do all in its power to ensure that this project succeeds.

We are currently having history rewritten in a number of areas. One of the more ludicrous offerings of the government is its claim that nothing has been done about the Murray River over the past eight years. That is absolute rubbish. It was a former Liberal government (and, indeed, the Howard government) that, after years of rhetoric, actually got action. This was done through the Natural Heritage Trust and other programs that embraced a partnership with both land-holders and the community. The Liberal government had the Murray

River identified on the national agenda at last, and also achieved the rehabilitation of the Loxton Irrigation Scheme and the interim cap on diversions in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Labor Party and Democrats are big on environmental rhetoric but not good at action. The ALP has never understood the word 'partnership', proven yet again with its taking of soil boards, landcare, etc out of primary industries with no consultation at all with the large band of volunteers who are dedicated to the environmental cause.

This government came to power in an interesting position. It had some clearly stated policies, others were released post election and others we still await. Yet other policies, such as broomrape and the river fishery, were dealt into the mix with frantic haste and no consideration of budget impacts.

We heard much about the ALP priorities being health and education. It has been interesting, ever since election day, to see the lack of commitment to these so-called priorities. Health and education were real priorities for the Liberal government. In health we increased the budget by 35 per cent over what Labor spent. In education we did much—

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Still an increase. In fact, we did enough for the Labor think tank, the Evatt Foundation, to rank South Australia the highest of any mainland state in delivering on education. I congratulate the former minister on a marvellous achievement as judged by the Labor Party.

We have seen this new government giving every indication that it will back away from its health and education commitments. First, we saw over \$100 million removed to satisfy the priorities set by the member for Hammond. Continuously, we hear the Treasurer making lots of noise—and not much sense—about budget black holes and having no money for his commitments. Add to this the withdrawal of HomeStart loans to much needed nursing homes, the constant announcement of reviews and delay in decision making, and all we have to show so far in health and education is enormous uncertainty. So much for the priorities as promised.

This government has now been sworn in for more than two months. It is obvious that it was not at all prepared for government. It still has much to do to ensure that the Public Service has a structure that can deliver for the good of all South Australians. We have seen many appointments and constant announcements of reviews and consultants. We have seen the government dodge the difficult issues and not be prepared to make hard decisions. We have seen several ministers under pressure, their having made statements that were not necessarily consistent with information that was otherwise available.

We have also seen a worrying number of decisions made with little or no consultation with the stakeholders involved, including volunteers, who should have been given a say. One of the real fears evident from question time in the last two weeks is that the bureaucracy has absolutely taken over. The Treasury hold that has been put on many projects is causing anxiety in many areas. It is also evident from other answers that the bureaucracy is having a field day. The demolition of Lonzar's Lodge on Kangaroo Island against commitments made previously was obviously an instance of the bureaucrats in the department exploiting the minister's inexperience.

Today we saw the new Minister for Local Government demonstrate the grip that his bureaucrats have on him. Anyone who knows anything at all about regional South Australia, in particular the South-East or Eyre Peninsula,

would understand how wrong many of the figures in the document tabled today actually are. When that document was originally presented to cabinet, I asked to meet with the relevant people in planning. They were not as much at fault as the ABS and the methodology used.

It was explained to me that they looked at the 1986 census and the 1991 census and then wrote a desktop correction based on the 1996 census; that is how they arrived at the figure. However, desktop calculations are very different from reality. Ministers and MPs need to be in touch with reality to a large extent. This document is way out of touch with reality and, therefore, not an appropriate document on which to base important decisions. The consultancy to which the minister referred found that there were major flaws in the document.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** Do you know that they put Kangaroo Island in Outer Adelaide?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, the deputy leader!

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The deputy leader will not speak over the chair. He is out of order. The leader has—

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Attorney-General will not interject, either. The leader has the call. Please extend him the courtesy of listening to him.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection from both sides. If we look at Eyre Peninsula, at the figures they gave for those in the 20 to 29 year age group, we see that they are actually saying that from 1996 to 2001 nearly 25 per cent of males disappeared off Eyre Peninsula. Anyone who has been to Eyre Peninsula in recent years would have seen the number of young men, in particular, engaged in the oyster industry, the tuna industry and a whole range of other industries, and they come from all over Australia to work there. To say that the figure has decreased by 25 per cent is an absolute nonsense, and for the minister to swallow that and come in here today and attack us over hiding a document just shows inexperience. It shows not just inexperience but it shows the grip that the bureaucrats will get on you if you do not understand the issues. The minister might make the same accusation about another document I came across, which I think was even more inaccurate and which also gets horribly wrong what is going on in regional areas and also asks them to hold. There are real signs that the bureaucrats are taking over and it is up to ministers to get control of their portfolio areas.

We have also heard promises of honesty and accountability, and we are being told that ministers will be answering questions. A review of *Hansard* over the past two weeks shows an absolute disregard for that commitment. In the majority of cases there has been no attempt to answer any question.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** You haven't asked me anything.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** You don't know anything—what's the good of asking you? As the opposition we recognise our role: we will continue to question the government in the interests of open and transparent government and try to ensure that it honours its promises. We will continue to push that the government consults where appropriate with volunteers, communities and organisations—one area in which they really have rated about nought out of 10 in the first couple of months. This opposition will, wherever it can, scrutinise the dealings of government and try to ensure that equitable treatment is given across the community. There is much union influence on this government, and we will ensure

that decisions are made in the broader interests of South Australians rather than based on political pay-back. We look forward to making a positive contribution to South Australia whilst in opposition. In closing, I again congratulate Her Excellency on the role she is playing and thank her for her ongoing contribution.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Norwood.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will hear the member for Norwood in silence and will not engage in comments that have a double meaning.

**Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood):** I will not engage in puerile debate across the chamber. I am pleased to support the Address in Reply motion and in so doing acknowledge that we are on Kaurna land. I also congratulate the Governor on her opening speech and wish her well in her new role. I also congratulate the Speaker on his appointment. I particularly enjoyed my time with him on the River Murray select committee. He never failed to impress me with his knowledge and insightfulness on even the most obscure issues.

I also congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment. As a bon vivant, it pleases me to see you enjoying quality foods in the restaurants in Norwood on a regular basis, and I trust that you continue to support my community in that regard. It also gives me great pleasure to congratulate our new Premier, Mike Rann, who, like former Premier Don Dunstan, is a constituent of mine and has become a familiar figure in the area.

**Mr Scalzi:** Doesn't he live in his electorate?

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** On a point of order, sir, first, the member for stupid is interjecting out of his seat—Hartley—sorry—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for West Torrens will not engage in that sort of dialogue. Members show respect to each other and will not make frivolous interjections. The member for Norwood has the call.

*The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will start naming people who keep disobeying the chair. The member for Norwood.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** The Premier, Mike Rann, like former Premier Don Dunstan, is a constituent of mine and has become a familiar figure in the area.

**Mr Scalzi:** He should be in Salisbury.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** He is at Salisbury plenty of the time. I think that sometimes the Premier wishes he did not live in the electorate as he often gets phone calls at 4 o'clock in the morning from the local member, who gives him soccer scores or knocks on his door at midnight when doing the rounds of the neighbourhood. I commend him on his excellent campaign, along with the great team.

