

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 28 May 2002

The **SPEAKER (Hon. I.P. Lewis)** took the chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (THIRD PARTY BODILY INJURY INSURANCE) BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Pursuant to section 131 of the Local Government Act 1999 the following reports of Local Councils for 2000-2001: District Council of Coober Pedy

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. K.O. Foley)—

SABOR Ltd—Report 2000-2001

By the Treasurer (Hon. K.O. Foley)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Southern State Superannuation—Transferred Agreements
Superannuation—Enterprise Agreements

By the Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—

Public Corporations Act—Direction pursuant to Section 6

By the Attorney-General (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)—

Rules of Court—
District Court—District Court Act—Representation
Supreme Court—Supreme Court Act—
Admission Rules—Document Delivery
Criminal Rules—Representation
Court Rules—Interlocutory

By the Minister for Consumer Affairs (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Liquor Licensing—Dry Areas—
Exemption—Lucindale School
Mannum

By the Minister for Education and Children's Services (Hon. P.L. White)—

Regulations under the following Act—
Fees Regulation—Government Schools

By the Minister for Transport (Hon. M.J. Wright)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Harbors and Navigation—Breath Analysis
Road Traffic—Breath Analysis

By the Minister for Local Government (Hon. J.W. Weatherill)—

Regulations under the following Act—
City of Adelaide—Declaration Form
Local Government Elections—Declaration Form.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

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

The **Hon. M.D. RANN**: Today I welcome advice from the Managing Director of Adelaide Airport Limited, Mr Phil Baker, that South Australians after years of big announcements, more delays and false starts can expect a major upgrade of the Adelaide Airport in the near future. The airport is the gateway to our city for interstate and overseas visitors. It is also infrastructure that is vital to South Australia's economic prosperity. For too long the airport has offered a substandard set of facilities to travellers and to commercial users. In 1994 while opposition leader and during meetings in Hobart I negotiated with the then Keating government to achieve an extension of the Adelaide Airport runway. I want to stress that that position was enthusiastically supported by the then Liberal government headed by Dean Brown, and I was pleased to assist in a bipartisan way.

Today's media reports that Qantas is soon to make a decision on new investment in the airport terminal, and Mr Baker has confirmed this. These media reports are welcome. Previous plans were well advanced last year for a multi-user terminal facility involving the then three players, Qantas, Ansett and Virgin Blue. Following the tragic collapse of Ansett those plans were put in jeopardy for a new multi-use terminal.

The South Australian government welcomes new investment in the airport. We understand that Qantas is proposing an upgraded terminal involving air bridges. However, the South Australian government favours the original concept of the Adelaide Airport upgrade for a multi-user integrated terminal. In present circumstances, following the collapse of Ansett, that is likely to mean a smaller facility than previously planned. However, the proposal for a multi-user integrated terminal would still be the new state government's preferred option. We believe it is much better to link the servicing of all three levels of air travel—regional, domestic and international—through a single, integrated and efficient facility, in other words, one new terminal.

The state government has committed substantial funds to support the development of a new multi-user facility. Such a multi-user facility has advantages over airlines investing solely in upgrading their own facilities. Adelaide Airport Ltd, under the leadership of Phil Baker, has worked since the late 1990s to secure agreement from Qantas and other airlines about their intended commitment to future use of the new facility. The government strongly supports those efforts.

All players in the industry, as well as the travelling public and commercial and industrial users, stand to gain through the establishment of a multi-user facility. This facility is the best approach for a city of Adelaide's size and offers major efficiencies to the airlines. The multi-user concept has the potential to turn Adelaide's terminal into the best in Australia.

I understand that over the coming weeks Mr Baker will be having discussions with the airlines concerning the development of the terminal as a multi-user facility. As stated above, such an approach has advantages over a piecemeal approach to the airport's redevelopment that could occur if airlines invested solely in their own facilities. I urge the airline representatives to consider fully and favourably their support for the development of Adelaide airport as a multi-user integrated terminal.

SOBCZAK, SENIOR CONSTABLE

The **Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Police)**: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.
Leave granted.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: As Minister for Police, I wish to advise the house of the tragic death of a member of the South Australian police force. Last Sunday, 26 May, Senior Constable Bogdan 'Bob' Sobczak died as a result of injuries he sustained in a motor vehicle accident while on duty. His motorcycle was involved in a collision on the Palmer to Tungkillo road approximately 4 kilometres east of Tungkillo. Whilst details of the events leading to the tragic accident are not yet clear, it will be the subject of a major crash investigation and a commissioner's inquiry.

Since 1847, 59 South Australian police officers have been killed while on duty protecting the lives and properties of South Australians. It is a reminder to all of us that every day police officers put themselves at risk and in potentially dangerous situations to protect the community and to keep South Australians safe.

Senior Constable Sobczak was a veteran police officer with a wealth of experience. He was in his 33rd year of service with the South Australian police force and had been assigned to traffic duties for almost 30 years of distinguished and unblemished service. Senior Constable Sobczak was a valued and well respected colleague at the Holden Hill Police Station, where he spent most of his career. His death will be felt by all members of the South Australian police force and their families. He leaves behind a wife and four children.

On behalf of this house, I wish to convey our deepest sympathies to his family and colleagues. Our thoughts are with them at this terrible time.

DUNCAN, Dr G.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: On 10 May 1972, Adelaide University law lecturer Dr George Duncan drowned in the River Torrens. As members would know, the case created enormous media interest at the time and has continued to do so over the years. In its way, it led to reform to the laws relating to homosexual acts between consenting adults. It also led to the most intense police investigation at the time, including the calling in of a New Scotland Yard detective, Detective Chief Superintendent McGowan, to undertake an independent inquiry owing to allegations against members of the South Australia Police.

The McGowan report, which was completed in 1972, has never been released. This in turn led to intense public speculation about what was contained in the report. It is 30 years this month since the death of Dr George Duncan. Under the Freedom of Information Act, a document that is exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the act ceases to be exempt 30 years after its creation. In other words, the public can expect the release of the McGowan report in October of this year. In forming a view on the release of this report, the government must balance its commitment to freedom of information with the public interest.

The release of the McGowan report has the capacity to cause great distress and lasting emotional harm to many innocent people. Being homosexual at the time of Dr Duncan's death was effectively a crime and an accusation of homosexuality can be a vicious weapon. The Premier and I have already consulted with the opposition on the release of this material but I want to acknowledge the positive role of the opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition and

the shadow attorney-general, the Hon. Robert Lawson QC. This is an extremely sensitive issue beyond party politics.

The Freedom of Information Act does allow the government to extend the period of exemption for this document by regulation. At this stage, the government, after consulting with the opposition, believes it is appropriate and in the public interest to release most, if not all, of the McGowan report. This may occur within the next two months, before the October deadline. Currently, efforts are being made to check exactly what is and is not on the public record given that we have had Coroner's inquiries and a criminal trial since. Every effort will be made to avoid harm to those who are named but who are innocent of any involvement in Dr Duncan's death.

REGIONAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to regional impact statements made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

FLINDERS AND GAMMON RANGES

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the Flinders and Gammon Ranges made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Regional Affairs.

QUESTION TIME

WOMEN'S PRISON

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Given the premier's strong anti-privatisation stance during the election campaign, will he now rule out considering any private sector involvement in the construction and management of the new women's prison which is currently under consideration? During the election campaign, the ALP campaigned strongly on a no-privatisation policy platform. The ALP's privatisation policy clearly stated that under a Labor government there would be no more privatisation of our prisons. It went on to say that the threat of privatisation would be lifted from our schools and police, and other essential services would remain in government hands.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): If the opposition leader does not mind, I am happy to take that question. The Labor Party made it very clear at least 18 months prior to the election, leading up to the election, I think from memory once or twice during the election campaign, and certainly since, that the policy of public-private partnerships is one that the state Labor government agrees with. Not only does state Labor agree with it, but also the Labor Party governments in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia agree with it. Public-private partnerships is about the construction and ownership of the physical asset.

The Hon. P.L. White: New assets.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Exactly, new assets. It is about governments being able to build projects with the private sector as the builder of those new assets, but it is about government running the services—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: And that is the difference.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: And that is the difference. The Labor government in the United Kingdom under Tony Blair

pioneered this policy, and it is about a clever use of capital. The important point is that it is about the public sector delivering the service; if we go back some years, we find that that is so. If we go back over recent years, we will see that a number of schools under both Labor and Liberal governments have been built by the private sector but leased by the government and with our teachers, headmasters, etc., in those schools. So, it is not a novel approach, and I congratulate the former government on beginning the process of public-private partnerships. The former government announced a number of projects that would be under consideration in its budget.

What I am saying is that a number of those projects are being actively pursued by the new Labor government and, what is more, we are going to give consideration to more projects under a public-private partnership approach. My colleague the Minister for Government Enterprises will be taking responsibility for overseeing that development program as a very useful, sensible and productive way to give governments value for money in the capital works budget, a capital works budget that is highly constrained given the financial mismanagement by the former Liberal government. We will use PPP as one option to get around a very constrained budget position to allow us to find ways to deliver important public projects, but with the public sector providing the service.

SOCCKER WORLD CUP

Ms BREUER (Giles): My question, which is on a very important subject, is directed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware that people living in the Spencer Gulf region might miss out on broadcasts of the most important World Cup soccer matches? The Nine Network has arrangements with SBS to broadcast the opening ceremony and 48 of the matches, which means that they will be seen by many people in our regions. But GTS/BKN is still negotiating to broadcast the 16 matches that will air live on Channel 9 during the World Cup throughout June. This includes the finals and the key preliminary round matches. Can the Premier advise the house on what, if any, measures he has taken to ensure those 55 000 households in the Spencer Gulf do not miss out?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I thank the member for Giles for raising the subject; I know she shares my passion on this matter. I have written to and faxed today the Managing Director of the Nine Network, Mr Ian Johnson, in Sydney. I will read a copy of the letter:

Congratulations to the Nine Network for bringing to Australians the sporting event of the year—soccer's World Cup next month. I am certain that millions of Australians will be caught up in the spectacle of the world game. As a soccer fan myself, I applaud your network's arrangements with SBS to screen the opening ceremony and 48 games, which means that these will be seen by soccer fans around Australia, including in most country areas.

However, I write to make a plea on behalf of fans in South Australia's Spencer Gulf, who will miss out on the 16 games the Nine Network will be showing live. I'm sure you would be aware of the massive interest in soccer in the area, especially in Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta.

GTS-BKN has, I understand, been negotiating with the Nine Network to broadcast those matches on behalf of the 55 000 households who will miss out on these World Cup matches, and I urge you to continue negotiations with GTS-BKN in order to bring about a compromise that will guarantee coverage.

GROUP 4

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome): In the light of the government's reluctance to accept Healthscope's offer to terminate the Modbury Hospital outsourcing contract, will the Attorney-General advise the house whether the government will be continuing the Group 4 contract for prisoner movement and in-court management, or will the government be returning these services to the public sector? The previous Liberal government entered into an arrangement with Group 4 to manage prisoner movements and in-court management processes. When in opposition, the ALP was a strident critic of the outsourcing of government services and went to the last election on a strong anti-privatisation platform. However, in the house yesterday, the Minister for Health refused to accept an offer to return the management of the Modbury Hospital to government control. This now raises the question as to the government's position with respect to the outsourcing of services in other portfolios, including correctional services.

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader knows that, having asked his question, he cannot ask a raft of questions and proceed with a rhetorical statement implying that further information is required. Future questions of that order will be simply ruled out of order. The Attorney-General.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): The answer is yes.

SOLAR BIKE RACE

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services tell the house about the achievements of Eastern Fleurieu school students in the international solar bike race?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I would be delighted to inform the house of a significant achievement by some very enterprising young South Australian high school students. Earlier today I was pleased to be able to be at Adelaide Airport to welcome home the Eastern Fleurieu students who, in a recent international solar bike race, did us very proud in winning—in fact blitzing—the competition. The students took line honours in the three day, 550 kilometre solar express road race from Topeka in Kansas to Jefferson City in Missouri, finishing more than 3½ hours ahead of the nearest competitor. There are only three events like this in the world, including the Alice Springs to Darwin race which, I might add, was won by these students last year.

The state government, through the Premier's office, helped fund the United States trip, with a grant of \$22 000. The team also received \$6 000 from Holden's and \$40 000 from the Australian greenhouse office, among other sponsors. Of course, the Eastern Fleurieu students and school community did much fund-raising themselves, and they are to be commended for their great effort. Certainly, this momentous achievement is worthy of significant praise, even more so because the students built the vehicle themselves. It is certainly an outstanding example of a curriculum activity that is relevant to students and is linked to the traditional areas of study, and for some of the students involved it has been the linchpin for remaining engaged in their learning.

School principal Bob Heath is to be congratulated. He attributes the success of the team to the outstanding rider fitness, a thorough technical understanding of the vehicle and the sophistication of their technology. Of course, there is always in successful programs such as this a key relationship

with some truly fantastic teachers, and I acknowledge the leadership and vehicle preparation of teachers Bill Kelton and Dave Jennings. This certainly shows what dedication, skill and a bit of initiative can do in the pursuit of excellence. Congratulations to these students and teachers who are very fine ambassadors not only of an alternative energy but also of South Australia as a whole. My congratulations to the Eastern Fleurieu school community.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

SA WATER

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Government Enterprises. Given the minister's failure to rule out rural job losses within SA Water, can the minister advise the house of the government's policy with respect to downsizing or retrenchments within SA Water, and what are the expected savings from these measures? In response to a question on 16 May regarding the likelihood of job losses within SA Water regional operations, the minister refused to rule out redundancies. We went on to advise the house that SA Water had a chronic problem in relation to the age of its work force and that the government had agreed on a program to replace some older workers with younger workers. In a radio interview the very next day, the Premier indicated that he was not aware of any retrenchment programs which were age specific. The workers of SA Water deserve to know the government's policy in this area.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises): I will repeat what I have said before: I will not rule out redundancies. There is the program that I spoke about before and, as I said, I will not be giving the Leader of the Opposition a snapshot of the current budget, no matter which angle he tries to come at it from. The other hypocrisy of this mob is talking about job losses in water after they outsourced the contracts, after they committed carnage to the public sector—not one or two but several thousand jobs in the public sector. For this fellow to stand up today and ask me about a retrenchment program in SA Water is nothing but the most utter hypocrisy.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Florey.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Can the Premier explain how the events scheduled for National Reconciliation Week can help South Australians better understand issues relating to indigenous Australians? Last night, several members attended a special Parliament House screening of the documentary *Without Prejudice*. The documentary tackles the questions of reconciliation and includes the opinions of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians after they were presented with balanced information about the issue. The screening of *Without Prejudice* was organised as part of National Reconciliation Week.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I thank the honourable member for her question on an important question for both indigenous and non-indigenous South Australians. I understand that last night's screening of the *Without Prejudice* documentary was very successful, with a number of MPs and staff and even representatives of the media taking the opportunity to learn more about reconciliation issues. The documentary follows a series of deliberations of reconcili-

ation issues between randomly selected Australians who met in Canberra to discuss some of the complex issues faced by indigenous Australians. It is clear from the evidence presented in the documentary that the attitudes of Australians towards reconciliation issues change substantially once they are presented with balanced and accurate information.

National Reconciliation Week provides an opportunity for all South Australians to gain an insight into the lives of indigenous people and perhaps a better understanding of the issues that concern them and the difficulties they face. The theme of the week is 'Walking the talk'. It runs until next Sunday and features a full schedule of community events, including indigenous art exhibitions, family picnics, an indigenous film festival and Friday night's Dinner for Reconciliation at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. Martin Luther King III, the son of the legendary American civil rights leader, will be the special guest at the Reconciliation Dinner, and I will introduce him.

National Reconciliation Week is also celebrating two significant turning points in Australian indigenous affairs: the 1967 referendum in which Australians voted overwhelmingly in favour of giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the right to vote; and the tenth anniversary of the High Court's Mabo decision. National Reconciliation Week was originally set up by a federal Labor government with support and funding continued by successive federal Liberal governments. However, federal government support has waned in recent years, resulting in the state government's having to take more responsibility for progressing the cause of reconciliation.

An enormous amount of good work has been done in the past, and this has resulted in a better understanding of reconciliation issues, including land rights, in the broader community. This greater understanding has also boosted the confidence of local, state and commonwealth governments in dealing with indigenous peak bodies, including ATSIC and the regional Aboriginal organisations and communities. I am also pleased with the level of understanding of indigenous issues now within the state Public Service and commend government organisations for initiating and adopting reconciliation statements.

I want to pay tribute to the people who volunteer their time and effort to further the cause of reconciliation. They are committed to reconciliation and, without their contribution, the results we have achieved would be far less substantial. I would encourage all members and all South Australians to participate in the events scheduled for National Reconciliation Week.

The SPEAKER: I can advise the house that, given the difficulty that many members had in getting to the screening of *Without Prejudice* last night, I have arranged for another screening of it, and details of when and where will be circulated shortly.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is to the Minister for Tourism. In the light of the Premier's welcome statement to the house today regarding an upgraded international/domestic multi-user terminal, is it correct that the Minister for Tourism believes that the push for an international standard airport is 'crazy'? On Sunday 24 March this year, the *Sunday Mail* reported that the minister had said she believed that an upgrade of Adelaide Airport to an international standard was 'crazy'. This is despite her own

admission in the same article that, each time an international flight has to funnel through Sydney and Melbourne, valuable South Australian tourists are lost. An efficient and capable airport infrastructure is vital to the future development of South Australia's tourism industry, a growth upon which thousands of small businesses and employees depend.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): As the honourable member would know, I am entirely in support of the Premier's statement on this matter.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Government Enterprises makes it extremely difficult for me to get an eye line on the member for Enfield, who seeks the call. I now call him.

INSURANCE, PUBLIC LIABILITY

Mr RAU (Enfield): Is the Treasurer aware of comments widely reported in today's media by the federal Minister for Small Business and Tourism, Mr Joe Hockey, to the effect that the state governments should consider setting up their own—

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the member that he bring that question along with him and let us have a chat about it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! In the meantime, if the member insists on proceeding, the question will be ruled out of order.

Mr RAU: I will have another go. Mr Hockey's comments were to the effect that state governments should consider setting up their own government insurance offices—

The SPEAKER: I think the member would do well to come and have a chat with me. The member for Davenport.

TEACHERS' SALARIES

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): If the Treasurer's claim that '\$205 million is a grossly inadequate provision for teachers' wages' was accurate, why has the government, through the Minister for Industrial Relations, told teachers that the government's offer of \$205 million was the government's best offer? On 2 May this year the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Wright, indicated during a number of media interviews that the government's wages offer to teachers had a total cost of \$205 million, that the government was in a tight budgetary situation and the government had put 'its best offer' on the table. On 14 May the Treasurer, in his ministerial statement to this house, finally admitted there had been a provision of \$205 million in the budget which he then claimed was grossly inadequate.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I am not exactly familiar with the comments of my colleague, but I will say this: what the member failed to tell us on the day that he made that accusation was that the day before I acknowledged that the then treasurer had indeed made a contingency for the teachers' wage increase, but it was not enough. I assume that the \$205 million referred to by my colleague is for the full-year effect—I am not certain of the exact figures. The reality is that the three-year effect of the teachers' wage increase was inadequate to the tune of \$130 million. You did not provision \$130 million additional to the \$205 million. What you have to do is depend on the year in which you are assessing this. The important point is this: over the three-year period for which provision should have been made the former treasurer, Rob Lucas, provided \$205 million. Unfortunately, I am

advised that it was \$130 million less, approximately, than what was required. I am talking about the figure over a three-year period.

INSURANCE, PUBLIC LIABILITY

Mr RAU (Enfield): Is the Treasurer aware of comments by the Federal Minister for Small Business and Tourism, Mr Joe Hockey, that state governments should consider setting up their own government insurance offices to provide public liability insurance and, if so, does he agree with him?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I was surprised when I was made aware of certain comments made publicly in recent days. Mr Joe Hockey, who is, I think, the former assistant federal treasurer or minister for financial services, has since been replaced by Senator Coonan. I have told the house previously that state ministers are meeting on Thursday in Melbourne, at the request of Senator Coonan, to consider a series of options to deal with the public liability issue confronting Australia. Mr Hockey in today's press was saying that the state governments are playing snakes and ladders with the public interest. Mr Hockey said that none of their reform plans would stop the crisis from escalating. These are not just our reform plans that are being considered: these are reform plans that the federal government wants us to consider, about which the Liberal government's own federal minister is making these remarkable comments.

Let us bear in mind what happened here yesterday, when, in response to a question from the member for Davenport, I asked a question. I asked the member, in response to his question, what was the Liberal Party's solution to the liability crisis. What was its solution? Was it the state government taking back the risk? Was the state government taking on liability, effectively starting up insurance companies again? Was that the answer? There was deathly silence across the chamber. The member for Davenport would not give us an answer: now we know why. It is because this must be the policy of the Liberal Party here in South Australia.

Today in a couple of press reports their federal colleague Joe Hockey has called on the states to re-enter the insurance market in the short term. This is the Liberal government in Canberra. He has said:

I'm calling on the state governments to examine whether they should set up their government insurance offices again. . .

In the *Australian*, Mr Hockey said that state governments had to return to offering insurance cover themselves, as they used to in the government owned insurance companies. There we go. The solution for the Liberal Party is: 'Let's go back to the State Government Insurance Corporation.' If that is your solution and if you want governments to take on risk, that is fine, but I can assure you that—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: How does he feel about nationalising the banks?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Maybe they want to buy back the banks. I can say this: we are not about to start up an insurance company to cover public liability insurance. If members of the Liberal Party want us to start getting back into insurance they clearly have not learnt the lessons from the past.

SERVICE SA

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): Will the Minister for Administrative Services provide the house with an update on the role and implementation of Service SA?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Administrative Services): I thank the honourable member for his question and appreciate the opportunity to inform the house about this important project. As members would be aware, the Service SA initiative has been developed in response to a community need to have better access to government services. It is also consistent with our government's commitment to openness and accountability.

The project commenced in May 2001 as an initiative of the previous government, and the former minister, the member for Newland, should be acknowledged for the role that she played in that. It provides a gateway to whole of government information and services through an integrated network, including customer service centres, rural agents, a customer contact centre and the web site.

I was pleased to be invited to launch the web site for the Service SA initiative yesterday. The web site is a key aspect of the initiative and provides an electronic gateway to the whole of the services provided by the site. Those government services are collected in a comprehensive way and link state, local government and other community services.

Through the support of government agencies, the database content has been populated with agency information that provides a unique, whole of government approach. The site currently offers 1 400 services where people can pay bills, fines and taxes; apply for permits and licences; and find information and goods on line. The web site has a distinct and unique feature: it contains life events capability. That means you can plug in something like learning to drive, having a baby or shifting house, and it will provide a range of services that call up both commercial web sites and other government and community information web sites.

Another key feature is that it is a South Australian initiative and that it is being exported to other states that are interested in the technology. One particularly useful service is updating one's address so that you do not receive unpleasant reminders in the mail that you have forgotten to notify government agencies that you have moved to somewhere else. That is a particularly useful innovation, and I invite all members to take advantage of it.

For those who are not literate in the use of information technology, it also provides those who support those people, such as people in electorate offices, with the capacity to quickly help people who are in need of access to government services. It is a wonderful initiative. It was an initiative of the previous government, but we are happy to join in with and promote it, because it is a good measure.

EDUCATION BUDGET

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Is the Treasurer now arguing that the cost of the teachers' wage case plus other cost pressures in education now total \$505 million? On 14 March, when the Treasurer first made his claim about the supposed black hole, he released budget updates which claimed in table 1 that there were some \$300 million of cost pressures, including teachers' wages, in the education portfolio column. However, in his ministerial statement on 14 May the Treasurer admitted there was already provision of \$205 million in the forward estimates for the teachers' wage case.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I will get a reconciliation of those figures and provide it to the member as soon as possible.

AUTOPSIES

Mr SNELLING (Playford): Following public concerns about the retention of tissues and organs after some autopsies that occurred in the past, can the Minister for Health provide the house with information on the introduction of a code of ethical autopsy practice?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): Before answering the question, I acknowledge the work by the former Minister for Human Services on this matter. This has been a matter of great community concern following an extremely distressing time for some families affected by autopsy practice. On 2 May 2002 I announced the release of a national autopsy code of ethics aimed at informing families and the community of guidelines for autopsy practice. The code, endorsed by Australian health ministers, will ensure that national best practice guidelines are in place to inform bereaved families of every aspect of coronial and non-coronial autopsies. The code recognises that autopsy practice must be based on honest and open communication between health professionals and bereaved families.

After this matter was raised, the tissue retention hotline service received over 2 000 telephone calls, with over 1 400 people registering to obtain information concerning deceased relatives. I can also advise the house that a Service of Healing is planned for Sunday 14 July 2002 at which those affected by past autopsy practice can collectively recognise their pain and loss of loved ones. I hope that this service will help people affected by past practices to find comfort regarding this issue.

TEACHERS' SALARIES

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Does the Treasurer now admit that some \$656 million is available in the forward estimates to meet the expected costs of the teachers' wage case and other budget costs and pressures? On 14 March, when the Treasurer first made his claim about the supposed black hole, he released a memorandum from the Under Treasurer dated 13 March. On page 6 of that memorandum is a table showing \$451 million in the headroom and the capital contingency budget line which has not been allocated to any specific expenditure and which is available to meet cost pressures in future budgets.

An honourable member: How much?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Some \$451 million.

Mr Meier interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: It is \$451 million, for the information of the member for Goyder. However, the Treasurer, in his ministerial statement on 14 May, admitted that there is also already a provision of some \$205 million in the forward estimates for teachers' wage cases. These two figures total \$656 million that is available to the Treasurer.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I am happy to answer that question in detail, and I will provide a response to the member. But I will say this: yesterday I distributed to members in both houses some important documents, one of which was the financial briefing waiting for whoever was treasurer after the election. It was the document prepared, prior to the caretaker period, for the incoming government. The document—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Would you like to listen to the answer? The document waiting for whoever was treasurer showed the phoney \$2 million surplus that Mr Lucas wanted

us to believe was the true position during the election campaign. That document showed that minister Lucas failed to include cost pressures totalling many millions of dollars. It is in the document circulated to all members yesterday. Read the document: it shows that hundreds of millions of dollars of cost pressures were not included which revealed a \$26 million budget deficit forecast for this financial year, from memory, and at least a \$77 million deficit next year, rising to \$150 million. That was the briefing for whoever was treasurer—not only for me but also for Rob Lucas if he had become treasurer after the election. That is what we released on 14 March.

With respect to this issue of head room, the former minister throws up all these sorts of numbers. What he fails to do is also to read in documentation (that I have released) that the advice from the former treasurer to me on coming to office, now on the public record, is that the head room could not and should not be used for the cost pressures that the honourable member's government failed to include. That head room should not be used for that purpose. It is contingency head room for unexpected pressures on budgets into the future.