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**Ms CICCARELLO:** It is true, Dean: if people living in Norwood have their lights on, I feel that I can knock on their doors. They get good service from the local member. We have a great Labor team, which ensures that we have a Labor government in every state in Australia.

I have the privilege of having been elected for a second term to represent the people of Norwood and I will continue to do so with the same passion as always. It is the community I have known since I was eight years of age when we first moved into the area. I still live in the same street, so it is special. The demographics have changed enormously since we first moved in. Norwood was considered a slum area

when we first moved there, but it is now very desirable and, even though the demographics have changed, I trust the new people who have moved into the electorate will be just as happy with my representation. I take the opportunity of welcoming new members on both sides of the house and wish them well in their time here.

I can scarcely believe that it has been more than four years since I made my first speech in this place, and I cannot believe how nervous and apprehensive I was. It is daunting to think that perhaps in 100 years' time people may be reading our speeches and examining our priorities in relation to our community needs and making judgments as to whether we have been effective in putting them into action.

Many of our former members from both sides of the house are no longer here. Some retired voluntarily and others were unsuccessful in their bid to be re-elected. David Wotton, John Oswald, Graham Ingerson, John Olsen, Michael Armitage, Steve Condous, Annette Hurley, Murray De Laine and Ralph Clarke are now no longer members, and I wish them all the very best in their new lives. I was disappointed that parliament did not reconvene before the state election was called, thus denying those outgoing members the opportunity of being farewelled or giving them the opportunity to recount for posterity some of their experiences in this place. Between them they would have amassed a wealth of stories and anecdotes. Perhaps we can look forward to their memoirs, which could make for interesting reading.

I particularly express my thanks to Annette Hurley, Murray De Laine and Ralph Clarke for their friendship and assistance to me during my first term here. With Annette I often discussed my frustration with both the parliamentary and the party process and how it might be reformed. Murray used to say that he had 27 caucus members to look after—'and Vini'—while Ralph spent much time explaining the works of the house to me and the member for Giles as new kids on the block. The latter two were heartbroken at having to sever their ties with the Labor Party, but I know that they remain passionate to Labor ideals and philosophies. I will try to be brief in my comments.

I was a member of a select committee last year which was looking at parliamentary procedures and practices, and one of our recommendations was to limit the time allowed for the Address in Reply debate. We felt that much valuable time was taken up by members which could be better spent debating legislation and issues of importance to the community. That is not to say that what members have to say is not important in their Address in Reply speeches, and I recognise that new members should be afforded the opportunity to highlight in their first speech what ideals and aspirations they have and what they wish to achieve in their time as elected representatives.

We must understand that, while we may think that the community is hanging off our every word, quite the opposite is true. Until such time as we truly reform the way the parliament functions, we cannot hope to enjoy the confidence, support or interest of the wider community. I know that the Speaker feels strongly about a review of the parliamentary process and I look forward to the constitutional convention, which is in the process of being organised for later this year. One of the suggestions I made—and I know the member for Mount Gambier agreed with me—was that the Address in Reply, with the exception of first speeches, could be inserted in *Hansard* without reading, as are second reading explanations, thus giving the parliament more time to get on with valuable debates on legislation and issues of importance. If

they so desire, members could still send out their speeches to the community.

There are important issues about which we may be required to make decisions in the not too distant future, as technology and biosciences are moving at such a fast pace that the legislation is not keeping up. Would it not be a change for us to be able to have open debates about contentious issues and clarifying any areas of concerns we might have rather than waiting for legislation to be introduced into the house, not having had the time or opportunity to research the matter in question? The public must also understand that a lot of our most productive work is done outside the parliament and in the community and in my opinion we currently do not have sufficient time to do what is required of us if we are to represent our communities properly.

As members of parliament, we are allocated only one staff person in our electorate office, and we should pay tribute to their dedication in looking after us and our constituents, sometimes under very trying conditions. They must be amongst the very few people who work alone, which I consider a serious occupational health and safety issue. I have raised this subject previously and I hope that some action will be taken to rectify the situation. I hope also that it is one instance in which the Treasurer can be prevailed upon to be more generous.

There are many issues about which I am passionate and I referred to many of them in my first speech and therefore I do not think it is necessary to speak at length about them. In the last parliament, I was pleased that we were able to make some changes, after much consultation, in the way local government operates. However, more needs to be done and, while not wishing to reflect on some of our decisions, I feel that they have not always had the effect that was intended, at least in my view. I refer particularly to the interpretation with relation to planning matters and the ability for councils to exclude members of the public from meetings. I feel very strongly that, if people take on an elected role, they should have the courage of their convictions and be prepared to make their decisions under public scrutiny.

In the area of planning, particular problems are being experienced across the metropolitan area as there is no coordinated planning strategy for the state and many council development plans have not been reviewed for some years. I am confident that the new minister will ensure that the situation is rectified as soon as possible. In my own area, I know that, since amalgamation in 1997, the council has been striving to integrate the three existing development plans, and I urge a speedy conclusion as I am concerned at some of the development which is taking place, based on outdated plans, and which is putting in jeopardy the built fabric of our city. Others might not agree, as planning and design can be very subjective, and therefore the importance of a good development plan cannot be underestimated.

One of the other issues that I raised four years ago was my concern that not enough was being done to address the needs of problem gamblers. While I feel that people should have the freedom to make their own decisions about whether or not they use poker machines, I felt then as now that more measures should be put in place to assist that percentage of the population who have a problem. We hear every day why poker machines should be banned, because of their cost to the community. It should also be said that smoking should be banned for the same reason, and it was disturbing to read in the paper last week that smoking costs the health system \$12 billion a year; yet we have no intention of banning

cigarettes or, for that matter, alcohol, which can be equally as damaging.

I sometimes think that if people who, with very honourable intentions, had not made such a song and dance and been such zealots about limiting the number of machines available that some of those publicans who originally had no intention of installing poker machines would not have done so, and we would not have the current proliferation of machines. I am pleased, however, that increased funding has been allocated to this problem area and that the Minister for Gambling is taking steps to address the situation.

I commend the member for Colton for his motion yesterday condemning the federal government for its short-sighted attitude in cutting funding for the study of Asian languages. It is breathtakingly stupid in light of the fact that we are part of the Asian region and we must recognise it if we are to advance our economy. However, we should also ensure that the teaching of many languages is encouraged if we are serious about taking our place in a global economy. It is of utmost importance if we are to compete for our share of the markets, not only overseas but here in our magnificent state where eco and cultural tourism are a focal point of our economy.

I am passionate about languages and I consider myself fortunate that I am fluent in Italian, not quite as fluent in French, and understand Spanish and Portuguese, and that has opened up a wealth of knowledge for me because, with language, you also understand other cultures. In what we consider to be a multicultural society, it is essential that service providers should also be able to communicate in other languages, and it is a duty we have to all those people who came here as factory fodder and who are now in critical need of assistance, particularly in aged care. For some communities, it is probably too late, and they will die lonely and forgotten.