Advice provided to me, which I have released publicly, is that the head room (which was identified and provided by the former government) should not have been used for those cost pressures. That was the advice provided to the government; that is the advice we have taken. The bottom line is this: the former government produced a phoney mid-year budget review during the election campaign. Members opposite are blown out of the water—independent Treasury advice proves that. The former government has left this state with a massive budget deficit with which we are dealing and, in the July budget, we will show exactly how we have been able to deal with the budget mess left by the honourable member's government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Giles.

Mr MEIER: I rise on a point of order, sir.

The SPEAKER: The member for Goyder.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The call goes to the member for Goyder. The member for Schubert needs to remember that he does not represent Goyder.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I apologise to the member for Schubert: it is some other raucous individual near him. The member for Goyder.

Mr MEIER: Mr Speaker, the point of order is that I believe that the Treasurer has just misled the house in indicating that there has been a significant budget deficit, because it has been pointed out that that is wrong—

The SPEAKER: It is not appropriate—

Mr MEIER:—and the Treasurer was wrong a couple of weeks ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. If the member for—

The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will come to order. We have a point of order taken about whether a member of the house—in this case a minister—has misled the house. That is not an orderly inquiry. If the member for Goyder, or any other honourable member, believes that a minister or another member has misled the house, the only manner in which that can be dealt with is by substantive motion. I suggest to the member for Goyder that he consult

standing orders and determine the manner and form in which he might wish to put a substantive motion before the house.

Mr MEIER: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will look at the *Hansard* very carefully—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles.

CLARE VALLEY WATER SUPPLY

Ms BREUER (Giles): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises advise the house about the progress of a plan to deliver a water supply to the Clare Valley for irrigation and household use? In August last year, I understand that the former premier announced in principle approval for a scheme for the provision of water for irrigation and township purposes to the Clare Valley region. We were told that the implementation of the proposal would be subject to a satisfactory commitment by irrigators to the purchase of the peak water capacity to be made available under the scheme. I believe that the previous government set this commitment at 75 per cent of the peak water capacity.

The SPEAKER: Order! That represents, can I say to the member for Giles, a statement of opinion or belief, and that is highly disorderly. The explanation for questions is facilitated in standing orders so that all members can understand the cause of the inquiry. It does not provide the opportunity for members to comment and express opinion or belief. In any case, the minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises): I thank the member for Giles for the question, which is, of course, one of great interest to the member for Schubert, one of great importance to one of South Australia's most economically significant regional areas and, therefore, important to this government and to the parliament. The SA Water Clare Valley Water Supply Scheme will invest approximately \$26 million in the delivery of water to the Clare Valley and Mintaro areas via a new pipeline to be constructed from the Morgan to Whyalla pipeline. The water supply will be utilised primarily by grape growers and winemakers in the region and will assist the state to build on our strengths in a key industry, and I will say that both the Attorney-General and I have great reverence for people who turn water into wine.

I am pleased to advise the house that at the end of March this year 85 per cent of the peak water for irrigation had been committed to by approximately 90 growers and wine companies. This water supply scheme will bring enormous benefits to the economic and social development of the Clare Valley region. Not only will it provide a much-needed water supply to the wine industry but it will also bring for the first time a filtered water supply to the towns of Watervale, Penwortham, Mintaro, Sevenhill and Leasingham.

Mr Venning: Watervale? It has no water.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I said Watervale. I take this opportunity to congratulate the previous government on this initiative, which is particularly important to the member for Schubert's electorate. I look forward to reporting on developments in this project in the coming months.

REGIONAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier advise the house why, despite a commitment to regional South Australia during the election, on advice to this house we now learn that regional impact statements have not

been prepared for certain vital regional decisions made recently, and that there are no specific guidelines for their preparation? Yesterday in this house and in another place we were informed that regional impact statements had not been considered during certain policy-making decisions. Yesterday in the other place the Minister for Regional Affairs stated, 'I believe that the policy applies only to decisions that are made.' The Hon. Terry Roberts also informed us, 'There is no impact statement on issues that are being considered.' He went on to say, 'We would be tying up a lot of time with government assessments.'

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I am absolutely delighted to answer this question because I would have thought—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: One can only get nervous when the member for Goyder becomes so agitated. It is like being gored by a toothless rabbit. I am pleased to answer this question. If the Leader of the Opposition noticed, in the last few days we have announced \$10 million for a rail freight line for the South-East of the state, I have announced and reannounced our commitment to SAMAG in his own electorate, and today the Minister for Government Enterprises has announced an ongoing commitment for water reticulation in places in the leader's electorate that he should know such as Penwortham and Sevenhill—the area down in the Clare Valley. We have announced a series of measures relating to improvements in regional South Australia.

I did announce before the election a process to ensure a much better way of dealing with the regions than the former government did because, quite frankly, the reason that you are so on the nose in the regions—and we certainly picked that up—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Hang on. They don't believe it. Look at the Independents! You lost the safest seats in the world, in some cases, to Independents in the previous election. What happened was that people in regional South Australia saw that the Liberal Party took them for granted, that the Liberal Party believed that it had their votes in the pocket and could ignore the wishes of regional and rural South Australians, which is why we are the government for all South Australians, including the regions, and which is why we have had our first community cabinet meetings in Taillem Bend and Mount Gambier; and then last weekend we went down to Mount Gambier and Penola.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson is getting overexcited.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The simple truth is that, instead of celebrating the fact that this new government is committed to the regions, all we are getting is the whingeing, whining, carping opposition.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): Will the Minister for the Southern Suburbs outline the community's response to the bold new ministry for the southern suburbs?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for the Southern Suburbs): That is a hard act to follow. I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to answer this important question from the member for Mitchell. The then opposition—now government—went to the last election with a comprehensive plan for the southern suburbs, and the centre of that plan was

the announcement by the Premier—then Leader of the Opposition—at the previous election that there would be a minister for the southern suburbs to coordinate and bring together strategic thinking for the southern suburbs.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Absolutely. No, it doesn't at all. I can happily answer that question for the member. Central to our plan for the southern suburbs were three things: first, to help develop the region economically with new industry development programs; secondly, enhance education services; and, thirdly, to address targeted social needs.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson is again out of order.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bright is in the same basket.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: We all know about the basket the member for Bright is in, sir! The south is the fastest growing part of our state and, for the benefit of the member for Bright, I say to him that the description of the south in terms of the portfolio is that the council area is covered by Onkaparinga and Marion: that is what I understand, and that is what we have defined.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to send the member for Bright for another picnic.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Perhaps it is my fault, sir, for attempting to answer the member's questions as he went by. In terms of the southern suburbs, the definition under which I am operating covers the local government areas of Onkaparinga and Marion. The plan of the ministry is to work with these regions, council areas, government, business and the community to develop appropriate planning and policies, and implement those policies in the southern area. I am pleased by the response I have already received in the community. The local councils are very enthusiastic about it, as are community groups. The member for Mawson is nodding his head, and I know that he is enthusiastic about it, too. He was hoping, I think, to become the shadow minister for the southern suburbs, but sadly he did not get that honour bestowed upon him. However, I am sure that he and I will be able to work well together, as we have in the past, for good outcomes in the southern suburbs.

I wanted to assure the house that this is not about big 'P' politics. We are not attempting to turn the south into some sort of Labor stronghold (we are politically but not through this ministry): we will work with the Liberal members in good faith in the southern suburbs as we have in the past. I know that the member for Mawson is enthusiastic about this initiative—unlike the member for Newland, who has written a rather nasty letter to the Premier doubting the motives of the government in establishing this ministry. I assure the member that the purpose of it is not to create a massive whiteboard of resources for Labor-held electorates in the southern suburbs. We will be attempting to apply the appropriate level of resources in a smart way to get good outcomes educationally, socially and environmentally, as well as economically, in the southern suburbs.

COMMUNITY RECREATION AND SPORT FACILITIES FUNDING SCHEME

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): Will the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing guarantee that there will be no

cuts to the Community Recreation and Sport Facilities Funding Scheme? The previous Liberal government had committed an additional \$17 million to this program over three years, making it a \$22 million program. In regional electorates this funding has assisted local and community-based organisations in developing and improving the standard of recreation and sport facilities available. Since 1997 electorates such as, for example, Giles and Hammond have received funding totalling \$844 474 and \$186 672 respectively. We have been contacted by sport and recreation groups who are concerned that this funding will now be cut.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): We are well aware of the \$17 million that the former minister, in a pork barrelling exercise, threw into this fund in the dying days—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Davenport has a point of order.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Sir, the minister is imputing improper motives to a member of the parliament, and I ask him to withdraw. I ask you to rule accordingly, sir.

The SPEAKER: I do not share the assessment of the member for Davenport. It is probably provocative to people who feel sorry for pigs, but it should certainly not be to any of us. The minister.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Notwithstanding that, the new shadow minister, the member for Newland, has been in this place long enough to know that now is not the time for us as ministers to comment on budget matters. We will wait for the Treasurer to announce our budget on 11 July, when all details about all programs, whether they be in the recreation and sport area or any other portfolio area, will be revealed.

BIOSCIENCE INDUSTRY

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Will the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education inform the house of programs within TAFE to take advantage of the development of South Australia's bioscience industry to give young South Australians the opportunity to become involved in the industry?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I thank the member for Torrens for this question; she clearly understands the linkage between economic development and skills availability. As members would know, with the acceleration of the development of South Australia's bioscience industry, there is an emerging need for laboratory technicians with relevant skills. To support the state's objective to develop a world class biotech industry in South Australia, it is essential to tap into the state's excellence in vocational education and training to strengthen and develop the new skills that are needed for these emerging industries.

Torrens Valley TAFE has the potential to develop a quality reputation to support training in all the biotech and medical technology fields not only nationally but also, potentially, internationally. Through links with research organisations, CRCs and biotech companies, Torrens Valley TAFE has developed, supported and delivered training in biotech to provide pathways for students in areas of biotechnology commercialisation, research and training.

The establishment of an industry advisory group for biotechnology, with representation from a broad sector of research organisations, universities, CRCs and industry, ensures that the training offered by Torrens Valley TAFE is relevant and responsive to the emerging needs in biotechnology. The Veterinary Applied Science Centre (VASC) at Torrens Valley has made major capital investments into vital research and equipment and is collaborating with researchers so that students can receive world class, up-to-date and relevant education.

In the 2002 year, Torrens Valley Institute is delivering 37 000 hours of delivery and competencies directly related to the biotechnology industries. Enrolments include school leavers, mature age students wishing to be involved in this expanding area, university graduates who lack skills, existing lab technicians and even science teachers in schools who wish to upskill in this area.

This training and the collaborative partnerships between Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE and research organisations will lift the scientific status of TAFE. They can tap into an unmet demand for upskilling of staff in Australia and overseas and, clearly, are at the forefront of biotechnology innovation, development and employment in this state.

SOUTHERN EXPRESSWAY

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for Transport advise the house whether the government will increase the maximum speed limit on the Southern Expressway from 100km/h to 110km/h? During the election campaign, the then Premier Rob Kerin announced that the maximum speed limit on the Southern Expressway would be increased to 110km/h. Transport SA confirmed that on all measures including, importantly, road safety, quality of infrastructure, amenity, utilisation and related councils, the roadway was suitable and warranted the higher speed. The higher limit would improve travel times to and from the southern metropolitan area, the Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, and would enhance the benefits that the construction of stage 1 and stage 2 of the Southern Expressway have already delivered in the past four years.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport): To the best of my knowledge, I have not received any advice from Transport SA, but I will check that in fairness to the question. It is not something that has been brought to my attention and is not something on which the incoming government went to the previous election. If we were to move in that direction, I would have to be convinced of the merits of the argument. As I say, as far as I know, I have not received any advice, but I will be happy to follow that up and come back to the honourable member with more information.

HOUSING TRUST ACCOMMODATION

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): Will the Minister for Housing advise the house what needs to be done to arrest the ongoing decline in trust housing over the next two decades, which was foreshadowed in the recently tabled South Australian Housing Trust Triennial Review 1997-98 to 1999-2000? At a recent meeting I had with community service workers and volunteers from the Morphett Vale Baptist Church, they urged me to continue pressing for more public housing, as they see this as the most urgent social need in our area.

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Housing): I know the honourable member's passion and dedication to the area of housing and I am very pleased to receive such a question. As we all probably remember, the triennial review was tabled on 5 March, a memorable day, particularly for the Premier and Treasurer but certainly the next day was a very memorable day for the rest of us here, being given the honour and responsibility of being ministers. The triennial review contains three financial models, which hypothesise housing stock numbers and future outcomes for the trust, based on a varying number of assumptions.

Each of the models forecasts a continuing decline in Housing Trust stock numbers from a holding of 51 489 in 2000-01 down to 29 914 in 2020-21. At these levels of public housing it will be difficult to see how the trust could meet the housing need for low income and special need households, particularly in areas of high demand in metropolitan and country regions. The main issue driving the decline in public housing numbers is the continuing decline in the commitment to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement by successive governments over the past decade.

The triennial review estimates that CSHA funds to South Australia have declined by approximately \$8 million per year in real terms since 1990-91. Over the past decade, this amounts to an \$80 million reduction in funding for social housing. Over the same period and in accordance with government policy the trust has increasingly targeted houses to those in need, with the proportion of tenants paying a reduced rent, increasing from 70.5 per cent in 1990 to over 84 per cent in 2001. The triennial review indicates that an increase of 1 per cent in the number of reduced rent payers equates to a loss of \$1.5 million per annum in rental income to the trust. These factors, along with an ageing asset base (and probably an ageing population), which requires considerable ongoing maintenance expenditure, has restricted the trust's ability to acquire new housing stock at the same rate as it is disposing of older stock in poor condition or stock it sells to sitting tenants.

The renegotiation of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for the period from July 2003 onwards provides South Australia with an opportunity to join with other state and territory governments in negotiating an improved outcome from the commonwealth, with the aim of ensuring that housing needs are met and that communities in both city and country areas remain viable and sustainable in the longer term. Maintenance of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement funding in line with the consumer price index, the continuation of GST compensation, a recognition of the costs of the ageing asset base and a recognition of the costs of managing a more complex customer base are some of the elements that will be considered in the renegotiation of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement over the coming months. The triennial review and its modelling will also inform the state housing plan being developed by the South

Australian government and many other people from the building and construction industry, and this will provide South Australia with a long-term housing policy blueprint to ensure that the housing needs of all South Australians are met in the future.

MURRAY RIVER FISHERY

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I table a ministerial statement made by my colleague the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in another place on the Murray River fishery.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

GOLDEN GROVE ESTATE

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): I want to raise a matter of concern on behalf of the residents of a specific area in Golden Grove. Members would know that Golden Grove Estate is not within the boundaries of my electorate of Newland. However, when the residents had a genuine grievance and they could not get their elected member to support them, and they believed that they had been ignored by this current government, they took the action of bringing their grievance to me, to represent those concerns in this house.

Ms RANKINE: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In June of 1993—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms RANKINE: I rise on a point of order, sir. I take umbrage. The member for Newland is directly impugning my—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Which standing order?

Ms RANKINE: Yes, I can't remember.

The SPEAKER: By what remark—

Ms RANKINE: Reflecting improperly on me as the member for Wright and in my representation of my electorate, which this house knows I do most ferociously.

The SPEAKER: To what words specifically does the member for Wright object?

Ms RANKINE: The member for Newland said I was not representing my electorate.

An honourable member: She did not.

Ms RANKINE: Well, I cannot quote her word for word, but that was certainly what she impugned.

Members interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: Yes I do. It is what the member impugned.

The SPEAKER: I will pay close attention to what the member for Newland is saying. I did not get the impression that she was reflecting unduly on the competence of the member for Wright.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Thank you, sir. In June 1993 hundreds of people banded together to exclude Cobbler Creek Recreation Park, which was established in 1990, from a proposal that was put forth by the Labor government of the day which intended to sell part of the recreation park for residential development. The people won. Now in 2002 Delfin Lend Lease proposes to develop the remaining vestiges of open space. A portion of the new development will encroach on the eastern end of the Cobbler Creek reserve, known by the developers as Spring Hill development. Cobbler Creek itself will become the boundary for the new allotments, which will be positioned on the northern hillside, which banks directly down to the creek adjacent to—

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wright will have an opportunity to contribute in due course if that is her wish. The member for Newland has the call.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:—the old citrus orchard. This eastern part of the development rightly deserves to be protected for all time as a recreational reserve. Hundreds of eucalypts grow prolifically on this area, with some 83 trees which would meet the criteria for significant trees. Hundreds of other eucalypts would be removed if this development went ahead—a good reason for people in this area to be very anxious about the inaction by anyone with any authority to step in and at the very least give a genuine, unbiased assessment of the current situation.

I go back to 1994, when I received a copy of a letter which was sent to a resident of Golden Grove from Golden Grove Development and signed by Tim Sandercock, Manager. It states:

In response to your letter of 2 May 1994 regarding Cobbler Creek Reserve, I wish to advise that the Golden Grove development has no intention of removing eucalyptus trees from the area designated as the Cobbler Creek Reserve, and will ensure that the area is continued to be developed and promoted as the attractive area it currently is.

That causes confusion with the residents of Golden Grove, because they have in fact been told that this will happen and the trees will be removed. In fact, the confusion continues in an article which appeared in the Messenger press of 15 May and which states:

The state government says it has halted a section of the development opposite Citronelle Place so that an environmental study can be carried out. But Delfin management says this is simply not true. Work has not been halted and the study is part of the normal development application process.

Richard Osborne, Delfin Operations Manager, went on to say he was not aware that the development had been put on hold, saying:

There's no works going on at the site at the moment (but) it's drawing a very long bow [to say they've been halted]. . .

He went on to say:

[Mr Hill] hasn't stopped the development.

The confusion continues and, certainly with the differing opinions that the residents of that area are being given, is it any wonder that they are now most anxious and becoming angrier by the minute? In 1994, Delfin stated that no trees would be removed. Delfin is not consulting with the people in the area. The state government through the minister for the environment has not answered the people—media statements aside. The member for Wright refuses to become involved and only rushed into this house yesterday pleading to get a question put during question time of the environment minister because she was told that I would be raising this matter in the house. That can be discounted as any form of serious involvement.

The member for Wright was asked by the Tea Tree Gully City Council in her role as parliamentary secretary to hand deliver to the Premier as a matter of urgency the council's submission to protect the reserve. What did the member do? Did she rush to the Premier in urgency? No, she put a stamp on the letter three days later and sent it. Tea Tree Gully City Council could have spent its own 45¢ and sent the letter itself, except that it believed that, being a parliamentary secretary, the member for Wright might have greater access to the Premier. Unfortunately, that did not seem to happen.

Time expired.

Ms RANKINE (Wright): I have to say that I am absolutely stunned by the contribution of the former minister for the environment. This is the minister whose government allowed a telephone tower to be erected in the Cobbler Creek

Recreation Park. Well might she run out of the chamber after that; I would run out as well if I were her. I would be red faced, and I would turn tail and run. Her government allowed a telephone tower to be erected in the Cobbler Creek Recreation Park, and the minister at the time misled the house and had to come in here and make corrections.

Under the control of that minister, Vodaphone used inappropriate herbicides in the recreation park that the people of Salisbury fought for 20 years to have established, killing very special native Mallee trees in that area. During my investigation into that the minister threatened to prosecute me for taking a dead twig out of the park to prove that her advice to this house that it was bugs killing the trees was wrong. She has absolutely no environmental credibility in this place or anywhere else.

Let me address the issue. She has also tried to confuse the development that is happening at Spring Hill, on which I have been working quite diligently with my constituents, with the Cobbler Creek Recreation Park. There is a corridor of the creek through to the recreation park, but this development in no way abuts the Cobbler Creek Recreation Park. The Tea Tree Gully City Council has become a born-again protector of the people of Golden Grove. We cannot get it to supply facilities that were supposed to be developed more than 10 years ago. When it does develop anything it has to sell off half the land beforehand. However, all of a sudden it has developed this new awareness of Golden Grove and this new concern over a tiny pocket of development comprising about 15 allotments. I absolutely understand the concern of the residents up there about this development. It is a picturesque area that will be developed, and I have taken quite some action to assist these residents, and I will detail that in a moment.

Let me address the matter of the Tea Tree Gully City Council for the moment. That council passed a motion that it would invite the Premier out to look at the area to be developed. It did not express its objection to the development; in fact, it passed the development in 1999. I understand that Delfin has lodged new plans that take into account the significant tree legislation. My understanding is that they did not have to do that but did so in order to comply with that legislation. They could have gone ahead with the plans which the Tea Tree Gully City Council passed in 1999 and which would have seen the removal of a large number of significant trees.

The Tea Tree Gully council also resolved to write to the Premier through the local member. The next day I received a call from the Mayor, and let me say that it was the first time in 4½ years that the Mayor of Tea Tree Gully had ever bothered to contact me. She advised that they wanted to write to the Premier through me and that she would be bringing the letter to my office, and she asked me to hand deliver it to the Premier. I advised the Mayor during the conversation that I would not be seeing the Premier personally for some considerable time but that I was happy for the council to write through me, and I would send the letter off expeditiously to the Premier.

When the Mayor arrived at my office the council did not write through me at all: it gave me a letter addressed to the Premier signed and sealed in an envelope. It was not up to me to open that letter. That is not my job; I would say that that would be interfering with the mail. The Tea Tree Gully City Council could not even get that right. If it was going to write to the Premier through me, one would think that I would have had the decency of a letter, not just a letter in an envelope

delivered to my counter which I was asked deliver to the Premier. I explained to the Mayor that I would not be seeing—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Ms RANKINE: I am saying that the council did not comply with its own motion and the motion did not object to the development; and, as far as I know, it has still lodged no formal objection to the development. Now we have seen the member for Newland as a born-again minister for Aboriginal affairs and a born-again environmentalist. We have heard more from her on these issues than we ever heard when she was the minister responsible for those areas.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms Rankine: She's a disgrace.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Stuart.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, sir. On resuming her seat the member for Wright yelled out twice, 'She's a disgrace' in relation to the member for Newland. I ask that she retract those statements.

The SPEAKER: I am sorry; I did not hear that. It was out of order in any case.

PLAYFORD POWER STATION

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): On Friday 17 May I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the commencement of the upgrading of the Playford Power Station by NRG Flinders at a cost of up to \$180 million. The project will create employment in Port Augusta and Leigh Creek and extend the life of the coal fired power station at least 20 years beyond its planned closure in 2004, delivering an assured and reliable supply of power to consumers as well as significant environmental improvements. Playford, which was the main power station that drove the transformation of this state from its rural beginnings to significant industrial status, will provide up to 260 megawatts of power as an intermediate supplier to the national electricity market.

The important feature of this project is that the money invested will not be raised or guaranteed by the taxpayers of South Australia. NRG Flinders is a very good corporate citizen. Even though it has been criticised by the Treasurer and others, it is making a significant investment in the future of South Australia, in particular Port Augusta, Spencer Gulf and the northern parts of the state at Leigh Creek. This company, Mr Speaker (as you are probably aware), is a significant player on the international scene. It is involved with the Loy Yang power station in Victoria (a coal fired plant), the Collinsville and Gladstone power stations in Queensland, and with a number of other projects in Australia. It is also involved with a number of power stations around the world and in what was formerly eastern Europe, specialising in upgrading old power stations.

Mr Koutsantonis: Isn't it eastern Europe any more?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I said what was eastern Europe—in Hungary and those parts. The company has a fine record of upgrading and refurbishing redundant power stations. The important feature is that South Australia will benefit from the privatisation of its power generation assets because up to \$180 million will be invested in the long-term interests of the Spencer Gulf. I would be very happy to take the member for West Torrens to the power station at Port Augusta so that he could see at first hand the outstanding job everyone associated with it—management, employees and

others—has done over the past few years, operating at world's best practice. After the unveiling of the plaque, an interesting comment was made regarding the cost of electricity in Australia, and my understanding is that we have the second lowest cost of electricity for commercial users in the world. I am not sure whether Sweden or Norway is the cheapest, involving hydro-electricity, but ours is the second cheapest electricity for commercial use in the world. That is very important for ensuring that our industry and commerce are competitive on an international basis, because we have to export to survive and succeed and to improve our standard of living.

The other important aspect of this project is the decision of the government to give users control of and responsibility for upgrading the railway line, which has been significant in saving the power station at Port Augusta and also in ensuring that costs are competitive. The resultant increase in the work force in Leigh Creek is an excellent thing—we need to create more employment in that part of the state—and, of course, the life of the mine is assured for a number of years in the future. This is the sort of project which is good for the long-term development of South Australia, and I think NRG Flinders should be commended.

Time expired.

DRUGS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): Last night I attended a drug summit meeting in the electorate of Mitchell at the Marion Cultural Centre. What a fine building that is—on the inside, at least. The meeting was part of a process being undertaken by this government to grapple with the drugs issue in South Australia. After a series of regional meetings such as the one I attended last night, the summit promised by our Premier Mike Rann will be held, at which numerous experts, health professionals and community representatives will thrash out where we go from here.

In relation to the meeting last night, I report to the house that the meeting was competently chaired by officers from the Sturt Police Station. There were more than 50 people present. Some of those included professionals but the vast majority were members of the community. I record my thanks to those who attended, because it was a valuable community exercise: it was an opportunity for a frank exchange of views. In particular, I was impressed by and grateful for the contributions made by some people on a very personal level. It was very impressive to hear a young woman tell of her drug addiction, her spiral downwards into the use of amphetamines and her eventual surmounting of that problem. It was a privilege to hear the anguish and frustration expressed by parents of children addicted to drugs. It was also impressive to see the courage of those people who regularly use illicit drugs in stating their position quite openly in front of some senior police officers. So, in a range of ways, there was an impressive contribution from members of my local community.

Overall, I would say that the issues expressed represent an even balance of views in the community. Approximately half of the people who spoke were in favour of a harsh crackdown and greater punishment for all forms of drug use—at least in terms of drugs which are currently illicit—and about half of the speakers were in favour of a legalised, regulated, health focused, legislative framework for drug use, particularly in respect of some currently illicit drugs. It was disappointing that a number of people on either side of the debate were

aggressively intolerant of the views expressed by the other half.

I would hope for a genuine attempt, through this drug summit process, to grapple with the central problem as I see it, which is that of addiction. It does not matter whether the addiction is to heroin, alcohol, nicotine or gambling—there is a problem of addiction in our society, as there is in every society around the world to a greater or lesser degree. The issues, as far as I am concerned, are the reduction in the number of people addicted in different ways to these substances and activities and the reduction of harm that comes from deploying them. Coupled with that is the central issue of building self-esteem and resilience in people, especially young people, those under 18 years of age. That is what it is really about. I was concerned by the framing of some questions at the meeting last night which suggested that those goals will not be met. Because the focus is on drugs which are currently illicit, the process seems to ignore the tragic involvement of so many people with alcohol and tobacco. There were also leading questions, such as, ‘How do we make it harder for drug dealers in South Australia?’ When someone called out ‘Legalisation’ as an answer, that person was laughed out of the room.

Time expired.

BAROSSA VALLEY HEALTH CARE

Mr VENNING (Schubert): As the member for Schubert, the provision of high standard health services for the residents of the Barossa Valley certainly is a major priority for me. A closure of the existing Tanunda and Angaston hospitals would allow for a new subregional hospital facility to be developed at Nuriootpa, with state government funding of between \$12 million and \$14 million which was set aside from the last budget. The previous Liberal government gave a strong commitment to build a new hospital in the Barossa. A new Barossa health unit was expected to be completed by 2005-06, with building to commence in 2003-04.

There is concern that a new facility in the Barossa region is perceived as not being a major priority of the current government, and yet another review by the new government is stalling the process. The commitment was made by the previous government. A new Barossa health unit will offer a higher level of procedures. We need only the one acute facility for the region, and benefits will, of course, involve economies of scale. Expanded services will also enable a comprehensive level of care to be provided for the community. Such a facility will also offer a full hospital facility, community health facility, health agencies and the relocation of the ambulance service to provide acute, allied and community services. The old and existing Angaston Hospital was not purpose-built and is, as we all know, in a very advanced state of disrepair.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: What was it?

Mr VENNING: It was an old home which has had many additions over the years. Nothing has been done to it for five years. No repairs have been carried out because we all knew that a new facility was on its way. Nothing has been spent on it. If we delay this project any further, we will have a crisis on our hands. A revamping of the purpose-built and well-maintained Tanunda Hospital possibly lends itself to being used as an aged care and dementia facility for the Barossa region in the future. The new Barossa Hospital will become a focal point for health in the Barossa region and a central point for community care initiatives.

Taking into account the Barossa’s regional economic development, and in the light of the economic growth of the region and the millions of dollars it generates for the South Australian economy, such a facility is overdue and well and truly warranted by the state Treasury. The Barossa Valley, as you know, sir, is a region with state, national and international exposure, and visitors not only need but also expect upgraded facilities when they come to our region and have need of a hospital. The people who provide health care in these aged and substantial facilities deserve our highest commendation. The quality of care given is of the highest level.

Barossa Area Health Services has just been accredited for the third time, and we know what standard is involved in that respect. I hope that the minister will visit us in a few weeks and present that accreditation. On the two previous occasions, the Hon. Dean Brown visited the facility.

I also commend the Barossa community because, to its credit, it has agreed to forgo two health facilities for one. That is some feat when one knows of the parochial nature of the Barossa. I also pay tribute to the Barossa Health Services Chairman, Mr Mike Russell, and to the CEO, Mr John Dennis. Our people now expectantly await a new hospital. New facilities are of the highest priority.

If this project does not proceed immediately, a huge amount of money will have to be spent on major refurbishment. Repairs are certainly needed urgently. Repairs have not been carried out for some time because, as I said, the new facility was on its way. This government has been in office nearly four months. Every time I ask a question about an important project such as this I am told, ‘It is under review; you had better wait for the budget.’ Well, if this indecision continues, our state will slow and eventually stop. I want to hear the minister say, ‘We will honour the previous government’s commitment to a new hospital in the Barossa.’

POSTCODE DISCRIMINATION

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I would like to talk about an issue that impacts on my electorate, that is, postcode discrimination. It is a new form of discrimination but, because three of the major suburbs in my electorate, that is, Flagstaff Hill, Aberfoyle Park and Happy Valley, have the one postcode, 5159, the bureaucracies take the view that everyone in that area is well off. This is very unfortunate, because if you happen to be not so well off or are unemployed you are worse off than if you lived in one of the more well-known poorer suburbs of Adelaide. In fact, in my area—which, incidentally, has the lowest level of unemployment in the state (around 4 per cent)—if you are unemployed you carry a significant stigma.

But the even more serious consequence for the people of the electorate is that, as a result of that discrimination by postcode, by bureaucracies assuming that everyone has a high income level, we do not get the services that we should. I will continue to lobby both at the state and federal level to ensure that, irrespective of where one lives (and certainly including the people of my electorate) one is not discriminated against because some of the people who happen to be in that postcode area may be well off. I am sure that this discrimination applies to other areas.

That is how the bureaucracies work: they look at the postcode, they look at the data from the ABS and then assume that everyone in that area must be of a particular high income level, and it is not the case at all. We have single parent

families struggling, we have family dysfunction and we have some unemployed. As I say, they receive fewer services and consideration but attract more stigma than would be the case if they lived in an area comprising a greater number of disadvantaged people. The consequences flow through into a range of areas, such as reduction in childcare places—and, again, the bureaucracies think that simply because overall most people are on what appears to be a statistical high-medium income they do not need to provide things such as childcare places, and that is quite fallacious.

Youths in my electorate (and there are a great number of them, as is true of the southern area generally), sadly, have fewer facilities and services than they had five or 10 years ago. Five or 10 years ago we had 24-hour youth workers and places where young people could go to spend time together. Now, however, we have fewer of those. I am going to turn up the heat in relation to this issue because for too long young people have been disadvantaged and discriminated against in our community, mainly because they do not happen to vote in state, federal or local government elections, and that is not acceptable.

If one looks at facilities in relation to counselling, employment services, sexual health, and all those areas, one sees that we get very limited offerings compared to many other parts of Adelaide, and it is something that is not acceptable.

In regard to libraries, I have recently written to the Minister for Local Government and to the Premier suggesting that the whole issue of the provision of libraries or resource centres be looked at. I hesitate to use the word 'review', but what is needed is a complete overhaul of the provision of library resource centres in not only the metropolitan area but throughout the state. At the moment it depends on the council area in which one lives as to whether or not one gets a decent library or resource centre. Again, that is inequitable. Some councils do not provide any library services at all, whereas others provide grandiose, very substantial library services. This includes the city of Burnside, which has a marvellous new facility, and Marion. However, some other councils provide no facilities whatsoever, and that is ludicrous in a metropolitan area where everyone should be entitled to those sort of resources. It is appropriate that the funding for the allocation of those services be closely examined to ensure that we get a more just and equitable provision and access to libraries and resource centres throughout the whole of the metropolitan area and, I suggest, country areas.

SUPPLY BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 27 May. Page 297.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): As members would recall, at the end of the yesterday's proceedings I was addressing various comments to this bill. I certainly welcomed the supply of some \$2.6 billion to enable the continued running of this state, and I pointed out how it was so pleasing that the moneys would go towards helping to ensure that South Australia maintained its positive progress and that that positive progress was being reflected in a multitude of surveys that had been undertaken.

I refer to a BankSA survey which indicated that South Australia's consumer confidence had reached its highest peak in five years, and that would not have occurred if not for proper budgeting during the previous few years by the Liberal government. This Supply Bill simply continues the Liberal government's budget of the year 2001-02, and obviously it has my full support.

I also note an article in the *Advertiser* of 30 April by Nigel Austin which indicated that a rural recovery was sweeping through South Australia, with farmers predicting their most prosperous season in decades. Rural based exports this year are estimated to reach a record \$3.8 billion, surpassing last year's total by some \$600 million. These things do not occur naturally. You might say that the rural sector is very natural, and I will not deny that, but to get the export markets going you need not only your wheat boards and your barley boards but also Food for the Future programs and Department of Industry and Trade programs, and this Supply Bill will help continue that positive progress.

One thing that does worry me and, if I had the opportunity, I would ask it in committee, is how much of this \$2.6 billion will be spent on the printing of the reviews that the new government has announced. About every second question we ask relates to what is going to occur in health, education or in aged services, and the response is that we are having a review. I hate to think what the consultancy costs will be, and I wonder how much of the \$2.6 billion will be put towards those fees.

Perhaps we are being tricked. I have just thought that some of this \$2.6 billion might be required for the consultants who are doing the reviews. That is a thought I have just had, but my main concern is the cost of these reviews. I hope they are not going to be published on glossy paper with glossy photographs; just plain black and white reviews will be fine. As long as people can read them, that is all we need. We have to be very careful about what this extra money is spent on.

I return to the Treasurer's statement, not just in relation to the supply of \$2.6 billion, but in question time today, when he said that 'the former government has left this state with a massive budget deficit with which we are dealing'. You will recall, sir, that I took a point of order because I felt he was misleading the house, and I have a copy of that *Hansard*. Yesterday I pointed out that, if you do your sums with that \$300 million deficit (which I assume he is talking about), over four years that works out to be 0.937 per cent, if you work on a \$8 billion per year budget, and I think that is a pretty good assessment. However, if you wanted to be conservative and say that it is a \$7 billion budget—and that is understating it—that would be 1.071 per cent. In other words, we are talking roughly 1 per cent error, if the Treasurer was correct. Of course, we know that is not right, and that is why I took a point of order earlier today.

We noted a memo to all members of parliament from the former treasurer, the Hon. Robert Lucas, which clearly identified that the claims by the Treasurer are fictional and dishonest. I well understand the following statement by the Hon. Rob Lucas, when he said:

I must say it is disappointing that Foley has involved the Under Treasurer in his political games by publicly releasing his confidential advice to him.

I understand exactly what the Hon. Mr Lucas is getting at because, as a result of that, Mr Lucas had to release two confidential Treasury memos signed by the Under Treasurer. We all know now that those two memos showed there was an estimated underlying surplus of \$96 million for this year's

budget and there is an estimated underlying surplus of \$60 million for this year's budget, even if all Treasury advice on budget problems in health and education was agreed to. If Mr Foley is not misleading this house, I guess that he is telling porky pies. That would be one way of describing it.

This situation has saddened me and I say, 'Bring on the legislation relating to honesty and accountability in government.' I cannot wait for it to pass the house because we have had so much dishonesty in this place since the new government has taken office, and I just hope that the proposed legislation will cover the cases that have been so blatant, involving not only the Treasurer but also other ministers so far. It will have my support if it covers those circumstances. I hope it will cover the situation where the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing said that there was a case of pork-barrelling in the previous grants. That is absolutely outrageous. Surely, if he has done any homework at all, he would know that a totally independent committee assessed all these grants. That is a reflection on him. I hope that, when the honesty and accountability legislation is passed, it will stop ministers like the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing from making those comments. It is high time that proper standards were brought into this house.

Continuing on with the supply debate, we identified yesterday the record spending by the Liberal government in a variety of areas, and I am very pleased that this \$2.6 billion is being earmarked to continue the excellent record of that government. Members might recall that there was a \$28 million increase in expenditure on police, and the work that they are doing is to be applauded in every possible way. Of course, that brought a record allocation for police in the last budget, and this Supply Bill will ensure that money continues to flow through.

In the human services budget, there was a 10 per cent increase in funding to \$2.8 billion. In the education budget, there was funding of \$1.8 billion, which was a \$105 million increase on the previous year. Throughout the key areas of health, education and police, the previous government brought this state to a new level of expenditure and there was confidence like we have never seen before.

We are well aware that it took years to achieve that confidence. We inherited a basket case, which, we remember, had the worst per capita debt in Australia, near enough to \$10 billion worth; we had one of the worst unemployment rates at nearly 12 per cent; and we recall that some 36 000 jobs were lost in the two years that the Premier, Mike Rann, was minister for employment. Again, not a great deal of confidence is being instilled by the new Premier and his record from the past. I just hope he has learned from the past. I guess time will tell.

We had a budget overrun of \$300 million in one year, and the new Treasurer is endeavouring to make up a case over four years. I just point out that if he is correct—and he is not—that is 1 per cent of the total budget. He is grasping at figures that are totally unrealistic. Of course, we could go into many other areas as well. I simply say that it is very pleasing to see that consumer confidence has reached a record high. It is very pleasing to note that confidence in the rural areas has reached a new record, as well. In fact, the indications are that there is greater confidence in the rural areas than in the metropolitan area. Again, it puts the lie to one of the statements made in the house today by the Premier who indicated that the previous government had not looked after the regional areas. When he was attacked on the matter through interjection, he said, 'I'll just have a look at your vote.' I tried

to interject then—and I know that was totally out of order—but the reality is that someone like the member for Flinders got a 10 per cent increase in the primary vote. Our own leader, the Hon. Rob Kerin, got an increase of nearer 10 per cent in his own vote. They are two key rural areas.

Mr Brokenshire: We also got 51 per cent of the two party preferred—an absolute majority.

Mr MEIER: That is over the whole of the state—51 per cent of the government, yes, without even identifying regional versus metropolitan.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thought these speeches were supposed to be in connection with the Supply Bill and not the acclaimed credits or deficits of people's election results.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Goyder is straying from the matter before us, which is the Supply Bill and not members' voting achievements.

Mr MEIER: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will finish by saying that it is very heartening that now a massive 80 per cent of respondents to the State Bank survey are proud to be South Australian, and that is up by some 10 per cent on the previous survey. It is a great and positive reflection on the previous government. I support the Supply Bill.

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): I rise to support the Supply Bill 2002. I must say it is a pleasure to speak to a bill that is so stunning in its brevity but so effective in its proposed outcome in the expenditure of some twenty-six hundred million dollars. I have not ever heard it described in that way, but that is how it is described in the bill—in one sentence or two lines. Nevertheless, I rise to support it. I rise to support it with a caveat and in the circumstances of an incoming government, and I confidently support it for two reasons.

Firstly, we now have the budget from the federal arena, and I acknowledge that because it is important to identify what contribution will be made to all Australians and to the services for them, including South Australians. The second reason is that this bill comes after the performance of the previous government and, indeed, is based upon expenditure as outlined by them. It is the previous government that has established a structure. It is the previous government that has established and identified the revenue streams and secured the continuation of those, and it is the previous government that has responsibly identified the areas of expenditure to best and properly provide for South Australians. So I have every confidence in supporting the Supply Bill.

However, the caveat I raise is that, notwithstanding that we had an election in February this year and the government was appointed in early March this year, we have had very little by way of sitting days to date, and we have had repeated claims by the now Treasurer of the alleged impecunious state of budget expenditure and alleged cost pressures, allegedly arising out of the conduct of the previous government. Not just once but repeatedly he has asserted this is the circumstance. We have heard terms such as 'black holes' and 'bleak circumstances', even in material we are regularly fed by the Treasurer to describe the current circumstance as to be in a significantly 'bleak state'. That has been repeated, and, notwithstanding all those claims and all of those circumstances, we have a situation, I note, where the budget for 2002-03 will not be released, presented or provided for comment and consideration until 11 July 2002.

I wish to submit for the record that I consider that to be—and I may be alone in this submission—outrageously unacceptable in its delay in presentation for this parliament's consideration. Whilst there have been delays on prior occasions—sometimes for good reason—I note that the previous government managed to bring the state into order and to bring recommendations as to budgets by May of the calendar year for the purposes of future budgets. That is important for a number of reasons. One is to ensure, because of the importance of scrutinising a proposed budget, that it not only complies with what is proposed by a new or existing government but highlights any errors and ensures they are remedied before action.

We now have a Supply Bill—and necessarily so as a result of the government's decision to delay the publication of its budget—for as much as twenty-six hundred million dollars because this is the money that is necessary to continue to operate the government of South Australia for the services of South Australians. This is the amount that is necessary to cover what will be a four or five month period into a total of a 12 month period for budget allocation. I suggest that that is an unacceptable delay, particularly in light of the allegations of the Treasurer, which have been regularly and repeatedly denied in supply speeches to date, but, nevertheless, his assertion is on the record and it is repeated.

I suggest that, in view of those circumstances particularly, this delay is unacceptable, and next year the caveat is that they are on notice that that situation should be remedied, and that we as a parliament should properly be able to scrutinise the budgets when issued at the very least by May each year so that, when the proper processes of scrutiny are concluded, as near as practicable the implementation of the spending of that budget coincides with the commencement of the financial year. In the alternative, a change to the budget period during which the revenue is to be applied is an option, but, either way, we should properly scrutinise that in the future, and, in that, the government is clearly on notice.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I rise to support the bill to enable the government to commit to its programs prior to the actual budget being agreed upon. It is customary, and indeed a convention of this place, that supply is approved by both houses of parliament to allow this to occur. In the event this bill was not passed, the running of government would not be able to continue. All members know what happened in 1975 when supply was not granted to the then federal government. So, it is important that this bill is supported.

In his second reading explanation, the Treasurer clearly outlined why a supply bill is necessary and why it is important for members to support it. Indeed, a responsible alternative government in opposition will support the bill because it is necessary for the workings of government and to enable parliament to continue with its programs. It is also necessary for a responsible government to make sure that it clearly reports to the parliament the exact economic position in which it finds itself. So, the opposition, as a responsible alternative government, approves and supports supply. Equally, it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the accurate economic position is clearly stated to the house.

In recent weeks, and indeed in question time today, there has been some questioning in relation to the accuracy of some of the Treasurer's statements with respect to the economic situation in which the government found itself on coming to government.

If this bill were not passed, because of the time lag with the budget, we know that government would not be able to function. So, it is necessary to pass this bill, and the appropriation of \$2.6 billion to enable the government to carry on with its programs and, indeed, the programs outlined by the former Liberal state government. That is what this bill is about, and for those reasons we all support it.

I do not believe that statements that have been made have always been accurate. When you consider the government's comments about black holes and the way it found the economy, I believe that it is not quite the responsible attitude that one would expect from an incoming government. If we compare the present situation to that in 1993, I think the black holes would need to come under an electronic microscope. If we applied the same analogy, when you consider that the state debt—

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: I meant telescope, not microscope. I thank the minister for correcting me.

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: Well, the budget does not go that deep, does it?

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: That is right. The state was in a bad way in 1993, and the minister agrees. I have always admired the minister's honesty, and I place on record that as she was not in government, she was not responsible—her party was. She accepts that. We found ourselves with a debt of \$9 billion, whereas there is now a debt of \$3 billion; there has been quite an improvement. I believe that the economic indicators would show that.

It amazes me if we compare the economic indicators with which we are faced, and which show, as I said, a debt reduction from \$9.6 billion to \$3.27 billion. Unemployment—an important indicator—has gone from 12 per cent in 1992 to around 7 per cent now. Exports have increased by 32 per cent, with the growth over the past 12 months being more than twice the national growth rate of 13 per cent. Indeed, the value of South Australia's exports more than doubled under the previous government and are now worth almost \$9 billion per annum. Also, we can look, for example, at the comments made by Peter Vaughan, as follows:

... this State there have been tremendous jobs created and saved. . . Mitsubishi situation. . . interest rates are at. . . 35 year low despite slight increase by Reserve Bank—

I must acknowledge that we did not bring down the interest rates; the federal government has also managed the national economy well—

... Federal Government's home and savings grant loan. . . low dollar. . . in the last few years. . . been a great bonus for SA coming on the back of two record harvests.

We do not take credit for the weather, but I believe that the previous government, with its economic program, its support for new ventures and technology (such as support for bionomics and aquaculture), its export drive, and its support for the multicultural chambers of commerce has put South Australia on the map. This state has never before been so close to the national average for employment. South Australia has always lagged behind, yet we can now see that a lot of headway has been made.

One only has to look at the South Australian skyline to see what has taken place in the last six or seven years. Despite all this—and concrete evidence—the government tells us that there are black holes. Well, you cannot have the best economic indicators in eight years and, at the same time, say

that there is the biggest black hole. Somehow, the two do not compute.

Mr Hanna: They do.

Mr SCALZI: They do, do they? I ask the member for Mitchell: is it \$9.6 billion?

Mr Hanna: They are two different things.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hartley will address the chair and ignore the member for Mitchell, who should not be interjecting, anyhow.

Mr SCALZI: I do not mind the member for Mitchell's assistance, because it is always good to have someone to help you with your speech, so I welcome the interjections. When we look at the economic indicators of gross state product, at exports, at employment and at participation rates, I acknowledge it is not perfect. A 30 per cent youth unemployment rate is a serious problem and a concern for all of us and we have to address it. But when we are talking about economics there are no absolute certainties: it is always a comparison. There are target levels of employment and target levels of economic growth, and the commentators will tell you that. When we look at how we compare to other states and at how Australia compares to other countries, we must acknowledge that Australia as a whole is economically healthy.

We did not experience the problems that the South-East Asian economies experienced a few years ago, and last year, even when the economic giant, the United States, was in difficulties, Australia performed well. It has one of the best rates of growth of all the OECD countries, and that is a proud record. We welcome the support for Mitsubishi with the state grant of, I think it was, \$50 million, because that was in keeping with the previous government's commitment. Together with over \$30 million from the federal government, that has put funds into job creation and security for this state. And that is what it is all about.

So, I cannot understand how we can have all this good news and at the same time have black holes; I cannot reconcile the two. As I have mentioned previously in the house, I attended a function at the Wine Centre and heard a speech made by the Treasurer, in which he was talking about how economic development has to be in a bipartisan way and how the economy is moving. Indeed today, during question time, the Treasurer told us that he is not really against all privatisation, that agreements between state and private businesses for public infrastructure and services are a good thing. That is the way I understood it.

We have had discussions about the Modbury Hospital, and it is not ruled out that that is a bad thing. I just wonder how this government reconciles its philosophy and its pre-election promise of no privatisation: 'that's the end, no ifs, no buts: after all, it's about delivery'. It is good to hear that the government is taking a more sensible, liberal approach—

The Hon. S.W. Key: With a very small 'l': a little, weeny 'l'.

Mr SCALZI: I understand about small 'l's. But it is good to see that the government is taking that approach. We have committed to social infrastructure, education and transport. As examples, I have noted the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link and the Southern Expressway, and I welcome the government's announcements with regard to the airport, and so on. So, we are heading in the right direction. I commend the way this government has formed boards—

Ms Breuer: Lost your place, Joe?

Mr SCALZI: No, I haven't lost my place, because there are so many good things in South Australia to talk about. The Economic Development Board is what I was looking for. I

welcome the government's announcement, and there are some good members there. As the Premier says, it is a bipartisan approach. He has taken a more liberal approach to development, and that is good to see. So, how can you have all this going on and yet still talk about black holes? Do not talk South Australia down, because it might be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The government is quick to support Business SA plans, and I also welcome that. We have a Labor government supporting Business SA's plans, and it is good to see. I know that it is this new Labor, the new dynamism that the Labor Party has in government, and it is good to see. But perhaps it should also take into account a quote from *Business Life* of May 2002, stating what it wants to see. It reads as follows:

It wants to see state and local government expenditure fall over 10 years, as a percentage of SA's economic output, from the 2002-03 target of 13.3 per cent, to 10 per cent. Over the same period, Business SA has called on the government to match capital investment and infrastructure development, first with the growth in the state's economic output, then in the longer term to that of the private sector. The budget submission also calls for targets that will see both payroll and other state taxes fall. It argues that payroll tax should fall to 5 per cent over the next three years and to 3.5 per cent over the next decade from the current 5.75 per cent of payroll.

So, the economic weather report is good—there is no question of that—and, in a way, the government has come into power on an easy ride. But it has to be careful that it does not derail the economy and all the good work that has taken place. You cannot take what we have for granted. It does not mean that the trends will continue without work and input by government. We did manage to get the economy right and, therefore, put more into health, education and social infrastructure, and the government is carrying on with that. However, a state that is sick economically cannot hope to provide the funds for health, education and social infrastructure, or to care for the environment.

If this government loses sight of the economic goals; if it does not ensure that the economic health of the state is maintained; if it does not ensure that unemployment is kept low; if it does not ensure that employment and participation rate increases; if it does not make sure that exports continue to increase; if it does not support businesses, it will fall back to the economic illness that characterised the late 1980s and early 1990s. And Lord help us if we get economically ill again because, as members opposite keep telling us, privatisation has stopped: what are we going to sell? That is true. The head room, as the Treasurer would say, is very low. We do not have the room to make mistakes.

Time expired.

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): I rise to support the Supply Bill which is currently before us. I would like to commence by addressing a comment made late this afternoon by the member for Goyder, who has argued that on revised Treasury figures the deficit over four years runs to only .093 per cent of total budget outlay. This could well be a line of argument run by Jodee Rich to blunt attacks on his management of OneTel. OneTel was a high transaction volume business with a massive turnover. The final debt may have been a meagre percentage of turnover but in real terms it was staggering. Similarly the projected South Australian government budget blow-outs are also significant, running to \$26 million in the years 2001-02, \$77 million in 2002-03, \$87 million in 2003-04 and \$154 million in 2004-05.

Running to budget, whether in the public or private sector, is always difficult. However without the disciplines of a

budget big, medium and small business run a high risk of collapse. OneTel is a prime example. Running close to budget gives a high degree of stability to government and business. Attention to budget variance, a basic management tool, with the discipline of analysing budget overruns and underruns, means that businesses and governments should, over time, run extremely close to budget.

The previous government, on the figures provided by Treasury, failed to run its operations to budget in respect of expenditure. It would appear that the previous government did not insist on rigorous budget variance analysis on the expenditure side. This is of extreme concern.

Business knows the importance of control over expenditure. There can be greater control over expenditure than there can be over revenue. Such is the case with government. There was insufficient control over expenditure by the previous Liberal government. On the revenue side, according to the 14 March update, there are projected revenue improvements of \$32 million over the years 2001-02, \$10 million over 2002-03, \$32 million over 2003-04 and \$14 million over 2004-05. These projected revenue improvements are largely due to the boom in real estate values. Without these improvements in revenue, the budget position would be far worse. The position would be a \$58 million deficit in 2001-02, an \$88 million deficit in 2002-03, a \$117 million deficit in 2003-04 and a \$156 million deficit in 2004-05. Without these better revenue outcomes, which businesses do not factor into their budgetary considerations, the budget blow-out would be even larger than that with which we are currently grappling.

What would have been the outcome if the previous government had been able to manage its budget, had been able to manage outlays and benefit from improved revenue streams? We would be in surplus to the extent of \$34 million in the current financial year, \$12 million in surplus in 2002-03, \$34 million in surplus in 2003-04 and \$16 million surplus in 2004-05.

We would find ourselves in the budgetary situation of the Tasmanian Labor government. By being able to run expenditure, or outlays, to budget, the Tasmanians have benefited from their real estate boom. The Tasmanian government in its budget brought down on 23 May, was able to announce a budget surplus, assisted by a \$33 million windfall gain in stamp duty on real estate. The Tasmanian government was able to announce a \$30 million social infrastructure fund which will provide a range of social justice services. The sum of \$10.3 million will be spent to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery and for dental treatment. Another \$2 million will be spent on assisting low income families to meet the cost of education.

Some \$2.3 million will be provided by the Tasmanian government as additional support to the frail aged. In a nutshell, the previous South Australian Liberal government has blown the real estate boom. We should be in the budgetary situation of the Tasmanian Labor government; we should have inherited a healthy budget surplus and be in a position, like the Tasmanians, of looking after the most in need.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I rise on a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. I draw your attention to the clause regarding relevance to the specifics of the debate around the Supply Bill. I hardly see a debate about something happening in Tasmania as relevant to the Supply Bill. I also ask you to consider the fact that this is not a grievance debate or indeed a debate on whether we were a better government at fixing the mess than they are. I ask that you consider relevance with respect to this debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hanna): Order! The point of order is about relevance. I am listening carefully to the member for Napier's contribution. He was speaking about the amount of money in the budget, which does have a direct correlation to the amount of money required for supply. So, at this stage I would say that he is keeping to relevance. There is therefore no point of order, but I will listen carefully to what the member for Napier says.