Four years ago I said that I had witnessed the tragedy of refugees who had lost all their family members and currently we are witnessing what can only be described as the shameful and inhuman treatment of asylum seekers. Perhaps because of my own background, many people come in to see me about migration issues, even though they understand that these matters come under federal jurisdiction. The stories are often heartbreaking and, more often than not, their desires for even temporary family reunions are not granted, even for grandparents to be present for the birth of grandchildren, because certain countries are perceived to be of high risk and therefore their citizens are prejudged as being undesirable.

When I was Mayor of Norwood, I had the immense privilege of performing many citizenship ceremonies and, if I were to recount some of the stories these wonderful individuals told me about what they had gone through and how many family members they lost before being able to make their homes in Australia, I do not think there would be a dry eye in the chamber.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** I move:

That the sitting of the house be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** In almost all cases, I am sure that people who come to this country do so because they have hopes and dreams for a better future, and many need to escape persecution. I along with many others have had the

opportunity of meeting Afghani refugees and we are humbled when we hear their stories and what it has cost them to make the very dangerous trip in boats that should long ago have been on scrap heaps. Approximately 20 years ago, having survived indescribable horror, Vietnamese boat people made their way to Australia and to other countries, where they were faced with the same xenophobic attitudes as the current crop of asylum seekers. They have since become respected, hard working members of our community and, indeed, many of their children carry off the top prizes in education and other areas of endeavour because they have a hunger to succeed in life and do not take for granted the opportunities this great country has to offer.

Why are we making the same mistakes with the current wave of refugees? Why are we not fulfilling our human rights responsibilities? Why are we not filling our quotas? The federal government has the arrogance to insist that small Pacific nations should take on these poor unfortunates and is willing to put in enormous resources to keep them out of the country, even though it has been established that the great majority, once processed, will be entitled to come to Australia. The irony is that it has been calculated that it would cost much less to accommodate these asylum seekers in Australia, process them as quickly as has New Zealand, and then resettle them.

We have heard many times from the lips of John Howard and Phillip Ruddock that there has been no criticism of Australia's treatment of asylum seekers overseas. Obviously they do not read foreign newspapers and did not see the front-page headlines that condemned the actions of their government, or are they simply selective in their reading? It is interesting that the Prime Minister, in particular, is always quick to tell us with great pride how respected our sports-people are overseas, so we are prepared to accept the good and ignore the bad.

The number of asylum seekers trying to come to Australia pales into insignificance when compared with the thousands arriving every day in European countries such as Italy. There, however, they are treated in a humane way and are certainly not held in the appalling conditions of the Woomera Detention Centre. It was pleasing to note that one of the first actions of the new Labor government was to instigate an investigation by Robyn Layton QC into the conditions for children in Woomera.

I recently attended a youth forum which was held at the Norwood Town Hall. Young people from many local schools attended and they spoke about their dreams and their fears. It was certainly edifying to hear the articulate discussions from the various groups, but some of the disturbing recurring themes were young people's lack of self-esteem and the high incidence of youth suicide.

Many of the young people present appeared to have been affected because school friends had taken or attempted to take their own lives. It is a sorry indictment of our society that young people feel so isolated or pressured that their only solution is to take their own lives. It is very clear to me that this is an area which needs urgent attention, and some of the young people suggested some very simple solutions which might help them, such as providing facilities where they could just 'hang out' in a friendly, relaxed environment and not feel under pressure to take drugs or indulge in sexual activities. I am currently investigating suitable premises that could be made available for them—and some of the school halls might be an option after school.

There are many more topics about which I feel strongly and which I am sure I will have the opportunity to raise either in this forum or on the various caucus committees.

I must put on record that I am delighted to have been elected a member of the Public Works Committee and look forward to examining, along with other members, projects of great importance to our state. I congratulate our Chairman Paul Caica, because I think he will be a very good chairman.

In closing, I thank the hundreds of volunteers who assisted me in my bid to retain the seat of Norwood. They spent many hours doing everything required to retain the seat, not just during the campaign but throughout the four years since my election in 1997. The wonderful thing about the Labor Party is that we have people who would do things for us because they are true believers, and money cannot buy such commitment. It was a hard fought campaign and perhaps we should feel somewhat flattered that the Liberal Party decided to throw its considerable might—

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** Are you suggesting that others don't?

**Mr Hanna:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dean Brown:** Oh, that's an insult.

**Ms CICCARELLO:** I was not casting aspersions on anyone else. I think that the commitment of our—

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms CICCARELLO:** The Liberal Party decided to throw its considerable might behind trying to wrest the seat of Norwood from our grasp and, judging from the amount of glossy literature that was sent out to the electorate, money was obviously no object. The tactics appear to have been to flood the area with Young Liberals imported from interstate who, it has to be said, behaved in an appalling and unprofessional manner and who managed to enrage many people with their idiotic and, I add, dangerous behaviour, standing at busy intersections waving placards during peak hour and putting people's lives at risk. Many people reported their activities to the police and to the council.

One elderly disabled gentleman almost had a serious accident when one of these placards landed on his windscreen, completely obliterating his vision. It seemed to be rent-a-crowd, because one of the young women who followed me around Norwood also appeared in photographs in *The Australian* with the member for Bragg.

I understand that the member for Sturt and the wife of Senator Robert Hill were the masterminds behind the campaign, with considerable input from Graham Jaeschke who authorised a scurrilous pamphlet which was distributed to all households in the early hours of Friday morning before the election (as has already been mentioned by the member for West Torrens), thus making it impossible for me to rebut.

Senator Amanda Vanstone proudly announced on radio that she had been cooking sausages for the Young Liberals who had been delivering this scurrilous nonsense. The pamphlet stated that I had cost the taxpayers money to move my office just 100 metres down the Parade. Yes, I did move my office, but they failed to mention that DAIS was not prepared to renew the lease on the existing office, and that was for a variety of reasons, one of which was that the original tender for fitting out the office was unreasonable (close to \$150 000) and therefore needed to be retendered. The most disturbing aspect is that access for the disabled would not be provided because the former treasurer stated that it would be too expensive.

It was at this point that I put my foot down and said that unless access for the disabled was provided I refused to



move. I was able to suggest how the entrance could be redesigned to provide a cheaper solution. I also point out that the original office location caused more of a problem for my staff than for me. It was located under a dance studio which conducted flamenco and tap dancing classes every day. In deference to my personal assistant I decided to move, not because I wanted to. Anyone who came to my office and had to put up with the noise would know how bad it was. I was disappointed with the actions of the Liberal Party. However, as a saving grace the pamphlet did say that, 'Vinnie is a very nice person.'

I would normally not single out any one person who helped me, but in this instance I single out my PA Sandra Colhoun for her extraordinary efforts in organising my campaign. At the time that the election was called her then partner, and now husband, the Hon. Gordon Bilney had to have open heart surgery, so she was placed under enormous stress. However, with the prayers of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Gordon made an excellent recovery and we won our campaign. I look forward to representing my community to the best of my ability.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** In this Address in Reply debate I acknowledge the new members of parliament on both sides of the house and congratulate them on their entry to the house, and particularly congratulate them on their maiden speeches. I think we have heard a number of very good maiden speeches from the new members, and they are to be acknowledged as a significant contribution.