Mr O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I will conclude—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr O'BRIEN: I conclude by saying that the situation in which we currently find ourselves is one of deficit, and it should have been one of surplus. We should have been able to pick up the additional positive income stream into Treasury from the real estate boom and applied it to social welfare matters as governments interstate have done.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: A dib a dollar?

Mr VENNING (Schubert): That will be interesting for the record.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Schubert will continue.

Mr VENNING: I have much pleasure in supporting the Supply Bill, with \$2.6 billion being appropriated, but we will have to wait until July to see where this new government's priorities are. This \$2.6 billion is being appropriated to allow the continuation of government to run itself and pay our public servants, etc. It is also affected by the previous government's budget—whether there were overruns and shortcuts and so on—and we have heard about that in previous speeches. The South Australian economy is booming, thanks to the significant impact made by primary producers, who inject over \$1 billion of valuable export earnings from our state each year. It certainly makes the appropriation easier, without the impacts we would have in a difficult year.

South Australian business confidence has peaked over the past 12 months, due in no small part to the success of business in rural areas and previous government policy. Our state economy relies on exports, most of which are generated by industries in rural areas, and this has the remarkable flow-on effect of an increase in consumer spending and confidence, particularly in country South Australia, and it does impact on this appropriation. When you compare the financial position of South Australia today with what it was like in 1993, you see that the previous government certainly implemented significant changes. In relation to this appropriation and the coming budget, it will be interesting to see what the new government will do in relation to these successes and the progress made since 1993.

We are constantly faced with myriad issues affecting those living in rural areas, specifically health and education, telecommunication access and a reduction in financial and medical services, transport issues, public liability insurance and the drift of young people to urban areas. I have to say that the drift is still continuing, which is very sad. It has certainly abated in some areas, particularly the Barossa Valley, but generally across our state it has continued.

Since coming to power almost four months ago the new Lewis-Rann Labor government has put all the—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Schubert of the Speaker, the Hon. Mr Lewis's, direction regarding the Supply Bill debate. Indeed, today the member

for Mawson has usefully drawn my attention to the fact that members may be tempted to stray outside the strict relevance of the debate. So, I would advise you to keep strictly to the matter of the supply debate and not stray outside that.

Mr VENNING: I will talk about Tasmania; is that okay? I will not say I disagree with your direction, Mr Acting Speaker, but we are now talking about appropriation. I am just saying that this is the first appropriation of this government in the almost four months since it came to power. It is very relevant to the subject; this government is reviewing all the previous government's decisions and commitments that were made. They are all being reviewed and, as we know, they are on hold and we are still waiting for that budget.

I have previously raised the matter of the Barossa Music Festival, and I want to raise it again because in answer to a question yesterday in this house the Premier said that the wine industry should fund the Barossa Music Festival, 'because the government has funded the wine centre'. I find that comment totally confrontational and unbelievable. What is the Premier trying to do? The wine industry is our most successful industry; is he trying to win friends and influence people with a comment like that? I know that the Premier was ready for my question, and I was pleased that he was, because he had prepared the answer. I can understand people getting caught and saying things they regret, but making a considered response like that I found absolutely extraordinary.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Schubert that he will have the opportunity for grievance following the Supply Bill debate, and that may be a more appropriate time to raise those matters.

Mr VENNING: I defer to the your decision, sir.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will not interject.

Mr VENNING: I am sure the Attorney-General would pick me up if I were out of order, because we are talking about appropriation, and this is about saving money. It is all about the \$2.6 billion, and the Premier said he has done this to save the \$160 000 that the festival cost. That is exactly on this subject; I am sure the Attorney would tell me otherwise if it was not. The state government's decision to abandon the festival was an appalling decision, showing a lack of vision and foresight. It was one of Australia's longest running, most highly respected and internationally recognised regional festivals, generating \$2.5 million to \$3 million a year in the Barossa region, and we might consider the fact that that is 10 per cent of this appropriation. The festival has provided national and international exposure for wineries and businesses in the Barossa and boosted our state's economy. The government's attempting to save money by reducing spending on regional events results in a dramatic decrease in potential income earnings and therefore also investment in South Australia.

For every dollar the taxpayer put into the festival, \$12 was returned to the community, making it one of the most economic festivals in the country. The decision is a great disappointment to members of the Barossa community, arts enthusiasts, the wider community, business leaders and winery and tourism operators. As the member for Stuart said yesterday in a grievance contribution after the Premier's answer, if it is good enough for the funding for the Barossa festival to be cut, so should all the others. You cannot be selective; it should apply to all the arts, the opera, etc. I certainly do not want to see that, but the same criteria should be used: it is all part of the appropriation. The Premier said

that because the festival cost \$35 per seat it had to go. Well, we should apply that criterion to all the others and see where we stand. We will end up with nothing left.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr VENNING: The Attorney said, 'Don't tempt us.' It is on the record. There it is; you have set the criteria. If it is good for one, it is good for all. You argue your way out of this one. I have been quite amazed by the support for this festival. I am quite overcome that people from all walks of life, some who are not all that arty, have come to support it. We will see what happens, because the same scrutiny could be used on the others and that could be a worry. The bottom line is that the festival should not have been cancelled. The Premier is already talking about another festival to take its place. Why did we not we leave the name there? We could leave the festival and change the whole format, but do not get rid of all the goodwill that has been generated over 12 years. You are starting from scratch now. What is it going to cost to start from scratch and get a festival up and running? Massive amounts of money. So, in discussing appropriation, I say that it was not a good decision. I hope that there is time for the government and the Premier to reconsider it because I have not given up and will still keep on batting.

The topic of the National Wine Centre has been raised and the cost to keep it running is part of this appropriation. It has financial difficulties, as we know, which have escalated with the threat of closure hanging over its head leading to a decrease in bookings and consumer confidence. As I said, the wine industry is a driving force in our economy and has changed the face of rural South Australia with changes in land use, increases in employment opportunities and the development of a new infrastructure. Funds have been generated by the wine industry for the state Treasury—again, it comes under appropriation through taxes, charges and payroll tax and its contribution has been much greater than the funds that have been injected into it by the state government. South Australia is in net debt to the wine industry, as the leader Rob Kerin said.

The other Australian states were very keen to be home to the National Wine Centre to enable them to target local and international tourists and the income that they generate. We had to fight to keep it in South Australia—federal money was used as well. If we are not careful and if the government does not support the wine centre, we will lose what the previous government fought hard to secure for this state. I appreciate the support given by the then opposition leader (Hon. Mike Rann), and I say on a bipartisan basis: why have a change of heart now? The wine and tourism industries, particularly since 11 September, have endured a very unsettling trading period, with a drop in performance. The National Wine Centre is a government funded centre, not an industry centre as stated by Mr Ian Sutton, Chief Executive of the Winemakers Federation of Australia. South Australia is the dominant wine producing state of Australia and it is essential that the centre be located here.

My final comment is this: South Australia does not have many firsts. We do not rank number one in many things in Australia—occasionally we rank number one in football and in some other things—but there is no doubt that we rank number one in the wine industry in Australia. So, what are we trying to do now? We are trying to harpoon it and are upsetting their leaders. Some large companies have invested millions of dollars in recent times—and are doing so this very week. We do not want to see this brought to a halt and we do not want any impediment in the way of these investors. We

want to encourage them and make them feel good and we want their dollars here in South Australia because we know that what they spend goes round and round.

One of the reasons the economy is so buoyant is the wine industry. We do not want to lose the dominance of our wine industry in Australia and in the world. Wine grape production continues to expand. Some 395 million litres of wine was exported over the last 12 months and there is potential for unlimited exports. Australia is now the seventh largest producer in the world. We must promote the wine industry in South Australia, and the centre is a key to providing an educational experience for tourists and wine lovers. A cash injection of up to \$2 million is required under this appropriation to allow the centre to become independent within three years.

So, I plead with the government to give it a chance, get off its back and help it, don't hinder it. We need to be talking it up, not talking it down. I know that one family has, regrettably, because of the concern hanging over the centre's head, cancelled a family function which was booked 18 months ahead of time because they do not want to run the risk of not having a venue for their daughter's wedding. This is the sort of thing that happens when you criticise a body such as this. So, get off its back, give it a future, invest in it and I am sure that in time it will run itself. I have also already discussed earlier—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And if you are wrong?

Mr VENNING: If I am wrong, the losses will be only a fraction of what other governments have lost on other projects. But I intend to be confident and positive. I am confident that the industry will continue to support us and—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: So how many losses?

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Schubert does not need to respond to interjections.

Mr VENNING: In relation to the Barossa Hospital, the commitment of the previous government to build a new hospital was welcomed by people in the Barossa Valley. As I said earlier today, the present facility is totally run down and has not been repaired because we were waiting for a new one. I am concerned that this government may, as it has with its three previous announcements, put this on the back burner as well. However, if it does, it will have to come up with millions of dollars to repair what is there, because what we have is unsatisfactory and has to be totally rebuilt.

The Barossa Band Festival is different from the Barossa Music Festival and also comes under scrutiny in relation to appropriation in this financial period. We have an annual band festival. I received a letter in reply from the Minister for Tourism (Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith) the other day which stated that the \$6 000 funding the festival received from the Liberal government last year was a one-off payment. I question that, because I have been instrumental in getting many cheques from the government over the years—is that a pun? I suppose it is—to keep the band festival going. It is not a lot of money. The \$6 000 paid for visiting bands and some of the on-costs. So, if the band festival goes the same way as the music festival, I will be very upset. What is next—Barossa Under the Stars? Will you continue to fund that, or will it go the same way? Sir, what does this government have against the Barossa? Don't you understand—

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Schubert will address his remarks through the chair.

Mr VENNING: I am facing you, absolutely sir. What does this government have against the Barossa? Suddenly, everything that has been done in this region is put under

heavy scrutiny. Not a thing has happened in the last four months in the Barossa in relation to new funding or even a recommitment of old funding by the previous government. Nothing! So, sir, I say to you and to members opposite: don't you understand that the powerhouse of our economy since about 1992 has been the wine industry and the tourism industry? And what are you doing? This industry relies on one thing more than anything else, and that is confidence and government support. And what are you trying to do? Some companies have come here and after four or five days decided to spend \$65 million. On what? On the industry that is there, on the government support that is there and on the acceptance that is there. And what are you trying to do? The message from the government during, I suppose, the last one or two months has stopped them in their tracks. Companies which have been about to start new developments and which were looking to bring stages two and three on stream have decided, 'We will put them on hold.'

The Hon. Michael Wright (Minister for Transport) was present at the opening of Gomersal Road the other day, and I think he was rather amazed at the number of vehicles going past—and, certainly, we blessed the road. All I can say to the government is: if you want to keep the economy going, keep promoting the Barossa. The previous Liberal government did. You have to understand that there were no votes for us in the Barossa because it is a pretty conservative area. Labor was never the enemy in the Barossa—it was the other conservative parties. I welcomed a better Labor candidate this time, and you fared much better than last time. Certainly, I understand that the Labor Party realises that—

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member will keep to the debate about supply.

Mr VENNING: I am talking about supply. I am talking about income generation that keeps the economy on the front foot, and I hope that the Labor Party will get the message that if you—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

Mr VENNING: There are \$2.6 billion reasons why you do not harpoon the power generator in South Australia. I also mentioned earlier the Angaston Primary School, which is included in the current funding. I hope that the minister continues that project, because it was almost ready to start. It had only \$800 000 of state government money. I want to make sure that the government will honour that commitment because Angaston Primary School has been waiting for a long time for that development. The Kapunda Primary School is in the same position. That school was a big problem for the previous government. It is a heritage school and the cost of refurbishment has been enormous. That has been a problem. Of course, the previous government committed to upgrading it, and I hope that that commitment, too, will be honoured. As discussed today, it was agreed to sell the old Tanunda Primary School site to the Barossa council, but while negotiations were taking place the vandals and white-ants got into it and we now have almost a ruin on our hands.

The price deal was renegotiated with the previous Treasurer, but the new Treasurer is now saying, 'You will not pay the renegotiated price: you need to pay the full land value.' That will not happen because it is not worth that anymore. Hopefully, the Treasurer will address that problem very shortly. Also, the transport issues in the Barossa Valley are very important. Gomersal Road is now open. I would ask the government, though, to reconsider who owns the Gomersal Road. Currently, it is operated and maintained by

the Light council. I believe that road should come under government control because it is a very busy corridor.

I hope that the government will address third party insurance premiums during this session because it has huge ramifications. Also, in relation to this appropriation I was very concerned to learn today that the compulsory third party on farm vehicles will increase by \$5 each. I am very upset about that because farm people have tractors but they do not travel on roads. How many claims have been lodged in the past 12 months? None. I am very concerned about that. I appreciate the appropriation and I support the bill.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I support the bill. I will give a brief introduction to the bill, discuss a number of issues relating to Treasury, the arts, tourism and information economy and innovation that relate to the budget and conclude by making a couple of observations about how the Supply Bill will impact on affairs of state for the coming three months.

The bill provides for \$2.6 billion of public funding to be made available for expenditure by this government in accordance with, as clause 2 specifies, the budget approved by parliament for the financial year 2001-02. It is very important to note the context within which this Supply Bill comes to the house. That context is one in which state debt has been substantially reduced not since 1997 but since 1993. It is a context within which supply has not needed to be made to service an enormous debt of over \$9 billion inherited by the former government from the Bannon-Rann Labor government that went out of office in 1993. Were that debt still in place, this Supply Bill may very well reflect a different quantum. The incompetence of the former Labor government resulted in this state and its people not only carrying a debt burden of \$9 billion but also inheriting a current account in 1993 of \$300 million per annum in the red.

The financial incompetence of the Labor Party was laid bare for all to see. Fortunately for the people of South Australia, the calling in this Supply Bill is for a service to government that does not include that extraordinary burden, because the Liberal government abolished that debt by a sensible program of rationalising government services, running them more efficiently, selective and proper outsourcing of non-essential key roles and a process of debt reduction that has been applauded around the nation. Already we have seen signs from the new Labor government that that financial incompetence and mismanagement is starting to re-emerge.

I say that within the context of the sequence of events that has unfolded since March this year, as the Treasurer (the member for Port Adelaide) has attempted to reinvent the public accounts to show some sort of a black hole, so that he can cover up the government's object of trying to dig up enough money to pay for some unaffordable promises made during the election and a number of other commitments that it hauled on board in the process of forming government.

On 20 March this fiasco began with a minute from the Treasurer to all members of parliament in which the Treasurer claimed to have discovered a \$350 million black hole in the public accounts which the struggling incoming Labor government would have to hurdle over in order to make the books balance.

Attached to that document were a series of notes and figures which have been literally blown out of the water by the former treasurer, the Hon. R.I. Lucas, in another place. Even the present Treasurer acknowledged in that 20 March

minute to all members of parliament that revenue was up \$19 million. Indeed, the new Treasurer has walked into a windfall revenue gain that would have delighted and excited Treasurer Baker, compared to what he walked into in 1993: a staggering \$300 million deficit and a massive public debt. On 9 May, the Treasurer issued another media release titled, 'Further detail on the budget deficit', and it got more interesting.

In this particular release, the Treasurer claimed that the 2002-03 cash-based budget position would be close to \$100 million in deficit—an amazing revelation. He accused the former treasurer of all sorts of dastardly deeds and argued that analysis from Treasury showed that the deficit would remain above \$100 million in the out years, growing to \$169 million in 2004-05, claims that have subsequently been shown to be totally unsubstantiated by the opposition.

The Treasurer also claimed that there were errors in the way in which the Department of Human Services spread across the four years estimate period its provision for a number of expenses, including pay periods. He made a bit of a fool of himself on that account and has spent subsequent weeks backtracking furiously, and I will talk about that in a moment.

On 10 May the Hon. R.I. Lucas in another place released a memo to all members of parliament refuting many of the silly claims made by the Treasurer. He pointed out, first (and I bring this to the attention of the house specifically because I think it is an important point that has been largely overlooked), his disappointment that the Treasurer has involved the Under Treasurer in his political gains. He has selectively quoted or misquoted the Under Treasurer, and this has led to counter-quotes by the Hon. R.I. Lucas as a matter of necessity which have, in effect, embroiled a very well-respected and senior public servant in the Treasurer's devious political games—a most unfortunate development on the part of this new government and one which is no doubt resonating around the Public Service as I speak. Sadly, as a direct result of the Hon. Mr Foley's actions, the Under Treasurer is now embroiled in this political dispute—a most unfortunate turn of events.

In this memo of 10 May, the former treasurer made it very clear (and, in fact, he has provided Treasury memos dated 15 January and 16 January as proof) that the estimated underlying surplus of \$96 million for this year's budget was primarily due to a strong boom in stamp duty receipts. He has further proven that the estimated underlying surplus was \$60 million for this year's budget, even if all Treasury advice on budget problems in health and education was agreed, and, thirdly, that the former government had put aside another \$170 million in the forward estimates for cost pressures and new initiatives such as the teachers' wage case. As I mentioned, he provided a Treasury memo dated 13 March to confirm that there is \$451 million in the forward estimates to meet such cost pressures and new initiatives, including capital works. That \$451 million has not yet been allocated to any specific spending decisions. The former government, now the opposition, made its decisions consistent with Treasury advice on all issues, and evidence to that effect has been provided by the former treasurer.

It also needs to be noted, and I support the former treasurer in his observation, that caretaker provisions, dutifully abided by during the caretaker period by this opposition, prevented the former government from spending any of the \$96 million or \$60 million underlying surplus

between 15 January and 5 March, and also that no extra teacher wage costs were incurred this financial year.

Mysteriously, between 5 March and 14 March, the Treasurer, the member for Port Adelaide, has managed to turn a \$96 million or \$60 million surplus into a \$26 million deficit for this year's budget. What a remarkable bit of bookkeeping, which does not auger well for public confidence in the Treasurer's ability to manage dutifully and responsibly the public accounts! It is clear that the claims of a black hole in this year's budget are a fiction created by the Premier and the Treasurer because of the unsustainable election promises they have entered into and the other commitments they made as part of their deal to gain office.

Whilst the claims of a black hole are false, it is accurate to say that all budgets are always under cost pressures. That is a point that seems to have suddenly dawned on the Treasurer. He has suddenly realised that there are things called unpredictable costs, that there is a thing called head room, that one must manage one's accounts in such a way as to provide for the unexpected, and that to some degree the unexpected can be predicted, but in other respects it is unpredictable. There is an element of grey in any set of accounts. Anyone who has been in business knows that.

Many people on this side of the house, including me, have effectively run small businesses and medium enterprises. Very few on the other side have ever done so. Anyone who knows how a set of company accounts are written up knows that you can fiddle around with the figures to present the books in almost any way you see fit. It all depends on the accounting standard and the level of probity and integrity with which you draw up those accounts as to how you represent the figures. The former treasurer has made a compelling case that the Treasurer, the member for Port Adelaide, has manipulated the figures to suit his own political ends.

For example, the *Advertiser* of 17 March 2001 reported that agencies had requested \$1.5 billion in extra funding to meet cost pressures and new initiatives. That is nothing unusual. Agencies dream up all sorts of costs. It is easy to portray a situation of cost pressures. There will always be demands for money. It is another thing to manage the books so as to provide competently for them. The former treasurer did so. The new Treasurer knows that he did. This is an exercise in misrepresentation to suit the new Treasurer's political objects.

It gets better, Mr Acting Speaker. On 14 May the Treasurer released a media statement about the teachers' enterprise bargaining and provision for funding because it was claimed by the opposition that he had misled the house. It led to the matter being raised here as well and a considerable amount of embarrassment for the Treasurer. Of course, the media reported this. The *Advertiser* of 16 May had quite a bit to say about our new Treasurer.

Sure enough, on 14 March, Mr Foley solemnly announced that the budget was in economic free-fall and faced a huge deficit. Wasn't everyone startled! In fact, in the corridors around here the media were making a joke of how long it would be before the Treasurer came up with some sort of a black hole. The Treasurer also warned of steep increases in compulsory third party premiums to ensure that the Motor Accident Commission remained solvent. What a joke, Mr Acting Speaker. Here we go, up go the costs to the taxpayers. Here we are, looking at ways to raise more and more money out of the taxpayers' pocket to fund these crazy

promises and getting further and further away from the responsible paths set down by the former treasurer.

In the *Sunday Mail* of 19 May, the article laments the new Treasurer's terrible predicament. People were almost feeling sorry for the Treasurer it seems. The article states:

It was not a good week for Mr Foley: not only was he facing a parliamentary censure motion on the serious charge of misleading parliament but his claims about a 'black hole' in this year's budget had just been blown out of the water by two confidential Treasury memos.

Of course, they were released by the former treasurer. The new Treasurer (the member for Port Adelaide) has been leading with his chin ever since parliament began in this session, and it has been well and truly whacked on several occasions.

I can only hope that the new Treasurer comes into this chamber with a little more restraint and a little more considered resolve, rather than do what he has consistently done while in opposition, and that is hip-shoot based on a poor foundation of fact and a delight in getting his hands dirty in some sort of a scuff-up here in the parliament, rather than engaging in clear, concise, well-argued debate. I think the new Treasurer has had a bit to learn in his first few weeks in that position.

I want to move on to the issue of clause 2 of the bill, which deals with the fact that the \$2.6 billion provided for is to be spent in accordance with the agreed budget for 2001-02. As the former minister for tourism and innovation, and as the present shadow minister for those two portfolios, as well as arts and information economy, I hope that the money provided for in this bill is applied to the very worthwhile purposes and functions performed in those four portfolio areas.

Tourism needs considerable help and determined guidance. It has taken a bit of a whacking since the new government took office. I could list the damage that has been done, but I will save that for another time, suffice to say that major events are vital to the future of the tourism industry. There was a substantial allocation of funding in this budget for which this money is provided. It must be provided. There is a considerable demand, in fact \$11.2 million in 2002-03 alone for tourism infrastructure. There is also quite a bit of base funding to do with a range of tourism and strategic partnerships that needs to be met. I hope that the new minister and the Treasurer do not savage tourism any more than they already have, and I will be addressing that issue separately.

In regard to innovation and information economy, I was delighted to see that the new government did not axe or cut the \$12 million provided for by the former government for the Genomic Grain Research Development Centre of Excellence at the Waite campus. I note that they delighted in taking all the praise for the decision; in fact, the only decision they had to make was not to cut the money we had already budgeted for.

I note with disappointment that the ICT Centre of Excellence has gone to another bid and that our bid, for which the former government provided \$10 million, was unsuccessful. I note that there will be another \$10 million available to the Treasurer in the out years for him to use on other purposes, and I will raise that matter in parliament at a later date.

In respect of the arts, the Premier and the Treasurer have got off to a very poor start by axing the Barossa Music Festival. I commend to the house the comments of my colleague the member for Schubert. I think that to axe an

event without providing anything in its place is a little reckless. True, there were problems there. Welcome to government! What governments do is to get in there with industry and with the community to help solve problems. It is easy to wield the axe around. I note that there are a few pet events coming, such as the Adelaide Film Festival, that the opposition supports, with reservation, and I have spoken about that earlier in this place.

In regard to the arts, I remind the house of the outstanding job done by the former government in rebuilding the South Australian Museum, in rebuilding the State Library, in rebuilding the Art Gallery of South Australia—arts infrastructure that was left in ruin by the former Labor government—and in providing for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Adelaide Festival, the Festival Centre Trust, the Adelaide Fringe, our dance theatres, our various arts associations, Country Arts SA, and a range of other initiatives. Frankly, the former Liberal government did an outstanding job in the arts, and it will be a challenge for this government even to look like matching it.

In conclusion, I commend this bill to the house: the \$2.6 billion is needed for the day-to-day running of government. But I bring to the attention of the house that this state is in a wonderful financial condition, thanks to the efforts of the former government.

Time expired.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I rise to support the Supply Bill. Members would be aware that this is the first time that I have had the pleasure of rising to support such a bill. Like the member for Bragg, I notice that it is indeed a short bill of three whole clauses, two of which are formal only and one of which is substantive. For that reason, I then referred to the explanation of the bill by the Treasurer when he introduced it on its second reading to the house. In that explanation, he said:

A Supply Bill will be necessary for the first few months of the 2002-03 financial year until the budget has passed through the parliamentary stages and received assent. In the absence of special arrangements in the form of the Supply Acts, there would be no parliamentary authority for expenditure between the commencement of the new financial year and the date on which assent is given to the main Appropriation Bill. Due to a later budget than in previous years, it is possible that assent may not be given until October or November 2002.

That was the explanation given for the bill on its second reading. Of course, that explanation was inserted in *Hansard* without actually being formally read in the house.

So, I understand all that, and I understand that it may be October or November before the budget receives assent and that this bill provides the formal mechanism to allow the government to keep operating between 1 July and when the budget does receive its assent in four or five months time. I also understand that supply bills generally come in the same format: they are always this short, and they usually follow the same pattern. But for the change of dates and amount, we will always see the same sort of bill.

However, the lawyer in me made me go and look at the bill itself. When I got to clause 3, hoping to find a very simple explanation, I found that, while I could understand subclause (3) of clause 3, which basically says that if money was allocated previously to one agency and that agency has now changed its name or the department through which those services are provided the money will then be channelled through that new name. That is fine, but clauses 1 and 2 had me a bit puzzled. Subclause (1) provides:

The sum of twenty-six hundred million dollars—
or \$2.6 billion—

is appropriated from the Consolidated Account for the Public Service of the State for the financial year ending on 30 June 2003—

that is, the next financial year that we are about to enter. I could understand that, but then I read clause 3(2), which provides:

Money must not be issued or applied pursuant to that appropriation—

that is, for the next financial year—

for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated by parliament for the same purpose in respect of the 2001-02 financial year.

That clause puzzled me. After taking a lot of advice and considering the various ways in which it could be interpreted, it seemed to me that that provision means three things. First, until the budget receives assent—that is, after it has gone through those processes, which will take some months—there is an upper limit on government expenditure on any budget item, and that upper limit is set by clause 3(2) to be the amount the previous government budgeted for that item. Given that the previous government was budgeting for a whole year and this Supply Bill will take us through for only four or five months, that should not be a problem. I understand the overall intention is to stop massive shifts in the way money is spent by the government until its new budget receives assent.

Secondly, the allocation of this money, pending that final assent to the new budget, enables moneys allocated under the previous budget to continue to be spent. Thirdly, it seems that technically it means that the government cannot enter into or initiate any new commitments—that is, commitments for which no allocation was made in the year 2001-02—such as the compensation that might be payable to fisheries, or the broomrape eradication program. These might be new initiatives.