I wish to cover three or four areas in this contribution. The first is the issue of building indemnity. This is a huge issue within the community. Today, for the first time, in answer to the question I asked, I think there was some acknowledgment by the Treasurer that it is an issue. Until now, the government has been saying, 'Let there be a commercial solution to this issue.' In fact, they are still saying that. But there has been no acknowledgment of the almost devastation that it is almost causing some builders within South Australia, and I would like to touch on that.

I now have clear evidence of quite significant lay-offs within the building industry. I have evidence that the building of hundreds of houses has come to a halt. I have evidence that quite a significant number of houses cannot be built simply because approval cannot be obtained because building indemnity insurance is not available. I have evidence that, in fact, local governments are refusing to give approval, and I also have evidence that builders are going ahead and building homes without builders' indemnity insurance. Therefore, those builders—and, of course, the owners of the homes being built—are put at enormous risk and exposure because building indemnity insurance has not been taken out, simply because they cannot get it.

I also have evidence that banks have stopped part payments for the construction of homes. Members can imagine the devastation that causes. If the part payment for work completed is stopped, work on the site stops and the people who are waiting to move into that home are therefore held up and invariably have to pay ongoing rental costs and, of course, the whole livelihood of the building industry is brought to the edge. I also have evidence that some builders have had to sell their own homes. With the collapse of Dexter, Royal Sun Alliance is now asking for quite significant amounts of money to be deposited either by way of direct deposits or by bank guarantees or some other security

with the insurance company. As a result of that, significant financial hardship is put on those builders. Of course, that in some cases has meant the sale of the home and certainly the sale of other assets.

The other issue is that it involves not just those builders who cannot get indemnity insurance; that is probably a smaller number. The bigger problem is that Royal Sun Alliance, in a monopolistic situation—and I am not criticising them, but they happen to have fallen into a monopolistic situation—is now saying to builders that they have to cut back very substantially on the amount of building work that they have been doing in recent years. I understand that there are some builders who were insured with Dexter and who have now been told by Royal Sun Alliance that they have to cut back to half, a third or a quarter of the number of homes being built per year.

Some of these builders are in my own electorate. A number of weeks ago I wrote to the Treasurer and I asked that a deputation see the Treasurer to highlight the problem to him. I have not yet had an answer, even though I wrote, I think it would be, four or five weeks ago. In the meantime, the livelihood of these builders is being put at jeopardy. I have asked for a deputation.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Well, there is plenty to highlight, such as the problem with building indemnity insurance. What has occurred? Every time anyone has seen the Treasurer they have been told, 'We will leave it up to the market.' I can tell members what is happening if it is left up to the market: the building industry is being slowly ground down. The number of companies able to build is being reduced, and the number of houses they can build is being reduced. I think we have seen the trigger point for a decline, a reduction, in the housing industry within South Australia, and that will be very unfortunate, indeed.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** What's your solution?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I have already put to the Treasurer a number of proposals. I have asked for retirement villages to be excluded from requiring building indemnity insurance. A retirement village within my community already has the foundations poured, and building work has come to a halt on five houses at the pouring of the foundations simply because the builder, who happens to be the owner of the retirement village, cannot get building indemnity insurance. This is a classic example of one step that could be taken. Another step, which was approved by the former attorney-general and by me as Minister for Human Services, was to exempt builders for the Housing Trust. That would certainly ease the situation for those who build for the Housing Trust, and would allow them under their insurance to build a large number of non-Housing Trust homes within the cap imposed by the insurer.

At present there is an eerie silence. Building companies are fearful, where there is a monopolistic situation, to speak out about what is occurring. I understand the Treasurer has threatened, 'If you speak out on this, we won't do a thing. We will leave you to the market'. In fact, that has already occurred. It is a very significant problem. I feel for the builders; I feel for their employees; I feel for the subcontractors; and I feel for the suppliers who are saying that demand in the industry has turned down quite alarmingly in the past couple of weeks.

A survey was carried out of 460 builders, and responses were received from some 205 of them. That sample pool of builders represented something like \$350 million worth of

residential housing being built per year. The number of annual commencements within the pool were 1 448 new homes, 807 new units and 2 585 renovations, making the total number of commencements 4 840. That is a very significant part of the home building industry of South Australia. The number of builders with Dexter policies represents 70 per cent of the sample pool; in other words 70 per cent of those builders had been insured with Dexter policies. The average dollar value increase required per builder is \$897 000. Each of the 205 sample builders is \$900 000 short in their insurance needs.

Therefore, we have a substantial number of homes, on average \$900 000 worth of homes, that cannot be built by those 205 builders. If we put an average value on those homes of, say, \$100 000 per home, that is nine homes per builder; that is something approaching approximately 1 800 homes that cannot be built at an average value of \$100 000 per home. Being smaller builders, I suspect that represents a fair and average value. It may be that some of those are renovations, in which case the value would be less and an even greater number would be involved. Something approaching 2 000 homes or major renovations in South Australia will not be constructed or undertaken under the current insurance requirements, and that will have a devastating effect.

The average loss incurred by the withdrawal of Dexter per builder is \$639 000. In other words, the average loss of income to each builder represents at least five jobs disappearing in connection with those builders. In relation to the restriction on trade due to the availability of indemnity insurance, almost 90 per cent of the 205 builders surveyed were affected by this insurance issue. It is a massive problem, indeed, and we have had no response from the government except to say, 'Leave it up to the commercial market.' That is not a response. Here is a government that has been in office for nine weeks yet all it wants to do is wash its hands and walk away from the problem.

*The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** We did quite a deal indeed. You have only to look at some of the ministerial statements in terms of what we did.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** We lifted the level of insurance to start with from \$5 000 to \$12 000. But Dexter has collapsed only in the past six or seven weeks. It is up to this government: it was not the previous government in office when it collapsed.

**The Hon. J.D. Hill:** We are working on it.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** That is what members of the government say to every problem that comes up: 'No solutions, but we are working on it. Let's have another review.' The one thing they have learnt after nine weeks in government and eight years in opposition is that when you have a problem, 'Let's have a review'. So we have had review after review, while the building industry in South Australia heads downwards in a very dangerous decline and people's livelihoods are at stake.

Next is the issue of a statement made by the Premier when asked about some of the objectives he wants to achieve through the new economic development board and his new economic development policy. We merely asked him to tell us some of the key objectives here, but he said that he was not willing to do so; he was not willing to put down those objectives.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Rubbish!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** It is not rubbish at all. He was asked, for example, how many jobs he would create, but there was no answer.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I will come to that. When we were in government we put down specific objectives.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I will come to that very shortly. The government has no targets and it has no specifics, and it is fair to say that the government has no direction, no purpose and no measure of what it is achieving, let alone what it might be setting out to achieve.

Business Vision 2010, at which I heard the Treasurer speak last week, was set up to give a clear direction as to where South Australia should be heading. It put down a whole range of different initiatives, but I will not go into that. However, one of the very important initiatives was that specific objectives and indicators should be put down for South Australia and that we should measure ourselves against those indicators. In fact, last Friday morning they released their publication on the indicators for South Australia. I have a grave concern that this rudderless government has put down no directions and no specifics in terms of what it is trying to achieve.