The wording of this bill provides that the government cannot apply any of the money that it is asking to be appropriated unless it was allocated, because it is not allowed to exceed what was in the previous budget. If the previous allocation was zero, then, instantly upon spending any money on a new initiative, it is in breach of this legislation. I ask the government to note with particular care that, technically, under the wording of this clause of the bill, no new initiative should be allocated money from this \$2.6 billion.

Primarily, I wish to talk about the provision that enables money to be spent which was already allocated in the previous budget. Everyone seems to have glossed over the wording of the clause, but the fundamental purpose of this bill is to allow money to continue to be spent to enable the government to keep operating for the few months until the budget receives assent, which theoretically should be by the time we commence the new financial year. It allows the government to spend money that had already been allocated and budgeted, and it allows money to be spent on projects that were already approved, allocated and budgeted prior to the commencement of the new financial year.

I must express concern in relation to a couple of issues that have arisen in the electorate of Heysen. The first relates to some recent newspaper reports regarding the proposed CFS station upgrades in Aldgate and in adjoining electorates, such as Montacute, which I think is in the next electorate, and Davenport, where Eden Hills is located. Recent newspaper reports indicate that those proposed stations may not go ahead, when in fact the previous government had already

allocated and budgeted the money, and the expenditure was expected to be made. The purpose of this Supply Bill is to enable that expenditure to continue.

In the case of the Aldgate CFS, it is a tin shed that would not pass anyone's idea of occupational health and safety standards. It has a terrific group of volunteers who operate out of there and it is in the heartland of the most difficult bushfire conditions, and yet the volunteers have struggled for years without appropriate accommodation.

They have many female volunteers, for instance, and there is no female toilet. They really have just a tin shed. It was all approved, budgeted for and allocated, and now we see newspaper reports indicating that it might not go ahead. It needs to go ahead, and this Supply Bill intends for those sorts of projects, which were already budgeted for and allocated, to complete. The other matter that is of major concern in my electorate, although I have not heard anything from the government about it at this stage, is the proposed indoor recreation and swimming centre at Heathfield.

That is a joint local government/state government initiative. It involves the Department of Recreation and Sport, the Department of Education, Training and Employment and the local council in building an indoor recreation centre and swimming pool for both the high school and the community and all the primary schools in the area. There are nine primary schools in the immediate area, all of which have to bus their children out of the district to have swimming lessons and swimming carnivals. In Heysen we live in the wettest and coldest place in the state, yet there is not one indoor recreation facility in the area. We have a high school which, in spite of not having a competition level court has, for eight of the past nine years, managed to be the national champion in volleyball. It is a focus school in volleyball, yet it has not had a competition level court.

The building of the new centre was planned and budgeted for and the money was allocated. Indeed, \$1.1 million of the money has been paid over in readiness for this project to complete. What I want to be assured of, in supporting the Supply Bill, is that important facilities such as this, which have been budgeted for, will still go ahead once this new government gets its \$2.6 billion under the appropriation considered by this bill.

In closing, I would like to support the comments made by the member for Schubert about the National Wine Centre. It is my understanding that it was always part of the business plan of the National Wine Centre that it would operate at a loss for the first couple of years of its existence, and it is appropriate for that National Wine Centre to be nowhere else than in Adelaide. I can just imagine the screaming that would have gone on if that Wine Centre had been placed in another state, when this state is clearly the wine capital of Australia, and it deserves absolutely to have our support. The government needs to be giving it a go. I have pleasure in supporting the Supply Bill.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I support the bill, as have all opposition members. For any business to operate effectively and efficiently it needs a sufficient stream of funds. Running the state is no different from that, and we require adequate funding to pay our public servants and fund our essential services such as roads, schools and hospitals and the many other publicly and part publicly funded services and projects. The question stands as to the government's priorities when it comes to distributing these moneys.

During the election campaign, the Premier talked at length about improving the standard of our health services, and no-one in this house would disagree with that statement. But where the debate obviously becomes divided is how and where those funds are spent. The same applies to schools and roads, and the myriad other avenues of expenditure lines. I have several quite significant avenues of required expenditure in my electorate. I spoke of some of these in a speech that I made to the house a couple of weeks ago, but I feel that they are most worthy of mention again. I am certainly aware of the direction that the Speaker set—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thompson): Order! I would ask the honourable member to be mindful of the fact that this relates to the Supply Bill and is not the grievance debate. It sounds to me as though the honourable member is about to stray into areas relating to a grievance.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Acting Speaker. I understand that the bill relates to \$2.6 billion in providing funds for our public servants to continue their work on publicly funded projects, and these are all issues related to that. As I was saying, I am certainly aware of the direction that the Speaker set at the outset of this debate and I will definitely be guided by that, but the issues that I wish to talk about all require Public Service attention and Public Service funding and, as such, impact on the budget and the moneys allocated to those individual portfolio areas. They concern roads, schools and hospitals.

I will also speak about the issue of public liability insurance. One could argue that the issue of public liability insurance does not affect our budget, but the point I make to the house is that it does, because businesses will close if we as legislators do not act quickly to remedy the current critical situation with which we are faced. When businesses close, the operators cease to contribute to the government coffers in the form of taxes and charges. I will talk about that issue later.

Some of the public expenditure items I will refer to include the second Mount Barker freeway interchange, the Hahndorf heavy vehicle bypass, the Mount Barker hospital and the Woodside Primary School. Mount Barker is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Over the next three to four years, 2 000 plus homes are projected to be built in the district. Transport SA (obviously part of the Public Service) and the minister say that a new interchange is not required at Mount Barker at present—it is low on the priority list. However, the government will have to include this infrastructure development in its budgetary forecasts because this matter will not disappear. It needs to realise that planning must start now. The public servants in Transport SA need to start work on this matter now. When work starts on a freeway, it is not a five minute exercise: it is more like a two to three year project. I believe that funds should be provided now to commence the planning process. It will be expensive, but the government has to face up to it; it cannot ignore it and hope it will go away.

Another issue that requires budgetary attention is the building of a heavy vehicle bypass to reroute vehicles around the town of Hahndorf. As a major tourism icon in this state, Hahndorf cannot afford to have semitrailers, buses, cars, locals and visitors all competing for space along the main street. A further issue that could also require an allocation of funds is the potential capital works at the Mount Barker District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. The Stirling hospital is to close its maternity ward shortly, which will impact on the services provided by the Mount Barker hospital. It is anticipated that an additional 100 babies could be delivered

per year on top of the current deliveries of approximately 350 per year. Obviously this will place a huge unsustainable demand on Mount Barker hospital. It will require at least one additional birthing suite and two additional post-natal rooms. I raised this issue with the Minister for Health some weeks ago now, but have yet to hear a word about it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member is now straying. The member's contribution sounds more like a grievance debate to me than debate about the Supply Bill. I have been very generous. I ask the honourable member to be very careful.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Certainly, I appreciate your guidance, Madam Acting Speaker. Obviously one other issue that impacts on the Public Service and other related budgetary issues which are tied up with the Supply Bill is educational facilities within the electorate. The Woodside Primary School buildings are in serious need of renovation. The minister, to her credit, is progressing the issue, and I believe a feasibility study is to be undertaken. All I hope is that, once that study is completed—which is when the vital commodity of money arises—the education department budget will be sufficient to support positive outcomes as a result. I will speak further on other budgetary issues relating to schools at a later date.

I now turn my remarks to the solid contribution that our hills region makes to the state's economy. The primary industry sector contributes a total of \$558 million in terms of gross food value to the economic wealth of South Australia. We have a very strong primary production industry in the Hills and we need to not only preserve that but enhance it—wine, apples, pears, cherries, dairying, grazing, livestock and cropping to name some—all form part of our significant contribution to the state's economy. Not only farmers but also secondary industry business operators within our region continually buy and sell, and, through that activity, GST taxes and charges are paid, which are obviously funnelled to the government of the day. It is incumbent upon this government to continue to properly support rural and regional areas.

I would like now to talk about the state's economy and focus on the budget in general. We need to put a few things into perspective in terms of impacting issues relating to this Supply Bill. We are all well aware of the infamous 'black hole', but a memo signed by the Under Treasurer, dated 15 January this year, confirmed that this year's budget was actually in surplus of between \$60 million and \$96 million. The actual Treasury estimate of the underlying surplus was \$96 million, and if Treasury's advice to forgive overspending by some portfolios was accepted the estimate becomes \$60 million.

The Liberal government did not agree to forgive this overspending by government departments as it believed it sent the wrong message to those departments who had worked hard to manage their spending within their budgets. This government's policy of just accepting departmental overspending is a recipe for financial disaster. The government's claim about budget honesty is now exposed by its fiction of a supposed \$26 million black hole deficit this year. This government has inherited a strong budget and a strong economy. I support the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Davenport.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I rise to support the bill, and I let the Acting Speaker know that I am the lead speaker and therefore may go longer than 20 minutes, although I suspect that I might not go longer than 20 minutes. I rise to support the Supply Bill

and I note with interest a lot of the comments made by members opposite as well as members of the opposition in relation to it. It is interesting that the government is seeking to rewrite history in a whole range of matters in relation not only to the budget that they have inherited but also the economy that they have inherited. I have noted comments from the Treasurer and the Premier that they have inherited a black hole, and I noted comments from the shadow treasurer in another place about bets being laid as to when the black hole would be announced, once the Labor Party had won government and how much that black hole would be. I think the electorate is getting a bit cynical about oppositions that have had eight years to prepare coming in and then suddenly saying things are not what they seemed. There has been a lot of debate on that and we might address some of those issues during this address in the matter of supply.

Something that surprised us all on this side were the comments in relation to the economy. We have had comments made by various ministers suggesting the economy is not as good as it could be, and that is unfortunate because I think there is a general view within South Australia—and I think the evidence in South Australia points towards this—that the economy, as it stands in the first six months of this year, and particularly prior to the election, is as good as it has been for some time. Retail sales in the last 12 months are something like 11 per cent higher than in previous years, compared to some 8 per cent higher for Australia as a whole.

There has been a 43 per cent increase in new home approvals this year, and building activity in South Australia is certainly a lot stronger than in most other states. South Australian businesses are estimating something like a 37 per cent increase in new capital expenditure in 2002-03. Recent growth figures for South Australian business suggest they are the strongest of all states. All that points to a relatively strong South Australian economy, and I guess we are a bit disappointed that the government has chosen to try to talk down the economy in an attempt to try to rewrite history in regard to the terms and conditions under which it has taken over government at this particular time.

The Supply Bill provides for the supply of money to various government agencies to enable them to undertake various tasks. Various members have commented on that in terms of their own particular fields of interest. It is interesting to reflect on some of the achievements of the previous government, which include: increasing the state's health budget by 35 per cent; increasing operational police spending by about \$114 million per annum more than when we took office; and bringing the budget back into order.

During the supply debate, it would be appropriate to discuss some of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and the Treasurer, as well as the member for Kavel, who earlier referred to the various black hole claims by the government. As I mentioned earlier, people are becoming pretty cynical about oppositions that come into government and say, 'It's not quite what we thought it was going to be.' For example, today in question time the Treasurer indicated to the house that he was not quite across the detail of the wage offer to the teachers. That certainly surprised us. We would have thought that a wage offer of hundreds of millions of dollars might be of some interest to the Treasurer and gained his attention, but clearly in today's answer the Treasurer indicated that he is not fully across the details. Even though the government itself put out a press release indicating the level of the offer and what it might cost,

apparently the Treasurer could not recall those details during question time today.

A whole range of comments have been made by the Treasurer and the Premier since coming into government that raise the question of whether, as yet, they are right across their portfolio. We raised with the Speaker a matter of privilege in relation to the Treasurer, and the Speaker gave a ruling. Let us look at some of the comments made by the Treasurer during that time and some of the comments that he made on radio. I know it is early days and that the ministers are new to the job, but they hold senior portfolios in the government. A classic example is the teachers' wage issue. On 14 March on the ABC radio journalists Kevin Naughton and David Bland interviewed the Treasurer on this fictional black hole, and the teachers' pay rise was also raised during that interview. Kevin Naughton asked a simple question:

Firstly, the prospective pay rises or enterprise bargaining agreements that need to be negotiated and finalised in respect of teachers and, I think, fire service employees: what's the position there?

The Treasurer started by saying:

Look, I can't give an exact figure for that.

He went on to say:

They chose not to; they're now saying, well, I'm not quite sure what they're saying, but the effect of what they're saying is that they weren't going to give teachers a pay rise, and given that they had rewarded every other public servant with a significant pay rise it was unlikely that they would have not provided a reasonable outcome for teachers. Now that has a significant effect on the bottom line but equally there is [that] the Education Department under the management of the Liberals were running out of cash.

Later, the Treasurer said:

If that is not paid, cheques start bouncing, teachers' salaries don't get paid; that is a result of now three or four years of Liberal government allowing the Education Department to overspend.

So, it was clear that right from the first day (14 March) publicly the Treasurer was stating that the Liberal government was not going to give teachers a pay rise. The clear inference from that is that no provision had been made for a teachers' pay rise in the budget forward estimates. Kevin Naughton went on to ask a further question. He said:

Lets go back to—sorry, I think we need to make this [absolutely] clear.

So, even Kevin Naughton was somewhat confused. He said:

The amount of money needed to be set aside for this estimated increase in teachers' pay rises had been underestimated, you're saying, by the Liberals?

Let us be clear that Kevin Naughton is saying, 'Let us be clear.' He wants a clear, definitive statement. The answer from the Treasurer is, 'It had been left out.' The *Hansard* extract reads:

Kevin Naughton asked:

Had it been left out? Well Rob Lucas has been reported as saying that there are hundreds of millions of dollars included in the Treasurer's contingency budget line for the forward estimates 2002-03 to 2005-06 to fund those wage increases. Now is that true or not?

The Treasurer says:

No it's not and he—Rob [as in Rob Lucas from another place]—knows that.

I will repeat that answer:

The Treasurer says:

No it's not and he—Rob—knows that.

That answer is absolutely clear; it is as clear as the question. Naughton clearly asks whether there were provisions and the Treasurer clearly says that, no, there were not. This govern-

ment tries to paint its picture from that starting base. It is unfortunate that the code of conduct for ministers does not start until 1 July; maybe that was deliberate. To go out and say something that is so inaccurate so early in the government's term I for one think is unfortunate. I know that Mr Lucas in another place has a particular view about those statements and has put out press releases to that effect, but it is clear that those statements made by the Treasurer on ABC Radio that day are simply not true.

Following a number of questions in the chamber about the matter of privilege, the Treasurer then had to come in and make a statement to the house clarifying that in actual fact there were provisions within the forward estimates for the teachers' wage claim. From memory, I think it was on 9 May. He goes on to say that there were issues—

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a reasonable memory. On 9 May he goes on to talk about provisions in the budget. I recall the comment quite clearly. One comment in the house that twigged in my mind as being not quite accurate was when he said:

Let's have no nonsense from members opposite about the teachers' wage increase. Let's have no crocodile tears from members opposite because, if you believe the former Treasurer, they were not going to pay the teachers—not 2 per cent, not 3 per cent, not 4 per cent, not anything. They were not going to pay the teachers.

Then he suggests:

Explain that one, former Minister for Education!

I guess we should ask the Treasurer to explain why he went on radio suggesting that there were no provisions and then came into the chamber suggesting that the former government would not pay the teachers, 'not 2 per cent, not 3 per cent, not 4 per cent, not anything'. That is very clear. Then he came in the next day following questions and said that actually a couple of days previously when he was accidentally reading a Treasury briefing note to the parliament he mentioned that there were some provisions. The rules do not quite work like that, that you can get it wrong one day, correct it the next day and everyone forgives and forgets—I'm sorry, I got it wrong yesterday; I'll get it right eventually.'

We put the Treasurer on notice that every single word he says will be scrutinised, because so far the history of this government in its first eight to 12 weeks is that lots of inaccuracies are being told—

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: If you want to get up and talk about our government, go right ahead, but the fact is that the member for Torrens is in government. You have to make decisions and we as an opposition have to scrutinise you. That is our role. You are now accountable for the decisions you are making. You have put out a code of conduct providing that ministers will be honest and correct public statements when they are wrong. I am saying to the member for Torrens that she should look at the Kevin Naughton transcript—it is available from Rob Lucas if she wishes to see it—and at the member for Hart's contributions as Treasurer. He has clearly made errors publicly which he had to come in to the house and correct in his roundabout sort of way, without admitting an error.

It is an absolute nonsense to suggest that the Liberal government made no provision in relation to the teachers' wage issue. I know that questions were asked today in relation to that, and we look forward to getting the Treasurer's answers to those questions tomorrow. I look forward to having some explanation as to how he can

reconcile his answers today or tomorrow with what he told Kevin Naughton previously on ABC Radio. The Treasurer certainly has inferred that the Liberal government did not allocate moneys in relation to the teachers' wage issue.

I noted with some interest that yesterday (27 May) the Treasurer sent to all members of parliament a substantial document listing a whole range of budgetary matters in relation to this mythical black hole.

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Obviously, he has not sent it to all MPs. The Minister for Housing says that she has not got a copy. That does not surprise me. I sat at the cabinet table for three or four years, and I do not mind saying to the minister that I suspect what the Treasurer might be doing is 'smoke and mirrors' with his cabinet. I suggest she take the opportunity to quiz the Treasurer occasionally at the cabinet table on what he is saying and the advice he has been given. I know Rob Lucas would be happy to attend the cabinet table and offer advice. I am sure that Jim Wright, the Under Treasurer, would be happy to sit at the cabinet table, if invited, to give fearless, independent advice. Members have to be very careful about the relationship between the Treasurer and other cabinet ministers.

My experience is that Treasury offers lots of advice, as do other government agencies, about cabinet submissions, but it is not up to the cabinet to simply blindly accept the advice. Ministers have to question it and, ultimately, make their own decision as a cabinet. I suggest to the minister that, if she has not seen the minute that was sent to all members of parliament, she approach her friend and colleague, the Treasurer, and ask him why his cabinet colleagues are being kept in the dark. I asked the question today—

Mrs Geraghty: That's just rubbish. You made a statement based on no facts at all. That's quite wicked of you.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The minister told the house that she had not received the document.

Mrs Geraghty: No, she said that she hadn't got a copy of it.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: She had not got a copy of it: that is exactly right.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I rise on a point of order, Madam Acting Speaker. I thought the direction that you gave earlier was that we needed to stick to the substance of the Supply Bill. Although I do appreciate the advice from my colleague on the other side, a previous minister—and I will take all he said to heart—can I suggest this is not the main topic to which he should be addressing himself in the major speech for the opposition on the Supply Bill, despite his being the lead speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thompson): The point of order is upheld. The member will return to the matter of the Supply Bill.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I seek clarification of your ruling, Madam Acting Speaker. Your own Treasurer wrote to the whole parliament advising that the Supply Bill was to be debated and that he would provide to us a series of documents for the debate. It just so happens that I am using the very document provided by your Treasurer, and I will quote from it—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The matter raised by the member for Ashford related to whether or not she had a copy. This is not relevant. We will get on with the issue of the Supply Bill. It is almost dinner time.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Do you wish to break for tea now?

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, continue with debate.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I make the point that the Treasurer wrote to the—

Mrs GERAGHTY: The Speaker clearly gave a ruling that any debate must relate to money issues. The member has wandered around that direction of the Speaker and will not come back to it. He is defying the ruling. I ask, Madam Acting Speaker, that the member come back to the debate as requested by the Speaker.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: As I was explaining to the Speaker—

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am confident that the member for Davenport will return to the debate immediately.

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

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Prior to the dinner break, the member for Torrens and the Minister for Housing referred to what could or could not be debated in relation to the Supply Bill. I make the observation that the Treasurer wrote a minute dated 27 May to all members of parliament comprising 15 to 20 pages, in which he stated:

With the Supply Bill due to be debated during the current sitting week of parliament, I felt it timely to provide you with a briefing on the state of the budget to clarify any outstanding issues.

Then there are, as I say, 15 to 20 pages of all sorts of facts and figures, Treasury comments and documents that the Treasurer thinks we should be able to consider during the debate on the Supply Bill. I agree with the Treasurer, so I will go into some of the issues raised by him in his minute, and I am sure that other speakers will take up the Treasurer on his offer to speak about the broad issues in relation to the budget and this Supply Bill. So, I have a different view to that of the member for Torrens and the Minister for Housing as to what can be debated in relation to the Supply Bill, and either they are wrong or the Treasurer is wrong.

In the documents distributed by the Treasurer for debate on the Supply Bill, I read with great interest a minute from the Under Treasurer to the Treasurer about the budget outlook for 2001-02 to 2004-05. Under the section called 'Cost pressures' it states:

We—

that is, Treasury—

have included cost pressures where, in our view, it would be difficult to avoid incurring some additional expenditure, either because of the practicalities of the situation or our perception—

that is, Treasury's perception—

of what is likely to be politically acceptable.

I think it is an interesting observation that the Treasurer places this before parliament as somehow a defence of some of his actions. Ultimately, it is a sad day for the new government if it is going to allow Treasury officers—and I mean no disrespect to Treasury officers: in my dealings with them they have all been very dedicated and professional in what they do—to decide what is politically acceptable in relation to expenditure of the state's money. Ultimately, that is a job for cabinet and for the elected politicians. It sets a very dangerous precedent if the Treasurer says to the house, 'Here is the advice that we are accepting on behalf of Treasury' and that advice happens to include the words 'our perception' (that is, Treasury's perception) 'of what is likely to be politically acceptable'.

So, I give a word of caution to the new government—particularly the Treasurer, but to all his cabinet colleagues in particular, who will have to decide at what point they are going to stand up to the Treasurer and demand some accurate answers about what is happening to the budget and whether the Treasurer is simply blindly putting to them Treasury's view of what is politically acceptable, as he has done in the parliament through this document. This comes down to what the Treasurer has done in structuring the advice that he may be giving to cabinet. I smiled when the Treasurer advised the public that a thing called a 'budget review committee' will be set up, because that is really about the Treasurer controlling advice that will go to cabinet. So the normal pattern is that the Treasurer will pick two or three cabinet ministers who are of like mind to form a budget review committee and they will sell that to their cabinet colleagues on the basis—

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, this is just an observation, for the benefit of the Minister for Environment. The budget review committee will then come back to cabinet with essentially a fait accompli. I think it is very dangerous for new cabinet ministers to accept that. I would encourage them to have some very open debate early in the government's term, to quiz and question the role of the budget review committee, the advice they are taking, the advice they are accepting, and the advice they are giving to the cabinet itself.

I know that previously the budget process was relatively open. We would meet usually around October or November for the first budget bilateral, and around February for a second budget bilateral, where a whole range of issues would be put before the treasurer and the minister, and they would have an open discussion about what were the priorities. Ultimately the priorities would be put to cabinet, and cabinet would sit down and go through all of those priorities and decide as a cabinet what the priorities would be. They did that particularly in relation to the regular budget cabinets where cost issues or new initiatives would be put before the cabinet, and we would all get a say in what would happen in relation to those issues. It would not necessarily go through a filtering process by a budget review committee as has been established by this Treasurer.

I have some very real concerns for members of the new cabinet, that they might not be getting all the information they need. They may well be getting filtered information to try to get them to accept the Treasurer's view about where things should be going in relation to supply and the budget. I guess that is why I noted with some interest that the shadow treasurer in another place mentioned that cabinet colleagues of the Treasurer are going to the former treasurer seeking advice. I guess that is an indication that there are some concerns already within the government about the level, type and nature of advice they are getting from Treasury or the Treasurer in relation to the true state of the budget. I guess I throw a word of caution to my parliamentary colleagues in the cabinet, to make sure they really do take the opportunities to properly question the Treasurer about matters of supply and matters of budget.

I noted with some interest the comments in regard to this issue of cost pressures. There has been a lot of debate by the Treasurer, both publicly and in the house, about whether or not certain cost pressures were taken into consideration. I know that the shadow treasurer in another place has made some response in relation to that. I make the observation for cabinet members and members opposite generally that they need to be careful that they are not being sold a pup. The

agencies will trot out, as is their role, a whole range of programs where they will spend taxpayers' money. We should not necessarily discourage that initiative. We certainly should encourage the initiative of the agencies to come up with new programs.

I can remember being questioned in the house, or seeing the government questioned in the house, about the infamous green book where the type and number of initiatives being considered by the agencies was given to media outlets. I remember an article by Greg Kelton in the *Advertiser* with the headline, '\$1.5 billion State Spending Plan Revealed'. It was all about a green book which contained all the agencies' suggestions of new programs and new initiatives. We could call them cost pressures. We could say, 'Here are all programs that need to be funded.' All had their merits and all had their due consideration, but ultimately it is up to cabinet, based on its best advice, to take that advice into consideration and make its own judgment about those particular cost pressures.

When members opposite and the Treasurer or the government talk about cost pressures, I think we all need to realise that, in every day of the government, and certainly in most cabinet meetings, there will be budget bids and initiatives thrown up for cabinet to consider. Very few cabinet submissions do not have a budget impact of some description. So this issue of cost pressures and budget bids really needs to be put in its right perspective.

The Treasurer says there was \$X million of cost pressures. That may well be the Treasurer's view. The reality is: which ones of those had cabinet formally decided on? When cabinet formally decides on them, they go into a formalised program and decision, and they are implemented by the agencies. Up to that point, they really are a series of agencies' or ministers' wishes which they may wish the cabinet to sign off on. Until cabinet actually signs off on them, they really do not enjoy that status. I think we need to be very cautious about this whole concept of what is a cost pressure, what is a budget bid and what is a cabinet decision, and I think that the Green Book, as reported in the *Advertiser*, really reflects that. I read that article with interest because the now Premier said:

How does the Premier—

that is, the then premier—

plan to pay for these initiatives? Will it be through more privatisation or higher taxes?

Well, Premier, the same question could be asked of you given the claims of the Treasurer over the last few days. The other point that needs to be addressed during the supply debate—and, to some degree, it is raised in the Treasurer's substantial document (which he has provided to the house for the supply debate)—are questions in regard to the overspending of agencies and how governments treat those. I note the comments of the shadow treasurer in another place. Essentially, the shadow treasurer says that the principle behind overspending of a government agency is that they should not be rewarded.

In effect, he is saying that if the agency does not have any discipline, if the agency cannot control its spending, then other agencies or other government budget lines will ultimately pay the price by having to subsidise that. That is a fair observation. As another word of caution to the new cabinet ministers, the danger is that the big agencies will run the agenda, and there are two very big agencies: education and health. From memory, 60 to 65 per cent of the state budget is tied up in those two portfolios; and if cabinet is not

careful and if ministers of these smaller agencies are not careful the smaller agencies will pay the penalty for the big agencies if the big agencies are not disciplined.

We will be observing the enthusiasm of the ministers involved in the smaller agencies and how they stand up to the Treasurer and the bigger agencies in relation to overspending issues, because what is a small amount of money to the big agencies, such as education and health, is a mammoth amount of money to smaller agencies such as, for example, the environment. It is important that the government establish early a sense of discipline within the agencies whereby the overspending will not be rewarded by write-off of debts. Rather, it should adopt a strategy of repayment over some time back into the budget or to the head room so that the smaller agencies are not disadvantaged significantly by the bigger agencies.