The honourable member interjected across the house that perhaps some of the objectives put down by the former government were not achieved. That is part of the importance of putting them down: so that you know whether or not the measures you put down are, in fact, being achieved or whether you need to take corrective action.

What company would dare operate on the sort of basis on which this government is now trying to operate? I take as an example some of the things that I did when we came to government back in December 1993. In fact, it is rather interesting, because someone came to me just last week with a photocopy of an article in the *Bulletin* of 13 December 1994, where I talked about some of those objectives. I recount to the house what some of those objectives were. It says:

He—

that is, Brown—

predicted that by 2000—

that was six years away—

a fairly long-term projection would be a reinvigorated South Australia and a major world centre for information technology. The car industry will be exporting 20 per cent of its production and 30 per cent of manufactured goods will be exported to Asia. Adelaide's airport main runway will be extended (hear that, Laurie Brereton). The preliminary rounds of the Olympic soccer event will be played in Adelaide and some of Australia's most exciting mineral deposits will be exposed in the state's north.

I highlight that, before we came to government in 1993, I put down specifically that we achieve a 15 per cent compound growth in exports out of South Australia each year—probably one of the most important objectives to put. When I came back as Leader of the Opposition, it struck me how South Australia was very isolated, was not a participant in the export markets and had failed to capture a lot of opportunity in Asia in particular. In fact, we had a lot of opportunity there to get in and develop those export markets.

Looking back, we are able to say, eight years later, that we achieved the 15 per cent compound growth rate and, in fact, exceeded it quite remarkably. We achieved the objective of 20 per cent of our car production going outside South Australia. Both Mitsubishi and General Motors-Holden now exceed that target. I believe that we have achieved—in rough

terms, at least—30 per cent of our manufactured goods going into the Asian area.

I happened to meet with the Ambassador of South Korea this week, and he pointed out that South Korea is now the third major importer of product out of South Australia. A large portion of that product relates to manufactured goods going into the motor industry and, of course, the wool industry.

I now look at what we put down with the wine industry. We funded the wine industry in 1993 and 1994 to put down a clear plan and objectives to be achieved by the year 2000. And what did they do? They achieved that—and exceeded it. We put down specific targets: they had to achieve exports for Australian wine of \$1 billion and exports out of South Australia of \$650 million by the year 2000. They achieved it.

We sat down and signed a memorandum of understanding with the tuna boat owner-operators from Port Lincoln. At that stage, they were producing and exporting about \$22 million worth of tuna a year. I think I am right in saying that we put down an objective of \$160 million by the year 2000. Last year, they exceeded \$280 million worth of exports.

I am concerned at the extent to which this government has formed the Economic Development Board. I will reserve judgment on that today, but I get the impression that the government is likely to follow the same sort of model as I put down, which, effectively, is a departmental structure answering to the minister with an advisory board sitting there. I appointed Ian Webber to head up that advisory board. In fact, I appointed the present Chair of the Economic Development Board, Mr Robert Champion DeCrespigny, to be one of the members of that board. The board put down specific objectives that it wants to achieve for South Australia, and we were willing to be out there and to be judged by them.

The point I make is that this government has failed to do that. In fact, not only has it failed but it has deliberately decided not to. I think that is unfortunate, because I believe that it is against the interests of South Australia. It will not put pressure on either the department or the Economic Development Board in terms of what their objectives should be. I ask the Premier, the Treasurer (as the Minister for Industry, Investment and Trade) and the Economic Development Board to review that decision, because I believe we need specific objectives which need to be put out there so that South Australians and South Australian companies know where our economy is heading, what are the areas of growth on which we should be focusing, where we want to create jobs and how many jobs we want to create. If we fail, we should simply look at why we have failed and take corrective action. There is nothing embarrassing about failure if you have tried but for some reason have not achieved your objectives. What is embarrassing is if you do not try and if you do not put those objectives out there.

The third subject on which I wish to touch is that of the decision by this government to stop the use of HomeStart loans throughout South Australia for the building of aged care facilities for non-profit organisations within the state. On Monday morning, I heard the Minister for Health criticise the federal government for the fact that about 700 bed licences have been issued in South Australia for which facilities have not been constructed. I therefore decided to ask a question on that day about how the HomeStart scheme is going.

The former government set up a scheme whereby any individual non-profit organisation could borrow up to \$5 million from HomeStart to build aged care facilities. I was astounded to hear in answer to my question on that day that

the HomeStart scheme, which held so much hope and promise for aged care people throughout South Australia, particularly in the country in association with country hospitals and also in the metropolitan area, has been stopped by this government. It has been stopped not by cabinet but by, as it has now been shown, the Treasury and the Treasurer, which highlights exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said earlier.

You can see it so clearly: the Treasury has come in and grasped the new government by the throat and is slowly twisting and cutting off the blood supply and the air supply in order to govern by dominating all policy positions. I thought we had a ministry that was supposed to sit in cabinet and have the courage to make decisions. But no, we find that the Treasury put a stop to the HomeStart scheme for aged care people without any consultation with the cabinet. The ministers do not count on this.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The ministers don't count. It is the Treasury that has grasped the neck of this government and is cutting off the blood supply and the air supply. Just watch what the consequences will be. Today we heard that they have done it not only to aged care but also to housing development in regional areas of South Australia. I refer to a program of \$20 million that had been put aside by the previous government. Let us look at this decision, because the Treasurer tried to imply to this house that this would create some economic uncertainty for the country hospitals involved, that it would put economic pressure on them.

If they build the aged care facilities, the Federal government will give them a daily amount (which contains a significant capital component) to pay for the capital costs and all their recurrent costs. I happen to know that country hospitals with aged care beds make a nice profit out of those beds. They pay for their facility, their interest costs and their recurrent or operating costs, and they make a nice profit.

This government is cutting its own throat here, in terms of its country hospitals, by cutting off that supply of revenue that would come by building these aged care facilities. At Millicent, a project had been approved by HomeStart and, some weeks later, along came the government and withdrew that loan. I hope that the people of Millicent take legal action against the government for breach of contract. I hope that they sue this government for breach of contract for having withdrawn that loan, because they were advised to go to HomeStart. They asked for a HomeStart loan and, after receiving it and starting to go to tender and preparing, through a government agency (DAIS), they suddenly found that the loan was withdrawn from them.

This will have a huge—a material—negative effect on the creation of aged care beds in South Australia, especially in country areas and in low income areas in the northern and western suburbs. One of the reasons why I introduced it was that I could see that we were under-represented in terms of aged care beds in the northern and western suburbs, and the non-profit organisations were struggling to get the money together to be able to build the facilities and, therefore, create those beds. Yet the very mechanism we put in place to create that social justice for those people has now been strangled and stopped by the Treasurer. The same applies with respect to low cost and low rental housing in regional areas. It was aimed to help the people who had just obtained a job, who could not afford to buy a home and who needed a low cost rental home. Housing projects worth \$20 million were to be carried out through HomeStart finance.

The other incredible thing is that all of this was off the balance sheet. It would have had no impact whatsoever on the budget, or the budget deficit, because HomeStart finance sits entirely to the side. The Treasurer tried to create the impression that there was some financial problem with HomeStart. HomeStart has paid a \$10 million dividend to the state government over the last two years: it is very profitable. Here was a means of using the strength of the balance sheet of HomeStart, which was under its lending limit (and I stress this point, because this is the point that the Treasurer did not reveal) set by Treasury, and we were using that to help provide a home for elderly people in our community and for people in regional areas.

I find this decision to stop the HomeStart loans for aged people a discrimination against those people. HomeStart is there to provide homes for people, particularly those on low incomes. Frail old people who cannot afford to pay big deposits to go into some of the nursing homes are the very people for whom we should be providing a home. And why is not a nursing home just as much a home for a frail, aged person who needs to go into a nursing home as any other home that we have in the metropolitan area? Why is that not just as justifiable for HomeStart to be funding? It is a clear discrimination by this government against older, frail people on low incomes, particularly in country areas of South Australia and in the northern and western suburbs.

I think that government members should hang their heads in shame that one of the first decisions they made in their eight weeks in government (and one of the only decisions, apart from bulldozing down a house in Flinders Chase when, in fact, they were asked to keep it) merely showed that they have no regard for social justice whatsoever. Their decisions are affecting the very people who need the support of government—those on low incomes and those who are frail and aged.

I ask the Minister for Environment and Conservation: why did not his people respond to the requests of the Friends of National Parks some eight weeks ago and at least consult with them? Why did not his people in fact tell the Friends of National Parks, when they met with them just eight days ago, that they were proposing to demolish this house? I think it is the worst form of arrogance and secrecy that you can imagine, where a minister goes in, knowing that there has been a commitment to consultation, knowing that a moratorium has been put on it, knowing that correspondence had been sent to him asking him not to demolish, and then demolishing it.

**The Hon. J.D. Hill:** You are misleading the house, Dean. That is not true. I did not get correspondence.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Schubert.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I have much pleasure in supporting the Address in Reply and I thank Her Excellency, Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, our new Governor, for opening the parliament, and we wish her well. It was wonderful to have the Governor in the Barossa last week, and the young people certainly flocked to meet her at the local school sports day. I look forward to her term as governor.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Did you get up there, did you?

**Mr VENNING:** Yes, I did, because of the early night on Monday. I am pleased to be back and getting on with the job, but I am disappointed in the change of role. I am especially disappointed because more South Australians voted for us—30 000 more—and we received 50.8 per cent of the two party preferred vote. The non-Labor parties won more than half the

seats, 24 to 23, but we find ourselves on this side of the chamber. Labor's primary vote in the Legislative Council was only 32 per cent, which I thought was pretty ordinary. I know that the people of South Australia are furious, especially in Hammond, which is a seat as conservative as mine.

I note the change to standing orders for the four day sittings and I must make the observation early, after the first four days, of how disappointed I am. I have to say that initially I favoured the idea. As a country member, I thought if you are travelling to Adelaide you may as well be here for four days and get the job over with, but I have to say that I am very disappointed. It has not worked. We have not used our time wisely. We got here on Monday and effectively completed only one hour of government business, and then we went home early. Then, again, on Tuesday, we went home early. On Wednesday we went home at 8.15 p.m, so I believe we should not meet on Mondays and we should sit later on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. When I say 'late', I mean no later than 9.30 or 10 o'clock.

I feel for members like the member for Mount Gambier—who I don't often feel for, but I do in this instance—because he would have to leave home early on Monday morning to get here. If he goes home tonight—which would not be wise because he would be very tired—he will have one effective day in his office for the week. He will probably go home tomorrow morning and he will have less than half a day in his office. It is not satisfactory and we need to look at it again. I have certainly changed my mind on that.

I was very pleased with the support that I received from the voters in Schubert. We had seven candidates and five were conservative, but we still ended up with a very strong majority. I congratulate the other candidates, especially the Labor candidate in Schubert, a Mr Kym Wilson, who was a very good candidate and a very good fellow. It was good to see the Labor vote in my electorate return to a more traditional level because in the last election it was shot to bits, which allowed the Democrats to do better than they should have done. I welcome the young Mr Kym Wilson, a policeman, from the ALP. He did very well and I wish him all the best in the future.

**An honourable member:** You still beat him.

**Mr VENNING:** Yes, I did beat him, very handsomely, but it was good to see the Labor vote back where it ought to be. I want to thank all those who have supported me for over 12 years now. I would especially like to thank my campaign workers Mr Peter Frazer, my campaign chairman, Mrs Stephanie Martin, my electorate chairman, and Mr David Lillcrap, who has been the secretary of the Schubert sub-branch, and before that Custance, for over 30 years. I am also very grateful to the campaign team behind them and certainly indebted to many people. Sir, I am blessed, as you would know, with one of the most experienced teams in the business and I am very grateful for that.

I made comments at the declaration of the poll at Angaston about the Electoral Boundary Commission and the decisions and changes it might make. It would be great if all the Barossa could be in the one electorate, as about one fifth is currently not. The communities of Greenock, Maranaga and Seppeltsfield are in Light and it would be nice to have them all in with the rest of the Barossa. I have discussed this with the member for Light, Malcolm Buckby, and, if it stands up numerically, maybe a swap could be arranged with some of my electorate and the back streets of Gawler, Sandy Creek, Cockatoo Valley, etc. My further comment created quite a deal of public comment, because I then said that maybe the

local government boundaries should go the same way. I am going to Light council next week to explain my comments because they certainly caused some public comment. I think as MPs we are allowed to chance our arm, and, in this instance, I will probably get it back with some interest. But I have the courage of my conviction and I will front up, and Mayor Shanahan will probably give me some advice. So I look forward to that, or I think I do. If the Labor government wants a challenge, it should implement a statewide review of local government boundaries.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** You want a review?

**Mr VENNING:** Our previous Liberal government has done the hard work in assisting council amalgamations; now is the time, I believe, to review the boundaries between them. The only way we can attempt this, and have any success, is with a bipartisan approach, because if we are not prepared to back it in it will not happen, I can assure you. I know that, with the member's boundaries in his electorate in West Torrens, certainly he would agree that those boundaries, too, could do with a sorting out. Those boundaries are traditional. Surely when communities move and change they ought to be assessed at regular intervals, and that is what I am going to tell the Light council, and I hope that they will agree with me. I look forward to the government trying to pick up that challenge. If it does, I am happy to assist in tackling it on a bipartisan approach, because I think many of them are asking us to do that.

I was very pleased that we won the seat of Light so well, because that was the seat that I was paired with, and I want to congratulate Malcolm Buckley on a great win, because that was one of those front row seats. I also congratulate his fine campaign team because they did a fantastic job. I also want to include the member for Hartley—what did they call you Joe, the nickname?

**Mr Koutsantonis:** The littlest dinosaur.

**Mr VENNING:** The littlest dinosaur! Sir, I am backing him all the way. I have heard the comments made about my friend and colleague Joe Scalzi. Well, he is still here, against all the odds, against all the knockers. He is not big in stature but he is big in heart, he is big in soul, and he is big in commitment, and he is still here. They can knock all they like.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** And you're the only one who's praised him so far.