The other issue I want to touch on is this infamous black hole, which certainly has been the subject of some discussion over the last four to six weeks. I guess that the shadow treasurer, the Hon. Mr Lucas in another place, has made a number of speeches and released a number of documents in relation to the issue. What the documents really show us, depending on which document of which date one reads, is that the surplus advised was going to be somewhere between \$60 million and \$96 million. There can be only one reason for the Treasurer to somehow try to convert that, in a matter of three or four weeks, into a \$26 million deficit: if it is a \$96 million surplus down to a \$26 million deficit, that is, roughly enough, a \$120 million or \$130 million turnaround.

That can only indicate that the government is writing off accumulated debts within agencies to that amount, or that it intends to spend that amount of money in funding promises it made at the election that it cannot or could not possibly afford. We believe that this is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. We said at the election that we doubted that the government had the capacity to pay for its election promises. We know that the former treasurer has provided minutes dated 15 and 16 January (provided by the Under Treasurer) which confirm the existence of those surpluses; it also confirms that the decisions taken by the Treasurer are in accordance with Treasury advice.

It is important that we note that—‘are in accordance with Treasury advice’. The then treasurer made a particular point of seeking the advice of Treasury officers—that he was acting in accordance with Treasury advice—and clearly the advice back to him was that that has occurred. I think that the current Treasurer should clarify how he has managed to turn a \$96 million surplus into a \$26 million deficit in a matter of weeks. I think it is incumbent on the Treasurer to come before the house and ultimately explain that, and he may wish to take that opportunity when we are considering either this or some other bill.

The former treasurer made some effort, during debate in the other chamber on the mid year budget review (which began on 8 May), to set out the way in which the mid year budget review works and the fact that the memos existed, and he tabled the memos to show that the budget, as advised by Treasury, was indeed in surplus. I think that is important to note. We are pretty cynical, I guess, about the government’s motives in relation to creating a \$26 million deficit. If one looks at what the former treasurer said, one will see that it is clear that the enterprise bargaining arrangements for teachers do not kick in, as I understand it, until about October this year. So, they really have no impact on this year’s budget. They kick in at a later date and, of course, provision was

made for them, despite the comments of the Treasurer to the contrary.

The shadow treasurer in another place (Hon. Rob Lucas) makes the point (and he put on the record in the other place a number of things) about the two memos that they clearly show that there would be a \$96 million surplus rather than a \$26 million deficit for this financial year. The Treasurer, of course, has also made some allegations about the former treasurer, saying he was advised of former cost pressures and did not take any action. I want to spend a minute or two addressing that issue, because I think the former treasurer certainly has shown that he did take action with respect to those cost pressures.

The former treasurer has released the Treasury document presented to him on 15 January this year. Page 4 of that memo indicates that, in terms of the revised budget outcomes as a result of the mid year budget review, there had been, from Treasury’s viewpoint, an unexpected, large boost in stamp duty revenues, in particular, as a result of the commercial and residential property boom throughout Australia. So, Treasury was advising the then treasurer at that point that there was some surprise increase in the level of revenue through the streams on the property boom. That memo dated 15 January (which is the day on which the election was announced) from the Under Treasurer forecast an underlying surplus of \$96 million in this financial year (2001-02), and it also provides a series of figures for the three years 2002-03 up to 2004-05. The Under Treasurer went on to say there were a number of cost pressures which meant that that set of outcomes was unlikely to occur.

The document goes on to list the cost of the Education Department’s enterprise bargaining. The Education Department forecast an over-expenditure of \$25 million in this financial year and the possibility that it had a structural problem with its budget. The Department of Human Services expected to overspend by some \$7.5 million this year. The current numbers assume that the Department of Human Services would claw back some \$21.5 million in expenditure over the out years. It also raised the cost of the MFS enterprise bargain. The document goes on to state:

In our view, it would be prudent to increase head room for these accounts.

Treasury produced a series of initial recommendations in the memo of 15 January. I stipulate that, based on Treasury saying it would take into account those other cost pressures, the recommendation for this financial year was for a surplus not of \$96 million but of some \$60 million. However, over the four year period it was broadly in balance. When one is talking about a \$7 billion budget, some surpluses and deficits even out when you look at them over the four year period. Some were around \$19 million, or just under \$5 million a year if you take the average over that time. The shadow treasurer suggests that, to all intents and purposes in overall budgetary terms in a \$7 billion-plus a year budget, an average deficit of \$4 million or \$5 million in the out years is broadly in balance. This means that, having taken all those issues into account, the Treasury recommendation was to make some annual timing adjustments in the budget to produce what would then be a string of small deficits which, on average, would be \$4 million to \$5 million during those four years. On 15 January, the day of the announcement of the election, the Treasurer wrote back a reasonably strong note to Treasury officers. That note has been released publicly and the first point there is that the then treasurer noted that there was

strong opposition, although no decision yet, to the quantum of the DETE EB bid. That of course was the teachers' wage case, for those who are following. The memo continued:

As you know, I also opposed the size of the bid, so DTF should not incorporate specific provision for the bid in our documentation. However, I agree we should use some of the underlying surplus to increase contingency issues, including the wage issues.

I break there because that is an important point. The allegation made about the former treasurer was that he was asked to increase contingencies and he refused to do so. That minute from the shadow treasurer, in which he gives that instruction to Treasury, clearly shows that the comments to the contrary are inaccurate. It is important that the parliament realises that the then treasurer took action in relation to that particular issue. The shadow treasurer continued in his memo:

As you should be aware, I have strong views agency overspending should not be rewarded by writing off, so I do not believe we should provision for it.

I made comments earlier about how government should treat the overspending of agencies. It will be interesting to see how much discipline this cabinet has in relation to the overspending of agencies.

The Treasurer's minute then goes on and makes a series of points. He asks them to confirm those assumptions that he (the Treasurer) has correctly summarised the DTF advice in these memos. That is an interesting and important point. He actually asked Treasury to confirm that with those assumptions he has correctly summarised DTF advice in the memo. There is a whole range of other points that I could make. The memo is public and I will not read it all. The important point is that he asked Treasury to confirm that he had correctly summarised their advice and, ultimately, Treasury wrote back and confirmed that he had. Any inference from the government, the Treasurer in particular, that the former treasurer did not allow contingency is patently wrong and it is important that be on the record.

The government raised a whole range of issues in relation to the Supply Bill, but the interesting thing from the opposition's viewpoint is: in the short time the new government has been in, what have we learnt? We have learnt that we have senior members of the government who, particularly in the financial area, are not as accurate as they could be. They have gone on radio and made comments that are clearly not correct. They have made off-hand comments in the house and come in and made ministerial statements to clarify them and there is a general view, particularly in relation to financial matters, that the government bears a lot of watching. In my view, and in the view of the opposition, the government is seeking to orchestrate a deficit this year for a number of reasons: first, to convince its own cabinet that it has an issue to deal with so that the Treasurer can go through and make the cuts he or his budget review committee wants. Whether cabinet has the full information or not is a matter for cabinet to worry about. I sense that the budget review committee will do a job on the new cabinet. I know that some of them have not been in cabinet long. Some of them have not even been in the parliament for long. I guess I am concerned for those—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order! The member will refrain from grieving during this debate and will return to the debate on supply. I have given you a lot of latitude as you are the lead speaker, but I ask you to return to the substance of the debate. If you have a grievance afterwards, you can talk about the cabinet all you like.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. You may not have been in the house—

The ACTING SPEAKER: I was.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS:—in fact, you were not in the house when I started immediately after the dinner adjournment—when I brought to the attention of members in the house then (and I bring it to your attention now, Mr Acting Speaker, for your interest) that the reason I mention a lot of these issues is that the Treasurer did the opposition the courtesy of writing to all members of parliament a 15 or 20 page minute—although there was the admission by the housing minister that she, unfortunately, had been left off the list. I will quote the Treasurer again, as follows:

During the last two weeks of parliament, there was a substantial amount of debate on the current state of the budget. With the Supply Bill due to be debated during the current sitting week of parliament, I—

that is, the Treasurer—

felt it timely to provide you with a briefing on the state of the budget to clarify any outstanding issues.

The Treasurer sets the standard for the debate. The Treasurer has generously given us 15 to 20 pages of briefing about Treasury matters and the budget issue. Mr Acting Speaker, I understand your ruling, and I will continue to refer to the issues involving supply and the memo given to us by the Treasurer relating to the Supply Bill during the course of this debate. The Treasurer has given us a significant document, and members are quite within their rights to refer to a briefing paper provided by the government to the opposition to debate the Supply Bill. Literally hundreds of lines within this document raise issues relating to the budget. I accept the Treasurer's understanding, and I will not comment any further on the Treasurer's relationship with cabinet, as I can understand how the Acting Speaker may think that is a matter for a grievance, and maybe I will take that up in a grievance debate.

In summing up my contribution to the Supply Bill, I highlight some of the points I have previously made. I would caution the government about taking Treasury advice on what it thinks is politically acceptable. I remind the government that it is not the Treasury officers who decide that but the elected members of cabinet. The briefing paper provided by the Treasurer states:

We have included cost pressures where, in our view—

that is, Treasury's view—

it would be very difficult to avoid incurring some additional expenditure, either because of the practicalities of the situation or our—

that is, Treasury's—

perception of what is likely to be politically acceptable.

My suggestion to the cabinet is that it not accept all that advice from Treasury but that it put its own judgment on what is or is not politically acceptable, despite the good work, dedication and professionalism of Treasury officers.

I also suggest that we have another good look—and this matter was raised in the document provided to us by the Treasurer—at what is a cost pressure, what is a budget bid and what is a formal decision of cabinet. The issue that the Treasurer raises in relation to cost pressures really is a series of budget bids from the various agencies, and no-one here would expect the government to fund every single bid from every single agency, every single time. The cabinet needs to bring in its own sense of discipline as to how it will deal with those.

I have some concerns about the budget review committee, because my mind is cynical enough to suggest that that is a

way for the Treasurer to control the other cabinet ministers and to corral them into a position where essentially he is delivering to them a *fait accompli* on the various decisions. However, that will ultimately be for the cabinet ministers concerned to take up with the Treasurer if they have the courage.

I would also like to re-emphasise the issue of overspending of agencies. We have some concerns about the write-off of agency overspending, particularly from the viewpoint of the big agencies 'doing in' the small agencies. I am particularly concerned for those little agencies which do not have the budget flexibility to handle some of those issues and I am suspicious that what will happen is that the big agencies' overspending will be written off and that will mean that the small agencies will suffer a significant penalty as a result. We all know that it is the bigger agencies with the bigger budgets that have greater flexibility to deal with those issues.

With those few comments, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to support the Supply Bill and I look forward to quizzing the government on its economic performance in due course.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support the Supply Bill. A sum of \$2 600 million or \$2.6 billion—that is a lot of money in anyone's terms. The member for Playford yesterday said that some adjustments had been made in the budget over the last few years because of the bad bank. What a term that is—the bad bank. We are providing \$2.6 billion for supply in this bill. Imagine how much we would have had if not for the bad bank, if we still had the good bank that existed in the dim dark ages of the previous Labor government. If the bad bank had not been thrust upon us, if that \$10 billion debt in today's terms was not thrust upon us, we would have a lot more than \$2.6 billion for the Supply Bill.

This \$2.6 billion will be used to carry out a lot of valuable measures that were put up by the previous government, and we do not want to see it wasted. We have heard it said that there is an \$11 million black hole here and a \$13 million black hole there. Let us put it into perspective. Of \$2 600 million, \$11 million is less than 1 per cent. I am not quite sure exactly what the figure is and I will not waste the time of the house working it out. It is a minuscule amount. It is not like running a hot bread shop or a small business. We do not have tax deductions or depreciation. We were put in the situation of having to deal with changing circumstances, where \$10 billion of debt had to be reduced, we were forced to do that and we came up with a terrific budget that enabled \$2.6 billion to be used for supply. How did we do that? We had to sell ETSA; we leased ETSA.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order! I have said many times while I have been in the chair, and the Speaker has reinforced it, that this is not a grievance debate. This is about supply from now to the budget. I understand that the member has things that he wants to say but I ask him to relate them to supply.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I understand that, Mr Acting Speaker. The \$2.6 billion that is available for supply results from the fact that the previous government was able to manage the economy in such a way that we were able to produce balanced budgets, and I hope this government is somewhere near as good a financial manager as the previous government was. There is talk of black holes. We all know what a black hole is: it sucks everything in. We all know who has been sucked in this time. It is not the opposition, it is not the people on the street—it is the government. Never believe

your own publicity and do not believe the stories about black holes.

The sum of \$2.6 billion has been made available. It will be used for teachers and firefighters and it will enable many valuable services to be provided. I had the pleasure of visiting Brighton Secondary School a couple of weeks ago and spoke to the teachers there. Teachers are valuable members of our society. I was a teacher once and I would never denigrate teachers in any way, shape or form. So it is very important that we use this \$2.6 billion to help fund our schools, our firefighters, and all the things that come under the Supply Bill regulations.

Let me look at what the Auditor-General said about how we were able to arrive at this \$2.6 billion for the Supply Bill. We were able to reduce the debt of this state and, as the Auditor-General said, the sale of ETSA brought immediate debt reductions to \$4.9 billion, and that reduced our debt down to \$3.3 billion in June 2000. With a smaller debt of \$3.3 billion—perhaps not so small; it is still a huge amount of money, but as measured against \$10 billion—allowed the previous government to produce a budget where \$2.6 billion is available for supply.

We have heard fairytales from the government about how badly this state is going and what a terrible situation it is in. Let me just remind the house of what those outside are actually thinking. They are not sucked in by the black hole comments. They know that this \$2.6 billion that has been made available really exists. If I can just read what Mr Peter Vaughan from Business SA said—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I understand that the member has things he wishes to say, but I recommend that he leaves them for the grievance debate. If he has remarks to make about the Supply Bill, please make them, but he should not comment on any other issue.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The Supply Bill is a vital part of this government's future. Here we are on 28 May and we have not yet debated any real legislation; apparently we will get some in the next few days. We are still debating routine matters. The sum of \$2.6 billion should not just be written off without any discussion or without any approval from the opposition. It was this opposition that put this budget together. It was this opposition that worked tirelessly for the last nine years to put this state in the fantastic situation that it is now in. We have a booming economy, and if it was not for the fact that we have such a booming economy—if exports had not been at record levels, if this government had not managed the situation as well as it possibly could and did—we would not have \$2.6 billion for the Supply Bill.

Members opposite may say whatever they like about black holes: they can create fictitious figures. However, I must say that economists are put on this world only to make meteorologists look good—that's a saying I heard from Lew Owens, the electricity regulator—and it is so true.

If this government is really worth its salt, if it is really genuine, open, honest and bipartisan, it needs to acknowledge that there is no black hole and that there is \$2.6 billion of real money there, and that the debts about which the member for Playford speaks (for instance, the One-Tel situation) or the analogies about which the member for Napier spoke are not true analogies.

When considering the \$2.6 billion provided for in this Supply Bill, we really need to look at some of the initiatives of the previous government. This is not just raising issues that could be raised and agreed to. Rather, this is to confirm that

this is a real fear. The quotes that I would like to read from Peter Vaughan, of Business SA, about how the state is booming are real. They are on the public record.

Mr SNELLING: I rise on a point of order, sir. The member for Morphett is defying your previous ruling to speak purely to matters of supply, and I ask you, sir, to bring him to order.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I thank the member for Playford for his point of order, although I do not uphold it. I understand that this is the first time that the member for Morphett has participated in a debate on a supply bill. I will give him a bit of latitude. I have reminded him many times that this is a supply debate, not a grievance debate.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I appreciate your tolerance and your latitude.

An honourable member: We're all tolerant in here.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I will not dignify that—it is the alacrity and the perspicuity about which I have doubts. Where was I before I was taken to task by the member for Playford with his \$11 million out of \$2.6 billion of the total Supply Bill budget—\$2.6 billion? That is a lot of money.

Members interjecting:

Dr McFETRIDGE: I keep saying that because it is about time people realise that it is a whole concept that we are looking at. We are not looking at a very small variable. We are looking at a large—

An honourable member: So you're saying that \$11 million doesn't matter?

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am saying that in the whole context—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Morphett to ignore interjections.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you. I should ignore them.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Schubert will know not to speak while out of his seat. He has been here long enough.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What will we actually spend the money on? We are going to spend it on keeping the Public Service busy. The Minister for the Environment and Conservation interjected a moment ago that they are watching what I am doing. But let me tell you that we will be watching what the environment department does.

An honourable member: They're going to cut their budget.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I understand that there will be some budgetary tightening, through no fault of the previous government. We have \$2.6 billion that we can spend. The Minister for Environment was really quite harsh when he described the Barcoo Outlet as a drain. Hopefully, the \$17 million spent by the previous government will not be wasted.

Let us hope that the public servants who will be funded from the \$2.6 billion will be used to continue the previous government's good work in expanding the wetlands. Look at the Morphettville wetlands with 600 megalitres of water going underground every year, with 300 megalitres being pumped back onto the race track, which saves about \$120 000 a year. It is really quite amazing. People just do not want to look at that: there are none so blind as those who do not want to see. The racing industry injects \$550 million into the state's economy, allowing next year's Supply Bill and that of the following year to be enacted and, hopefully, it will be more than \$2.6 billion.

The Speaker and I were lucky enough to have lunch at the Investigator Science and Technology Centre for the launch of Andy Thomas's science program. While there, I was alerted to the fact that funding has not been made available in past budgets for the expansion of the centre. I urge this government to divert some of the \$2.6 billion for the expansion of this wonderful facility or its replacement at a new location, such as the Entertainment Centre or some other location.

Staffing is perhaps one area where this government is saving, and it will allow more than \$2.6 billion to be made available. It is interesting to look at the staff being employed by this government. I do not have the time now, so I will save that discussion for a grievance debate. However, it is interesting to see all the family and friends coming on board, and I wonder whether they are being paid as much as ordinary public servants. The litany of nepotism that is going on is absolutely amazing. There should be—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member on numerous occasions not to stray into debate in other areas. The member will confine his remarks to supply: it is a very simple standing order.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I am sorry if I appear to be recalcitrant; I am trying not to be. The area of public/private partnerships was referred to today in one of the ministerial statements. I hope that some of the money from the Supply Bill will go towards investigating public/private partnerships. I am particularly interested in the refurbishment of the Glenelg tram lines and the supply of new trams. Initiatives proposed by the previous government included not only the upgrade of the Glenelg transport corridor and the procurement of new trams but also the development of a new state aquatic centre, particularly at Marion in the member for Mitchell's electorate. It is well and truly overdue. The people down there are on a time frame, so I hope that public/private partnerships are investigated by the public servants and shown to be something that is worthwhile. It would be good value to spend some of the \$2.6 billion on that facility. The other public/private partnership is the new Investigator Science and Technology Centre, which is something that I really hope the public/private partnerships will be involved in.

I am not quite sure how SA Tourism fits in with the public service, but I certainly would be very interested to find out a little more about exactly what the link is. Hopefully, some of this Supply Bill money will go towards funding it. The sum of \$3.1 billion was returned to the state from tourism last year, and 45 000 people visit the Bay on any weekend, so I hope that the public servants who receive the benefit from the Supply Bill will be involved in expanding this wonderful industry that keeps some parts of this state buoyant.

The wine industry is another area that I hope will continue to benefit from public service input. The Supply Bill money will certainly be used to foster overseas relations and improve the viability of the wine centre. The wine centre will not improve if we keep talking it down the way we are. It deserves support and some money to be allocated to it, so I hope that some of the Supply Bill funds will be used for that as well.

Capital expenditure on schools perhaps does not fit in to the Supply Bill: it is more capital expenditure. I like to think that public servants would spend some of this money on getting out there and looking at the state of some of the schools. The previous government did much towards improving the state of our schools. Partnerships 21 was a very

successful program, and it has been very successful in the seat of Morphett.

The Public Service should be committed to coming together with the teaching profession to produce very smooth transitions into P21, where parents and school communities have been involved in the management of schools. Good money is being spent under the Supply Bill, where public servants are doing an excellent job.

We then need to look at what will happen next year, and in following years. This government cannot keep blaming the previous government. We were not the whingeing, carping, whining opposition. They are in government now, and it is time to start making some really tough decisions and to realise that with power comes responsibility.

You are there by 93 votes. That is all you are there by—93 votes. Ask the member for Norwood. So, do not think you are there for a long time, but make sure you are there for the good of the state, not just for the good of yourselves. I support the Supply Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): It is my pleasure to rise in this house this evening to support the Supply Bill. It has been a rather interesting debate to date. From my experience, limited though it may be in the house over the last 4½ years, the debate on this occasion has been somewhat restrained, and I think that finding a different group in opposition today than I have experienced over the past few years may explain some of that restraint.

But I come back to what we are actually talking about and, Mr Acting Speaker, as you keep reminding members in this house, we are debating the Supply Bill, and this particular Supply Bill is to appropriate the sum of \$2.6 billion to allow the machinery of government to continue to turn over the next period, perhaps until October this year, when the new government's budget will be passed and ratified by the Executive Council.

I feel at liberty to discuss all matters and functions that will be performed by the state public sector between now and later this year, possibly October, and in doing so I also wish to canvass some of the things that have happened historically to bring us to this point. I think it is well within the purview of this debate to understand why and how we have got to the budgetary position that we now find ourselves in in South Australia.

The services provided to the citizenry of South Australia by the state government are spread far and wide. Indeed, in most cases—and I say in most cases, not in all cases—they are an absolute necessity for the lifestyle that the people of South Australia aspire to. Of course, we recognise that most of the moneys appropriated by the state government are allocated to two areas, namely education and health, and I will spend a little time tonight addressing both previous and present government policies in those areas.

Of course, we have been through an election period where much has been said about policies by both sides of politics in South Australia, but health and education were the two main issues identified by the major parties in the electorate during that process. The people of South Australia went through that election process with, at the forefront of their mind and their understanding of the politics of South Australia, what either side might in government do in those two fields. I will start with education. It is worth noting that, even though there has been much rhetoric put out about our education system—and a large proportion of the moneys being appropriated in this bill will go to the education

sector—it has been identified that the South Australian education system provides one of the best outcomes experienced by any jurisdiction in the world.

In fact, towards the end of last year the Labor Party's Evatt Foundation vindicated what we were doing here in South Australia and suggested that the South Australian education system was the best education system, providing the best outcomes to its students. We went through the election period with a lot of rhetoric, and the then opposition would have had the electorate believe that it was going to do fantastic things in education, revamp the education system and pour lots more money into the system. In fact, we have just been through negotiations between the new government and the teachers' union on the new teachers' pay deal, which will run for the next three years, I think it is. This has also been the subject of much debate, particularly by the Treasurer, as to the state of the finances of South Australia.

The Treasurer has tried to make a claim that there is something like \$350 million worth of black hole in the budget of the current period and over the next three years. It is very interesting that in the mid-year budget review the Under Treasurer would supply figures to suggest that in the current year we have a surplus of some \$96 million, and very interesting that the former treasurer (the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place) was aware of the cost pressures that would face the government over the next few years and ensured that the government put substantial sums of money aside for things such as teachers' wage increases.

Some \$205 million was identified and put away for that purpose, a sum of money that the current Treasurer has taken some weeks to find, which is rather amazing. I do not think it has been the fact that the Treasurer had great difficulty in finding it, but the Treasurer has a penchant for coming into this place and going before the media and selectively quoting from a whole host of documents to try to create a perception that bears no resemblance to reality. In my experience, the Treasurer has made an art form of doing that, and in this case has almost convinced his own colleagues on that side of the house.

I was listening to the member for Davenport's remarks regarding this matter and was interested to note where the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer are going, and I think he made some very pertinent remarks about the way that the new and very green ministry should address itself to the budgetary position it finds itself in and ask the Treasurer some very serious questions about the real position. I refer to the old axiom that says that there are lies, damn lies, and then there are statistics. Treasury figures are nothing more than statistics in the sense that, unless you have a very good overview of the whole budgetary situation, it is impossible to know where you are going.

To pull one or two pages out of the total budget and say 'Aha: I have found a black hole here' is an absolute nonsense, because there are issues of timing, of when you account for certain revenues coming in and certain outgoings, and the timing can literally make a difference of hundreds of millions of dollars. I note that some of the papers which the Treasurer has very kindly made available to all members of the house are very selective in the information that they put before members. I also note that in the paper the Treasurer put out (I think it was on 14 March) he talked about the cost pressures facing the Treasury in the out years.

It is worth noting—and I did mention this in my contribution to the Address in Reply and it is worth reminding the house yet again—that the amounts included as cost pressures

in the Under Treasurer's minute to the Treasurer (which, as I said, I think was released on 14 March) on the mid year budget review 'are necessarily a matter of judgment'. Even though he does also say that the cost pressures are real ones, he says that the potential outcomes presented in the minutes are a very real possibility unless some difficult decisions are taken. That is the underlying problem that this new, very green ministry is facing. Certainly I hope that they can learn to make some of those tough decisions over the next couple of months and certainly before they bring down the budget on 11 July. Some of those tough decisions might involve saying to the Treasurer, 'We do not exactly believe you. You have not convinced us,' because I can tell members that the Treasurer has not convinced me. I do not think he has convinced the people of South Australia. The reason he has not convinced the people in the wider community of South Australia—

Mr Meier interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: As the member for Goyder says, 'Is he telling porky pies?' I suggest that he is bending the truth somewhat; I will put it that way. He has not convinced me and he certainly has not convinced those erstwhile members of the journalist fraternity in South Australia. They have been very careful and very circumspect in the way in which they have reported some of the nonsense that he would have them report, and as a consequence he has not made a hit with the population of South Australia. Watching members on the opposite side in question time today, I noticed a fair bit of doubt on the faces of some of his ministerial colleagues—

Mr Meier interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: Again, as I mentioned in my contribution to the Address in Reply, it is the used car salesman who tells you he is honest of whom you have to be very careful. You really have to be wary of any government which spends so long telling you how honest it might be. My experience of human nature is that, if you cannot convince someone of your honesty and integrity by your deeds, then you have lost the argument and you have lost them. To actually bring in bogus matters and—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will refrain from straying from the debate on the Supply Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS: I take your point, sir.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is a grievance debate after this period. I have warned many members. I have given the honourable member lots of latitude. This is the honourable member's last warning.

Mr WILLIAMS: I rise on a point of clarification, sir. You have given me many warnings? I thought that was the first warning you have given me.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I said I have given many warnings; this is your first and last.

Mr WILLIAMS: Thank you, sir. I was about to say that I feel I am straying somewhat from the matter before the house at this juncture and certainly I accept your ruling. However, I do come back to the point that the Supply Bill which we have before us is to appropriate a large sum of money to keep the wheels of government running for the next six months. It is interesting to note that clause 3(2) provides:

Money must not be issued or applied pursuant to that appropriation for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated by parliament for the same purpose in respect of the 2001-2002 financial year.

Mr Meier: What does that mean?

Mr WILLIAMS: Well, the honourable member asks what that means. Basically, it means that until the new

government introduces and has approved its own budget it is tied to the budget of the previous government. So, over the next period (and as I said a few minutes ago, that could be up to four or five months), the government will indeed be tied to running the public sector using basically the same policies that the previous government had. I can only say that that is a good thing for the people of the South Australia because the state's budget has been run not only in a very tight manner but also in a very responsible manner for a number of years now. That is why we are in the situation in which we now find ourselves.

I would like to ask a question with regard to what some of these cost pressures are. We know that the Premier gave certain undertakings to the member for Hammond. It is as a consequence of those undertakings that the Premier finds himself in that position. One of those undertakings was the eradication of branched broomrape in the Murray Mallee area, in that member's electorate. For the benefit of the members, I would like to quote from the *Stock Journal* of 16 May this year, as follows:

About 30 hectares of farming land will be targeted for fumigation as determined by a rating system developed by the broomrape control team. Costing up to \$8 000 per hectare, the move is part of a \$2.3 million project supported by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council.

So, sir, 30 hectares of farming land is to be fumigated at a cost of \$8 000 a hectare. The article goes on to say:

More than 33 000 hectares of farming land with branched broomrape infestations had been detected in the Murray Bridge district.

If one contemplates 33 000 hectares at \$8 000 a hectare, one sees that that is a cool \$260-odd million. So, when we talk about cost pressures, perhaps some of the ministers on the front bench over there might like to ask the Treasurer and the Premier why the pressure is coming on all the agencies right across government to try to save some money: it is to pay for some of the promises that have been made. I do not have the answers to the questions sir, but I think it would be of great interest to other ministers who are struggling with their portfolios.

I now move on to some of the things that are happening in my electorate and affecting the people whom I represent. The cabinet was in my electorate last weekend, and it was interesting to note that the Premier was talking about—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Tell us about Tom's drain.

Mr WILLIAMS: Tom's drain is excellent, actually; it is working very well. The Premier spoke today in the house about the reopening of the South-East rail network at a cost of \$10 million. Might I just come back and correct the Premier? Sir, you might pull me up for straying here a little, because I am going to say that the \$10 million for the reopening of the South Australian rail network is not a part of this appropriation. The Premier tried to indicate to the house and to the general public of South Australia today, in this house, that it was; but it is not. That money was set aside last year in a bill that was passed by this house to set up the Rail Infrastructure Fund, and the money over this financial year and next financial year will, in fact, come from the sale of excess country rail assets. It is not coming from Consolidated Account at all, so the Premier got that one very wrong, and perhaps in that he is not unlike his senior minister the Treasurer.

One of the fantastic things that the Liberal administration did for rural and regional South Australia over the last few years was the system of grants that we made to sporting clubs

and associations. The Minister for Sport and Recreation was asked today whether he would commit to continuing those grants, in particular, a grant known as the Community Facilities Grant. The minister was most discourteous to the house when he suggested that the previous government used this as a porkbarrelling exercise when a couple of the electorates which did best out of those grants were Giles and Hammond.

In any case, the previous government put aside \$17 million in this financial year and the next two financial years for this program. This is one program which I seriously urge the new government to maintain. This program has done a huge amount for the lifestyle of people right across the state, particularly in rural and regional areas. Providing sporting facilities in small country towns is very difficult and to be given a bit of a leg-up through a dollar-for-dollar grant is most helpful, because not only does it improve the lifestyle and the social welfare of the people in those communities but it does a wonderful thing for their health by encouraging and enabling them to become involved in sporting activities. I have just about used up my time, and that disappoints me greatly, but I will be back during the grievance debate because there are a few other matters that I would like to bring to the attention of the house.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I, too, rise to support the passage of the Supply Bill.

Mr SNELLING: On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, the honourable member is addressing the house out of his place. I ask you to direct him to move back to his place to address the house from there.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Although the honourable member does not have the carriage of this bill for the opposition, I will extend him the courtesy of allowing him to speak from the Leader of the Opposition's place given that he is the only shadow minister in the chamber. Technically, the point of order is correct, and that seat should go to the member for Davenport who has carriage of the bill for the opposition.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Speaker, and for educating the member for Playford who has been here for four years and should know how this place works by now. I rise to support the Supply Bill—

Mr Snelling interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: —and if the member for Playford cares to sit back for a little while longer he might learn a little more. I note that some of—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And \$175,000 of it is for you.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Would the Attorney-General like to repeat that interjection?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not respond to interjections; he will address the chair.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The sum of \$2.6 billion is to be appropriated from the Consolidated Account for the public service of this state for the financial year ending 30 June 2003. It makes sense that I and other opposition members should support the passage of this bill to facilitate the spending of these moneys for we know full well that, in the main, it will facilitate the spending of moneys that were pre-programmed in the last budget of the now former Liberal government.

It is worth comparing the passage of this particular bill with one which occurred in 1994—or, I might add, at an

earlier time—because in 1994 we, too, had an incoming government on that occasion, but that particular government was able to put its legislation before the house in a much more timely manner. It is worth reflecting that even though today is 28 May 2002 this is actually the first piece of legislation that has been put before this parliament by the new government and it is but a procedural bill. We look forward to non-procedural bills to see what initiatives, if any, this government is capable of putting forward. However, to date, it has demonstrated itself to be slow off the mark, devoid of policy and slow in putting bills forward.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The current debate is on supply from now until the 11 July budget day. I ask the honourable member to return to the debate. There will be a grievance debate afterwards when he can say anything he likes, but I ask him to obey the standing orders in the same way as I have asked every other member and talk about supply.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: This bill is worth comparing with that of 1994, and it is worth looking at the state of the finances—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Please do not test my patience on this. I am asking you to work within standing orders and talk about the current Supply Bill: not to compare it with anything else but to talk about the current Supply Bill. In the grievance debate you can say whatever you like.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I seek your guidance, sir, but I put to you that it has always been traditional in this place to compare any supply bill with other issues of supply. In my 12½ years that has always been an accepted way of debating a supply bill, through Speaker after Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Speaker Oswald ruled that supply debates were only for the period at hand. He ruled that in 1998 when I was speaking. I uphold my ruling. If you wish to do something else you may; you are well within your rights. Within the terms of this debate, all I am asking you to do is stick to the issue of supply between now and the budget. After that we will have a grievance debate, when you can say whatever you like.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: In referring to the Supply Bill it is necessary that I refer to the circumstances that have resulted in its being in its present form. I will keep within your ruling to ensure that that is the case. If I am to compare this Supply Bill with others before it that have resulted in its form, it is worth noting that in 1994 the Supply Bill had to address different matters to result in the format of the bill today. On that occasion, while supply was facilitated to keep the Public Service moving forward, there was a matter of a \$9.4 billion debt to address, as well as a \$360 million deficit for that financial year. There was a \$9.4 billion debt and a \$360 million deficit.

That presented the Treasurer at the time with quite a quandary. The bill before us presents the Treasurer with considerably less of a quandary. Well might you and other members smile, sir, because there is no doubt that the Treasurer is in a very fortunate position compared with that of the Hon. Stephen Baker, the Treasurer of 1994. In putting together this Supply Bill this Treasurer has faced a debt of some \$3 billion—a \$6.4 billion reduction in the overall debt—and a considerably better picture in so far as it relates to the debt situation.

I am pleased to see you take the chair, Mr Speaker. As you are well aware from your time in this place, the budget has been incredibly difficult to focus on for the past eight years. For eight long years of government successive treasurers—

the Hons Stephen Baker and Rob Lucas—had to address matters of import to try to bring the state's finances back into check. I certainly find it offensive that the Treasurer would stand in this parliament and deride the budget position he inherited, for there is no doubt that the budget position that he inherited was a joy compared with the budget situation that the Hon. Stephen Baker inherited and had to address from December 1993 onwards.

It is interesting that the Treasurer has felt it necessary to assist members in their debate on this bill. I refer to a document that the Treasurer circulated to all members of parliament—at least, that is what I understand from the way in which it was addressed—in preparation for the debate on this bill. His letter is dated 27 May 2002, and is headed 'To all members of parliament'. He states, in part:

During the last two weeks of parliament, there was a substantial amount of debate on the current state of the budget. With the Supply Bill due to be debated during the current sitting week of parliament, I felt it timely to provide you with a briefing on the state of the budget to clarify any outstanding issues.

It is very generous of the Treasurer to see it as his responsibility to brief us on the state of the budget, and this makes very interesting reading. Of course, Mr Speaker, you would be very familiar with the state of the budget as it was in 1994. I repeat: this one is sheer joy. In the accompanying documentation to his memo to all members of parliament the Treasurer has a mid year review total—in fact, a projection from the 2001-02 financial year through each successive financial year to 2004-05. He indicates a \$2 million surplus in each of those financial years, as advised to him. Of course, that has been the position taken by the Hon. Rob Lucas, that is, there would be a \$2 million surplus for each of those financial years; in other words, a modest surplus, effectively a balanced position. Then he determines that there are a number of cost pressures. Of course, we have heard a lot about cost pressures in this chamber, and the Treasurer has floated a variety of figures before the parliament and a number of those figures have proven to be erroneous in their detail. The Treasurer already has been forced publicly to backtrack on some of the figures he has provided, and doubtless there is a case that he may have to do likewise again after statements he made in this house today.

In the current financial year (2001-02), the Treasurer identifies some \$60 million of cost pressures. He identifies a further \$89 million of cost pressures in 2002-03; \$119 million in 2003-04; and \$168 million in 2004-05. Publicly, the Treasurer has accumulated those cost pressures and endeavoured to portray them as a budget blowout. I contend that is mischievous in the extreme, because the Treasurer should know—and, if he does not, all of us should be even more concerned—that something identified as a cost pressure does not necessarily become a cost reality and does not in itself have to take place in the budget without a trade-off occurring. In other words, it is not simply an additional budget amount as the Treasurer would endeavour to portray.

It is fair to say that over the preceding eight years there have been more than a few cost pressures, and certainly far more substantial than what has been floated in the document the Treasurer has circulated. I encourage members of the government, if they are unfamiliar with past documents, to ask the Treasurer to provide them and compare them to see just how much better the budget situation is now than it was in any of the preceding eight years. There is no doubt that

what have been alluded to as cost pressures here are minor in the extreme when compared with the total state revenue.

Of course, the Treasurer has made scant reference to the fact that, as well as cost pressures, there are actually some areas of increased revenue. It is important to focus on those because Treasury projections show that taxation revenue has been increased by \$19 million. Since the publication of the 2001-02 mid-year budget review, what Treasury describes as the 'continuing buoyancy in the property market' has led to an upward revision of \$20 million to conveyancing stamp duty receipts for 2001-02. They are interesting words—'continuing buoyancy in the property market'—and they are the words of Treasury, not me. That buoyancy in the property market certainly was not the result of any period of Labor government: in fact, far from that. Eight years ago, when the Liberal Party took government, there was no buoyancy in the property market. In fact, it is fair to say the property market was depressed. We were still suffering the after-effects of rampaging interest rates under federal and state Labor governments, and there was much to turn around.

Contrast that with today where we have a buoyant property market; we have home building approvals at an all-time high; we have home ownership increasing; we have housing more affordable than it has been for a considerable period; and we have a large number of South Australians now able to enjoy the opportunity of owning their own home, in no small part due to the fact that the federal Liberal Government has been able to put in place a new home buyers' grant that has encouraged people to take up home ownership. Many people are now in home ownership who would not have been in home ownership if there had been continuing Labor government, for their fiscal recklessness would not have seen the economy in such a shape where these benefits were able to be offered to Australians, and indeed South Australians. There have also been revisions to a range of other tax lines that have improved the revenue outlook for 2001-02 by a further \$8 million. Treasury defines those as largely coming from insurance mortgage duty and gambling receipts. Of course, the amount of mortgage duties is in no small way due to additional home building activity that has occurred.

The Attorney-General generally interjects in relation to gambling receipts. He and I share a common view on gambling and I know that he, like I, does not support a lot of the gambling opportunities in our state. Be that as it may, they have generated revenue which has added to the state budget. I hope that the Attorney would argue, as I would, that they need to be paid out at the other end to assist those who become gambling addicted. I look forward to the programs that his government puts forward—and particularly programs that the Attorney-General himself might champion—to help combat gambling addiction and what the Attorney-General knows to be crimes often associated with endeavouring to obtain funds to prop up addictions. I know that the Attorney-General wants to do something about crime—at least, that is what he tells us.

It is also interesting to look at those areas that are described as cost pressures within the Treasurer's paper. He describes them in a range of areas but principally focuses on human services where he claims that hospitals have overspent their budgets by between \$10 million and \$20 million a year and require an additional \$11 million per annum to achieve a sustainable budget position. He talks about an extra allowance for budget overruns in the education, training and employment portfolio; an additional \$21 million required to replace buses in excess of 25 years of age; an additional

\$19 million required over four years for cost overruns by the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, the Convention Centre and the National Wine Centre; and an additional \$6 million required to meet the impact of increased electricity costs across government.

Those cost pressures are no different from the cost pressures that any government in Australia is going to experience during every year of putting together a budget. If the Treasurer and the members of the government do not understand that, God help the South Australian taxpayer in what is to come, because I fear that we will see yet another stampeding Labor government wreaking havoc with the state's finances and forcing it further into debt as they repeat their mistakes of the past.

In the time that is available to me I want to focus on the issue of electricity, but particularly the issue of sustainable electricity. It is interesting that the Treasurer mentioned that budgetary pressures, in part, are associated with electricity costs. I contend that inaction by this government is putting significant renewable energy opportunities at risk. Yes, Mr Speaker, I am aware that the Premier turned a sod yesterday for a wind farm at Starfish Hill—in fact, one that was facilitated by not the Labor government but by the Liberal government. He is endeavouring to claim the glory for the efforts of others. But, that aside, this government has not continued with an important program that we put in place.

The state government is becoming contestable, as of 1 January next year, for around 300 000 megawatt hours of power for government contracts. The Liberal government endeavoured to put in place a system that would encourage renewable energy opportunities by leveraging off that 300 000 megawatt hours of power. As a consequence, the Liberal government announced last year that we would be calling for tenders for that 300 000 megawatt hours of power, or part thereof, as an incentive for the renewable energy industry to commence in this state. Well, Mr Speaker, surprise, surprise! The whole thing has come to a standstill. Companies have put in bids but nothing has happened. The dilemma is that the companies need about a nine month lead time. Those decisions were ready to be made. They could not be made during the caretaker period but they could be made as soon as the government came into power. Certainly, the energy minister was briefed on their import and on the crucial timing involved but, despite that, no decision has been taken. As a consequence, it is quite possible that millions of dollars of opportunity have now been lost through the inaction of this government. If that is the case, I will remind this government loudly and clearly of the opportunities it has missed. It was the opportunity to start up not just sustainable energy provision but, importantly, a whole sustainable energy industry, from the manufacturing process through to the production process.

We were in the crucial final stage of negotiations with two companies to establish manufacturing plants in South Australia. The negotiations were at the stage where the companies had preferred sites. They had seen the sites, and they had flagged South Australia as a preferred location, but we knew we were competing with Victoria and Tasmania. If those factories that will produce cells and blades locate in Victoria or Tasmania, the Minister for Energy, the Premier, probably the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the Treasurer will collectively stand condemned: they will have lost that opportunity.

As you, Mr Speaker, know, at least one of the companies was actually looking at Murray Bridge in your own electorate

for that opportunity, and I would expect that you are using what influence you can bring to bear to ensure that these opportunities become a reality. But indecision has put these projects at risk and, if that is so, you do not get another opportunity to get into an industry at its infancy to build it from the start. The government's inactivity disappoints and frustrates me and my colleagues on this side of the house.

The SPEAKER: Order! I inform the opposition that the lead speaker for the opposition may address the chamber in the second reading debate from the position of the leader in the house. Any other member will speak from their place; otherwise, that is disorderly.

Bill read a second time.

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

That the house note grievances.

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

This grievance debate is obviously an opportunity to assess where the new government currently sits, to reassess some of the achievements of the previous government and how some of those improvements are perhaps being placed at risk unless there is more action from the new government. Currently, the government has a cabinet which is showing somewhat of a lack of confidence in its economic management capability. That is starting to become evident on a daily basis.

This is causing a strong reliance on Treasury advice, and it seems to be centralising the control over far too many of the decisions that are actually being made and over many of the programs which should be continuing on but which are being put into review. This is leading to uncertainty, not only for ministers but also for the Public Service, which seems so unsure of the government's direction for their departments' programs and projects. Added to this is the government's battle to settle a structure of operation for ministers and departments, and that uncertainty is impacting on confidence, not just within the public sector but also unfortunately in industry and the community.

We are currently seeing several worrying trends, and I will just list a few of them. We seem to be having constant reviews. There are far too many. There is always room for reviews, and some of the reviews which the government has announced are valid. However, some are totally unnecessary. They are areas that have been looked at over time. They are ones which are not all that complex and which just require a decision. Some reviews actually stand out as a cop-out to the government's actually making a decision. They are an alternative to getting on and making a decision as to whether or not, particularly from Treasury's point of view, money will be put forward for certain programs.

The second of the worrying trends to which I refer is the uncertainty within the Public Service, and this is a major issue which is becoming evident for those who need to talk to public servants on a daily basis. There seem to be a growing number who are just not sure what the next few months actually hold for them. They are not willing to start new project work. They tend to be backing off on many jobs that they would normally undertake. That uncertainty in the Public Service does tend to build on itself and, over time, I do not think that is good government. Thirdly, one aspect we are really seeing—and this is evident in question time in particular—is central control. The dominance of Treasury at the moment is becoming somewhat evident with the number of good and proven programs and projects that have been delivering to the business community, the community in

general, regional communities, and whatever, being put on hold.

I think that anyone who has been a minister—and the former minister for education would have experienced this—knows that Treasury is often about not spending too much money. Good government is about spending money correctly. Treasury has not always understood that. Anyone who has been in cabinet understands that Treasury sees its role as the guardian of every last cent of taxpayers' money. Treasury does not like to see money spent, and what we see at the moment is, perhaps, Treasury ruling. I think that there is absolutely no need for a review of some areas. Some areas that have shown to be extremely good in terms of value, good government and good spending of money have been put under review.

It is not just Treasury domination; there have also been other instances where the professional bureaucrats have taken control in a range of areas. One such instance stood out recently. The Minister for Urban Development and Planning (and I will not be over critical of him: he is new to the parliament, let alone new to the ministry) came into the chamber to talk about how I had supposedly suppressed a report on population projections for the next few years. Those population projections are very much used for the planning of infrastructure and what we do about school numbers, and whatever.

Anyone who understands the first thing about what is happening in regional South Australia and saw those figures would realise that they are extremely wrong. Those figures indicated, for instance, that, between 1996 and 2001, the number of people in their 20s on Eyre Peninsula had reduced by something like 20 per cent. Now, anyone who knows what has happened on Eyre Peninsula in that period of time knows that the reality is very much the opposite. The same applies to many other areas. They will never suppress those figures. When those figures were sent to cabinet (as any minister should) I had a good look at them and, with my understanding of regional areas and what has happened with respect to the aquaculture industry and several other industries on the Eyre Peninsula, I realised that those figures were wrong.

The figures for the South-East were probably very wrong, and figures for several other areas were questionable. We sent those figures back to have them reviewed in the hope that, subsequently, the correct figures might be released so that we could make some good decisions. I met with the people concerned. It was not as though we declared the figures out of hand as wrong and suppressed them. I met with the people who put those figures together and they explained to me that the figures are based on the 1986 census, the 1991 census and a small correction for the 1996 census.

Unless you get out and have a look at what is happening in regional South Australia those figures will be wrong. The bureaucrats might not like that and, with a new minister, they saw an opportunity to release those figures without changing them at all. The minister has listened to those people. He has come into this place, had a go at us and released those figures. I was a minister for a little more than six years and I worked with many senior public servants, and I reckon that they are terrific people. However, by nature, the main job of bureaucrats is to control their minister and to ensure that he does the right thing in terms of the way he thinks, and I saw many cases of this.

This is important, and the Minister for Environment and Conservation would do well to take this advice: always read your files. Read all of your files. Do not sign anything

without reading it, because the bureaucracy have a different point of view. That is not any sort of denigration of them because many became very good friends of mine over time. I have a lot of respect for our senior bureaucrats, but quite often the bureaucracy will try to be the tail wagging the dog. It is just absolutely vital that any minister and cabinet make sure that they do not become the tail on the dog: they must keep an eye on things. I think at the moment there are some signs that a lot of senior bureaucrats are having quite a few wins. That will always happen with any change of minister, and I think it happens with any government. At the moment, it seems to be happening—

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I could probably name a few. There are some absolute wins. The Minister for Environment and Conservation has just encouraged me to mention a few of those wins that the bureaucrats might have had. I think it is only fair that I take up his challenge before I am finished here.

The fourth worrying trend is that there is some inconsistency in answers, or statements. That is understandable to some extent, with new ministers, in a new government, trying to get across a whole range of portfolios. I think that is the lack of confidence about which I spoke. They are trying to get on top of their portfolios, and I think that is certainly not helped by the structure, which is the fifth of the trends that I see—the structural chaos that is present, and the decisions about structure. I understood that it would be difficult because of the way in which portfolios were put out, but we had hoped that before parliament resumed a lot of the decisions would have been made as to how the structure would work with the mix of portfolios that were given to the various ministers.

The Hon. M.R. Buckby: They had been in opposition for eight years.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: They had a little while to prepare. During the first week back, the Treasurer said that they were a couple of weeks away from settling that matter, but from what I can gather, they still have a fair way to go. I should not give too much advice to a new government, but I think that one of the real issues is that it has to work out the structure between its ministers, its chief executives and its departments. It was the situation that, in some cases, we had two ministers for a department (normally a senior and junior minister). But at the moment, while there are about four ministers for a department, if a CEO is working on cuts to budgets, in particular, there is a real problem as to whose priorities those CEOs will look after. I think that is a real issue—and that is not a political statement. I think that the government has to make sure it is not the tail on the dog and that it controls the situation. I think that, at the moment, the structural situation is making the government's job harder, and it needs to be sorted out pretty quickly.

I think that the other major worry is the lack of consultation. Over the past few weeks, there have been some absolute examples where there has been no consultation on some very important decisions, some of which have involved volunteers. I think that is when it becomes extremely dangerous, because volunteers play an enormous role in our society; we all know that. In a lot of these cases, the volunteers could quite often pack up and go home and leave someone high and dry—and I will come back to a couple of examples of that. But one has to be so careful that the bureaucracy does not win over the community; that is an absolutely important factor.

I will go a little further with the seventh trend. Today the Premier spoke passionately about what this government has done for regional areas in the past few weeks, and re-announced some of the things that previously had been announced by our government. There have been some re-announcements—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I will let him go for a while.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: No, it's getting a bit dry, actually. I heard the Premier today. We were concerned that the South-East rail would be knocked off. We were not so much concerned about SAMAG, in that there has been pretty much a bipartisan approach to it. The Clare Valley water issue, for sure: we appreciate that. But it is the regional development infrastructure fund, the river fishery and some of those issues where, to some extent, contempt has been shown for regional areas. I will touch on a couple of them.

I think that the river fishery is a real lesson. It is unfortunate that it came about so early in the government's life. Because of the way in which it was brought about, a decision had to be made. They were not too sure of the cost. They have gone in and said 'Yes' and then tried to work out the cost. There has been no consultation until now. An announcement was made yesterday that the minister will go and meet with the people concerned, but that meeting will not occur until 7 June, I think it is (or some time in June), and these people's livelihood will disappear on 30 June. You really question that decision, which was made back in mid-February.

We now see that it will be some time in June before these 30 families get the opportunity to be told what their compensation package will be and how they will be dealt with. The decision has been made to remove their livelihood, yet they have not been told anything about consultation. We are uncertain whether there is a regional impact statement. The Treasurer yesterday took it on notice. If it was dealt with yesterday morning and there was a regional impact statement, then he has a very poor memory of his papers, as it is a major Treasury issue, or there was not one. He promised to get back to us on that matter. The Minister for Environment asked for an example or two: the shift of the sustainable resources section out of primary industries into environment without consultation—

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: It is even worse if the public servants didn't want to do it. The big problem with that is that in the sustainable resources area—within landcare, soil boards and animal and plant control boards—are thousands of good South Australians who will hate that decision. They will absolutely hate that decision and will rail against it. They feel that their efforts over a long time have been totally ignored by that decision. There is no doubt where they feel at home and can work—

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: The minister is saying that I have got it wrong. In 1997 we made a mistake because a consultant suggested that we do this, and you should have seen the reaction we had at that time. What you risk in shifting the soil boards to environment—

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Shifting them out of primary industries into the environment portfolio. I understand that they may go into a different area than environment. The people concerned are willing to give the government half a

chance as far as the culture of that department goes, but they do not appreciate being moved out of primary industries. The government has a task ahead of it now to convince them that they will go into a culture that is amenable to what they want. We have here a whole group of people, many of whom have dedicated years to the plant and soil control boards—people who have put in 15 to 20 years basically as volunteers on these committees and done an enormous amount of work—and the government has the task ahead of it to convince them.

What will be the cost to the environment if some of these people start to walk away, even with integrated natural resource management? We have had problems with certain groups in some areas because, as they are volunteers and are passionate about what they do, they take a lot of handling with many of these issues. What will be the cost to the environment if we lose some of those people? The Natural Heritage Trust was the first step in getting away from the rhetoric we heard about the environment. For years our great friends—yours and ours—the Democrats, were saying that the environment was their homeland. The ALP is not far behind them in claiming the high ground. The Liberals are often seen as being not quite there, yet it was John Howard and Liberal governments that got the Natural Heritage Trust going. It was a major step forward as it embraced partnerships and got landholders and communities out working.

The minister would agree that the Natural Heritage Trust was a cultural step forward in working together. We got work on the ground. It is a great success and I have no doubt that governments of whatever persuasion will continue to encourage that partnership approach. It is a matter of who owns the land, who does the work, who makes the real sacrifices and, in many cases, who is willing to live where a lot of these problems exist and to work on them. It is a matter of who really cares. You need to be very careful that you treat those people correctly: they need to be consulted when major decisions are made. We have spoken about Lonzar's Lodge a few times lately. That was one example of where a little more consultation could have helped.

We are in grieves over the supply debate. It is a matter of where our economy is at present. Lately, there have been some attempts to rewrite history. Statements have been made about the Economic Development Board being set, and I have no problems with the appointments to that board. What concerns me is the talk of the need to turn the economy around. The South Australian economy is doing a lot better than it has done for a long time. Talk about turning the economy around is wrong. To that one-eyed journo who keeps writing South Australia up as a rust-belt state, trying to rewrite history as to where the starting point of this government is, I say 'Fair go!' At this time of a fair bit of confidence within the economy the last thing South Australia needs is for it to be talked down. I do not think that that helps anyone at all, and those efforts to rewrite history tend to do that.