**Mr VENNING:** Well, member for West Torrens, should I not?

**Mr Koutsantonis:** You should, and full credit to you.

**Mr VENNING:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, he's made my day, I can retire now. So to all the new members of parliament, welcome and congratulations on winning your seats and I hope that you find your time here personally rewarding. To all those returning members, welcome back. I congratulate the new ministers. It must be a challenge to them. I hope they are able to settle into their jobs. But I have to say that I have a couple of disappointments. I was very disappointed that a couple missed out. The member for Torrens is a very hard-working member of parliament and, being a true bipartisan man, I can say that I was disappointed that she was not elevated. She was the Opposition Whip and is now the Government Whip. She and also the member for Fisher are regularly heard on the radio. The amount of work that that generates for those members must be phenomenal, but the member for Torrens does that, and I thought that the party would have recognised her and elevated her.

The member for Ashford was elevated and I was pleased about that. I appreciated the Hon. Stephanie Key's input—I can name her I hope—as a member of the ERD Committee. I am very sad that I am not on the ERD Committee any more. It was not of my choosing, and I am disappointed. But I look back and say, 'Well, what a great committee it was,' and I congratulate the members of the government who were on that committee: the Hon. Stephanie Key and also the Hon. Terance Roberts. They were both valuable members. I was a bit of a committee knocker. My eight years on the ERD Committee and six years as Chairman have shown me that things can be achieved in a bipartisan way, that committees do work and that they can be a valuable part of the parliamentary process here in South Australia.

I am pleased that the Hon. Stephanie Key has been elevated. I know Stephanie and her husband Kevin well, and they are good people. I will certainly watch Stephanie's progress with interest.

I want to pay tribute to those members who are no longer here, particularly John Olsen—a personal friend of mine—John Oswald, David Wotton, Graham Ingerson and Steve Condous. I also want to pay special tribute to the Hon. Murray De Laine. He and Ralph Clarke were valued members who contributed much to this place. And I also refer to Annette Hurley. I give them full credit. Murray De Laine particularly never, ever shafted anyone. He was an honest person, and when he did a deal with us—and we did deals with the whips—he always kept his word, as whips do. Stan Evans once told me, 'You've got to be able to trust the opposition whip; if you don't, you're in big trouble.'

My final word is in relation to Ralph Clarke. What happened was sad. It has to be said that Ralph Clarke was a jolly good local member and a very entertaining member of this house. The only time I can remember smiling was when I was being ripped to pieces, because he did it in such a nice way, was when he called me 'the lion of the Barossa'. He is missed, and I wish him all the best for his retirement from this place, for he is only a young man. We all do things we sometimes regret, and I only hope that he can get his life back together. Hopefully, one day he may return.

Yesterday, I heard a speech of the member for Wright that I wish I had not heard. The Hon. John Olsen retired from this place with the stigma of dishonesty.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** He was.

**Mr VENNING:** I do not think any member need reflect on that. I think it is gross.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** What you said about John Bannon—

**Mr VENNING:** John Bannon? I do not believe that the Hon. John Olsen did any more or less than most other premiers. It could be argued that what was told to the house could have been misleading, but it could have been solved years ago if it had been said 12 or 18 months ago that, yes, there was a double-deal done—if there was, and I do not know. No more would have been heard about it. But I believe that the Hon. John Olsen protected his staff, and it was his advice that cost him. I think it is very sad and, if I could rid my friend John Olsen of that stigma, I would.

Leave it as it is. I do not like members raising that matter here, and I think it is grossly unfair, because that man is no longer here. He has done a lot for this state, for me and for the people of my electorate.

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I wouldn't put it like that at all—not at all. I make those comments, and I am fast running out of time. I believe that the Olsen-Kerin government was an

honest government that spent resources wherever the need arose, and not for vote buying. The previous government did not need to buy votes in my electorate of Schubert, as we all know, but we know that it scored exceptionally well under the previous administration with a huge list of achievements, such as the filtration plants so that we now have clean water in the Barossa. We installed filtration plants all the way along the Murray River. There is also now a filtration plant at Mount Pleasant. The water at all these places was filthy: it just was not on. It was promised when I first came into this place—back in 1990. Then Premier Bannon, and then Arnold, said, ‘As soon as we have finished the filtration plant at Myponga, we’ll be in the Barossa.’ And it never, ever happened. We have honoured our promise.

The BIL scheme for the wine industry and the offpeak water scheme have both been tremendous godsend to the Barossa. You can take the water off peak, and having the extra system via the BIL was a great success. I pay tribute to John Olsen, again, because it would not have happened without his involvement. There was not any precedent for this. For private people to be able to put water through the public system and then to have their own water reticulation system at the end was ground breaking legislation, ground breaking government and private cooperation. But it is happening, it is done and it is working, and we would be in big trouble without it.

Gomersal Road, which the Minister for Transport opened the other day, has been a great asset to the community in the Barossa. They can now get direct access to the highway without having to drive with the trucks up the Barossa Valley Way. In relation to the Barossa Brenton Langbein Theatre, that is one of those times in my 12-year career that I will look back on with great fondness. It is arguably the best theatre in the state, and it was put there by major government investment with private money.

Here I pay tribute to my former colleague Graham Ingerson. If it were not for his initial involvement, it would not have happened. Also, there has been support from ministers since, particularly Joan Hall, and we should be very proud of them. The locals are very pleased that it is there, and it is getting a lot of use. The new Tanunda Primary School is another great asset. We have a new special education unit for the Tanunda Primary School for those less fortunate, and an additional special education unit at the high school, giving that flow through. We have new emergency services facilities, and the list goes on.

A new hospital for the Barossa had also been promised, and I hope that this new government will honour that promise. I spoke to the minister just a few moments ago and she said that there could be some difficulty. I have invited the minister to come up to the Barossa, and I have made her a deal: we will spend half a day working and then have half a day enjoying the Barossa. She might think about that. Rest assured that in that half day I will make sure that the minister sees the Angaston hospital because, quite honestly, it is an absolute disgrace. It should never have gone on as a hospital for the past 10 years, but the problem has been that governments—ours included—have not spent money there, purely because we knew that a new hospital was coming.

They did not spend anything on maintenance, and now we have a situation where we have a facility that is just not coping, is far overtaxed, and we are expecting professional people to work with facilities which are second grade and worn out and which should have been replaced 10 years ago. That is the problem, and I will be watching it very carefully.

Hopefully, this government will continue the former government’s commitment for a new hospital by 2005.

As I said in an earlier speech today, I am very disappointed that the funding for the Barossa Music Festival has been cut. Continued public criticisms by the Premier of the Australian Wine Centre concern me greatly. Wine industry leaders believe it to be a great pity and a short sighted decision to close the centre, which remains a sensitive issue for all concerned.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I move:

That the sitting of the house be extended beyond 6 p.m.

Motion carried.

**Mr VENNING:** I am talking about the continued public criticism of the Australian Wine Centre. It certainly is not doing it any good. I have had friends who had booked a member of their family in to be married at this venue but, because of the discussion going on about it, those people have cancelled. When you start heaping criticisms on bodies that are starting to find their way, it can make the situation worse. I hope it does not go the same way as the Barossa Music Festival.