The recent economic report which was compiled by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies and other recent economic releases such as the BankSA report we saw the other day really show that things are starting to tick along very well. Retail sales are good and home commencements are good—although we need to work through the building liability issues to make sure that we absolutely do not soften that. That is not an easy issue; we understand that. The Attorney is starting to well and truly realise that. He has one to grapple with there. He could look at more exemptions as the major flaw in where he is heading at the moment. Capital

expenditure has been up; export growth has been fantastic; and unemployment figures are exceptional compared to when the Premier was the minister for employment. They have gone down a lot, but we would all still love to see them lower. A whole lot of indicators are showing a boost for South Australia.

Several members of this house and I went to the opening of the new Embassy Hotel the other night. One company is putting quite a level of investment into South Australia. The Embassy Hotel involves about \$68 million. One South Australian company alone is putting \$500 million of investment into hotel and accommodation projects in South Australia. That is great, and that is a benefit the new government will get from both Urban Construct and the previous government's work. As far as the financial achievements of the previous government are concerned, debt was a major problem for us. We have heard the Treasurer talk about the problems he has with the budget at present. In 1993 Stephen Baker had black hair at that stage but that went grey very quickly. The problems that we—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: You didn't have to talk down the economy at that stage—at all. As a government we constantly produced balanced budgets. That was despite a starting point of a \$300 million deficit. That was not easy. One of the major turnarounds within the South Australian economy during that time was certainly exports. The government might have had a couple of programs that helped, but at the end of the day the government did not put those dollars there. The exporters of South Australia deserve an enormous pat on the back for what they have done over last few years. That is somewhat hurt by the talking down of the economy.

One or two people on the East Coast—a couple of journos there—are, quite frankly, not worth what they are paid, because they do not do their homework and will not change their mind on what the South Australian economy represents. They have a major problem. We put more money into health. We were responsible for a whole range of achievements. At the bottom of it was the fact that we started to pay our way and not book up things for people to pay for in the future on the so-called bankcard by running deficit budgets. That is very important for a lot of us, and I know that the new government will probably try to do the same thing.

We achieved a lot in the area of health. It will always be an area of some contention. The expectations in health will be enormous. Health will be a priority for whatever state government we have. I will be very disappointed if we see a state government at any time in the future where health is probably not the number one priority. It is for both the parties here at present. Health really comes back to the ability to pay for the health expectations of the people of the state, and a lot of that comes back to your ability to handle the economy itself.

During the period of the Liberal government, we went through a time of incredible growth in exports, and exports act like a big funnel that brings money into the economy, which then starts turning over in a whole range of areas. It is responsible to a large extent for what we are seeing now with property values in South Australia, the enormous waiting lists for housing, CBD vacancies, investment, consumer confidence and retail spending. So much of that comes back to exports.

In 1993—indeed, the early 1990s—that funnel of exports was bringing into the economy somewhere in the vicinity of \$3 billion, depending on the season. Now \$9 billion is coming

in through that same funnel, and that makes an enormous difference. That is the generator: that is the engine room of this economy. That brings in the money and it can then be turned around.

There are some fantastic stories in that. We all know about the success of the wine industry, and enough has been spoken about it. It has shown enormous leadership in this state and we owe the wine industry a lot. I will not go on about the Wine Centre tonight but I think it is an investment for this state. The Wine Centre is much maligned and people should get behind making it work. Some of the statements that have been made about it have made it harder for the Wine Centre to operate. The talk of closure and the cancellations that have resulted have caused some problems in regard to making it work, but I will leave that one alone.

Let us talk about some positives. The wine industry has set a fantastic example for other industries in this state. They were bold: they stuck their neck out and said that they were going to achieve targets that people laughed at. In 1996, we got the food industry to do the same. We set a target of improvement from \$5 billion to \$15 billion over 12 years. A lot of people laughed at that. As of last year, we were ahead of that schedule. Last year food exports out of South Australia rose by 40 per cent, and that came off a record harvest and record growth the year before.

That result of 40 per cent came about because a lot of producers are getting together and working together in export markets. That is a fantastic achievement. Some say the 40 per cent is largely because of the Australian dollar and our competitiveness overseas. Some of it is, but the 40 per cent overseas, matched with the 29 per cent increase in exports interstate, matched with a 5 per cent domestic growth, and matched also with the fact that we reduced food imports into South Australia by 10 per cent, together result in an enormous growth factor in a very important industry across the state, and that really has started to help the growth of the industry itself. While exports went up 40 per cent, the industry itself grew by 15 per cent, but what we saw for the future was enormous investment both at an irrigation level, which is the production level, and also at the value added level, and we will see that industry do very well for a long time in the future.

Much has been said about electricity privatisation. One of the real holes in the Labor Party policy on electricity is, if ETSA had not been sold, what would have been done about building the generation capacity that has seen a 40 per cent increase in the past three years. In that time we spent \$700 million on hospitals. If ETSA had remained in government ownership, the only thing we could have done to increase that capacity was to use on generation plants the \$700 million that we spent on hospitals. That is the fact of the matter. The reliance of Labor policy on Riverlink goes beyond the comprehension of anyone who understands the amount of electricity that is needed, the capacity that has been put in, and the effect that Riverlink would have had. Anyone with that understanding would know that Riverlink was not the answer.

Regional infrastructure is a major issue. Massive growth industries such as the food industry, the wine industry and the aquaculture industry need infrastructure. One of the things we are seeing is massive growth in our rural towns. We are able to identify 15 towns that have housing shortages, water shortages and, in some areas, power shortages.

Infrastructure is a major cost in setting up businesses. I know that the Treasurer is presently reviewing the Regional

Development Infrastructure Fund, and I would encourage him to keep that going. Over the last couple of years we spent \$11.5 million out of that fund, and we have been able to put that towards various projects. It does not cover the full cost but it helps them to get over the hurdle. That \$11 million of very good investment has helped with the creation or retention of 2600 jobs and new investment of more than \$497 million, and I hope that the Treasurer looks upon it favourably because it is an area that we used extremely strategically when we talked to people about setting up business in regional South Australia; and that was very important.

One of the other areas where I would urge the government to be extremely careful—and I know that people talk about bread and circuses—is major events. It brings enormous money into this state. It really helps us out. It creates major attractions for our tourism industry and it is something that this state is getting extremely well known for. A lot of small businesses do very well out of people who come here for events.

The Tour Down Under, the Clipsal 500, the Horse Trials, the Classic Adelaide Car Rally, Tasting Australia and, incredibly at the moment, the Year of the Outback are all very important. Of course, we have to make sure that the taxpayer does not put in more money than they should, but they are areas that should not be cut without an extreme amount of thought put in. We look forward to the World Cup rugby and the World Police and Fire Games. Some of these things have had an enormous amount of effort go into them to make sure that we keep South Australia moving forward.

There are many other areas, including bioscience and innovation. I encourage the government to keep moving in that area. The Plant Genome Centre was announced the other day, and I thank the government for that. I know that there was some reluctance by Treasury in respect of that decision, but in the end the government stood up to Treasury, which is great to see. That is very important. That industry has enormous growth for us. It will create a lot of highly paid jobs, and it is an area of new economy that we need to pursue.

At the moment we are concerned with some of the trends, and we just encourage the government to get on with some of the really hard decisions. Get the structure sorted out and let us get on with making South Australia a great state.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I will not take—

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Do I need to stay?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will make a few comments, but I will do them early. I will not take the full time that is allotted to me as the lead speaker. Before I begin, I indicate that I did not get a chance to speak during the Address In Reply debate so I would like to congratulate you, sir, on your appointment as Speaker and also congratulate you on the way that you have handled the job thus far. The tone of the house is much improved under your speakership, and long may it be so. As a member of the new Labor government, I thank you, Mr Speaker, for putting your trust in the Labor Party to form government. As one who is responsible for addressing a number of the issues in the compact, I am looking forward to working closely with you to achieve them in the best interests of our State.

I also congratulate the new members of this house, a number of whom are on this side—the members for Cheltenham, Colton, Napier, Adelaide and Enfield. I congratulate them on their maiden speeches. I see that the

opposition leader is leaving—I will get him to read the *Hansard* later. I also congratulate the new members on the other side and all members who have been re-elected to this place.

I note in the media that some people think it is inappropriate for members of parliament to make speeches along these lines and waste the time of the house. I am opposed to that argument because it seems to me that there is such a small amount of civility in this place that it is appropriate that at least once every four years you can get up and congratulate and thank people and just acknowledge the fact that people do a good job. However, having made that comment I now want to make some reference to the member for Bragg whose maiden speech I have read. There were certain things in there that were interesting. Obviously she was positioning herself for the first or second position opposite.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is okay. I do not mind that she does that. What I thought was most unfortunate was the fact that she did it by denigrating that great leader of South Australia, and I refer of course to Don Dunstan. She denigrated him. No person is perfect, and all of us on this side know that Don Dunstan had faults, but he also had great merit. I think that in her speech, she was unbalanced in the way she summed up his political life. The fact is that there are only three premiers who have their statues in the hallway to this place—Kingston, Playford and Dunstan: the three great premiers of this state. I doubt very much that any of the premiers who served here in the former Liberal government will find their statue out there, no matter how many years we may wait to see what history eventually thinks of them.

So, I think the member for Bragg's contribution was a disgrace. I think she was poorly informed, and I am assuming that she was told what to say by those who are advocating her rise through the ranks of the Liberal leadership. She also made comments about members on this side being owned by unions. Well, that also was highly insulting. I am a member of the ASU, but to think that the ASU actually owns me is quite a wonderful thought. Over the years, I have said to various ASU secretaries, 'Please tell me when your meetings are to be held so that I can come along and participate,' but I never got the special invitation. They certainly do not own me, but I am pleased and proud to be a member. I think they do a very good job.

I want to comment on some of the issues, particularly those raised by the leader during his interesting contribution. I want to particularly refer to the issue of sustainable resources, which was once part of Primary Industries but which has now been transferred to my new department, the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (known as WALABI by members of that department, creating a new acronym). Prior to the election, the Labor Party was very clear about its policy on this matter. We said that we would have an integrated natural resource department which would bring together the Water Resources Department, elements of Primary Industries (the sustainable resources section), and parts of the Department of Environment and Heritage (the biodiversity section) to create a new department. Our policy documents even said what the name of the department would be. So, for the leader to say that there was no consultation is arrant nonsense. We consulted with the whole community. In addition, I spoke to and consulted with members of South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF), particularly the Natural Resources Committee of SAFF, and they were supportive of what we were doing. Only today I

spoke to the Local Government Association, and they are supportive of what we are doing. I have spoken to the Conservation Council, and they are supportive of what we are doing, and I have spoken to countless members of water catchment boards, soil boards, drainage boards and animal and plant pest control boards. I am not sure whether they all support it, but they certainly acknowledge what we are doing and are working cooperatively with me.

It is not our intention to put the new department within the Department of Environment: it will be a different department. Both are within my area of responsibility, but they are not one department. The reason why I have done that—

An honourable member: It is empire building.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is not empire building; I had these responsibilities in opposition. I now have them in government, but I have put them together in an appropriate way. The former government tried to have integrated natural resource management by leaving the departments spread out as they were and then putting upon that another two structures, which was just a nonsense. They could not get it debated in this house, because Independent members of the last parliament would not even have it put on the agenda. So, that was just plain wrong. This government's process puts natural resource management into one department. On the ground, I have said to the various people in the community with an interest in this, 'We have made two decisions: firstly, that there will be integration of natural resource management; and secondly, the boundaries we use will be water catchment board boundaries, we will not be using the existing structures. We will work with you to work out the best structure that suits your community.' What happens in the South-East will be different from what happens on the West Coast and what happens in Adelaide. So, we will work with the communities. We certainly want to involve communities. We accept, recognise and applaud the great contributions made by local communities to integrated natural resource management.

We also want to keep local government involved as well as the farmers federation and conservation groups. Under the Labor Party the Water, Land Biodiversity Conservation undertaking is in my portfolio and associated with the Department of Environment. If the Liberal Party gets into government at some stage, it may wish to group it with Primary Industries, but at least they are now together in a single department with a single focus and, hopefully, over time they can develop a new culture, a new approach, which will best manage these issues.

I have a number of other things I wish to say, but I would like to finish with one point. Recently, in the other place, the Hon. Diana Laidlaw asked a question of one my colleagues regarding a State Library Foundation fundraising dinner, and she had a go at me for not attending, which I suppose was fair enough. I could not attend the dinner because I was elsewhere. She also said that a couple of people at the dinner had put in a bid to have dinner with me, which was part of the auction that was taking place, because they could not get to see the minister. She said, in fact, that David Klingberg, the Chancellor of the University of South Australia, was the first to bid, and \$15 was his bid. She alleged he said 'to try to get see the minister who has not answered any of [his] representations'. That was a slight on me, and I thought it was an outrageous comment by the former minister.

I now have a letter, of course, from Mr Klingberg which states that his comments to the former minister were tongue-in-cheek. He says:

I certainly did not mean to imply that your staff had not been in touch regarding the appointment I had been seeking. In fact, there have been frequent communications. I look forward to working with your portfolio on water resources and environmental issues.

He also says:

I think my bid was in the region of \$150 to \$200; certainly not \$15.

I now have two appointments with him. The other point was, of course, that another person, who had been sacked from a board that this person was on, was complaining that they had bid so that they could have dinner with me to find out why they were sacked. I would say two things: first, do not say things in confidence to the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, because she will repeat them in this house; and, secondly, people other than friends of the Hon. Diana Laidlaw can now expect to be appointed to boards.

Mr McEWEN (Mount Gambier): First, I compliment Premier Rann and his cabinet team on their visit to Mount Gambier last Friday. It was an exceptional visit in a number of ways, not the least of which was a community forum at night, where a number of people made the point that it was great to have access to the whole team, together with not only their political advisers but also the heads of departments. What was even better was that you actually got answers to questions there and then, as well as some commitments on a number of fronts. I trust that that experience will continue around the state and that others will find it as valuable as did the people of the South-East.

Equally, the afternoon tea with the volunteers was fantastic in terms of having the opportunity to meet the team that is running the state—as I said at that meeting, the team that is running the state for the next four years, unless something quite extraordinary happens—and to be able at that meeting to identify Jennifer Rankine and the role the Premier has given her in relation to volunteers over the next 12 months.

Tonight, briefly, I wanted to put on the record another of the crisis situations that is developing out of problems with insurance. I would like to quote from a letter from Greg Robinson, who is the convener of the Council of Historic Railways and Tramways of South Australia. In writing to the Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith, the state Minister for Tourism, Greg Robinson says:

On behalf of our member organisations, which are spread throughout the state, I respectfully request your government to consider taking action on our behalf to remedy a crisis developing within the tourism rail operators of South Australia. We have, together with other bodies, been hit with increased public liability insurance premiums over the last four years. These increases of 25 per cent to 60 per cent per annum have been topped in the coming years with a 250 per cent to 400 per cent increase.

This equates in one organisation to a 4 000 per cent increase over a four-year period, with an increased cost alone per passenger rising from 31 cents in 1998 to \$6.50 in 2002. So, four years ago 31¢ on each ticket was insurance: today \$6.50 on each ticket is insurance. Mr Robinson continued:

If last year's passenger numbers are repeated, this figure rises to \$15 and wipes out the total fare revenue—

and, therefore, the organisations—

Needless to say, organisations faced with these types of increase will have no option but to close their doors. Already, some groups have recently advised the Council of Historic Railways and Tramways of South Australia that they will not have the funds available to reinsure beyond 30 June 2002, therefore forcing closure due to a regulatory requirement to have adequate insurance.

He goes on to talk about this regulatory requirement, as follows:

A breakdown of premium costs supplied by the insurers indicates that the first \$10 million amounts to 22 per cent of the total premium. The second \$10 million having to be underwritten overseas by the one and only underwriter that handles rail insurance.

In other words, the first \$10 million is costing 22 per cent of the premium and 78 per cent is going for the second \$10 million, and they ask if it would be possible for the requirement of the \$20 million cover to be reduced to \$10 million through some other arrangement. One possibility would be that the state government collectively underwrites the \$10 million by some form of group insurance and apportion the premiums among the operators on a per passenger or similar basis. Mr Robinson states:

A similar scheme to this has operated interstate amongst heritage rail operators.

So, there is a precedent interstate. He continues:

I trust that you will take up this request for assistance with your colleagues in parliament and expedite a solution for at least those organisations whose insurance comes due on 30 June 2002—

the point being that, if we do not do something by the end of next month, we will not in this state have any historic railways or tramways operating, because their insurance premiums will cater for more than their total revenue.

Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey): Tonight I would like to talk about the issue of commercial fishing in the Murray River and put on the record a bit of history on this issue, because it has been incredibly topical over recent times, particularly in the media over recent days. It has been said that the commercial fishing industry and the commercial fishers themselves have been hard done by by the decision of the Labor government through the compact with you, Mr Speaker, to remove the gill nets from the fishery without consultation with the fishers. I would like to put on record my particular views on this issue and go back over history and talk through some of the issues.

Back in 1989 it was Labor Party policy that the commercial fishery would be phased out. Licences were non-tradable at that time, so it is nothing new for the Labor Party to have made a decision that the commercial fishery in the River Murray is unviable. At that time there were 39 reaches in the river fishery. The gill allocation per reach was far different from what it is now and it was not consistent across the reaches. The gill net effort in those days was significantly less.

When the Liberal government was elected in 1993, and during the course of its first term in government, it undertook a review of the commercial fishery that was based on the commercial viability of the river fishery rather than on its environmental viability. It determined that a restructure was necessary to sustain the economic viability of the fishery. During the process, the government was heavily criticised by the Riverland community for not having undertaken an appropriate consultation process throughout the community of the Riverland and, indeed, the River Murray fishery community. At the time, the Environment, Resources and Development Committee (in 1997) undertook—

Mr Venning: A good committee.

Mrs MAYWALD: A very good committee which, under the chair of the member for Schubert, undertook an investigation into the sustainability of commercial fishing of inland fisheries. After 12 months of investigation and a lot of information that was collected and collated, and many hours

of deliberation, the committee determined that the commercial fishery was not sustainable. It was recommended that there be a maximum of a 10 year phase-out; that gill nets needed to be assessed immediately; and that options to look at monitoring the recreational use should also be looked at. Issues such as a tagging system or a licensing system were also necessary to understand what the recreational effort was in the river fishery. It was also determined that there was no appropriate environmental impact assessment of the fishery prior to the restructure.

The restructure went ahead regardless and despite the efforts of the ERD committee, and the transferability of licences was introduced, creating the problem that we now have in respect of compensation for the phasing out of the fishery. It also created an enormous increase in the effort within the commercial fishery, even though the number of licences was reduced from 39 to 30. The way in which the gear was allocated to each licensee was substantially changed, in that they were able to use 50 units of a number of allocated types of fishing equipment per reach. There was a strong effort by a number of members of parliament to have the gill net allocation reduced. The government finally conceded and reduced the gear allocation for gill nets to 30 per reach, but in my view this certainly did not go far enough and certainly did not take into consideration that the ERD committee considered that an appropriate assessment of the use of gill nets needed to be undertaken before any change to the gill net allocation was made.

There has been extremely strong opposition to commercial fishing throughout the Murray River community. The Labor Party position has always been to phase it out. Mr Speaker, as the member for Hammond you have been opposed to the commercial fishing industry for as long as I have known you. I have opposed commercial fishing in the Murray River since my election in 1997 and, despite an aggressive campaign that was run against me during the last election by the commercial fishing sector, my opinion remained firmly opposed to commercial fishing. The community was very much opposed and, whilst there would be those in the commercial sector who would say that only a few antagonists were driving the agenda, this is not the case.

The *Murray Pioneer* conducted a spot petition in the Riverland community and obtained over 2 000 signatures within a two week period. I established a Murray River advisory group to assist me on fishing issues in the Riverland, because we were getting very much an us versus them mentality happening in the Riverland, and we were seeing the commercial fishing sector victimised by the recreational sector, which I believe was not in the interest of anyone in the region and it certainly was not progressing the issue of what was in the best interest of the fishery.

The advisory group undertook to do a survey. In that survey we asked whether or not there would be support for a recreational fishing licence: 96 per cent of people who participated in the survey were in favour of a recreational fishing licence for inland waters. This was on the proviso that commercial fishing, in most instances, was removed from the river and that the gill net effort was also removed. It was also suggested that, if we were to have a recreational fishing licence, there should be a hypothecated fund to manage the funds of the recreational licence to improve the fishery. The writing has been on the wall for commercial fishers for some time. I believe that for the commercial fishers now to be crying that they have been hard done by in the whole process is inappropriate.

Labor policy has always been to phase out the fishery, and I support that position as well as the position taken in the compact with the member for Hammond in regard to the fishery. However, I believe that there needs to be fair and equitable compensation and it needs to be done in consultation with the commercial fishers. I support the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, who intends to visit the Riverland early next month to discuss the issues of compensation with the commercial fishers. I believe that the commercial fishers will have the opportunity to put their case fairly and squarely.

The issue raised by Lorraine Rosenberg from SAFIC that they deserve life-long compensation, I believe, is a nonsense. They do not have a property right to the commercial fishery. They have an annual licence to access a public resource, and therefore, in my view, it is not appropriate that they be given a package to compensate them for life. I believe, though, that a fair and equitable compensation package is due. A livelihood will be taken away, and it would be inappropriate to establish a precedent whereby a person's access to a public resource can be removed without fair and equitable compensation.

I look forward to this matter being resolved once and for all so that the debate can move on to the establishment of a recreational fishing licence in the Murray River. If it is too hot an issue politically to do it for all inland waters, then perhaps we can look at just an individual river license to run as a pilot within the state. I am certain, as was indicated by my community in its response to the survey that we put out, that there would be broad support for a recreational fishing licence with a hypothecated fund that will certainly be invested in the future sustainability of native fish stocks in the Murray River.

It has worked in New South Wales and in Victoria. We have a number of recreational fishers who regularly go across the border into New South Wales and Victoria to fish, and who happily pay the recreational fishing licences, in both states, to go away for a weekend of fishing. That revenue goes to New South Wales and Victoria. Recreational fishers can catch fish over there. There are good restocking programs, and there is no commercial fishing. I believe that we can follow that example and that we can significantly improve the lot of the river fishery in South Australia by funding it appropriately and putting in place programs to ensure that the native fish stocks are sustainable.

I am also sure that tourism and the community of the Riverland can benefit as a whole from this public resource, and not just a limited few, who have, at the moment, an exclusive right of access that others are denied, because of the amount of gear that they are able to use to exploit the fishery. I support your position, Mr Speaker, in bringing this issue to a head, and I firmly support the Labor Party's position on phasing out and ending commercial fishing in the Murray River.

Mr CAICA (Colton): I rise to recognise the significant contribution to community safety and beach safety awareness being made by Surf Life Saving SA in particular, and the many thousands of surf lifesaving volunteers who patrol South Australia's beaches during the summer months. By way of interest, in 1969 I was fortunate enough to be amongst the first group of South Australian children who became surf lifesaving nippers. Nippers are of course junior lifesavers, aged seven through to 14. This was at the Henley Surf Life Saving Club and I continued in an active role with that club,

and later with the West Beach Surf Life Saving Club for many years to follow. I continue to follow surf lifesaving with abiding interest.

Like many others in this house, I know first-hand and appreciate the significant and vigilant service provided by South Australia's surf lifesaving volunteers. Nineteen surf lifesaving clubs affiliated to Surf Life Saving SA are situated along the South Australian coastline from Whyalla through to Port Elliot. They patrol 23 of the most recognised and popular swimming beaches in the metropolitan and country regions. One of the many misconceptions about surf lifesaving is that a surf lifesaving club is nothing more or less than another community sporting club.

I have heard surf lifesavers dismissed as 'those people on the beach with the funny red and yellow caps'. This is indeed a misconception. Surf lifesaving is much more. Later, I shall share some statistical information with the house that will show that, in addition to rescue and preventative actions, surf lifesaving club members are involved in call-outs, searches, returning lost children to distraught parents, gathering and disposing of syringes, administering first aid and a raft of other beach activities.

Mr Rau: They are very important.

Mr CAICA: Very important. Surf Life Saving SA and its affiliated clubs, through its patrolling members, are not simply a response unit. The movement undertakes as much a preventative role as a rescue role through its school and community education program as well as offering safety services to the beach-going public. In Australia where the majority of the population resides along the coastal strip, and is concentrated predominantly in major cities, the role that surf lifesaving clubs have played in our country's history, and continue to play with respect to community safety and beach safety awareness and education, cannot be overstated.

We are a country where a large proportion of the population spends a significant period of time at the beach. I am thankful that, through surf lifesaving, we have in place a system which provides for the safety of our beach-going population. I mentioned earlier that I would provide this house with statistics which reinforce the role played by surf lifesavers in beach safety. Rescue, education and prevention: this is the function of surf lifesaving clubs in our state. The statistics for the 2001-02 season show that surf lifesavers performed 172 major rescues, 503 minor rescues, over 6 000 preventative actions, returned over 30 children to lost parents, were involved in 50 searches, 21 call-outs and attended over 1 000 first aid cases. Indeed, that is magnificent. All of this was performed by volunteers on weekends and public holidays from November through to March inclusive, and it included a staggering 51 578.5 volunteer hours.

Away from the patrol, surf lifesavers are also very active in other areas. For example, surf lifesaving volunteers have collected data over the past 10 years that has resulted in the publication of a book called *The Beaches of the South Australian Coast*. This book identifies the individual characteristics of location, usage, hazards and identifiable levels of risk of each beach throughout South Australia. People must bear in mind that lifesaving clubs through their volunteers patrol only 23 recognised swimming beaches in metropolitan and contrary areas.

Although clubs have a system of roving patrols using four-wheel drive vehicles and inflatable rescue craft—this enables volunteers to cover up to five times the number of designated safe swimming areas—the fact remains that there are approximately 800 unpatrolled beaches which are readily

accessible and another 300 remote unpatrolled beaches. The point I wish to make is that this book, *The Beaches of the South Australian Coast*, has many benefits when used correctly, including reducing public risk through risk identification.

Surf Life Saving SA also provides professional lifeguard services throughout weekdays during summer when volunteers are at work. In addition, Surf Life Saving SA has trained coastal auditors who are able to assist various levels of government and developers to develop beach safety and management plans. In another life, before coming to this house, I sat on the National Public Safety ITAB (Industry Training Advisory Board). In that forum, discussion is still going on which will result in a formal recognition and national qualification of the training awards available through Surf Life Saving SA.

In conclusion, I know that the house will join with me in congratulating our surf life saving volunteers for their outstanding efforts in providing our communities with an equally outstanding level of beach safety and protection, education and awareness. I know that this house will be as one in ensuring that surf life saving volunteers are able to continue to provide this valuable community service.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.59 p.m. the house adjourned until Wednesday 29 May at 2 p.m.