Another great concern has been brought to my attention by the former minister for tourism who has told me that the industry is very concerned that the government might cancel the underwriting of the successful Barossa Under the Stars event. If that is even being considered, I would be absolutely shattered, because we have had some absolutely magnificent nights, and it is one of the highlights of the arts program of South Australia. It was booked out last time. You cannot run an event like that without a major government underwriting. I put the government on notice that, if it attempts to do that, it will incur a lot of angst from the community. The Australian wine industry is riding on the crest of a wave that continues to expand, with 395 million litres of wine exported in the past 12 months—an increase of 19 per cent—compared to only 10 million litres 17 years ago.

There has been prevarication about the Labor government’s commitment to the new Barossa hospital, which is really needed, as I have said. Road funding for the Barossa is in jeopardy because, now that we have the Barossa road strategy, we need connecting roads for that. There are plans, and I hope that we can get the plans agreed to by local government and the respective communities and then ask the government to help fund them.

Given that all these things are negative, what sort of message is this sending to the Barossa—this state’s engine room for economic development. If the government wants to slow down our progress, it is certainly starting in the right place to do so. I was very concerned to hear today the member for MacKillop talking about how the regional infrastructure fund is to be cut. That concerns me greatly, because those of us in regions like mine certainly rely on that for the ongoing funding to plan, instigate and encourage regional development in our areas. Mr Speaker, as you would know, \$1 spent in the Barossa earns \$10 straight back to the state.

A deal between the council, the former minister and our government was struck concerning the old Tanunda Primary School site. However, the new government now wants to renege on that deal. I have raised that matter with the minister as I am very concerned, because the old school site has been vandalised and ravaged by white ants, and it is nowhere near the value it was. A new price was agreed to, but it has not

been signed off. I urge the government to address that matter. Investors all over the world have been pouring investment dollars into the Barossa with obvious benefits across the state, and that involves not just millions but hundreds of millions of dollars. One only has to drive through the valley to see the massive development occurring. It is still going on, despite some negativity that is starting to occur in relation to the wine industry.

We must not put the brakes on the wine industry, especially at a time when Australia has the potential for unlimited exports, now being the seventh largest wine producer in the world and having 18 per cent of the market share in the United Kingdom. The scope is there for wine exports to countries such as China (would you believe it!), India, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Korea and many more countries whose wine consumption has a small base but is growing very rapidly.

The Barossa Valley is the centre of my electorate. It is Australia's premium wine grape producing region, and the government's support is essential for the wine industry to continue to grow and prosper. If you kill off the Barossa Music Festival (and you have done that), if you freeze government spending (and you are going that way), if you kill off consumer confidence and if you freeze the regional infrastructure fund, what do you think you are doing? You are sending a message to investors to the effect, 'Maybe you shouldn't be investing your money here.' How inept! These are all the wrong decisions for all the wrong reasons. It is base pork-barrelling politics. Let us see what this July budget brings, although there is still a way to go. The Barossa is undoubtedly South Australia's tourist hub, and its very successful amalgam of wine, fine food and culture is famous the world over. So, what else can they do that is negative? Food, of course! What is to become of our very successful Food for the Future initiative?

I am very concerned—why mess with it? We should not interfere with things that have been working well. I will give the government credit, as it has given us accolades on a few occasions. In this instance it should not mess with something that is working so well. It was an initiative of our government. There is no reason why this government cannot take it over and take it to even bigger and better things. Just because it was a Liberal initiative it should not go over the side.

Tourism is booming: will it continue to do so with strong government involvement by a minister? Well, the tourism minister in the new government has been in office for over two months and she has not even been near the Barossa, as far as I am aware. She has refused open invitations, including an invitation to attend the Barossa tourism awards next week. This is not good enough, minister. The excuses reported to me were pretty pathetic. We have been spoilt in the past. Previous ministers, particularly Hall and Hamilton Smith, were seen in the Barossa at all major tourist functions and venues and I pay tribute to them both. We are certainly missing them. We have been spoilt. I would have thought that the Minister for Tourism would have visited the Barossa last week or the week after the election. She is still welcome to come, but she has not been yet. By the sound of it—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** What an inane interjection. I assure members that this welcome will wear off if the minister does not up stumps and travel one hour north to the Barossa. She will be most welcome. I also extend invitations to the Minister for Health (Hon. Lea Stevens), particularly to the Angaston and Tanunda hospitals, and the Minister for Education (Hon. Trish White). The Angaston and Kapunda primary

schools were to be developed as promised under our government. They are not quite under way—will they continue? Both ministers have apologised for not coming out. Do we have to wait until after July before they will accept an invitation?

*Mr Caica interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** Thank you, Paul. The member for Colton is on his way to visit. He is welcome, too, and I will even shout him a red. It looks as though the Barossa is about to enter a politically induced drought. How short sighted is that? Do we have to wait until 17 July to find out anything? There is no direction at all, and all we can do is comment on the previous government's commitments.

I raise one of the most important concerns of all and reiterate what I said in the house last night: this new government refuses to commit to the previous government's commitment to build a new deep sea port at Outer Harbor. I will not go further as I raised it at length yesterday. Unless we get answers in the next two or three weeks, we will see developments that may not be the best for South Australia. You have to put it on the line whether you are or are not—

**The Hon. J.D. Hill:** Explain it.

**Mr VENNING:** You read my speech from last night—it is all there. Otherwise you will have another port and it will not necessarily be the best for South Australia. I despair as I thought the contract was all signed, sealed and delivered. I have not seen the contract, although I would have liked to. It may not be perfect and, if the product is not perfect, I am happy to support the government in having it changed. However, if it has been signed, sealed and delivered, let us get on with it.

What did the previous Liberal Government achieve when in office? We achieved plenty, including the Adelaide Hills freeway and the tunnel—what a huge project that was—the southern freeway and the Barcoo outlet. There are plenty of knockers of the Barcoo outlet in here. When I stay in Adelaide I live right near the outfall and I have had no problems with it at all, touch wood. I believe it will be the best thing. I wonder how long it will take members opposite to accept that, because what we had was not acceptable. We had a big country road program, with the Morgan-Burra Road now comprising 90 kilometres of sealed road. The Hon. Di Laidlaw undertook that project and I rode that road twice. It was a gimmick, but it worked. Those people are so pleased that that vital link of highway is sealed.

I have mentioned the Gomersal Road. The Eyre Peninsula and Riverland road systems have been addressed. We have achieved the lot. I only hope the new government will continue that. There are three new hospitals in South Australia, 10 new schools, new state art centres, an upgraded art gallery and, the biggest of all, the commitment to the Adelaide to Darwin rail system.

We have heard premiers and prime ministers promise this, but they never did it. I think that we must give credit where credit is due. If I hear any other member in this house criticise premier Olsen or our government for these things I will be very upset. Without his dynamism and single vision to get this done we would not have got it off the ground because it was a strong political commitment. The least members can do is respect the man, thank the man and be thankful that he was our premier for that time.

Motion carried.

## ADJOURNMENT

At 6.10 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 27 May at 2 p.m.

